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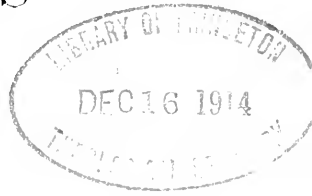






# LECTURES

ON



# THE APOCALYPSE.

BY WILLIAM JONES, M. A.

AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF THE WALDENSES, ETC.

“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world : If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews ; but now is my kingdom not from hence.—To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into this world, that I should bear witness unto THE TRUTH : every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.”—JOHN xviii. 36, 37.

“COME and SEE.”—REV. vi. 1, 3, 5, 7.

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TO THE

## SCOTCH-BAPTIST CHURCH,

ASSEMBLING FOR WORSHIP IN ALDERMANBURY,

LONDON.

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BELOVED BRETHREN!

To you I inscribe this Course of Lectures, as a humble testimony of my christian affection for you, and of my desire to promote your steadfastness in the good profession which you have made of Christ's name, and the nature of his kingdom. Undertaken at your request, and prosecuted under the countenance and encouragement which you have afforded in the service, I am desirous, having now brought it to a close, that these published pages should be regarded as a memorial of our mutual attachment, and a declaration of our views respecting the doctrine, worship, and order of our Redeemer's kingdom in the world. Nor can I willingly abandon the hope that when a few more years shall have passed over us, it may be permitted us, through the mercy of the Most High, and the grace of our adorable Redeemer, to meet each other in another and better world; where, among the higher felicities of the place, we may possibly look back to the time which we have lately spent in exploring the contents of this wonderful book, and, perhaps, reviving in our recollections the "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord," with which we have been kindly favoured while engaged upon that interesting theme—

" When light broke in upon our eyes,  
With kind and quick'ning rays."

There is surely enough in the gospel of our salvation to warrant the pleasing anticipation; let us then not cast away this confidence; the world has nothing to offer us in exchange for it, of equal value. In the meantime, be exhorted to steadfastness in the faith, and in the scriptural order of the house of God. While *practically* contending for these things, as laid down in the Apostles' doctrine, and approved examples of the first churches, you must be

content to be pointed at by the finger of scorn, perhaps laughed at for your singularity, and reproached for your bigotry and sectarianism. But let none of these things either stumble or discourage you; for, be assured, that “no strange thing has happened to you.” The path you now tread, is that in which all the first churches walked, until Antichrist arose and corrupted the christian profession; and it will be again restored and become a “highway,” when Antichrist shall be destroyed “by the brightness of the Lord’s coming;” when “the cities of the nations fall,” or, to speak without a figure, when all national establishments of Christianity are swept away, and the dissenting churches get rid of the leaven of Popery which still attaches to them. That much of this remains to be done, you, I am sure, will require no proof from me. While we find some of the strictest sect of our dissenters contending that the apostolic churches are no longer an example to us for our imitation in conducting the affairs of the kingdom of Christ; that though they were not without their use in the infancy of Christianity, or so long as it maintained its pristine purity, yet that *now* a new case has arisen, and to accommodate matters to this new order of things, it has become necessary to abandon the example of the apostolic churches, and *to meet Antichrist half-way!!!*—I say, so long as such monstrous opinions as these are broached in the face of the sun, and acted upon, the state of our dissenting churches must, in the very nature of things, become increasingly corrupt. May you, my brethren, ever be upon your guard against that accursed sophistry which would lead you to tamper with divine ordinances and institutions; you can be at no loss to trace it to its origin, Gen. iii. 1-5. Remember that those things were given you by the adorable Head of the church, *to keep*, and not to play fast and loose with, according as human weakness and caprice may dictate. And while all your affairs are conducted with charity, “do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; among whom may you shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that my labours among you have not been in vain.” I am,

Your willing Servant in the Gospel,

THE AUTHOR.

Hoxton, *New Gloucester Street*,  
December 1st, 1829.

## PREFACE.

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THE subject of Prophecy constitutes so important a part of Divine Revelation, that it surely were superfluous to offer anything in the shape of an apology for the attention which is bestowed upon it. Infidels, and superficial thinkers who assume the christian name, "sporting themselves with their own deceivings," may amuse one another and display their wit, as many of them have done, in pouring ridicule upon both the subject itself, and the writers who have undertaken to illustrate it; but if, as it professes, its author be divine, raillery and ridicule were never more out of place than when thus employed. A theme which was not thought unworthy of the sublime genius and capacious mind of Sir Isaac Newton; on which that great man bestowed many of the choicest hours of his life, and which he held in such veneration, that he could not allow his manuscripts to go to the hands of the printer till he had rewritten them again, and again, and again, thus shewing that he considered the subject to be worthy of his most attentive regards and profound deliberation, must certainly be entitled to a different treatment, than that which it has received at the hands of many who plume themselves upon their superiority to vulgar minds. When we open the Bible, says a late writer, "we behold, with astonishment, a spirit of prophecy pervading all time, commencing so early as the fall of man, and extending to the final consummation of all things: we see it uniformly characterizing one person; first, by dark and obscure intimations, then gradually unfolding itself with brighter and brighter lustre at every step, till the appearance of HIM who was its ultimate end and object. In Him and his Apostles, but particularly in his beloved Disciple, we behold it once more renewed, and predicting with peculiar exactness every important event which should befall his church, even from its earliest establishment, down to that period of awful expectation, when the great plan of divine grace shall be brought to a glorious and consistent

conclusion, and the mysterious counsels of the Almighty, respecting the christian dispensation, shall be for ever closed in judgment." <sup>a</sup>

It is this series of New Testament prophecies which has of late years, in a more especial manner, engaged the attention, and employed the pens of so many writers among us: and as they form the subject matter of the Apocalypse, the press has teemed with publications, professedly intended to illustrate that mysterious book. The truth is, that when I take a review of their number, and consider the learning and talent that has been employed upon the subject, more especially during the last forty years, I feel myself imperiously called upon to offer a serious apology for presuming to add another volume to the mass already before the public.

It is now no secret, nor, so far as my information goes, do I understand that any wish exists to conceal the matter from the public, that a number of gentlemen of high respectability are somehow associated in the study of prophecy, and hold occasional meetings, for the purpose of mutual conference on this high theme. The result of these laudable interviews and conversations has been given to the public in various shapes, but chiefly in a work entitled, "Dialogues on Prophecy," in 3 vols. octavo. It is to that publication that this course of lectures is indebted for its origin; and if the reader have sufficient curiosity to know how that was brought about, he may be satisfied by glancing his eye over the subjoined note, <sup>b</sup> otherwise, if he be

<sup>a</sup> White's Bampton Lectures, Sermon vii.

<sup>b</sup> In the *New Baptist Miscellany*, May, 1827—a periodical publication which was then, but is not now, under my superintendence, I gave some account of the *Dialogues on Prophecy*, Parts 1, 2, 3, being all that were then published; and concluded the article with these words: "When the remaining part or parts of these singular Dialogues are before us, it shall be our endeavour to point out the errors of various kinds into which these gentlemen have been betrayed, and to rectify their mistaken system." Shortly after this, I received a note from the gentleman who sustains the office of editor of the "Dialogues," written from his country-seat at Albury, in Surry, in which he mentioned that he had seen the Magazine, and read the review of the "Dialogues on Prophecy," that he was particularly desirous of having a personal interview with the editor or reviewer, and hoped he would do him the favour of giving

him a call at his town residence, where he expected to be on a day specified in his note. This request was complied with; and, on being introduced to him, he was not a little surprised to recognize in the reviewer, an old acquaintance, who had laboured with him for years in establishing the Continental Society! The interview was a very pleasant one: it lasted for some time, and we had much general discussion on the subject of unfulfilled prophecy. I must mention, that he particularly requested I would drop my intention of continuing the review of the "Dialogues," and rather tell the public what I had to say on the subject in some other form; with which request I cheerfully complied. At parting, he lent me the first volume of Ben Ezra's work, urging upon me a careful perusal of the translator's elaborate Preface. After some weeks, I received from him a note, of which the following is a copy.

deterred by its length, he may pass it over, and go on with my apologetical preface.

The great and unfeigned respect which I entertain for the editor of the "Dialogues" as well as for many others associated with him in

Dear Sir!—I conclude, by your having been so long detained by the work of Ben Ezra, that you find the Students of Prophecy are not all quite such geese and old women as you at first fancied, and that you will not find it quite easy to refute him [Ben Ezra.]—Are you aware that a passage of Matthew, which you assert without proof to mean one thing, Mede, neither an unlearned, nor illogical man, asserts, and proves to mean another? I rather wish you would take up the subject, because I think you have too much candour to be so wedded to any thing as not to be ready to abandon it, if a modification of it can be shewn you from the Scriptures; and I should really be glad to know what you think on the following points. 1. How is the present dispensation to end, as it regards us Gentiles? 2. Ditto, as it regards the Jews? 3. What is the meaning of Christ returning to set up the tabernacle of David? Acts xv. 16. I am,

My dear Sir, your's, very faithfully,  
June 28, 1827. H. D.

To these queries a reply was returned; and to abridge my labour in so doing, I gave an epitome of a discourse on Rev. xi. 15, "*The kingdoms of this world are become our Lord's and his Christ's,*" &c. which had been lying by me in manuscript for several years, intimating, that when I could avail myself of sufficient leisure for that purpose, it was my intention to revise, enlarge, and publish it. The following is part of a letter written me in answer.

My dear Sir,—I am much obliged to you for the skeleton of the sermon which you have sent me, and shall be glad of the publication of any thing that can draw the public attention to the times in which we live. With respect to its outline, I would beg you to consider whether you do really differ from the views advanced in the Dialogues so much as your review of them would lead the reader to suppose. Indeed, the difference is so slight, that I could almost be tempted to pronounce that you had not read them. Under your sixth head of events which will take place during the

Millennium, you notice, "that Christ's subjects shall be all righteous," and, seventh, "They shall reign with him a thousand years." Who reign? the *subjects*. I think this will lead you to reflect that there will be both a *spiritual* and a *literal* resurrection; not the former only, to the exclusion of the latter. And if you shall be brought, by again examining the declarations of God in this matter, to agree with me in this point, I shall be most happy in agreeing with you in every other. *I entreat you to get your sermon out.* . . . . .

"But to return to your sermon at which I am much delighted, finding we agree so nearly; for, as you say that there will be a personal appearance [of the Saviour] at some time or other on the earth, you differ widely from those who insist on it, that our Lord is never to appear in his body again here. I wish you would again read the third number of the Dialogues, which treats of this matter in detail, though I should be much afraid of being positive on any such point; yet the expressions "his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives," "shall so come in like manner," "sitting on the throne of David," exercising dominion as the second Adam, all seem conclusive of a *personal* reign. I am, my dear Sir,

Yours, most truly,  
July 20th, 1827. H. D.

Before we advance any farther, I may remark, that I know not where the persons are to be found (professing Christianity) who deny that Christ will come again the second time, without sin, unto salvation—that he will come *personally*, in his glorified *body*; unless it be among the mystics. All the advocates of a *spiritual* reign of Christ with his saints, upon the earth during the thousand years, with whom I am any way acquainted, contend as strenuously for this, as an article of the faith once delivered to the saints, as my respectable correspondent does, or any of the students of prophecy. That is not the point in debate; the question is, "Does he come *personally* for the destruction of Antichrist, previous to the commencement of the thousand years'

the study of prophecy, could not but fill me with pungent regret at finding him, as the case appeared to me, wandering in a labyrinth of error, on a subject of such high importance, and in which, the longer he perseveres, the more distressing will it be to his own mind, and destructive of his comfort. Let me not be accused of presumption, if I take this opportunity of speaking what I know of that gentleman. The urbanity of his manners, the readiness with which he can condescend to men of low estate, the benevolence of his heart, and the apparent pleasure which he finds in relieving the distresses of his fellow-creatures, are not the only excellencies that adorn his character. Favoured by heaven with ample means of doing good, he is still more highly favoured in possessing a heart ever disposed to promote those plans which *appear to him* calculated to ameliorate the condition of suffering humanity. In learning and talents he excels many his equals, whether in his own or any other country. In bearing

reign, or at the conclusion of it, namely, at the last day, to raise the dead, and judge the world, and put an end to the present dispensation?" This is the gist of the whole controversy between us, and it depends upon the question, whether Rev. xx. 4-6, is to be interpreted literally or metaphorically. I contend for the latter, and my correspondent and his friends for the former; and I may further add, that this simple question, trifling as he would represent it in his letter, is the hinge of two systems which differ *toto calo*, and will be found, like leaven in the meal, to diffuse their influence into almost all our views of the book of the Apocalypse. But, not to insist further on this point.—In the early part of the year 1823, I wrote some Essays on the prophecies of Daniel, for the New Baptist Miscellany, and towards the end of March, forwarded to my correspondent, the numbers of the Magazine, for January, February, and March, which drew from him the following note:

11, Belgrave Square, April 2, 1823

My dear Sir.—I received this morning, three numbers of the New Baptist Miscellany, for which I suppose I am indebted to you, and therefore return you my best thanks. You seem in your review of Daniel, &c. to be so nearly agreeing with "the Students of Prophecy," that you must have what the phrenologists call a large organ of combativeness, to find any thing about which to quarrel with us. I hope you have

seen Mr. Cunninghame's pamphlets on the personal appearance of our Lord, which he first published in the Christian Observer. What do you do with the Confession of faith of the Baptists published in Crosby, respecting the personal reign? Depend upon it that there is as much hatred of Christ as *king* now, in the religious world, as there was of old among the Jews. I am, &c. H. D.

The only remark which I make upon this note is, that the complaint of hatred to Christ's *kingly* office, appears to me to come with a singularly ill grace from those who would support his throne by the power of the civil magistrate, in express opposition to his own declaration, John xviii. 38; who are for transferring to the kings of the earth, that rule and government in his kingdom which belongs to *himself exclusively*, which he never delegated to another, and the assumption of which is the mark and image of the beast and false prophet, against which the vials of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, are now pouring out upon the earth! And I may add, who are as deaf as the adder to all that Christ and his apostles have said respecting the Christian union and separation, in which state alone, obedience to Christ's kingly authority can be manifested. To such professors of his name, he may well say "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and *do not the things* which I say?" All our zeal and bustle about religion, without this, is vain!

my humble testimony to the many virtues which adorn his character, I speak not from report merely, but from my own personal knowledge. How then, can I sufficiently lament that such a man should be led astray by an *ignis fatuus*, and so deplorably, too, as to become an apologist for the veriest blasphemy, vented from week to week, against the "Holy One of God."

The pernicious effects of this malignant influence upon him, are too visible to escape observation: they appear but too manifestly in his writings, in the acrimony which he discovers towards the conductors of our religious "periodicals," and, indeed, towards all who refuse to bow to the high behests, the oracular decisions, of the object of his idolatry. The conductors of the periodical press need not my feeble suffrage to support them under the heavy accusations with which they have been so liberally assailed by the translator of Ben Ezra, and his zealous lay defender; but as I am no longer one of the "corps," I will take this opportunity of saying, that I think the public are under unspeakable obligations to the gentlemen referred to for their useful labours as the pioneers of literature. Any man that doubts this has only to pause and seriously consider what would be the actual condition of the reading population of this country, were those journals all withdrawn from the field of literature. That they are conducted with consummate skill and judgment, is more than I am prepared to say; but I know scarcely one of them that is without its use, and am sure that I have lived to witness a great improvement in the manner of conducting most of them. Let me add, that in no one particular have they, in my opinion, deserved higher of the religious public, than for the decided stand which they have made against the whimsical dogmas, propagated with such oracular decision by the translator of Ben Ezra! The effusions of friendship, emanating from a kind and benevolent heart, may delight to contemplate that orator in the attitude of an eagle, seated in royal state, upon the top of Ben Lomond, regardless of the chattering of the daws, and the jays, and the sparrows that gather around him, whose noise has no other effect upon him, than to make him soar the loftier!<sup>c</sup> But some little allowance should be made for the dulness of others who are incapable of appreciating his transcendental flights!

<sup>c</sup> At one of the meetings of the "Students of Prophecy," at Albury, this gentleman is reported to have feelingly bewailed it, as "a sore trouble to the flesh, for a man [meaning himself, of course] to have more light than his brethren!" This anecdote, of the correctness of which I believe there is no doubt, may suggest to some whether the simile of the Eagle above mentioned, might not with some propriety be exchanged

Were it possible for me to obtain the ear of "the Students of Prophecy" for only one quarter of an hour, I should be disposed to address them to the following effect :

Gentlemen—

Will you allow a by-stander to congratulate you upon the happy choice which you have made of a subject for your mutual deliberation? In forming that choice you have no doubt been influenced by the "signs of the times," which are portentous in the extreme; and you have acted wisely in determining your views to an investigation of the prophecies of scripture which are yet unfulfilled. This subject is high, and of almost paramount importance. But in proportion to its vast magnitude and intense interest, should be the care and caution with which you conduct it. In an especial manner be upon your guard against the adoption and influence of any favourite hypothesis; see to it that your first principles are sound, so as to lay a solid foundation for the superstructure which you are about to erect upon it. Above all things let me recommend to your serious attention, the confession which the Lord Jesus Christ made before the Roman governor concerning his kingdom, John xviii. 36. This must be your "guiding star" in exploring your way through the Apocalyptic visions; by this you must steer your course, if you would navigate in safety; and depend upon it, that if you once lose sight of it, you will instantly find yourselves among quicksands, rocks, and breakers. Never dream of confounding the kingdom of Christ, which is spiritual and heavenly, with national establishments of his religion; these all have stampt upon them the image of the beast! And to attempt to amalgamate those two things will be found as fruitless as to form a compound of iron and clay, or to mix oil and water. You have called loudly, and in some instances, rather vociferously upon the public, to join with you, and second your views. But before you deal out censures upon us with so unsparing a hand, permit us to solicit from you a consistent "symbol," of what you hold as a body. At present the only article in which you seem to be

for that of "the paper kite," whose story is so interestingly told in verse by the late venerable John Newton. The whole is too long for insertion in this place, but the first stanza runs thus :

" Once on a time a paper kite,  
Was mounted to a wondrous height?  
Where, giddy with its elevation,  
It thus express'd self-admiration."

I sincerely wish the gentleman in question, a better fate than that which befel the luckless kite!



agreed, viz. the immediate *personal* appearance of Christ, and his continuance upon this earth during the thousand years' reign of the saints, we believe, upon good grounds, to be a popular error; and if we examine your writings, we find no two of you agreed upon any one point beside, and scarcely any one of your number continuing in the same judgment for six months together! Excuse us, therefore, if we prefer waiting until we find you more agreed among yourselves, or until you have furnished us with a more consistent creed. We perceive that you affect to be indignant that any persons should represent your dogmas as novelties. Well, then, we will concede to you that they are not novelties; that, on the contrary, they boast a high antiquity—we can trace them as far back as the beginning of the third century. But it really is a subject which deserves some consideration, in what light they appeared to the more judicious of the servants of Christ at that early period. Pardon me, gentlemen, if I presume to refresh your memories with the following facts.

We learn from Dr. Lardner,<sup>d</sup> that Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, flourished from the year 247 to the year 265. During his episcopate there were great numbers of Christians in the district of Arsinoe in Egypt, who were very fond of the Millenary notion, expecting a kingdom of Christ here on earth, in which men should enjoy sensual pleasures. These persons were much confirmed in this opinion by a book of Nepos, an Egyptian bishop, entitled, "*A Confutation of the Allegorists.*" Dionysius had a disputation or conference with those Christians, of which he gave an account in one of his books, written upon that subject. In a fragment, which we have in Eusebius, he writes to this purpose: "When," says he, "I was in the province of Arsinoe, where, you know, this opinion has for some time so far prevailed as to cause divisions and apostacies of whole churches; having called together the presbyters and teachers of the brethren in the villages, admitting likewise as many of the brethren as pleased to be present, I advised that this opinion should be publicly examined into: and when they produced to me that book as a shield, and impregnable bulwark, I sat with them three whole days successively, from morning to evening, discussing the contents of it." He goes on, highly applauding the good order of the dispute, the moderation and candour of all present, their willingness to be convinced, and to retract their former opinions, if reason so required: "With a good conscience," says he, "and unfeign-

<sup>d</sup> See his *WORKS*, vol. ii. 8vo. edition, London, 1828.

edly, and with hearts open to the sight of God; embracing whatever could be made out by good arguments from the holy Scriptures. In the end, Coracio, the chief defender of that opinion, engaged and promised, in the presence of all the brethren, that he would no longer maintain, nor defend, nor teach, nor make mention of it, as being fully convinced by the arguments on the contrary side. And all the brethren who were present rejoiced for the conference, and their mutual reconciliation and agreement."

Thus far Dr. Lardner; where, in connection with what I have now quoted, we have other interesting particulars relating to this celebrated Millenarian dispute, that are well worthy of attention; but my main design in quoting what I have now done, in this place, is the better to introduce to your notice the judgment that is passed upon this celebrated controversy by one of the greatest men of modern times, viz. the learned and pious Herman Witsius. The article to which I now refer, has hitherto, unhappily, lain concealed under the veil of a dead language, having been written in Latin; and it now, so far as I am aware, for the first time, meets the reader's eye in an English dress. It constitutes the Dedication of a Tract, of which I subjoin the title, with the name of the individual to whom it was inscribed. And, while I earnestly recommend the former part of the Dedication to the deliberate consideration of the Irvings, and the Drummonds, and the Cunninghames, and the Mc. Neiles, *et hoc genus omne*, of the present day; I would, (if the *apparent* presumption of such an obscure individual, attempting to shelter himself under the wings of so eminent an authority, could be overlooked) entreat them, and my readers in general, to consider the latter part of the learned Professor's Dedication—with the exception of what relates to his public office as Professor—as expressing my own sentiments, and making my apology for this intrusion at the bar of public opinion, especially on so high and important a theme:

*“A Dissertation on the Sense of the Seven Apocalyptic Epistles, whether it is Historical or Prophetical. By HERMAN WITSIUS.*

“DEDICATION TO FREDERIC SPANHEIM, a very celebrated Divine of Leyden, in Holland.

“That appears to me to have been a holy, and simple, and candid, and Christian-like mode of disputation, which Eusebius Pamphilus, bishop of Casarea, in Palestine, describes as observed between Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, and the disciples of Nepos, an Egyptian prelate, who was captivated with the opinions of the Millenarians.

Dionysius does not begin with reproaches, or contempt, or invectives against Nepos, whom he had undertaken to confute, but declares that he very much esteems and loves him, and holds him in high veneration, on account of his faith, and diligence, and knowledge of the Scriptures; and cheerfully praises and commends those things which have been rightly and judiciously advanced by him. But since to a good man nothing ought to be more valuable than truth, he takes the liberty of examining and correcting those things in which he considers him as having wandered from the right way. In that disputation, which was public, and continued for three successive days from morning till evening, the brethren who espoused the cause of Nepos, brought forward his book as an armoury and impregnable bulwark; yet in such a manner as to prove to Dionysius their stability and love of truth, their penetration and good sense; while he observed with admiration, that they put questions, and gave answers, and made concessions, in the most orderly manner, and with uniform moderation and good temper; that they tried, neither by any means contentiously to persist in what they had once stated, if detected to be false; nor, on the other hand, to conceal contradictions, but to maintain and confirm their doctrine as far as was possible, and were not afraid, whenever good reason demanded it, to change their sentiments, and acknowledge the truth; but with a good conscience, and without the least insincerity, with hearts in simplicity laid open to God, they readily received those things which were established by the declarations and doctrines of the sacred Scriptures. *The issue of this discussion happily corresponded to the desires and prayers of the excellent prelate. For the most eminent and strenuous champion of that doctrine, whose name was Coracion, not only submitted confessing himself overcome by the truth, but also, in the hearing of all the brethren that were present, solemnly promised that he would never, from that time forward, make mention of this opinion, the vanity of which he had discovered by the opposite arguments.* This debate, and humility, and agreement, caused the rest of the brethren to rejoice. I wish that all who discuss these points of controversy in the present day, would come to them with the same spirit, and handle them in the same manner; only fixed in this resolution, that they would embrace and maintain that, from whatever quarter produced, whether repeated a hundred times before, or now first brought to their ears, which should approve itself to their minds by the evidence of truth, in the sight of God, and with a rejection of all party-spirit, ‘without preferring one before another, and doing nothing by partiality.’ For, nothing is more pernicious to the church, nothing is more hostile to the truth, nothing is a greater hindrance to profit, than a violent party-spirit. Hence follows, when moderation is once discarded, a torrent of words, not to say quarrels, only comparable to the violence of the most raging sea. ‘Then,’ to use the language of Tertullian, ‘they proceed to heats, and animosities, and discords, and every thing unbecoming ministers of peace; then follow invectives, and reproaches, without any just ground of hatred,—and expressions of approbation, without any thing to deserve love.’ If these pestilent evils were

banished from disputations, and, instead of them, fear of God, and reverence of his word, and the love of truth, and attention to the Divine Spirit, (who ought to be entertained with tranquillity, and mildness, and quietness, and peace, not to be disturbed with fury, and resentment, and anger, and vexation) and a due estimation of the gifts of God in our brethren, and the like duties of Christianity, prevailed; the discussions of learned men would be productive of more advantage, both to themselves and to the public; sparks of truth would fly out on all sides the more beautiful from those peaceful collisions; charity itself, which can not but be delighted with the clearer knowledge of Divine truth, would be enflamed, and shine more brightly between brethren. That this has been my design, both in those works which I have lately published, and in this Dissertation, which I am now about to inscribe to you, celebrated Spanheim, both my conscience bears witness, and God himself, to whom our most secret thoughts lie open, in the day of his illustrious advent, will confirm the testimony. Far be it from such a humble individual as I am, though I am sorry that I have been reproached with it,—far be it from me, I say, that I should claim the right of judging all my brethren, or arrogate dominion over their faith, and, presumptuously ascending the tribunal, without authority from the government, or a call from the people, should pass sentence upon each of them. How foreign that would be from my habits, and (I hesitate not to say) from my modesty, none can be ignorant who have even a slight knowledge of me. If I could lead exactly the life I chose,—having now experienced the manifold malignity of the world, I should wish for nothing more than that, far from all disputation, I might be allowed to pass my days, even to my latest breath, in calm tranquillity and secret solitude, with pious prayers and devout supplications, in the humble investigation of our sacred Scriptures, and secret intercourses with God, secluded from the public, and scarcely known to my neighbours, except as far as piety requires. My wish is the same as that of Synesius, ‘that I might lead a life of tranquillity and security, unknown to all others, but known to God, and knowing the things of God.’ But since the nature of my office will not allow me, in the public station in which I am placed, to remain silent on these points, which are now controverted among the learned, I have said what I believed I had learned from God, and what I thought would very much tend to unite the minds of my brethren in the calm pursuit of the truth. And I have spoken in such a manner, that for those very persons with whom I was unable to agree in all things, I could, nevertheless, most sincerely declare my regard and veneration. Nor is my disposition or design different in this Dissertation: in which I have endeavoured to represent the word of God in its own simplicity, which is full of beauty; and to avoid turning plain expressions into enigmas, and darkening what is clear. But if, on any occasions, I have misapprehended the meaning of those very learned men whose opinions I am examining, let not that be considered as a fault in them or as an offence in me. If they are unwilling to impute it to their own obscurity, they may call it an oversight or error of mine; in the freedom of a good conscience, I

deprecate all suspicion of malignity or falsehood. I detest and abominate the conduct of those who, to use the language of Pindar, “climb not the loftier wall of justice, but that of rhetorical craft.” Moreover, whatever I have not observed with sufficient clearness, or whatever I have written inconsistent with the mind of God, or unbecoming the dignity of sacred subjects; in short, wherever I may be convicted of having wandered into error, that, when apprized of it, I will strike out and correct, with a sense of gratitude, which I shall not fail of expressing, to the person who shall give the admonition. For I class myself among those who cheerfully submit themselves and their thoughts to the opinion and judgment of their most judicious brethren, mindful of the apostolic direction, ‘and let the others judge.’ Excellently, in my opinion, whether by Gregory Nazianzen, or Methodius, (for to each of these has this golden observation been ascribed—to the latter by Epiphanius, to the former by Maximus)—excellently, I say, has it been remarked by him, whoever he was, ‘I think it a greater benefit to be refuted than to refute, in proportion as it is a greater advantage to be one’s self delivered from an evil, than to deliver another from one.’ For this reason I address myself to you, most celebrated Spanheim, whose fame is spread through distant nations and is proclaimed by all tongues, and whom not even pale envy will deny to be able to judge in the wisest and best manner respecting these things. Do you be my censor and judge; and consider my intention, with which these papers, such as they are, are offered to you, and allow this to stand as a perpetual monument of my respect for you, if my works are to have any reputation hereafter, and any thing of Witsius reach the next age. Farewell, great Spanheim, and cherish an affection for me.”

Dated at “*Franequer, in Friesland, June 14, 1678.*”

Again at “*Utrecht, Aug. 1, 1691.*”

The third time, “*Dec. 12, 1694.*”

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Here, then, I would terminate this Preface, were it not that I find it necessary to add a few words for the purpose of guarding against being misunderstood by those who may do me the honour to look into these pages. The nature of the undertaking in which I was embarked, has led me to speak with some degree of freedom of the *clergy*, and even of their *kingdom*, as opposed to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. To make myself at all intelligible, in reference to this point, I am aware that I have been compelled to adopt a phraseology which, in these days of catholic charity, will sound very uncouth to the ears of many; nor shall I be greatly surprised if some, who know better, should take occasion from it to accuse me of uncharitableness—perhaps of being actuated by a desire to undermine the authority, and cast con-

tempt upon the holy office of the christian ministry. Now, in answer to all such, I must be allowed to say in my own defence, that those persons greatly mistake my meaning who suppose me to be influenced by a spirit of envy, spleen, or ill-will towards the clergy of any denomination; much less by a contempt for true religion, which is quite a different affair altogether. That there are, and have been clergymen in the Roman, and in every protestant church, who in their social characters, separate from their clerical claims, have been ornaments to society, and an honour to humanity, is most readily conceded. There was a period of the life of the present writer, when, for nearly twenty years in succession, he was in habits of almost daily and familiar intercourse with more than one, two, or three priests of the catholic church; from these gentlemen he has received many expressions of personal kindness, and interchanges of civility and the courtesies of life were both numerous and frequent between them; but during that period he never concealed from them the opinion which he entertained of their religion—that he considered their church to be “Babylon the great, the mother of harlots;” and had frequent conferences with them on this and other subjects, yet without the smallest tincture of acrimony on either side, or to the prejudice of good neighbourhood. The Apocalyptic prophecies concerning Antichrist relate not to personal characters, but to the nature and spirit of their religious connection. For, as a man may be a very good neighbour, and in other respects a useful member of society, while yet he is a rebel against his king; so a clergyman may have many amiable and estimable qualities, and yet be a member of Antichrist; by which is not meant merely the power of the pope, of the conclave of cardinals, or of a general council; no, nor merely the honour, authority, and influence of any *national* clergy; but as including all that power which any class of clergymen have assumed over the persons, properties, or consciences of men. This explanation of my meaning I thought it necessary to premise, and request it may not be overlooked or disregarded.

# LECTURES ON THE APOCALYPSE.

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## LECTURE I.

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### INTRODUCTORY.

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. 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.—Rev. ch. i. ver. 1—3.

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THE Book of the Revelation is, by general consent, admitted to be as hard to be understood as any part of the sacred writings. This difficulty must be resolved, partly into the *subject* of which it treats; and partly into the *style* in which it is written. The subject differs from that of the Pentateuch, and the four Gospels; for instance, in this material respect, that, the greater part of it does not consist of a history of transactions that had taken place at the time the apostle wrote; but of a series of prophecies concerning the events that were to befall the christian church, or kingdom of Christ on earth, from the period of its first setting up, by means of the preaching of the apostles on the day of Pentecost, (Acts ii.) to the end of time—the final consummation of all things—that hour of awful expectation when, according to the gospel, the Lord Jesus Christ shall come again in the clouds of heaven, to raise the dead and judge the world, put an end to the present dispensation of grace, and fix the everlasting destinies of men and angels.

Such, in general, is the subject matter of this book: and as to the style in which it is presented to us by the Spirit of Inspiration, it corresponds for the most part with that of the prophecies of the Old Testament, more especially the books of Ezekiel and Daniel; to the latter of which it bears a great affinity both in matter and manner, as we shall have frequent occasion to notice hereafter. It is in a great measure figurative, parabolical, and couched in symbolical language;—a mode of writing which was of common and approved use in the ages when these prophecies were delivered, and among the people to whom they were primarily addressed.

As I shall have frequent occasion to trouble you with explanatory remarks, both on the contents of this mysterious book, and also on the style in which it is composed, should the Lord permit us to prosecute this course of Lectures, it will not be necessary to detain you upon either of these points at the outset; and we shall therefore proceed to offer a few observations, which may not be here out of place, respecting the writer, or author of this book, and the time when this series of prophecies was written: for concerning each of these there have been disputes.<sup>a</sup>

1. *As to the writer* of this sacred book: we see that the inspired penman styles himself "John the servant of Jesus Christ," ver. 1. In this, however, there is nothing conclusive respecting the individual: because it is highly probable, that the Lord Jesus had, at that time, many faithful servants in the world who bare the name of John. The point to be ascertained is, whether the writer of the Apocalypse was "the beloved disciple" of Jesus, he who wrote the evangelical history of the Saviour, and also the three catholic epistles; or, was it some other person bearing that name? To obtain satisfactory evidence on this point, we must have recourse to the earliest christian writers after the apostles—Those who are termed the Fathers: and we must endeavour to collect from them, who and what the writer was.

The principal writer of modern times, who has suggested any doubts upon the subject, is the learned Michaelis, professor of divinity in the University of Gottingen; and he founds them on some things contained in the writings of Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, who lived about the year 250. Dr. Lardner in his *Credibility of the Gospel History*,<sup>b</sup> has furnished us with the remarks of Dionysius on the book of the Revelation, from which it appears that his objections against it, or rather against its being the production of the apostle John, were founded on the perverse use that was made of it by certain Millenarians of his day, who contended from it that "the kingdom of Christ should be earthly,

<sup>a</sup> I do not enter upon the question of the divine authority of the Apocalypse, or its claims to a place in the canon of Revelation. Such an enquiry would be rather out of place in a course of Lectures, which are intended to be of a *popular*, rather than *critical* cast—delivered to, and designed for the use of those who entertain no doubts respecting the divine origin of this book. Besides which, the subject has been taken up and handled with superior ability by many learned writers, among whom are Lowman, Lardner, Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton,—and though last, not least in point of ability, by Dean Woodhouse, in his "Annotations on the Apocalypse," lately published, who has met the objections of Michaelis, and Dr. Less, and satisfactorily answered them. Sir Isaac Newton fearlessly asserts, that "no other book of the New Testament is so *strongly attested* as this." *On Daniel and the Apocalypse*, part ii. ch. i. page 219.

<sup>b</sup> Works, vol. ii. p. 693, edit. 1827.



consisting of those things which a carnal man most admired," the gratification of the sensual appetites, "eating, drinking, and marriage; and for the more decent procurement of these, feasting and sacrifices, and the slaughter of victims." 'But observe how this writer immediately proceeds: "for my part," says he, "I dare not reject the book, since many of the brethren have it in high esteem: but, allowing it to be above my understanding, I suppose it to contain throughout, some latent and wonderful meaning; for, though I do not understand it, I suspect there must be some profound sense in the words: not measuring and judging these things by my own reason, but ascribing more to faith, I esteem them too sublime to be comprehended by me. Nor do I condemn what I have not been able to understand; but I admire the more, because they are above my reach."

This is certainly interesting, as shewing us the opinion that was entertained of this wonderful book at that early period. Dionysius next proceeds to assign his reasons for thinking that it could not be the production of the apostle John, who wrote the gospel and the catholic epistles which he gives at considerable length; but, Dr. Lardner has classed the whole under five heads, and considered them in detail. Those objections are: 1. Because the evangelist John has not named himself in his gospel, nor in his catholic epistle: but the writer of the Revelation nameth himself more than once. 2. Though the writer of the Revelation calls himself John, he has not shewn us that he is the apostle of that name. His third objection is, that the Revelation does not mention the catholic epistle, nor the catholic epistle the Revelation. 4. That there is a great agreement in sentiment, expression and manner between John's gospel and epistles: but the Revelation is quite different in all these respects, without any resemblance or similitude. And, lastly; that the gospel of John is elegant Greek: but that the Apocalypse abounds with barbarisms and solecisms. Such were the objections of this ancient father, not to the book itself, but to its being the production of the apostle John: in opposition to which Dr. Lardner shews, that the book of the Revelation is quoted by Origen, who was cotemporary with Dionysius—by Tertullian, who wrote about one hundred years after the decease of the apostles—by Clement of Alexandria—by Theophilus, bishop of Antioch—by Irenæus, who wrote within seventy or eighty years of the time of the apostles—by Justin Martyr, an author of great reputation, who wrote in the year 140, that is, within half a century of the time when the Apocalypse was composed—all of whom quote it or refer to it as the undoubted performance of John the apostle and evangelist. This external evidence appeared of such preponderating weight to the candid and judicious Lardner, as to have

drawn from him this conclusion—twice repeated: “It may be questioned, whether the exceptions founded on the difference of style, and such like things, or any other criticisms whatever, can be sufficient to create a doubt concerning the author of this book, which was owned for a writing of John the apostle and evangelist, before the time of Dionysius and Caius, and, so far as we know, before the most early of those who disputed its genuineness.”<sup>c</sup> To which I may also add the testimony of Dr. Doddridge, who says, “There is, in my opinion, very little reason to doubt that the John here mentioned, was the evangelist of that name, and author of the three epistles: for, concerning *this John*, antiquity agrees, that he was banished to Patmos, in the reign of Domitian, for his adherence to the christian faith. And the author of this book informs the churches of Asia, ch. i. 9, that he, their brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, received those revelations when he was in the isle called Patmos, for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ.”<sup>d</sup> Let this, then, suffice as to the author or writer of this book, and we proceed

2. To consider *the time* when these prophecies were delivered. It will, no doubt, be well known to several of you, that some authors of considerable note, among whom may be mentioned Sir Isaac Newton, have been disposed to ascribe to this part of the sacred writings, an earlier date than is commonly thought due to it—placing it even before the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place, you know, about the seventieth year of the christian era, or about thirty-six years after the ascension of Christ into heaven. And to establish this, as a point of great importance, a bold effort has been very recently made by the late Dr. Tilloch, in his “Dissertations Introductory to the study and right understanding of the language, structure and contents of the Apocalypse.” And I refer to his volume, the rather on account of the author’s having lived among us—his book being consequently well known—and its comprising the substance of all that had been said upon the subject by former writers, with much that is additional from his own pen. Having quoted the opinions of Grotius, Sir Isaac Newton, Michaelis, and others, namely, that the Apocalypse was written as early as the year 54, of the christian era, Dr. Tilloch awards his own suffrage to this opinion, and proceeds to adduce evidence of its having been *quoted* by nearly all the apostles in their epistles to the churches. For instance, he undertakes to trace this in the epistle to the Hebrews—in the two epistles of Peter—in Paul’s epistles to Timothy—in

<sup>c</sup> Lardner’s Works, vol. ii. p. 698.

<sup>d</sup> Introduction to Paraphrase and Notes on the Revelation.

his epistle to the Ephesians—Colossians—Romans—Corinthians—Galatians—Thessalonians—in the epistles of James and John—and in those to Titus and Philemon. This was certainly a bold effort, and, though not perfectly novel, (for Sir Isaac Newton had attempted something of the kind, though with little satisfaction to himself, and still less to many of his readers) Dr. Tilloch maintained his hypothesis with a high hand, and, in conclusion, congratulates himself on his fancied success. If you ask for a specimen of his proofs, or by what train of ingenious reasoning and induction, the learned Doctor arrived at his conclusion, I may give it you. Going through the apostolic writings, he meets with the Greek word *αποκαλυψις*, the title of this book in the original—and which we translate “Revelation”—and finding that word, or some of its derivatives occurring there, he *infers*, either that the writer refers to this book, which of course must have been previously written, or that he quotes it: and this is one material branch of evidence with him that the Apocalypse was written before the other epistles. Occasionally he finds some other word, or a particular phrase occurring in the apostolic epistles, which is also found in the book of the Revelation; and then, without further ceremony this is adduced as proof, that the writer borrowed it from the apostle John—strangely over-looking the fact, that if there were any borrowing in the case, it was quite as possible for the writer of the Apocalypse to have borrowed from his brother apostles.\*

In opposition, however, to this fanciful hypothesis, we place

\* That I may not be thought to have misrepresented Dr. Tilloch, or to have dealt unfairly with his mode of argumentation, I here subjoin a few quotations from his book, in order that the reader may have an opportunity of judging for himself. Thus, for instance, the Doctor writes; “In Heb. xii. 22, 23, the writer tells the believing Hebrews, ye are come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly, and church of the first born, which are written in heaven,” &c. “Have not these expressions direct reference to the Lamb standing on Mount Sion, with one hundred and forty-four thousand, having his Father’s name written on their foreheads, Rev. xiv. 1—to the great and high mountain—the great city, the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, Rev. xxi. 10,—to the book of life, in which are written the names of the redeemed, Rev. iii. 5. ch. xx. 12. xxi. 27. &c. to the myriads of myriads of angels which surround the throne, Rev. v. 11.—and to the innumerable multitude which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, Rev. vii. 9, 14. Comparing the terms employed in the passage that has been quoted from the epistle to the Hebrews, with the passages just referred to in the Apocalypse, *I cannot entertain the slightest doubt*, that the former were taken from the latter.” *Dissert. pp. 58, 59.*

Again, having quoted the words of the apostle Peter, 1st ep. ch. i. ver. 6, 7, he thus proceeds: “This (our English) version fails, in giving the *true* sense of the original: the passage should be thus rendered,—In which [last time] exult ye (though for a short time, since it is necessary, suffering sorrow by

the fact, that, according to Eusebius, the oldest and most authentic historian of the christian church, since the completion of the canon of Revelation, the apostle John was banished to Patmos, and there was favoured with his visions, in the last year of the reign of the Roman emperor Domitian, which fixes the date about the year 96. Lampe has asserted, and Dr. Lardner confirms the truth of the assertion, "that all antiquity is abundantly agreed that Domitian was the author of John's banishment." And even Michaelis admits, that "almost all the ecclesiastical writers, who have spoken of the time when the Apocalypse was written, have followed this account, namely, that it was written towards the close of the reign of Domitian." To all which we may add an important consideration founded upon internal evidence—the contents of the book itself. It is addressed, we see, to seven churches in Asia Minor, which implies the existence of those churches at the time of writing; while the things said of them and to them, also suppose these churches to have been of

divers trials, that the proving of your faith more precious than of gold which perisheth, though proved by fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory) *εν αποκάλυψει Ιησου Χριστου* through the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ, that is, the Apocalypse being the cause of, or furnishing the cause for the exultation, by what is therein stated respecting *the last time*." The sense is;—"though now suffering sorrow by divers trials, this being necessary for the trial of your faith, &c., rejoice greatly in the things brought to your knowledge, respecting the last time, in (*by or through*) the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ. Here, then, we have the book of the Revelation referred to by the very title which John himself has given it in Rev. i. 1."—*Dissert.* pp. 65, 66. This is followed by a precisely similar gloss on ver. 13, of the same chapter, where, according to Dr. T. "The grace that is to be broughtun to believers at the Revelation of Jesus Christ," denotes, "The grace that comes to them, in (*by or through*) the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ!"—"the Apocalypse being the instrument that secured to them the promised grace," p. 71.—"It refers to a book by its own proper name,"—"the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ"—"as the instrument, bringing to them the gift, for which they are exhorted to hope," *ibid.* Having thus demonstrated the point in hand, the learned Doctor, triumphantly interrogates, "Can any further evidence be *possibly* required to prove that Peter's first epistle was written subsequently to the Apocalypse;—a book to which he actually refers by name?" p. 71.—This is a specimen, and a perfectly fair one, of our author's manner of extracting evidence for the fact of the early date of the Apocalypse;—than which, I humbly conceive, nothing more futile can be imagined.

Let me not, however, be thought unjust to the memory of Dr. Tilloch. That he possessed learning and talent, will be denied by no one who is acquainted with his writings. The book of the Apocalypse was the subject of his study for forty years; and the volume of "Dissertations," which he published a little before his death, contains much that is valuable on the structure and language of the Apocalypse; though, unfortunately, interlarded by fanciful hypotheses, and not a few questionable statements. It was his misfortune, however, that he could not be contented with common opinions on any points that came in his way, but must be straining after originality on almost every topic, in which he often failed. His criticisms are much too arbitrary and violent—and his learning is not always usefully directed.

some considerable standing; they had become considerable in point of numbers, and it is manifest, from the very tenor of the addresses to them, that they had undergone such changes and revolutions as the epistles which the apostle was directed to write to them, represents them to have done: all which is incompatible with the opinion, that the Apocalypse was written at the early date of 54. The first of the seven churches addressed, is that of *Ephesus*. This church was evidently gathered by the ministry of the apostle Paul: (see Acts ch. xix.) but the events recorded in that chapter did not take place until the year 54, or 55; how, then, should the things which the Saviour complains of in that church—such as their having cooled in the ardour of their affection, and the spirit of their profession—their having “left their first love,” &c. have taken place? The very tenor of the address supposes the church to be of some standing, and to have had considerable experience in the ways of the Lord. They had tried them which professed to be inspired apostles, and had found out the falsity of their pretensions, Rev. ii. 2. They had endured much persecution for Christ’s name’s sake—they had laboured and had not fainted, ver. 3. Sardis had acquired a name, or reputation, which she had also forfeited. Laodicea was become lukewarm, or indifferent. But changes of this kind, in a *whole body* of Christians, must be gradual, and the production of many years. Now all this appears irreconcilable with the notion, that these epistles were written at the time contended for by Dr. Tilloch and others—and on these grounds I coincide with the opinion of those who refer the delivery of this series of prophecies to the date of 96, or 97, of the christian era.

But dismissing this question of chronology, concerning which I do not think that any reasonable doubt should remain on our minds, let us now direct our attention to a review of the general outline of this mysterious book—its component parts, or the subjects into which it divides itself; for, I conceive that an analysis of this kind may assist us greatly in our endeavours to comprehend its meaning.

Commentators and Expositors, and writers on the book of the Apocalypse have differed considerably in their manner of dividing it into parts or sections. Some have made these three, others four, while a few have multiplied them to seven and even eight parts. I think, with Mr. Fuller, that this last mentioned plan is injudicious, and tends rather to perplex than elucidate. The whole series of prophecies contained in the Apocalypse, is included in the “sealed book,” ch. v. 1. The division of that book into seven seals, and the subdivision of these into trumpets and vials, appears to be the only one which the prophecy requires, or even admits. I think, therefore, that the whole book of the Revelation may be properly divided into four parts.

The *first* Part, I consider to include the first three chapters, comprehending the Preface, and the Epistles to the seven churches of Asia.

The *second* Part, is that of the Sealed Book, or opening of the seven seals, beginning with the fourth, and extending to the end of the seventh chapter. The main subject of this part, I consider to be, the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world, its triumphs over Paganism, &c. with the political revolutions which took place in the Roman empire, so far as those occurrences affected the state of the churches or kingdom of Christ on earth.

The *third* Part, is that of the sounding of the seven trumpets, which place Antichrist upon his throne. In this is included a general apostacy from the faith—the retirement of the true church into the wilderness—the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth—their destruction, death and burial, with their revival and resurrection, ch. viii. to xiv. inclusive. And

The *fourth* Part, is that of the pouring out of the seven vials, which are vials of divine wrath, effecting the consumption, and issuing in the total ruin of the man of sin, or the overthrow of Babylon the great, the mother of harlots—the binding of Satan for a thousand years—the Millennium period, or reign of the saints on earth—the loosing again of Satan for a little—the second *personal* coming of the Saviour—the resurrection of the dead and general judgment—the destruction of this mundane system by fire—the creation of a new heavens, and a new earth—and the happiness of the saints with Christ in his eternal kingdom, ch. xvi. to xxii. inclusive.

These appear to me to be the grand outline features of this wonderful book; but I ought to add, what probably most of you are aware of—that there are interspersed throughout the whole, several episodes, or detached pieces, of a highly interesting nature—some of a delightful, and others of a most sublime and awful kind. To instance concerning these: the prominent design and object of the book, is to call our attention to the events which either have transpired, or which are yet to take place on the theatre of this earth, concerning the fate or *fortunes*, as bishop Hurd would term it, of the christian church—the church militant. But, to quicken our attention to the subject, the curtain which separates the invisible from the visible world, is occasionally drawn aside, and we are invited to take a glance at the state of things “within the veil,” and are shown the deep interest which the inhabitants of heaven take in the events that are transpiring from time to time on earth. We listen to their anthems, and join in their songs of praise. This is the case with the fourth and fifth chapters; so also with the seventh, which pourtrays in glowing colours, the blessedness of the martyrs of Jesus, who, during the first three or four hundred years,

endured the rage of Jewish and Heathen persecution. They are represented as arriving at heaven through a sea of tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb—and they are now serving God, day and night in his temple. We have a similar repetition of this interesting topic, in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters, where we find the redeemed company, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. And not to be more particular on this point, I shall only mention, the beginning of the nineteenth chapter, which presents us with the triumph of the heavenly host on the fall of mystical Babylon; “I heard a great voice of much people in heaven,” says John, “saying, Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments, for he hath judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants, at her hand. And, again they said Alleluia—and her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four-and-twenty elders, and the four living creatures, fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen, Alleluia,” &c. ver. 1—5.

So much, then, for the general outline: we shall now offer a few observations on each of these four grand divisions of the Apocalypse, with the view of clearing the way for a more careful examination of the mind of the Holy Spirit in this portion of the sacred writings.

It has been pertinently remarked, by a late able writer on this subject, that, “while the rash precipitancy of the enthusiastic and unqualified interpreter is to be discouraged, indulgence will justly be thought due to those, who with pious caution, with laborious investigation, and literary research, endeavour to explore the prophecies of the Apocalypse. To illustrate this mystical book in all its parts, to prove the completion of all its predictions, to exhibit it as that perfect evidence of the divine origin of our religion, for which it is perhaps intended, “in the latter days,” can only be the work of time, and must employ the labours of succeeding generations. [Because many of the prophecies seem to extend to the latest period of the world, and can only be interpreted confidently and surely by the assistance of the events fulfilling them.] Yet to interpret and explain, by scriptural induction, the symbols and language under which the events are presignified; to separate and assort the prophecies; to discriminate those whose fulfilment has already taken place, and to point out their agreement with certain records of history, is a work which at any time may be reverently attempted, and is encouraged, and indeed authorized in this divine book.”<sup>f</sup>

<sup>f</sup> *Woodhouse*, Introduction, p. vii. &c.

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

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THE FIRST PART, Section, or Division of this book, I restrict to the first three chapters, and regard them as Introductory to the main subject, viz: The prophecies which the apostle was instructed to reveal concerning the kingdom of Christ, and the opposition it was to meet with in the world. CHAPTER I. after a short exordium, (the import of which will come under our consideration in due time) presents us with a most sublime representation of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in his glorified state, as the great prophet of the christian church, appearing to his servant John, and dictating to him what he should write to the seven churches in Asia; and the two succeeding chapters are taken up, with these epistles. On this division of the Apocalypse, I must inform you, that it is the opinion of some of the learned, that these seven epistles to the Asiatic churches are intended to furnish a general and typical representation of the state of Christianity in the world, from the first establishment of Christ's kingdom, to the time of his second coming. So that, according to this view of the matter; I mean, if the opinion be well founded, the state of these seven churches, as described in the epistles to them, is to be considered as prophetic of so many successive states of the christian church, from the days of the apostles to the end of the world. For instance, according to this hypothesis, we have in the *Ephesian* church, a representation of the state of the churches of Christ, and the profession of his name in them, which were planted by the apostles. In the church of *Smyrna*, we are said to have a representation of the state and condition of the disciples of Christ, in the churches under the persecutions of the Heathen emperors, till the time of Constantine the Great—especially the ten years persecution, which took place under the emperor Dioclesian. In the church of *Pergamos*, under the figure of Balaam teaching the King of Moab to cast a stumbling block before Israel, to mingle them with the people, and lead them to false worship and idolatry, we are said to have a representation of a ministry grasping at worldly honour and riches, conspiring with the Roman emperor to mingle the disciples of Christ with the world in communion. In the epistle to the church in *Thyatira*, we are pointed to the great whore represented by Jezebel of old, and the above abominable doctrine and worship of the church of Rome, typified by the doctrines and deeds of the Nicolaitanes. The state of the church in *Sardis*, is said to represent to us the state of Christianity in the national churches, separated from the



church of Rome after the Reformation, or from the time when the man of sin began to be consumed with the Spirit of the Lord's mouth. In the epistle to the church in *Philadelphia*, we are pointed to a representation of Christ's people under the revival of the ancient church order instituted by the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and gathered together in societies after the example of the first churches recorded in the New Testament, and so delivered from their scattered condition, and their bondage under Antichrist. And, finally, the epistle to the church of the *Laodiceans*, is said to represent to us the condition of the professors of Christ's name, in the churches, at or near the time of his second coming, and when he is just about to appear, a state of great lukewarmness and indifference.<sup>s</sup>

These few remarks will be sufficient, I hope, to give you some idea of the view that is taken of these chapters, by those who consider them to be typical, or prophetic, of seven successive states of the christian church: but, having mentioned it, I leave the subject to your own deliberation—merely adding, that, so far as regards myself, I confess that I never could see sufficient grounds to adopt the sentiment as well founded. The epistles to the seven churches in Asia, I make no doubt, were intended, like other parts of holy scripture, for our instruction, abounding as they do with such cautions and encouragements, promises and threatenings, as are applicable to the churches of Christ, in general, throughout all succeeding generations:—and when we come to consider their contents in detail, I persuade myself that we shall find them pregnant with important instructions to ourselves. But I do not think the characters of each of these churches are distinct enough to mark out those imaginary states or periods, which, by the help of a fruitful invention and forced constructions, have been assigned them. Some of the epistles seem to me to be as applicable to several ages of the church as to any one particular period; and, perhaps, there is no specific era, that has hitherto transpired, to which many of the things contained in these epistles will not be found applicable: but this is the opinion of a humble individual, not hastily formed indeed, and of which you will make whatever use you please. I now proceed to offer a few general remarks on the SECOND PART of this mysterious book, viz.: From the fourth to the eighth chapter, in which we have the opening of the SEALED BOOK.

The subject commences with a sublime description of the Deity enthroned in glory, surrounded with angels, and the general assembly or church of the first born who are in heaven;

<sup>s</sup> The learned Dr. Gill is one of the writers on the Apocalypse, who has adopted this fanciful hypothesis; and even the sober minded John Glas, has fallen into it. See *Glas's Works*, vol. iv. p. 4.—Perth ed. 1782.

after which description, the writer beholds in the hand of the Almighty A BOOK *sealed with seven seals*, given to the LAMB, who alone was found worthy to open it, and who consequently, receives the acclamation of the whole choir of saints and angels, ch. iv. and v. After this sublime apparatus, the Lamb is represented as opening the *seals* of the book, one after another; and with this the scene of prophecy begins.

*The first seal* represents a *white horse*, his rider having a bow in his hand, and a crown of gold on his head, and he goes forth conquering and to conquer, ch. vi. 2.

*The second seal* represents a *red horse*; and to his rider is given a great sword, and power to take peace from the earth, ver. 4.

*The third seal* exhibits a *black horse*, whose rider has a pair of scales in his hands to weigh corn and provision, ver. 6.

The opening of *the fourth seal* presented to the prophet's view a *pale horse*, whose rider's name is *Death*, to whom power was given to slay the fourth part of the earth with a sword, and with famine, pestilence, and wild beasts of the field, ver. 8.

*The fifth seal* was opened, and the apostle beheld under the altar, the souls of the martyrs of Jesus; and he heard them crying 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?" ver. 10.

*The sixth seal* is opened, and behold an earthquake, the darkening of the sun—the moon becomes as blood—and the stars fall from heaven, ver. 12—14.

After the description of the opening of these *six seals*, with the consequent visions, an angel is represented as putting a seal upon a hundred and forty-four thousand of the servants of God—it is the seal of the living God; and no sooner is this done than a chorus is heard, the whole multitude of saints and angels present themselves around the throne of God and the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and emblems of victory in their hands, celebrating the praises of God and the Lamb. John is then favoured with a vision of the blessedness of the heavenly state: ch. vii.

After this, the Lamb is represented as opening the *seventh seal*, which is succeeded by a profound silence in heaven, that continues for the space of half an hour,—introductory to the SECOND PROPNETIC PERIOD, which is that of the trumpets.

Before we proceed, however, to notice the sounding of the trumpets, it may not be improper to offer a remark or two on the period of the seals.

1. I understand the opening of these seals, to denote a regular series of events which were to transpire, in the Roman empire, affecting the church or kingdom of Christ, from its establishment, at the day of Pentecost, until the first trumpet began to be

sounded. What these events were, I shall not now attempt to explain; that will come more immediately under our examination, as we proceed, chapter by chapter, to pursue this course of lectures. For the present let it suffice to remark

2. That the *period of time* included between the opening of the first and last of the seals, is the portion of time which intervened, or elapsed, from the ascension of Christ into heaven, until Antichrist, the man of sin, the son of perdition, began his reign. This was a memorable and most eventful period in the annals of the christian church. The opening of the seals comprehends that state of things which existed on earth when the kingdom of Christ was first erected, and the gospel began to spread among the nations, until it passed away, or was destroyed by the opening of the sixth seal; and so in the ruin of that state of things, there is a type, or figure of the day of judgment, ch. vi. 11—17. Now a new world, as one may say, rose into existence. During the opening of the seals the Roman empire was, as regards its religious profession, Pagan or Heathen; but a mighty alteration then took place, denoted by the symbol of an earthquake, ch. vi. 12. The empire at this period became *christianized*. The religion of Christ, which had hitherto been the object of persecution, now became incorporated with the state; and from this time, instead of taking up the cross and patiently suffering the world's hatred, men found their secular interest connected with their Christian profession. What a revolution was this in the state of things! It paved the way for the man of sin, who had been secretly working from the very days of the apostles; but who had been restrained from making a visible appearance until the Pagan Roman emperor was taken out of the way. And now commenced the kingdom of the clergy. The seven trumpets place Antichrist upon his throne; and this is the subject of the THIRD PART of this book, to which we shall now briefly advert.

At the commencement of ch. viii. the apostle informs us, that when the Lamb had opened the seventh seal, seven angels appeared standing before God,—and there were delivered unto them seven trumpets, which they prepared to sound. By the sounding of these trumpets extraordinary occurrences take place on the earth, which are set forth in symbolical language, the import of which we shall, if spared, consider hereafter. At present, I merely remark, that it is under the sounding of these trumpets, that the kingdom of Antichrist is brought prominently into view; and now observe the effects of the reign of this monstrous power on the churches of Christ. The period of time allotted for his reign is one thousand two hundred and sixty years, during which there is a prevailing state of corruption, ch. xi. 1, &c.; and though the blessed God is not left without witnesses in

the world, yet these witnesses prophecy "clothed in sackcloth." In this state, however, they continue to bear their testimony *for* God, and *against* the abominations of Antichrist, until he is at last permitted to overcome them, and slay them, &c. ver. 7, 8. This is followed by another earthquake, on which the tenth part of the city fell, denoting, as I understand it, that schism which took place in the church of Rome, at the period of the Reformation.

And now, before we proceed any further, allow me to make one observation. The series of prophecies which we have hitherto reviewed, and which are included in the opening of the seven seals, and sounding of the seven trumpets, have all, in our day, become the subject of history. What I mean by this remark is, that our lot is cast in a period, when, by the lights of history, we can trace the accomplishment of all the prophetic intimations included under the seals and the trumpets. For instance, we can trace the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world, by the preaching of the APOSTLES and first ministers of the gospel; we can trace its rapid spread throughout the Roman empire; the persecutions with which it was assailed, by the unbelieving Jews on the one hand, and the idolatrous Pagans on the other; we can trace the fall of Paganism, or the subversion of the heathen Roman government in the empire; the rise of the ten kings, or kingdoms foretold by Daniel, ch. vii., and amongst them, one that was different from the rest, denoted by a little horn, ver. 21; in plain terms, we can trace the rise of Antichrist, pursue the history of his career and progress, until he becomes seated in the temple of God, and arrogating the honours of Deity. We can trace his cruel, tyrannical, and oppressive conduct towards the saints of the Most High, driving the true church into the wilderness, slaying the witnesses, and triumphing in their destruction. All this, I trust, we shall be able to trace by the lights of history: yea, and more, we can trace the resurrection of these witnesses, and the fall of the tenth part of the city; and the sounding of the seventh angel, ch. xi. 15, which brings us to the

FOURTH PART of the book of the Apocalypse, viz. The pouring out of the vials, according to ch. xv. 6, &c. With these vials the consumption of Antichrist, or the fall of Babylon commences; for they are vials "full of the wrath of God," ch. xvi. 1. The seven vials are seven plagues inflicted on the man of sin—the kingdom of the beast, and they issue in his total ruin, ch. xvii.—xix. And now let us mark what follows. The seventh angel pours out his vial into the air, and Babylon sinks into perdition. An angel descends from heaven, lays hold on the dragon, that old serpent the devil, shuts him up in the bottomless pit, and binds him for one thousand years; and with this astonishing event commences the thousand ears reign of the saints, the millennial

period, according to ch. xx. 1—6. The nature of this reign, the blessedness of which it will consist, and the state of the world during its continuance, will come under our examination in due time. At present, we only remark, that at the conclusion of the thousand years, Satan is to be loosed out of his prison, and again permitted to deceive the nations, at which interesting crisis the Lord Jesus Christ *personally* appears, the devil and those who are deceived by him are cast into the lake of fire, or endless perdition, ver. 7—10. Now takes place the general resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, according to Matt. ch. xxv., with the destruction of the world by fire, according to 2 Pet. ch. iii., the creation of the new heavens and new earth, Is. lxx. 17; ch. lxxi. 22., and the everlasting kingdom of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, which has been the hope of the righteous in all ages.

Having thus analyzed the book of the Revelation, and marked out its general divisions, I conclude this preliminary Lecture with one or two additional observations. I have already hinted at the difficulty of the undertaking in which we have embarked. He who now addresses you, is fully apprised of this difficulty. The great Calvin, who, nearly three hundred years ago, published a learned Commentary on all the other parts of scripture, declined entering upon this mysterious book; and his prudence in so doing, was commended by the learned Scaliger. Dr. Whitby published a valuable Paraphrase and Commentary on the New Testament nearly two hundred years later than Calvin; but he also stopped short when he came to the Apocalypse, though he favoured us with a learned dissertation on the Millennium. But, if such men as Calvin and Whitby shrunk from the task of explaining this series of prophecies, it is natural for you to say, how great must be the presumption of such an obscure individual as the present speaker to make the attempt? All this is fully admitted, and yet there are one or two circumstances which may be mentioned in mitigation of censure.

1. We humbly conceive that Christians, in the present day, are, in some respects, much more advantageously circumstanced for entering upon the study of this book, than those learned men were who lived two or three centuries ago. I refer to the light which the providence of God has, of late years, been diffusing upon it. When Daniel delivered his prophecies concerning the same events that John also foretels, he himself understood not their import; and in answer to an enquiry on this head, he was commanded to “shut up the words and *seal the book* to the time of the end,” ch. xii. 4, 9. But when John delivers the very same things in prophecy, it is said to him, “Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand,” ch. xxii. 10. Their accomplishment commenced coeval with the days of the apostle, and though, until Antichrist came to his height, it would not be easy

to understand him as pointed out in this book, yet how different is the case now! We have witnessed his rise, and reign, and the spirit of his religion; nay more, we have seen the beginning of his consumption by the Spirit of the Lord's mouth. What a blow was given to the man of sin at the reformation by Luther and others; and what another blow has been given to this antichristian power during the last thirty or forty years, by means of the convulsions that have taken place on the Continent of Europe! But, further:

2. Calvin and Whitby had the misfortune to be the advocates of *National Christianity*, which, in the nature of things, must have, in some measure, disqualified them for entering fully into this subject. The knowledge of the mind of Christ, in this series of prophecies is to be sought after in the churches of the saints, and there, if any where, may we expect to find it. In proportion as the consumption of Antichrist goes on, so will this book be more and more open to the Lord's people, particularly as they become delivered from the Babylonish captivity and Antichristian darkness, and are gathered into churches formed upon the model of the first churches, planted by the apostles, and to which this book is directed. It is to persons in this state, and not to professors mingled with the world in christian fellowship, that the Lord Jesus is set forth in the conclusion of this book, ch. xxii. 16, as "the bright and morning star," giving them light, and the certainty of his second coming. But,

3. To conclude: what encouragement have we, in ver. 3, of the first chapter, to turn our attention to the study of this prophetic part of the New Testament Scriptures? "*Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep, (or observe,) those things that are written therein, for the time is at hand.*" The views that are presented to us in this book, of God and heavenly things, of the kingdom of providence and grace, of the Redeemer's glory, the happiness and character of his people, with the wickedness and ruin of his enemies, are set forth in so striking and peculiar a manner, that even those who do not at all understand the prophetic meaning of the book are uniformly interested and edified by reading it, in proportion to the measure and degree of their humility, their faith, and their piety. Let us improve this as an encouragement to enquire into its meaning; and may the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, lead us into all the truth, give us an understanding of the holy Scriptures, and make them abundantly profitable to us, for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, that God in all things may be glorified through Christ Jesus. Amen.

## LECTURE II.

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JOHN to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne; 5 And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. 7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. 8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.—Rev. i. 4—8.

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IN an Introductory Lecture, I offered a few cursory remarks on the style and subject treated of in this portion of Divine Revelation; the person by whom, and the time when it was committed to writing. We also took a review of the component parts of the Apocalypse, and briefly sketched an outline of its contents; namely the Preface, and the Epistles to the Seven Asiatic Churches, ch. i.—iii.; the opening of the Sealed Book, ch. iv.—vii.; the sounding of the Seven Trumpets, ch. viii.—xiv.; and the pouring out of the Seven Vials, ch. xvi. to the end. On each of these divisions a few general observations were offered, with the view of clearing the way to a more particular enquiry into the meaning of this mysterious book. On this arduous undertaking we now enter, encouraged by the consideration that it is written, “If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.”—Jam. i. 5.

It seems to have been a practice of very ancient date, for the author of a book to introduce it to his readers by a short preface, explanatory of its object and design, as well as to prepare them for entering upon a perusal of it with understanding and profit. The apostle John has availed himself of this custom, and the first three verses may not improperly be termed his PREFACE to the whole book. He gives it the general title of “*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*,” ver. 1. The word which is here rendered “Revelation,” signifies a making known those things that were previously hidden, concealed, or secret. It is, I believe, purely a scripture word, and does not appear to have been used by any of the Greek heathen writers. Jerome affirms, that it is not used by any classical author, but was coined or invented by the Seventy

Greek translators of the Old Testament, to express more concisely, and more conveniently to explain, the *new* mysteries, or New Testament prophecies, which God had published to the church. The apostle further terms it, "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*;" which may be intended to import, not only that he is the author of it, that he communicated the whole of this series of interesting prophecies to his servant John, to be by him made known to his churches; but also that the whole of it relates to the affairs of his kingdom; for we are told, that "the testimony of, or concerning Jesus, is the spirit, (the substance, or the end,) of the whole prophetic dispensation."—Rev. xix. 10.

There is another thing contained in this preface which also demands our notice, viz. that this Revelation is said to be *given to him*, that is, to Jesus Christ, by his Divine Father; for it is called "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him.*"

As difficulties have been started on these words, and the mode of speech here used has been thought to militate against the doctrine of Christ's essential deity, it may be useful for us to pause a moment before we proceed and endeavour to obviate them.

Be it observed then, that in the economy of redemption, there is a distinction in the one Godhead plainly held forth by three personal names, and relative characters; and indeed by every mode of speech whereby we distinguish persons among men:—we have the FATHER, the SON, (or Word) and the HOLY SPIRIT. In creation the Father is represented as first in the order of operation. All things are said to be ( $\epsilon\zeta$ ) *of* or *from* God the Father, as the first mover or original source; and they are said to be ( $\delta\iota\alpha$ ) *by* or *through* Jesus Christ, as the immediate agent bringing the Father's designs into effect. Hence, God is said to have created all things *BY* Jesus Christ, Eph. iii. 9. And the same mode of speech is used to express their order of acting in the work of Redemption. "All things are *OF* God, who hath reconciled us to himself *BY* Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. v. 18.—"God was *IN*, or *BY* Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," ver. 19. In the economy of Redemption the person of the Father sustains the majesty of the Godhead, and acts his part in the character of the GREAT SUPREME; and though the Son is possessed of the same divine nature with the Father, yet, as a Son, partaking of human nature, and vested with the office of mediator between God and man, he sustains, and acts in a subordinate character to that of the Father. The Father is represented as the original source of all that authority, dominion, and fulness which the Son possesses as Mediator. It was the Father who *sent* his Son to be the saviour of the world. The Father commissioned him, and gave him a commandment, to lay down his life



for the sheep, raised him from the dead, and exalted him to the highest glory and dominion at his own right hand; and who hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the church. And as he holds the mediatorial kingdom from the Father till all the ends of it are answered; so when the end cometh, he shall deliver it up to God, even the Father, and be himself subject to him “that put all things under him, that God may be all in all,”—1 Cor. xv. 24—28. And this may explain to us the mode of speech here used, when it is said that “God the Father *gave* this Revelation to his son Jesus Christ to communicate it to his servant John; which he did by the ministry of an angel.” The things that were thus revealed to John, he has faithfully recorded, as they were made known to him, even as he faithfully testified in the gospel-history, which he formerly wrote, what he had seen of the Saviour’s actions, and heard of his doctrines while he tabernacled on earth, ver. 2; 1 John i. 1, 3. He then claims our attention to the things he had to communicate, by pronouncing a blessing on those that read, and hear, and observe the words of this prophecy; for, the case was now very different from what it was when Daniel foretold the very same things—“*the time was at hand*” when these prophecies should begin to receive their accomplishment.

As the apostle had been commissioned to write the mind of his Divine Master to seven churches then existing in Asia, he enters upon the subject by presenting his christian salutations to them, and wishing them an abundant enjoyment of all spiritual blessings from “the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift”—the eternal source of being and blessedness, “and from the *seven spirits* which are before his throne.” Such of you as have paid any attention to this book, must have perceived the frequent use that is made in it of the number *seven*. For instance, the number of churches, to each of which an epistle is written, is *seven*: the same number which we shall find frequently employed throughout this book of the Apocalypse. For, not only do we here read of the *seven* spirits of God, but we read of *seven* angels, *seven* thunders, *seven* seals, *seven* trumpets, *seven* vials, *seven* heads of the dragon, *seven* last plagues, &c. Now in these passages, as well as in many others that might be referred to, the number *seven* appears to denote a large and complete, yet uncertain and undefined number. The Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, abound with instances of this kind.<sup>a</sup> In its Hebrew etymology the number

<sup>a</sup> See Gen. ii. 3; ch. iv. 15; xxxiii. 3; Lev. iv. 6; 1 Sam. ii. 5; Prov. xxiv. 16; ch. xxvi. 25; Is. xxx. 26; Jer. xv. 9; 1 Kings xviii. 43; 2 Kings v. 10; Job v. 19; ch. xlii. 8; Mich. v. 5; Esth. 1. 10; Eccles. xi. 2; Dan. iii. 19; Matt. xviii. 22; Luke xi. 26; ch. xvii. 4.

seven signifies fulness and perfection.<sup>b</sup> Philo styles it *τελεσφορος*, the *completing* number, and it is mentioned as such by Cyprian, who cites passages from the Apocalypse and other scriptures, to shew “the perfect and legitimate consummation” of this number. By what means the number seven became so important to the people of God in former times, so representative of completion and universality, we may partly collect from their history. God had revealed to them, that his own great work of creation had been completed in six days, and he rested on the *seventh*. In commemoration thereof, he commanded them to reckon time by *seven*; thus *seven* days to the sabbath-day, *seven* months to the sabbatical month, *seven* years to the sabbatical year, *seven* times *seven* years to the great sabbatical, or year of jubilee. And when, upon their entrance into Canaan, it pleased God miraculously to deliver the city of Jericho into their hands, he ordered them to march round it *seven* days, *seven* priests with *seven* trumpets preceding them; and on the seventh day, on which the walls fell, they were instructed to encompass it *seven* times. It is not, therefore, from any casual or arbitrary notion that the number *seven* has been thus dignified: it is entitled to this distinction, from the natural order of things, which the adorable Creator was pleased to establish at the bringing of the world into existence. A day is a natural measure of time, and, multiplied by *seven*, forms that period of a week, which most conveniently multiplies again, so as to form months and years. It was long ago observed by the learned Joseph Scaliger, “that the number seven is of all others the most fit to measure the courses of the sun and moon.” The measure of time by weeks, or by the intervention of the number *seven*, is therefore not altogether arbitrary; it has a foundation in the nature of things; and the discovery of this circumstance is a proof that the great God who created the world in six days, and contemplated its perfection on the seventh, and, after this rule, established the number seven for the measure of time, acted in this circumstance with that providential order and harmony which characterize the rest of his works.<sup>c</sup> These few observations will open the way for the right apprehension of the sense in which the number *seven* is used by the prophetic writers, namely, as denoting any large, complete, indefinite number. It is, I believe, the opinion of some, that by the *seven spirits*, mentioned in ver. 4, is to be understood *seven angels*; but I much prefer the opinion of those who interpret the phrase “seven spirits,” of the one Holy Eternal Spirit, termed seven, not in number, nor in nature, but on account of his infinite and adorable perfection, and the diversity of his gifts and operations, see 1 Cor. ch. xii. For, as has been already intimated in the

<sup>b</sup> Daubuz. Etymol. Dict.

<sup>c</sup> See Owen on the Hebrews, vol. iv. *Svo. edit.* on ch. iv. ver. 4—7.

language of prophecy, the number “seven” is frequently made use of to denote perfection. And thus the apostle supplicates the blessings of grace and peace, from the eternal Father, “who is, and who was, and who is to come;” and from that infinitely all-perfect Spirit, whose office in the economy of grace is to carry his designs into effect. He adds,—

Ver. 5. “*And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.*” Here we have the *official characters* which the Lord Jesus Christ sustains in the economy of redemption, and in virtue of which he becomes the source of grace and peace to his people, in conjunction with the eternal Father and the Holy Spirit. A subject of so much interest, and of such vital importance to all his followers ought not to be slightly dismissed; we shall, therefore, spend a little time in considering the import of these official characters.

1. The apostle terms him “*the faithful witness.*”—We find the same title applied to him, ch. iii. 14, when addressing the church of the Laodiceans: “These things saith the Amen—the faithful and true witness.” This title has a particular respect to his *prophetical* character; for he came a “light into this world,” as he himself declares, “that whosoever believeth in him should not abide in darkness,” John xii. 46. He is the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom, or secret counsels of the Father, and who hath declared, manifested, or made known his character, purposes, love, and grace to a lost and guilty world, John i. 18; ch. iii. 16; and vii. 26. In the days of his public ministry on earth, he also bare witness of *himself*, his character, mission, and kingdom, (ch. viii. 18; xviii. 37,) and he confirmed his testimony by the miracles which he wrought, and sealed it with his blood. He is called the *faithful* witness because it is impossible for him to lie: and, consequently, all that he promises, or threatens, or testifies may be fully relied upon as absolute truth; for as “righteousness is the girdle of his loins, so *faithfulness* is the girdle of his reins,” Is. xi. 5. Again—

2. He is here termed the “*first begotten of the dead.*” A similar title is applied to him by the apostle Paul, in col. iii. 18, where he terms him “The first born from the dead.” The word is precisely the same in the Greek (*πρωτοτοκος*), though our translators have a little varied it in English—and it implies, that he was in the state of the dead,—that he was the first who rose from the dead to inherit immortal life—and that, in his risen and exalted state, he is invested with supreme dignity and almighty power, as God’s first born, or “Heir of all things,” according to Heb. i. 2, and Matt. xxviii. 18. These particulars imply the *priestly*

character of the Saviour, even as the former title, "the faithful witness," does his *prophetical*. It was as the great High Priest of his church, or that he might fulfil that most important office, that he offered up himself as a sacrifice for the sins of his guilty people, Heb. ix. 14; as such he was brought again from the dead through the blood of the everlasting covenant, ch. xiii. 20. God thereby testifying his acceptance of his sacrifice for our justification; and, as our glorious High Priest, he entered into the heavenly sanctuary with his own blood, to present it unto God—there to appear in his presence; and make continual intercession for us. Thus he is made a High Priest after the power of an endless life; made higher than the heavens; and able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, Heb. vii. 24—26.

Before we dismiss this point, allow me to remark, that the title, "first born," or "first begotten from the dead," includes also, Christ's *kingly power and dominion*; for he is a priest upon his throne, after the order of Melchisedec, see Ps. cx., compared with Heb. ch. vii. To which we may further add, that the "first born from the dead," evidently holds him forth as the pattern, the pledge, and the *first-fruits* of the resurrection of all his people, as Paul teaches us, 1 Cor. xv. 20. But,

3. Another title ascribed to the Lord Jesus is, that of "*the Prince of the kings of the earth.*" This points out to us his *regal* or *kingly character*, and his supreme authority and dominion, as KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS, according to ch. xvii. 14, xix. 16. This sublime title has a reference to the promise made to the Messiah in the second Psalm, "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion," ver. 6; and to the admonition given to the kings of the earth, to be subject to him, in the latter verses of that Psalm, when it is said: "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now, therefore, O, ye kings! be instructed ye judges of the earth: serve the Lord (Messiah) with fear, and rejoice with trembling: kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his anger is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him," ver. 9-12. You will find these words quoted and applied to Christ in Rev. ii. 27; see also ch. xix. 15, 16.

The kingly character of Christ is far more extensive than his priestly; the latter extends only to his own peculiar people; but his kingly power extends over all the monarchs and potentates of earth, to overrule, restrain, and subdue them at his pleasure, in subserviency to the interests of his kingdom; till he shall ultimately put down all authority and power, and all his enemies be

made his footstool, 1 Cor. xv. 24-28; for the Father hath given all things into his hands, John iii. 35.

But the Lord Jesus is vested with authority, not only over the kings of the earth; for "all power is committed unto him, both in heaven and on earth," according to his own declaration, Matt. xxviii. 18. And you may see also what the apostle Paul says on this subject, Eph. i. 20-23; Phil. ii. 8-11; Heb. ii. 7-9. And so in repeating this title, he is called the *beginning*, or chief of the creation of God, Rev. iii. 14; and Col. i. 18. Having taken a glance at the meaning of those official titles we now proceed:

"Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father:" ver. 5, 6.

By a very natural association of ideas; from a review of the offices which Christ sustains in the economy of redemption, as the great prophet, priest, and king of his church, the apostle is led to think, and to speak of what he has done for his people, answerable to those high and exalted characters: let us now attend to his account of this matter.

1. He declares that "*he hath loved us.*" You who are acquainted with your bibles need not be told, that the redemption of guilty man is frequently, in scripture, ascribed to the love of the divine Father. Thus, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life," John iii. 16. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were ungodly and without strength, Christ died for us," Rom. v. 8. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that HE loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," 1 John iv. 10. These texts plainly shew us, that the love of the Father is the grand source and spring of all our salvation. Hence the poet,

"Sinners from his first love derive  
The ground of all their songs."

But the salvation of perishing sinners is also ascribed to the love of the Son, who voluntarily undertook the work of redemption in obedience to the will of his heavenly Father, and from love to the children whom God had given him to redeem. Hence it is said, "Christ *loved* the church and gave himself for it," Eph. v. 25; and when the apostle Paul would take a survey of this love, and would have furnished an estimate of it, what is the report that he brings in concerning it? 'Tis very short, but very comprehensive. "*It passeth knowledge,*" Eph. iii. 19. It was, indeed, amazing love, whether we consider the objects whom it regarded, or the manner in which it was expressed! But mark what the apostle says of its effects—for,

2. "*He washed us from our sins in his own blood.*" All the heirs of salvation were viewed in the divine mind as sinners and rebels against God, consequently liable to everlasting punishment. To deliver them from this awful state, Jesus voluntarily became their substitute and representative. He suffered on their account, and in their stead; giving his life and shedding his blood for the remission of their sins; and thus cancelling their obligation to punishment, by bearing it himself; and in this way he procured their pardon and acceptance with God. His blood, which was shed by covenant, and, therefore, as the blood of sacrifice, "cleanseth from all sin," I John i. 7, in the way of expiation and atonement; for it is the blood that maketh atonement. When Christ's blood was shed, the "fountain was opened" for sin and uncleanness; and when we *believe* in him, we are actually washed from our sins, both as to their guilt and power; for it is by faith that we "receive the atonement," or become interested in it; we then have our consciences purged, and enjoy peace with God; see Rom. v. 1; Heb. ix. 14. The blood of Christ is also represented as a *ransom price*, buying us off, or redeeming us from the curse of the divine law, Gal. iii. 13, from this present evil world, Gal. i. 4,—in a word, "from all iniquity; and purifying us unto himself, a peculiar people zealous of good works," Tit. ii. 14. And so, in perfect consistency with what has now been said, we find all the redeemed company ascribing "Worthiness to the Lamb that was slain, and that hath redeemed them to God by his blood," Rev. v. 9. The Apostle adds:

3. "*He hath made us kings and priests unto God,*" &c. In the song of the redeemed, ch. v. 10, it is said, "And hath made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign upon the earth." The Lord Jesus has not only redeemed his people from the wrath to come, but he has advanced them to the most honourable and dignified relationship to God in connection with himself. As believers are all the *sons of God*, by faith in Christ Jesus, Gal. iii. 25; 1 John iii. 1, so they are *heirs* of God, and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 17; Gal. iv. 7. The whole church of the redeemed are a church of "*first-born*" ones, Heb. xii. 23; even as Israel of old was denominated, *typically*, God's "first born," Exod. iv. 22; and so, like them, they are a kingdom of priests, Exod. xix. 6; or a *royal priesthood*, as the apostle Peter terms them, 1 Pet. ii. 9; which is of precisely the same import with his making them "kings and priests," having the dignity of God's first born. All the children of God are raised to royal honours becoming the children of such a Father; they are heirs of the kingdom, and shall inherit all things. They are consecrated *priests* unto God, having access into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus, "to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable

to God by Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. ii. 5; Heb. xiii. 15, 16. They are kings and priests even now while in this world, just as they are sons and heirs; though it doth not yet appear what they shall be, when they shall appear with Christ in glory, and shall obtain the crown and kingdom. All this honour and dignity, Christ had procured for them, and they enjoy it in virtue of their connection with him; and, viewing the matter in this light, can we wonder the apostle John should add, as he does,—"*To Him be glory, and dominion, for ever and ever.* AMEN," ver. 6.

This glory and dominion has indeed been conferred upon him by his heavenly Father, as the reward of his unparalleled humiliation and obedience, Heb. ii. 7, 9; Phil. ii. 8-11; and it is ascribed to him by all the redeemed company, with gratitude, joy, and holy adoration, ch. v. 12-14. The burden of their song is, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." To this the apostle adds his "Amen." Let the Redeemer's disciples on earth unite their voices with saints and angels above, in ascribing to him the glory due unto his name; and make it their constant study while here to shew forth the praises of Him who hath loved them, and bestowed such blessings upon them. Transported with this delightful and soul-ravishing subject, the apostle looks forward with joy and triumph to the Saviour's coming again to punish his adversaries, and reward all his faithful followers: for thus he proceeds:

"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," ver. 7.

The *second* coming of Christ is a most important article of the christian faith, and much insisted on both by the Saviour himself and by his apostles. The Scriptures, in the plainest terms, speak of two distinct *personal* comings of the Son of God, and of *only two*. The *first* was his coming *in the flesh*, when he appeared in the end of the Jewish age, "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," Heb. ix. 26. He then "came unto his own," "came into this world," came to do the work of his heavenly Father—the work of his mediation—and particularly to make atonement for sin, by the offering up of his own body once—and thus to accomplish all the *predictions*, and fulfil all the *types* by which it was prefigured. The *second* coming of the Son of God, is that which is referred to by the apostle in the verse before us; and it is his coming in glory to raise the dead, and judge the world, and perfect the salvation of all his redeemed people. As the subject is important to us all, and is now fairly brought before us, allow me to call your attention to three things concern-

ing it,—the certainty of the fact itself;—some of the circumstances that will attend it;—and the ends to be answered by it.

1. The certainty of the fact; or the evidence on which it rests. It was the subject of prophecy from the earliest times. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, foretold it in these words: “Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him,” Jude, 14. The subject also occupied the ministry of succeeding prophets. See Ps. l. 1-6. “The mighty God even Jehovah hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. Our God shall come and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him;—He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people,” &c. But the topic is particularly dwelt upon by the prophet Daniel, ch. vii. 9, 10. “I beheld till the thrones were cast down and the ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened.” But this doctrine is more fully and explicitly revealed in the writings of the evangelists and apostles, to which we shall now turn. Thus, when our Lord was about to leave the world and return unto the Father, he consoled the minds of his sorrowing disciples by the promise of his *coming again* and receiving them unto himself; that where he is, there they may be also, John xiv. 1-3, 28. It forms the basis of many of those interesting parables which Jesus spake, during his public ministry; such as that of the ten virgins, Matt. xxv. 1-13;—the nobleman travelling into a far country, delivering unto his servants his goods wherewith to occupy during his absence, and returning at the appointed time to reckon with them, ver. 14-31; and still more plainly in his account of the judgment of the world, ver. 31, to the end of that remarkable chapter.

But the fact is attested by the holy angels who witnessed his ascension into heaven, Acts i. 9, 10. “Ye men of Galilee,” said they, “why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven,” ver. 11. And from this time we find it occupying a prominent place in the doctrine of the holy apostles. Thus Peter addresses the unbelieving Jews, Acts



iii. 19. "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." When Paul called the Athenians to repentance, he enforced the call by this consideration, that, "God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead," Acts xvii. 31. And when he would console the Thessalonians under the loss of their christian brethren, he puts them in mind of the second coming of the Lord to raise the dead and take his people to his eternal kingdom, 1 Thess. iv. 14-18.

I cannot dismiss the subject without adding, that the certainty of the second coming of Christ may be inferred from its necessity, in order to vindicate the equity of the divine administration in the government of the world. In this life we see vice every where triumphant, and virtue oppressed and humbled. But whence is this, and how shall we account for it? On this principle, I presume,—that the present life is only a state of trial and probation; there is no proper retribution in it; and a forgetfulness of the fact, often causes the christian to stumble in his course, as it did the psalmist of old, whose experience is recorded Ps. lxxiii. 3-12. But when Jesus comes again, all these apparent incongruities, these seeming difficulties, will be fully cleared up; for he will judge the world in righteousness; the secrets of all hearts will be revealed; and the rectitude of the divine administration be made fully apparent. Let us now briefly advert to some of

2. The circumstances which will attend his coming. It will be in the *clouds* of heaven, with power and great glory. So the apostle John here teaches: "Behold, he cometh *with clouds.*" And so the angels testified, at the time of his ascension, when "a cloud received him out of the sight of his disciples," Acts i. 11. "This same Jesus," said they, "shall so come, *in like manner* as ye have seen him go into heaven." And this agrees with what he said to his disciples in the days of his personal ministry, "they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory," Matt. xxiv. 30; for he will be attended with an innumerable company of *angels* to grace his triumph, and minister unto him. This is the account which Daniel gives us of the matter in the words lately quoted from his prophecy, ch. vii. 9, 10. And it corresponds with what the apostle Paul teaches, 2 Thess. i. 7: "The Lord Jesus shall be

revealed from heaven with his mighty angels," &c. When he made his *first* appearance in this our world, on the gracious errand of mercy, he emptied himself of the "form of God;" a human body was prepared for him, so he became incarnate; he acted in the capacity of a servant; for "the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many;" and so, "he humbled himself to the death of the cross," Phil. ii. 7-9. *Then* indeed he appeared "as a root out of dry ground; the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" poverty, weakness, and humility characterised his whole deportment;—but how different will his *second* coming be! He will then appear in glory, his own glory and the glory of his heavenly Father, and then

"*Every eye shall see him.*" At his second coming he will raise the dead; for thus he himself hath taught us: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth," John v. 28. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout; with the voice of the arch-angel, and the trump of God; and the dead shall be raised," 1 Thess. iv. 16. Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep (or die,) but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye—for *the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised,*" &c., 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. And now

3. Let us notice more particularly *the ends* for which he will come, and the *consequences that will result*. The apostle declares that "all kindreds of the earth shall wail (or lament) because of him." It will be a day of lamentation and woe to all his enemies. "He will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of his Son; these shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power," 2 Thess. i. 8 9. "They will call upon the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb," Rev. vi. 16, 17; "for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand it?"—Well,

It will be a day of joyful exultation and triumph to all the faithful followers of the Lamb. The Saviour will own them as his, and openly acquit them in the judgment. And oh! what sovereign and unmerited GRACE will then appear! When the saints shall reflect that the awful sentence now passed upon the wicked was what they themselves deserved as richly as the vilest of them; when they think on that love which made the difference, and on that precious blood which washed them from their sins, and delivered them from the dreadful wrath now come upon the

impenitent and unbelieving ; what transports of joy, of love, and of gratitude will then fill their souls ! Then, indeed, will Christ “be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe,” 2 Thess. i. 10. Then will the Judge say, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”—“And so shall they be ever with the Lord”—“beyond the reach of woe.” Realizing the glories of this period, and the grace which is to be brought unto us at the appearing of Jesus Christ—his glorious appearance and kingdom, the apostle here adds, “Even so, AMEN.” “*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.*” Ver. 8.

Here the apostle introduces to us the Saviour himself, asserting his own eternal, essential, and unoriginated Deity. Alpha and Omega, you know, are two letters of the Greek alphabet—the one the first, and the other the last. There is evidently an allusion to Isa. xlv. 6, in which Jehovah, the king of Israel, thus addresses his church of old: “I am the *first*, and I am the *last*, and besides me there is no God.” —“Is there a God besides me? Yea, there is no God, I know not any,” ver. 8. But this high and exalted dignity is claimed by the Saviour in the words under consideration—“I am the first and the last,” the original Creator, and final judge of the world ; the Eternal, the unchangeable, THE ALMIGHTY Author, Supporter, and Disposer of all things.

I shall close the present Lecture with a pertinent quotation from an eminent Catholic writer of the last century.

“In the gospel of John, we read the life of Christ on earth ; and we there see a man conversing with men, humble, weak, and suffering : we behold a sacrifice ready to be offered by one appointed to sorrow and death : but in the book of Revelation by John, we have the gospel of Christ now raised from the dead. He speaks and acts as having conquered the grave and triumphed over death and hell, and so having entered into the place of his glory, angels, principalities, and powers being made subject unto him ; and exercising the supreme universal power which he has received from the Father, over all things in heaven and earth, as the Saviour, for the protection of his church, and to ensure the happiness of his faithful servants in the end.”<sup>d</sup>

<sup>d</sup> Bossuet, Explication de la Revelation. PREF.

## LECTURE III.

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I JOHN, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. 12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. 14 His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire; 15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength. 17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last; 18 *I am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. 19 Write the things which thou hast seem, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter: 20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.—Rev. i. 9-20.

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THE subject of our last Lecture was—the official characters which our Lord Jesus Christ sustains in the economy of our redemption; in which we were led to contemplate him as the *prophet, priest, and king* of his church; to consider his amazing love in laying down his life for guilty rebels, washing them from their sins in his own blood, and making them kings and priests unto God even the Father; with the glory and dominion which is justly due to him on that account. We glanced at his *second coming* in the clouds of heaven to punish his adversaries, and reward all his faithful followers, by receiving them to himself, and conferring upon them the crown and kingdom.

In ver. 8, the apostle introduces his Lord and Saviour as appearing to him in vision, and asserting his equality with the Father—his eternity, self-existence, and almighty power; and now he proceeds to mention the place where the Revelation was given, and to describe the manner and circumstances of the first vision.

Ver. 9. Addressing the churches of Asia, which he particularises by name in ver. 11, he tells them that he "their brother" in Christ Jesus, and who was also "their 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" which he bore to "Jesus Christ."

PATMOS was a small island in the Grecian Archipelago, about thirty miles in circumference, and is sometimes marked down in maps of the present day as the island of Palmosa. Some of our latest geographers tell us, that it is totally barren and dreary, deserving rather the name of a rock than that of an island; but Dr. Wells, in his geography of the New Testament, affirms that it is moderately fruitful, producing, at least, the necessaries of life. To this place, John was banished, for his labours in preaching Christ's gospel, though it is not *certainly* known in what precise year, or by which of the Roman emperors he was exiled. The more general opinion is that it took place under the reign of Domitian; and this opinion is founded on the testimony of Irenæus, who was the disciple of Polycarp; and the latter was cotemporary with the apostle. We can scarcely wish greater authority than this, and especially as it is confirmed by Eusebius both in his Chronicle and Ecclesiastical History.

The apostle has deemed it expedient to inform us, that it was on "the Lord's day" that he was favoured with this Revelation from the Saviour. It certainly may appear strange that any difficulties should have arisen about the meaning of this term; yet so it is. Doubts have been raised by those who dispute every article of the Christian faith, whether the apostle intended by the Lord's day to denote "the first day of the week," the christian sabbath. But on this point I think we may arrive at a very satisfactory conclusion without much difficulty, by asking ourselves one or two plain questions. Did the apostle, when he wrote, intend or expect to be understood by after ages? and if he did, what other day *could he intend* besides the first day of the week? To those who will give themselves the trouble to reflect seriously on these questions, we may safely leave the solution of the difficulty.

The simple fact, however, stands thus; God at first blessed the seventh day, and set it apart in commemoration of his resting from the work of creation; and he gave it to Israel in their law to be observed in commemoration of that event, and also of his redeeming them from Egyptian bondage, and causing them to enter into his rest in the land of Canaan. But when Christ had finished the work of redemption and entered into *his rest*, which he did on the first day of the week, HE, as lord of the sabbath, gave it to his churches as a day of holy convocation, to be stately observed by them, as a day of sacred rest, in com-  
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moration of his resurrection from the dead. On this day the first Christians came together to observe the ordinances of divine worship; the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayers, celebrating the praise of redeeming grace. When John wrote the book of Revelation, the first day of the week was universally known among the churches by the name of *the Lord's day*; which intimates, that it was instituted by the Lord Jesus—sacred to his memory, and commemorative of his work; even as the “breaking of bread” is, for these reasons, called “*the Lord's supper.*”

On this first day of the week, the apostle was “*in the Spirit.*” Whatever more may be imported in this remarkable expression, we may, without danger of mistake, understand it as implying, that the apostle, though deprived of the privilege of meeting with his christian brethren and attending the public ordinances of the house of God, was nevertheless in a spiritual frame of mind, occupied with heavenly meditations and exercises; and while thus employed, the spirit of prophecy came upon him, as on the prophets of old, and revealed to him the things which he has recorded. While thus engaged in holy meditation, the apostle's attention was suddenly arrested by a *voice* resembling the sound of a trumpet; and, in ver. 11, he tells us what the voice spake unto him: “*I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last,*” &c.

Ver. 12: “*And I turned to see the voice that spake with me.*” We cannot wonder, that when John heard such an articulation, he should turn to see who it was that spake to him: but the manner in which this is expressed, may strike some with surprise: “*I turned to see the voice that spake with me,*” says the apostle; in which he has recourse to what rhetoricians term an *ellipsis*,—that is, a figure of speech whereby something is implied which is omitted, or not expressed; and the meaning is, that he turned to see *who it was* that spake to him, for sounds and articulations are not objects of sight, but of hearing—“*And being turned, I saw,*” &c.

Such a sight as this might well occasion the apostle's surprise; it would have surprised any one. The phenomenon exhibited a wonderful description of Christ and his church. The imagery is borrowed from the temple service, and presents us with a commentary on various things that were peculiar to that economy, but familiar to the worshippers under it. The first thing that arrested his attention was *seven golden candlesticks*, emblematical of the seven churches in Asia to whom John is commanded to write—and *in the midst of seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man clothed with a garment down to his feet, and girt about his paps with a golden girdle.* In this wonderful exhibition, the Son

of God is described by his human nature and his visible glory. He is represented to John, and described by him, as "One like unto the Son of man." This, you know, was a title which the Lord Jesus condescended to adopt, while he tabernacled among us, even as it had been given him by the Spirit of prophecy, in the writings of Daniel, ch. vii. 13. The apostle had been familiarly acquainted with him when he was on earth—"the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"—and he was then honoured as his peculiar friend; but while he now perceived him, in human form, and with *some resemblance* of his former appearance, (which is intimated by the expression, "*like unto*,") he now beheld him in such resplendent glory, that he seemed quite another person. An amazing change had passed upon him since the apostle had seen him hanging upon the cross, on mount Calvary, and it corresponded with what the apostle Paul teaches, concerning the resurrection bodies of the saints in 1 Cor. ch. xv.; and of which the glorified body of the Saviour, is the exemplar and pledge. When Jesus ascended into heaven, he took our nature with him, but the body in which he ascended was not a *natural* body, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." His body had undergone such a change as rendered it "a *spiritual* body"—that which had been sown in dishonour, when laid in the tomb, was raised *in glory*—spiritual, heavenly, immortal. Such was the glorified body of Jesus in which he now appeared to his servant John. In heaven the Messiah sustains the same relation to men, and is actuated by the very same friendships for them, as when he tabernacled among them. And though now divested of mortality, no longer subject to human infirmities, to hunger, pain, weariness and death, but exalted to the highest glory in the heavens, and reigning after the power of an endless life, he is not ashamed to display his divine glory through the veil of humanity. Indeed, it would be quite impossible for human faculties to endure the effulgence of divine splendour unveiled. There are some visible created objects too glaring for our senses; and it is not to be supposed, that if the divine splendour was exhibited to our view, it would be possible for men to bear it. Jehovah dwells in light which is "inaccessible and full of glory." "No man hath seen God at any time"—for, as he himself said to his servant Moses, "thou canst not see my face and live." Yet hath "the high and lofty one, who inhabiteth eternity," in condescension to our weakness, been pleased to veil his glory with a garment of human nature, that his people might be able to endure the manifestations thereof, with comfort and advantage. Jesus, while in this world, was "the image of the invisible God"—"the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person;" and this

same apostle John tells us, that, while tabernacling on earth, they behold his glory—"the glory as of the only begotten of the of the Father." The princes of this world, indeed, were ignorant of his true character, they did not know him, as Immanuel—God manifest in flesh—for had they known him, they would not have crucified "the Lord of Glory." In his exalted state, as Lord and Heir of all things, he now appeared to John, as a glorified man displaying and exercising all the perfections of Deity. But let us now attend to the apostle's further account of this vision.

1. We have the place or position in which this divine personage stood. It was in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks—the mystery or meaning of which is explained to us in the last verse of the chapter. These seven lamps or candlesticks are emblems of the seven churches of Asia, and the Saviour stands in the midst of them, holding in his right hand, seven stars, which is explained to mean the angels of these seven churches. And does not this suggest to us the nearness of Christ to his churches in this militant state; and the deep interest which he takes in all their affairs? Before he left the earth, he promised his peculiar presence to his churches while engaged in observing the ordinances of his appointment, and keeping his commands. You recollect his own words, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I, in the midst of them," Matt. xviii. 20. So also in the commission, which he gave his apostles, "Lo, I am with you alway," &c.

It is not without propriety, that the churches of Christ, are represented by candlesticks; for what is their end or design? Is it not to "hold forth the word of life, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation?" And this they are called to do, by the reading of the Holy Scriptures—by the preaching of the gospel of God—by the administration of the ordinances of Christ's house—by their prayers and their praises—all of which when conducted agreeably to divine appointment have the truth stamped upon them, and so are divinely calculated to promote the glory of God, and the salvation of men. If there should be an individual now present who has been accustomed to think lightly of a christian church, and the privileges of church fellowship, let the subject before us correct that mistake. Imperfection and evil will be found in all christian churches in this world; and for a very obvious reason,—because the members of them are not angels, but human beings, renewed only in part—men encompassed with infirmity; yet, after all, they are of divine appointment—the schools of Christ, designed by him to train up his disciples in knowledge, faith, and charity, so as to meeten them for a higher state of holiness and bliss, when the days of their pilgrimage are



ended. They are the nearest approximation to heaven of any thing that is to be found in this lower world, and the professor who thinks lightly of them as a means for preparing him for that state, gives sad proof of his want of regard for the end, viz. the salvation of his soul.

2. We now pass on to consider the description, which the apostle gives us, of the Redeemer's apparel, and other matters. He appeared to John in this vision "*clothed with a garment down to his feet, and girt about the paps, with a golden girdle.*" This form of dress and appearance corresponds with that of the Jewish High Priest, on the great day of atonement, (Exod. xxxix. 5.) whose robes came down to his feet, and whose shoulders and breasts were ornamented with the curious girdle of the ephod. This appearance has more signification than merely having an allusion to Jewish institutions; it is rather a commentary on the meaning and intention of the Jewish priesthood and ordinances, all of which were merely emblems and figures of the Saviour, who was to come. There are many phrases in the Apocalypse, which explain the meaning of various things in the Jewish tabernacle and temple, which we are told, were patterns of things in heaven, as well as that they point out spiritual objects, with regard to their future signification. In consistency with this principle of interpretation, may we not be permitted to regard the Redeemer's robe, as denoting that perfect righteousness, which he wrought out for his church, when he became obedient unto the death of the cross, and by which believers are justified; while the golden girdle around his breasts, resembling that of Aaron's ephod, leads us to think of the preciousness of his love, and the cordiality with which he maintains the cause of his people. But to proceed,—"*his head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow.*" This answers to the description given by the prophet Daniel, (ch. vii. 9.) of the Ancient of Days, and it is probably intended to point out his majesty, his innocence or purity, and his eternity. The dignity of Christ, if it does not consist in, yet assuredly it involves, his holiness and purity; his beauty is the beauty of holiness, and his crown is a crown of righteousness. In this vision, the Redeemer is not represented like an aged person, with a hoary head, and grey hairs, but with head and hairs white like snow, suggesting to us that there is no mixture of imperfection in his character, no spot in his righteousness, for he is altogether perfect. The fairest characters among the sons of men have some spots, or stains in them; but the character of Jesus is perfectly immaculate.

"*His eyes were as a flame of fire,*" indicating his omniscient acquaintance with the secrets of all hearts, and with the most

distant events in providence. It was predicted of the Messiah before he appeared, that "he should sit as a refiner of silver, and a purifier of the sons of Levi," Mal. iii. 3. "Whose fan is in his hand," said his venerable forerunner, "and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire," Matt. iii. 12. The import of all this is, that he has only to look upon his enemies in order to consume them: looking, speaking, and acting, are all the same to the Majesty of heaven. Every divine attribute implies the rest, and omniscience always implies almighty power. What an amazing spectacle must this have been! Can we wonder that it confounded the apostle, overwhelmed his senses, and made him fall at Christ's feet as dead? The most that could be said of the majesty of an earthly potentate is that it is dazzling to the eye, or striking to the senses; but the looks of this divine personage is sufficient to consume all his enemies.

*"His feet were like fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace."* When the inspired writers institute a comparison between natural and spiritual objects; things in nature and things divine, they always select what is best, or of most value, which is the case here, and indeed throughout the whole of this book. The original word, χαλκωλιβανω, which is here translated "fine brass," signifies brass which is found in Lebanon, and which was accounted purer than gold itself. Such a comparison is used in this place to point out the perfect wisdom that guides and directs all the ways and proceedings of our ascended Sovereign, and the certainty of all his operations. As brass is durable; and burning brass clear and shining; so the King of Zion is steady in all his purposes and faithful in all his promises.

*"His voice was as the sound of many waters."* This is a form of expression made us of, to point out the majesty and authority of the Lord Christ. There is a solemnity in the sound of many waters which produces an effect that is much more readily conceived than expressed. It brings a sort of solemn dread upon the spirits or senses, creating, at the same instant, a solemn pleasure and a sacred awe, which is diffused through the whole frame. Perhaps to enter fully into the import of the apostle's language here, we would need to visit "the falls of Niagara," in the United States of America; or, at any rate, to peruse some account of that celebrated cataract. Did our time permit, I should like to read you the account which is given us of this phenomenon by an intimate friend of mine, who visited the place only ten years ago, and who, on his return to England published his travels in two very interesting volumes. You shall, at any rate, have five lines of his description. After spending a number of pages in

describing the local scenery, and the route by which he arrived at the bottom of the precipice, he adds, "The noise of the falls, is of course, greatly increased below ; indeed, it thunders in the ear most overpoweringly. I use the term *thunder*," says he, "for want of a more appropriate one, but it by no means conveys an adequate idea of the awfully deep and unvarying sound."<sup>a</sup> Something akin to this was the voice that addressed the apostle ; and it is the same voice which in a little time, will again call aloud, "Awake ye dead and come to judgment," and it shall be heard by all that are in their graves, and "they shall come forth, some to the resurrection of life, some to shame and everlasting contempt." But let us return to the apostle's vision.

Ver. 16. "*And he had in his right hand seven stars :*" which is explained to be the pastors of the seven churches, ver. 20. His holding these in his right hand may be intended to denote, that as they are all his gift to the churches, raised up and qualified by him for the work of the ministry, so they are all under his special care and protection ; he directs all their motions, according to his own will, and upholds them by the right hand of his righteousness. The apostle adds, that "*out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword.*" Some understood this two edged sword to denote his awful and irresistible justice, in cutting down his enemies on every side, and "slaying them by the breath of his mouth ;" answerable to the prophecy concerning the Messiah, Isa. xi. 2-5. For my own part, I incline to the opinion of those who consider the "two edged sword" here to be emblematical of his word or doctrine ; which is "the sword of the Spirit," and which the apostle Paul testifies, is "sharper than any two edged sword ; piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," Heb. iv. 12. Taking the word of God as denoting the whole of divine revelation, or "the law of the Lord," as the Psalmist terms it, Ps. xix. 7, we may say, that it is the grand instrument, in the hand of the Spirit, by which all the affairs of Christ's kingdom in this world are managed. In that word he speaks to mortals in the language of justice, and of mercy ; and it is a voice answerable to the majesty of the living and true God, who says, "See now that I, even I am he, and there is no God with me. I kill and I make alive ; I wound and I heal ; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever," Deut. xxxii. 39, 40.

"*His countenance was as the sun shining in its strength.*" The divine splendour and majesty of the Lord Jesus is wonderfully

<sup>a</sup> Travels in the United States and Canada, in 1818 and 1819, by J. M. Duncan, A.B., vol. ii., p. 46.

summed up, by the apostle in these words: His countenance could be compared to nothing but the sun in its meridian brightness, when it shines most clearly and powerfully, not a cloud intercepting the effulgence of its rays. John had formerly been most familiar with his divine master; had been accustomed to lean on his breast at table; he had witnessed his glory on the holy mount, during his transfiguration, when "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light," Matt. xvii. 2. But even that spectacle fell far short of what he now beheld; he was utterly overwhelmed, and his senses confounded with the effulgence of his majesty; and such was the effect of this phenomenon upon him, that, on beholding his countenance, he "*fell at his feet as dead.*" The glory was too striking for flesh and blood to sustain, and the organs of vision were not strong enough to endure such an accumulation of celestial radiance; he "fell at his feet as one that was dead." A similar impression was made upon the apostle Paul, as you may recollect, by a view of the Saviour in his glorified state, as he was journeying to Damascus. The account which he has left us of the matter is, that as he was proceeding on his journey at mid-day, he saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining around him;" and the Lord Jesus appeared to him, on which he instantly fell to the earth, Acts ix. 3, 4. And in both cases the condescension of the adorable Redeemer towards his terrified creatures was the same. For, though he expostulated with Paul in persecuting him in his members, and warned him that it was hard for him to kick against the pricks; yet his next words were, "Arise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared to thee, to make thee a minister," &c. Acts xxvi. 16. And now, observe his conduct towards his servant John: "*He laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me: Fear not; I am the first and the last; 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,*" ver. 17, 18. There is something inexpressibly striking and beautiful in the method which the Saviour took to recover the apostle from the panic into which he was thrown. "He laid his right hand upon me," says John. He first touches him to let him feel he was a man, "clothed with our nature still," or "bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh;" and then he speaks to him in the most tender and affectionate strains, as his friend and Saviour, "FEAR NOT." The Shepherd of Israel had often occasion to comfort and encourage his disciples in similar strains during his public ministry, while on earth; and John, when recovered from his panic could not fail to call some of them to recollection: such as "*fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom,*" Luke xii. 32. And on another occasion, as he was with his

disciples in a ship, crossing the sea of Galilee, we are told that "there arose a great storm of wind," which filled the vessel with water, and put them in fear of their lives; on which they awoke Jesus, who was asleep upon a pillow, saying, "Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, 'Peace, be still,' and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." But mark, how he addresses them on this, "*Why are ye so fearful?* how is it that ye have no faith?" It is added, "they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, 'What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?'" Mark iv. 35-41. So in the case before us, the divine Redeemer graciously supported his servant, and dispelled his fears, again declaring himself to be the first and the last, &c.

It has been remarked, that the beauty and force of the words contained in the 18th verse, are a good deal spoiled in our translation; and that literally rendered they would run thus: "I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I became dead, and, behold, I am alive unto ages of ages, or for ever and ever, AMEN; and have the keys of the grave and of death." On this grand topic, so replete with interest to us all, you will, I hope, permit me to enlarge a little, on the present occasion; for I conceive it to be the most important part of our lecture.

Observe, then, that when John was ready to die through fear, on having a vision of the divine glory, the Lord Jesus does not comfort him by reminding him of his apostolic labours, of his being the beloved disciple, nor of his present suffering in a state of banishment, as he now was, for his sake; there is not a glance at any of these things, though all were true; but he draws his attention to his own divine and glorious character—reminds him who he was, and what he had done for the salvation of the guilty, as the only true source of consolation and hope to any of the human race. This is the sovereign antidote against fear, whether it be the fear of death, or that tormenting fear which ever haunts the guilty conscience. "I am the first and the last, and the living One—I was dead—and, behold, I am alive for ever and ever." Thus he encouraged John, by reminding him of that self-same truth, which the gospel presents to the chief of sinners, and which encourages the very worst of mankind, when they first understand and believe it, to hope in the divine mercy. The greatest saint on earth, when disquieted with a sense of guilt or fear of condemnation, can no otherwise find relief, but by the same truth which relieved the thief upon the cross. He never can obtain true relief by imagining, that there is any thing about himself on account of which it becomes God to forgive him more readily than the most profane of mankind, however common it be

in our day for persons to be directed to such a quarter for peace, consolation, and hope. The revealed character of Christ is the only effectual remedy for human wretchedness, and it is that alone to which the apostle John is directed as an antidote to all his excessive fears. Though we had this subject partly under consideration in our last lecture, I trust you will excuse a little repetition on the present occasion.

Consider the character here assumed by the Saviour, "I am the first and the last, and the living One." I conceive this to be of the same import with what is said of him in ver. 4, 8, and 11, where he is termed the Alpha and Omega; He which *is*, and *was*, and is *to come*, the Almighty; and it evidently imports his eternal power and Godhead, as the great first cause and last end of all things—the creator, upholder, and governor of the universe—he who has life in himself, and communicates life to his creatures. But then, it is he who "was dead," which necessarily implies his taking part with us in human nature; for a body was prepared him, according to Ps. xl. 6, 7, which body he took into personal union with himself, that so HE who made the worlds might suffer, and thus "God purchased the church with his own blood," Acts xx. 28. This is the great fact testified by the gospel, that "Christ died for our sins and was buried," 1 Cor. xv. 3. And of this the Lord of life and glory reminds his servant John for his comfort: "I became dead," said he, "and behold *I am alive for evermore.*" Thus he reminds him of his *resurrection* from the dead, according to the Scriptures. That he actually died upon mount Calvary, is a fact admitted both by friends and foes; by the latter as the subject of reproach and shame; by the former as the source of their hope, consolation, and joy. Had Jesus, indeed, like other mortals, remained under the power of the grave, I do not see what comfort any of us could have derived from his death; in that case, the only just inference that we could have deduced from his dying for us would have been, that the ends for which he laid down his life had not been attained; and consequently, that he was still held a prisoner under the power of the grave. But when we consider his death as the ransom price of our redemption; and, in connection with this, view him rising from the dead, we have all possible evidence that God hath accepted his sacrifice,—that he is fully and for ever well pleased with what he has done; we behold the righteous Governor of the universe, in raising him from the dead, vindicating his character as the Son of God—the Saviour of sinners; and, as the reward of his unparalleled obedience, crowning him with glory and honour. So much for the import of his death and resurrection, to which it is added, "*and have the keys of the grave and of death.*" As the "first-born," or "first-begotten from the dead," all power and

dominion belong to him. In his hands are the keys of the invisible world. He can open the gates of paradise to the souls of his sheep, with whom he is present in the valley and shadow of death; and having the keys of death and the grave, he will at the last day ransom them from the power of the last enemy, accomplishing the words of ancient prophecy—"I will redeem them from death: O death! I will be thy plagues; O grave! I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes," Hos. xiii. 14.

These, then, are things which the Lord Jesus presents to the consideration of the apostle John, as an antidote to all his fear and despondency; and the very same things are set before us in the glorious gospel of our salvation, as the ground of our present hope, and a suitable remedy against the fear of death and an approaching judgment. Fear is, indeed, natural to us all; and truly so, for we are all sinners. The most just cause of disquiet in the human breast is, the conviction of sin, and the dread of its punishment. It has been well said, "'Tis conscience that makes cowards of us all." Unacquainted with this glorious remedy, and awake to his real situation, with a conscience oppressed with guilt, the sinner, fond of a miserable life, shudders at the view of an hereafter, which he only knows enough of to dread and contemplate with horror. Death is indeed the king of terrors to the awakened soul; 'tis the entrance upon misery—the forerunner of judgment. What shall dispel this gloom, and enable a human being to meet death with composure?—Nothing but faith in the testimony of Jesus, as exhibited in these verses. But, oh! how refreshing, how divinely excellent are his words in this point of view! They present to the eye of faith a complete and all-perfect atonement for sin, effected by Him who is the first and the last—a most prevalent and valuable one, answerable to all the requirements of the divine law, or the guilt of transgressors—a sacrifice which God has accepted, by which peace is made; and the God of peace has shewn this by raising the sufferer from the dead. Here, then, is an end to all the perplexing questions that haunt the mind and conscience of an awakened sinner: the gospel testifies that the work is done—God is pleased—and Jesus, the almighty Redeemer, is now calling upon all the sons of men, in those sweet and inviting accents, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else," Isa. xlv. 22-25. "HEAR, AND YOUR SOULS SHALL LIVE."

## LECTURE IV.

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UNTO the angel of the church of Ephesus write ; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks ; 2 I know thy works and thy labour ; and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil : and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars : 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. 4 Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works ; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. 6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. 7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches ; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.—Rev. ii. 1—7.

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### EPHESUS.

IN lecturing through the preceding chapter there were two or three things of minor importance came in our way, which I intentionally passed over at the time, perhaps to the surprise of some who heard me ; but I found that to discuss them just then, would interfere with the grand and prominent subject which forms the leading topic of that chapter, namely, the personal dignity, the official characters, and the majestic appearance of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in the vision which the apostle had of him, in his glorified state. Before entering upon a consideration of these seven divine epistles, dictated by the Son of God, and transmitted by his servant John, to the churches in Asia, we shall now briefly advert to those particulars and offer a few remarks thereon.

In the 11th verse of the preceding chapter, the Lord Jesus thus addresses the apostle John : “ 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.” And again, in ver. 19, “ Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter : the mystery (or meaning) 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.”

1. With regard to the country in which these seven churches were situated : ASIA, you know, is the name of one of the four grand divisions of the earth ; but the title does not here occur in that large and comprehensive sense ; it is the *lesser* Asia that is intended ; the Western portion of that great quarter of the globe ; situated on the borders of Syria, having the Black Sea on the north, the river Euphrates on the east, and the Mediterranean Sea on the west. This part of Asia is the most interesting region of the earth, the parent of education, of arts, and arms ; the cradle of mythology, of poetry and eloquence ; the favourite abode of the muses ; the soil in which lay the ancient roots of genius, which have since struck round the world, beautified the moral wastes, and still luxuriantly expand their blossoms in almost every clime of the civilized world. In the time of the apostles, it is said to have comprehended in its bosom two hundred cities, among which were most of the places mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles of Paul. Rome, indeed, the imperial city, was in Italy, and Italy was in Europe ; but Corinth, Philippi, Ephesus, Colosse, Thessalonica, Athens, all the churches of Galatia, Pontus, Cappadocia, and Bithynia, were included in Asia Minor, and lay contiguous to these seven churches. We must not, therefore, suppose that there were no other christian churches in Asia, at that period, but the seven to whom John was commanded to write ; for the contrary is the fact. We have only to trace the journeyings of the great apostle of the Gentiles, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles to be satisfied that this country then abounded with Christians who were gathered into churches, for the worship of the One living and true God, and to observe the ordinances of Christ's house. It would rather appear to have been in compliance with, or a conformity to the general scheme which obtains throughout the Apocalypse, of arranging things by sevens, that the wisdom of God selected those seven churches as patterns of all the rest ; for the things that are said to these churches are equally applicable to all others, and they remain upon record for the instruction of their successors until Christ shall come again.

2. Another thing that I would notice, is the nature of the societies here addressed under the name or title of *churches*. It is of no little importance to us to attend to this matter, and to have our sentiments thereon regulated by the New Testament ; for unless our ideas of what the scripture means by a christian church, or of what kind of societies these were that John wrote unto be correct, we cannot possibly understand the Apocalypse aright ; nor, indeed, a great part of the New Testament. If,

for instance, we are disposed to listen to the learned bishop Newton, and other episcopalians writers, we shall find them reading us plausible lectures about "these seven churches being under St. John's immediate inspection; that he appointed their bishops over them; that he was their metropolitan;" with much more of this kind, which after all, amounts to nothing but "great swelling words of vanity," that will not bear examination by the standard of divine truth; nor should we allow ourselves to be imposed upon by such unfounded representations. These seven churches of Asia bore no resemblance to what is called the church of England; they were not like the kirk of Scotland; and much less the church of Rome; they differed from all *national* churches in every constituent principle. To select the church of Ephesus for an example: It did not comprehend in its bosom all the inhabitants of that famous city, nor yet of any one district or parish in the city, as members of the church; no, indeed, these latter were gathered out of the general mass of the population, by the influence of Christ's gospel upon their hearts, through the power of the Holy Spirit, causing them to understand it, and believe it, and love it, and, consequently, to obey Christ in all things whatsoever he commands in his word. If you require proof of the truth of what I now say, certainly I will furnish it. Turn to the 19th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and you will find an interesting account of the apostle Paul's first visit to Ephesus, and of his first preaching the gospel to the inhabitants, in which good work he persevered for three months, ver. 8, 9. His doctrine concerning Jesus of Nazareth, was violently opposed by the multitude; but, a few individuals enlightened from above, received it as divine truth, and these the apostle separated from their unbelieving neighbours, and formed them into a church, ver. 9; to that church, about seven years afterwards, he wrote the epistle to the Ephesians, and you may see how he addresses them at the commencement of it, ver. 1; he terms them "the *saints* which are at Ephesus; the *faithful* in Christ Jesus," partakers with himself in all the blessings of salvation, ver. 3. Observe how he describes their former state, ch. ii. 1, 2. At the time he first came to preach the gospel among them, they were "dead in trespasses and sins; walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air," namely, the devil, "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Would you know what the apostle means by this melancholy description? you have only to turn again to Acts, ch. xix., and review the state of moral degradation and mental darkness in which the inhabitants of that famous city were sunk, when Paul brought the gospel among them. Mark their complaint against him, for affirming that "they were no

gods which were made with hands," ver. 26 ; that his doctrine undermined the worship of the great goddess Diana, and tended to destroy *her* magnificence whom all Asia and the world worshipped," ver. 27. Transport yourselves in imagination, for a moment, to that celebrated city, and behold it "filled with confusion," every one full of wrath, and for the space of two hours vociferating "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" This is to walk after the course of this world, influenced by the devil, who is at the bottom of all idolatry ; and it justifies what the apostle Paul says of these Ephesians, ch. ii. 12 ; "that *at that time*, they were without Christ ; having no hope, and without God in the world." So he adds, ch. iv. 18, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their hearts ; past feeling, having given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." This was their state before they heard of Christ and his salvation ; and surely there must have been much grace, sovereign, rich, and free grace, displayed in rescuing such hell-deserving apostate rebels from their wretched state ; calling them out of darkness into God's marvellous light ; translating them from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son ; making them fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, ch. ii. 19, and indeed it is into this grace that the apostle resolves the whole, ver. 4-9.

3. Another thing which claims our notice, is the import of the term *angel*, in this place. Not only were these epistles to be addressed to seven distinct churches, but each church is described as having a distinct angel—what shall we make of this ? Much has been written by the learned, and not a little have I read upon the subject, but, without obtaining conviction to my own mind, as to the true import of the term. The episcopalians, no doubt, can furnish a ready answer, viz. that it means *the* bishop or primate, in distinction from the inferior clergy, and so here called by way of eminence *the angel*. I fear, however, that this will not help us over the difficulty, and that for various and important reasons. For, in the first place, as a christian church in primitive times was a very different thing from either the church of Rome, or the church of England, or even that of Scotland—so it would be utterly in vain to look among the primitive churches for different orders of the clergy—or even for such bishops as now obtain the title and office. Hear what the learned Mosheim says on this subject ; "Let none confound the bishops of this primitive and golden period of the church, with those of whom we read in the following ages: for, though they were both designated by the same name, yet they differed extremely in many respects. A bishop, during the first and second centuries,

was a person who had the care of one christian assembly, which at that time was, generally speaking, small enough to be contained in a private house. In this assembly he acted, not so much with the authority of a master, as with the zéal and diligence of a faithful servant. The churches also, in those days, were entirely independent; none of them subject to any foreign jurisdiction, but each one governed by its own rulers, and its own laws;" the learned doctor ought rather to have said, "by the laws of Christ, as contained in the writings of his evangelists and apostles." He very properly adds, that "nothing is more evident than the perfect equality that reigned among the primitive churches; nor does there ever appear, in the first century, the smallest trace of that association of provincial churches, from which *councils* and *metropolitans* derive their origin."<sup>b</sup> To which, with permission, I will add what the Lord himself said to his apostles, in the days of his flesh: "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them; but so shall it not be among you; but whosoever will be great among you shall be your servant, and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be the servant of all; for even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many," Mark x. 42. But, to proceed,

I observe, further, that whatever may be the precise import of the term "angel of the church," as applied to these seven Asiatic churches, one thing is beyond dispute, namely, that one of these churches, and the probability is that each of them, had more than one elder, presbyter, bishop, or pastor, appointed over them—to labour among them in the word and doctrine, and to rule, govern, and direct their affairs. I now refer to the church of Ephesus, and, in proof of what I have just said, refer you to Acts xx. 17—35. From this portion of the sacred history we learn, that in the year after the apostle had taken his departure from Ephesus, he was on his way to Jerusalem; and, not finding it expedient to go through Ephesus, he halted at Miletus, and requested the elders, bishops, or pastors of the church of Ephesus, to give him the meeting there. And, now mark the proof, that this church had a plurality of *bishops*. From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus, and called the *elders*, Gr. *πρεσβυτεροι* of the church—and when they were come he thus addressed them, "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the church over which the Holy Spirit has made you, Gr. *επισκοποι*, *bishops*, or *overseers*, to feed the church of God," &c. And that which is here demonstrated of one church, is probable of the others, viz. that each of them had its bishops and deacons,

<sup>b</sup> Eccles. Hist. vol. i.

like the church at Philippi, ch. i. 1; agreeable to which we read, in Acts xiv. 23, that it was the practice of the apostle Paul to “ordain elders in every church.”

But still the question returns upon us—the term *angel* must import something; and, if we are not warranted to apply it to one individual pastor, presbyter, or overseer, what is the import of it? In answer to this, I can only give you the opinion of others, having none of my own. Some affirm that it is the senior bishop or pastor that is intended; others, the presiding or ruling elder, or, if you will, the archbishop; while a third party, as I think with more propriety, regard the term as a name of office, and so consider it as being synonymous with the word “elder-ship,” or “presbytery;” thus including all the pastors, overseers, or bishops in each church. But whatever may be the precise meaning of the title, one thing is very plain, and with that my own mind rests satisfied, that the things contained in each letter, are the common concernment of the whole of the members of each church, and not of the pastors exclusively. “He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith *unto the churches.*” We now resume the thread of our lectures.

CHAP. II. ver. 1—“*Unto the angel of the church of EPHEBUS write.*” The city of Ephesus, in ancient times, was a place of no ordinary renown; and a short account of it, in addition to the remarks already made, may not be here out of place. It was the metropolis of that part of Asia termed the Proconsular Asia, and was situated upon the river Cayster, on the side of a hill, and much celebrated for its local scenery. But the chief ornament of the place was the famous temple of Diana, which, for its stupendous greatness and marvellous workmanship, was once accounted one of the wonders of the world. It is said to have measured four hundred and five feet in length, and two hundred and twenty in breadth, and to have been supported by a hundred and twenty-seven pillars of marble, seventy feet high. It was two hundred years in building, and erected at the expence of all Asia. Seven times it was set on fire; and it is recorded in profane history as a remarkable circumstance, that on two of these occasions it happened at the moment of other signal events taking place: for instance, it once happened on the day that their great philosopher, Socrates, was poisoned; and the other, on the night that Alexander the Great was born. The conflagration last referred to was effected by a person of the name of Herostratus, a philosopher, and, as he himself confessed, for the sole purpose of doing something which should hand down his name to posterity. But it was rebuilt at an immense expence, and, in the days of the apostle Paul, it retained a great part of its former grandeur; but so complete has been its destruction under the Turks, when they

ravaged the country about the year 1000, that the exact spot on which it stood is now a matter of dispute among the learned.

When the apostle Paul first came to preach Christ's gospel there, the inhabitants of Ephesus were much addicted to magical arts, and pretended to great skill in spells and necromancy. The Εφεσια γραμματα, or Ephesian letters, so often mentioned by ancient authors, were certain obscure spells and charms, with which they pretended to cure diseases, and to drive away devils and evil spirits. They are said to have been invented in this city, and reduced into some kind of system, which was committed to writing. The books which communicated the knowledge of these "Arcana," or what we now call "occult sciences," were accounted of great value among the people, and were studied with great avidity; and though they had been prohibited by a law of the empire, yet they were retained, and the practices founded upon them persevered in, until Paul exposed their diabolical origin and influence so completely, and made the abettors of them so much ashamed, that "they came and confessed and shewed their deeds—many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver," or £1,500 sterling, Acts, ch. xix. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed," ver. 20.

Such (for your time does not permit me to enlarge) was the renowned city of Ephesus, when the apostle Paul, in obedience to his Lord's commission, visited it with the glad tidings of peace and salvation; and such was the success which crowned his labours, that "the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified,"—a christian church was gathered, to which, about seven or eight years afterwards, the apostle wrote that most interesting letter which forms a part of the New Testament writings, under the title of "The Epistle to the Ephesians," and to which same church, about forty years after that, the Lord Jesus Christ commissioned his apostle John to write, in his name, as follows:—*"These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars,"* &c.

The observations which I have to offer on the things contained in this epistle, may be reduced to four heads: The commendation bestowed upon this church: the things for which she is blamed: the exhortation given to her: and the awful threatening by which it is enforced.

1. The King of Zion condescends to commend the church of Ephesus in various respects. She was careful to maintain *purity of doctrine*: "Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars," ver. 2. And from this we may learn, of what importance it is in *his* estimation that a christian church should hold fast "the form of sound words"—

“ the faith once delivered to the saints ;” that they should “ stand fast in the *true* grace of God,” in opposition to all counterfeits of that grace, with which the world abounds. There is a spurious charity abroad in the professing world, which is equally courteous to truth and error—which esteems a conscientiousness in error equivalent to soundness in the faith ; but it was not so with the church of Ephesus : they “ tried the spirits whether they were of God,” and they detected too many flaming professors who came among them, exposing the fallacy of their pretensions to be hearing the apostles ; and for this Christ commends them. Another thing which he commends, is their unwearied diligence in good works : “ I know thy works and thy labour : for my name’s sake thou hast laboured, and hast not fainted,” ver. 2, 3. In this important respect, they fell under the exhortation which the apostle Paul gave the Corinthian church : “ Be ye stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord ; forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord,” 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Further : the Lord takes notice of their patient suffering on account of their profession, and highly commends it : “ I know thy patience ; thou hast borne and hast patience ; thou hast laboured, and hast not fainted,” ver. 2, 3. It is a melancholy fact, that many professors commence the christian race with great ardour ; they run well for a time, and they bid fair for eternal life ; like the stony ground hearers, they receive the word with joy ; but when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, they are presently stumbled, give up their profession, and return to the world as their portion. Happily, it was not so with the brethren at Ephesus : they ran the race of faith and patience, endured a great fight of affliction, and persevered, amidst much opposition, in the good profession they had made of Christ’s name ; and this he commends. To all which we may add, that the Lord commends them for their strictness and zeal in maintaining the discipline of his house : “ Thou canst not bear them that are evil ; thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate,” ver. 2, 6. It is far from being certain what were the practices of the Nicolaitanes, here referred to. Some say they were a sect that pleaded for polygamy, or having a plurality of wives ; while Scott, the latest of our commentators, terms them “ a sect of avowed and most abominable Antinomians,” who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness. But, whatever were their specific tenets and practices, they were hateful to Christ, and hateful also to the church at Ephesus.

Taking a review of the things which the Lord here commends, one is apt to think that such a church must have been unexceptionable and blameless ; but the Lord Jesus will make all the

churches to know that it is HE who searcheth the reins and hearts, ver. 23, and that he can discover and punish the most latent alienations of heart, which it would not be warrantable in us so much as to suspect in one another. And therefore, notwithstanding all this fair appearance, he has somewhat against this church, namely, ver. 4. "*Because thou hast left thy first love.*" By their *first love*, is meant that love, delight, and gratitude towards their God and Saviour, which was kindled in their hearts when they first tasted that the "Lord is gracious." We have many instances, or specimens, of this first love on record, such as may serve to shew us what it means—as in the case of Mary, who loved much because much was forgiven her, Luke vii. 44—47. So also in the Galatians, when the gospel first came among them, such was their joy in the truth, that they received the apostle as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus, Gal. iv. 14. The case was much the same with the Hebrews, when, on the day of Pentecost, Peter preached the gospel to them, "they *gladly* received his doctrine:" it was like life from the dead to them, Acts ii. 44—47, and we may see how it led them to abound in "the work of faith and labour of love towards Christ's name," ch. iv. 32—34. The Lord, by the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah, puts his ancient people Israel in mind of "the kindness of their youth, the love of their espousals," when the fresh sense of *his* love in redeeming them from Egypt glowed upon their hearts, and when he took them into a marriage relation to himself; and he blames them for forgetting this, Jer. ii. 1—7. So here, in like manner, Christ addresses the church at Ephesus in the endearing character of a husband, and reprehends his bride in the jealousy of love. He acknowledges her dutiful demeanour in every thing outward and visible; but he cannot endure that the kindness of her youth should subside, or the love of her espousals wax cold. This *first love* was the original spring or motive of all those good things which he commands in this church. It was the faith of his loving her and giving himself for her, which influenced her to love him and his people, and cheerfully to fall in with his commandments and ordinances, and so her first works were the works of faith and labours of love. The church at Ephesus had left this first love, by losing the deep impressions which they had of their own guilt and unworthiness, and which is set forth in Paul's epistle to them, ch. ii. 1—3, and this he calls upon them to remember, ver. 11, 12. As the effect of this forgetfulness, the deep and affecting impression of that great love wherewith God had loved them, when dead in trespasses and sins, and which had been once so sweet to them, had insensibly worn off their mind. There can be no proper view of the love of God, but as it has respect to the misery of man, for it is redeeming love; and redemption has no



meaning but in relation to guilt and misery. If we once lose sight of the latter, our views of and relish for the former must necessarily subside in proportion. It is in this connection that God commends his love; and even in heaven the relish of it is maintained by remembering that they were washed from their sins in the blood of the Lamb. When the Ephesians thus lost the lively impressions of God's redeeming love, they must unavoidably abate in the ardour of their love and gratitude to the God of their salvation, such as they had on the first discovery of his love to them; and this must necessarily give a new complexion to all their obedience.

Let us now glance at the exhortation which the Saviour gives to this church: "Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works," ver. 5. The shepherd and bishop of souls, while he points out the malady, is careful to prescribe the remedy. He does not give them up as irrecoverable; he does not consider their case as desperate; he walks among them as a reprovcr, and whom he loves he rebukes and chastens, ch. iii. 19. The first thing that he calls this church unto, is to remember from whence she had fallen: this was the first step towards recovery. The apostle Paul, under divine direction, taught the Hebrews the very same lesson, viz. to call to remembrance former days, in which, after they were enlightened, they endured a great fight of affliction, &c. Heb. x. 32. Much has been said and written on the subject of past experience, and the use we should make of it: but, indeed, the thing is good or bad, salutary or hurtful, according to the use that is made of it. For instance, if we have recourse to former experiences, in order to support a presumptuous hope, to quiet our present sense of guilt, and put them in the place of the atoning blood of Jesus, they will prove a snare unto us; but if we recall them to recollection as a motive to repentance, and as an encouragement to put our trust in the atonement which has formerly given us relief, then they are of great advantage, and such use and purpose the Ephesians are called to make of them.

Having fallen from their first love, the exhortation to remember from whence they had fallen, must be an exhortation to call to mind those views and impressions which first excited the ardour of their affection. They were to call to recollection the deplorable state and condition in which they found themselves, when the love of God first beamed upon them, giving them hope in the divine mercy: they were enemies, ungodly, without strength, and liable to the curse of the law, Rom. v. 6—11. They were to remember that complete relief and happiness which they found, when first the atonement was manifested to their consciences, communicating a sense of pardon and forgiveness, peace with

God, and the lively hope of glory. They were to realize afresh, the love, the gratitude, and delight which this discovery kindled in their hearts towards God, and that fervent charity towards one another, as fellow-heirs of this grace. In a word, the Saviour would have them to retrace in their remembrance *how* they had fallen from these views, these enjoyments, and their corresponding effects, to their present state of comparative deadness, distance and alienation, that thus comparing their present with their former state, they might be duly struck with the difference and thoroughly sensible from whence they had fallen.

The Lord Jesus enforces this exhortation by a severe threatening: "Else I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent," ver. 5. He calls upon them not only for a change of mind, but for a change of conduct also; they were not only to return to their *first love*, but to do their *first works*, viz.: the works of faith and labours of love to Christ's name, without which all their professions of faith and love, and all their works flowing from another principle, were nothing in his estimation. But the threatening with which he enforces this call to repentance is the matter now before us, "I will remove thy *candlestick* out of its place, except thou repent." We have already seen that by the term *candlestick*, is here meant the church: this is Christ's own explanation, ch. i. 20. It was mentioned in a former lecture that there is an allusion here to the golden candlestick made by divine direction for the use of the tabernacle of old, and which stood in the holy place; it consisted of seven lamps, Exod. xxxvii. 17,—23, and these the priests were to trim and replenish with oil, so as to be kept continually burning, Lev. xxiv. 2. You will find the very same similitude, Zech. iv. 2. In the midst of these candlesticks, and in allusion to the priest's care and attention to the seven lamps of old, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the alone priest of the New Testament churches, now walks. The oil with which the priests furnished the lamps of the candlestick, was typical of the Holy Spirit, which Christ administers to his churches, for maintaining their spiritual life, light, and comfort. And when the Lord Jesus threatens the church of Ephesus to "remove the candlestick out of his place," it imports, that it should no longer hold its place or station among the other lamps, but should be struck off from the number of his churches, whatever outward appearance it should make. It implies that he would withdraw the oil, or, dropping the metaphor, that he would withdraw the influences of his Spirit from them, whereby their light, life, and comfort, would be gone, and their lamp be extinguished, as to any light they would show the world, or any edification they would reap themselves or administer to one another. He would no more walk among them, as in his temple, giving

them fellowship with himself in his ordinances, or hold the stars, (that is, their overseers) in his right hand, supporting and furnishing them with spiritual gifts for their government, instruction, and edification.

This interesting epistle concludes with a call upon us, and upon all who have an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches—thus, bringing the subject of it home, to our own business and bosom: for whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. And then follows a most gracious and soul-refreshing promise in these words: “To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God,” ver. 7.

All these epistles suppose the churches to which they are addressed, to be in a militant state; for you will observe that at the end of each of them there is a promise of blessedness to the conqueror—“to him that overcometh.” And though this blessedness be couched under different metaphors, and expressed in different terms, it all comes to the same issue eventually, a participation of the glory into which Christ is entered as the forerunner of his people. Here it is expressed by his “eating of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God;” in allusion to the garden of Eden, which the Lord God planted, and in which he placed our first parents—an earthly paradise, the felicities of which they lost by transgression. And so here that state of immortality and eternal life which was procured by the second Adam for all those for whom he died, is promised to him that overcometh.

From the whole of what has been now said, we may learn the high importance which Christ attaches to his real churches in this world, the honour that is conferred upon them as the depositaries of his truth, the interest he condescends to take in all their affairs, and his jealousy over them, as to the state of their hearts and affections. Let then his professed churches collectively, and each member individually, examine themselves by the things that are said to the church of Ephesus, and like that church be called to repentance.

## LECTURE V.

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

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### SMYRNA.

OF the seven cities of Asia, to whose churches the apostle John was commissioned to write in the name of his Divine Master, Smyrna is, at the present day, by far the most considerable. It is computed to contain a population of a hundred thousand inhabitants; of which, one half or more are Turks, and the remainder, Greeks, Armenians, and Europeans. It probably owes much of its present greatness to its local situation, at the head of a winding gulf of the Grecian Archipelago, which affords it peculiar advantages for the purposes of trade and commerce. The latter, indeed, are so considerable, as to make it to be considered the emporium of the Levant; and a chartered company of British merchants have, for many centuries past, retained an establishment there. It is situated about five-and-forty miles distant from Ephesus, and to the northward of that city. We are told that it extends about a mile along the water, in approaching from which, it makes a very beautiful appearance. But, though I make these observations on its *present* state and condition, it does not fall in with the plan and object of these lectures, to descend to more minute particulars, for it is with its former state that we have to do—and with that, only as connected with the kingdom of Christ. By whom the gospel was first preached in the city of Smyrna, and by whose ministry a christian church was gathered there, the Scriptures do not expressly inform us; but the probability is, that the apostle Paul was the honoured instrument, and that it took place during the two years he passed at Ephesus, Acts xix. 22. Let it, however, suffice for us to know, that the Son of God had disciples in that city, collected into a church

state, to whom John was commanded to write; and it has often been noticed as a most extraordinary circumstance, that the Lord found nothing, or at least mentions nothing, in the way of blame in this church. They appear to have been “an afflicted and poor people, trusting in the name of the Lord,” Zeph. iii. 12; tried in no ordinary degree, but maintaining the conflict, with much patience and self-denial, and in all things obedient to the will of Christ.

The epistle opens with a call upon them to consider the character of that sublime Being who now addresses them. “*These things saith the First and the Last—He who was dead, and is alive,*” ver. 8. The import of these attributes, or titles, “*the First and the Last,*” we had under consideration in both the second and third lectures, and it is therefore the less necessary to dwell upon the subject here. He who is the *first* cause, and the *last* end of all things, must be the eternal Jehovah; and this high character is laid claim to by him “who was once under the dominion of death, and the power of the grave, but who rose again from the dead, and now lives after the power of an endless life.”

As the main design of this epistle is, not to administer reproof, but encouragement and support under the very trying circumstances in which they were placed, it was of the last importance for the brethren at Smyrna to have their attention fixed upon *the character*, and recalled to a consideration of the *death* and *resurrection* of HIM by whom they are now addressed. Nothing could possibly be more calculated to raise their drooping spirits, and promote their stedfastness in the good profession which they had made of Christ’s name, than realizing views of their Lord’s glory and greatness, and to be assured that He had his eye upon them, —and of this, John is commanded to put them in mind.

“*I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty.*” We can be at no loss to ascertain what those works are which Christ particularly looks for in his churches—they are the good works of the gospel; not only such works as He has prescribed in his word, but especially such works as are produced by the influence of the gospel—“the work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” It was from these fruits of the gospel abounding among them, that the apostle Paul inferred the election of the Thessalonians, ch. i. 3; they are, in an especial manner, the works of charity, flowing from love to the Saviour, and influenced by a sense of redeeming grace, Tit. ii. 14; feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked; or, as Paul expresses it to the Hebrews, “ministering to the necessities of saints,” Heb. vi. 10. These are works which God our Saviour is not unrighteous to forget; he honours them with tokens of his approbation here, and will reward them openly at the last day. See

Matt. xxv. 31, &c. In these good works, the church of Smyrna excelled; and they were performed under very unfavourable circumstances, which greatly enhanced their value. It was in the midst of *tribulation*; not while they were basking in the sunshine of prosperity, enjoying the favour of princes, and the great of this world, but while adversity was their lot—perhaps severely persecuted by the heathen magistrates on account of their profession, which was not only a common, but an almost universal case in those days. But the Lord Jesus does not overlook their situation, and therefore it is added, “I know thy *tribulation*, and thy *poverty*.”

It is happy for many of the real fearers of God, that worldly prosperity is never held forth in the New Testament as a mark of discipleship; for, certainly, as regards the good things of this life, it is their lot to have a much more scanty portion of them than others. It is one of the characteristics of Christ’s kingdom, that “the poor have the gospel preached unto them.” And not only is it preached unto them, but, such is the will of heaven, that it is chiefly from among them that its divine author selects the trophies of his grace. “Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?” James ii. 5. Certainly, “not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called,” 1 Cor. i. 26. And the church at Smyrna would appear, in this respect, to exhibit a striking picture of Christ’s kingdom in its militant state, corresponding with the view given of it in ancient prophecy—“the bruised reed and smoking flax.” When in a great trial of affliction, as was the case in the church of Smyrna, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty tends unto the riches of their liberality, they illustriously display the power of the gospel. There is no virtue in being poor and persecuted; but this state serves, above all others, to manifest the christian temper and the power of godliness. Patient suffering for Christ is the best proof of discipleship; and the good works of the gospel, abounding in a church that is oppressed with poverty and affliction, most illustriously displays the power of the truth, demonstrating that there is a reality in religion. This was the happy case with the church at Smyrna; and, accordingly, it is recorded of this church, notwithstanding their tribulation and poverty, that they were “*rich*.”

But, “how can a church be poor, and yet rich?” exclaims the sceptic: this is a paradox, indeed! Poverty and riches are, no doubt, very different things, and rich and poor are very different states and conditions, as things go in this world; and yet, in the kingdom of Christ, it is no uncommon thing for these opposites

to meet in one and the same individual. A Christian may be *poor*, and destitute of daily food, yet *rich* in faith, rich in good works, and the heir of an eternal kingdom. The riches which Christ approves belong to the mind; a new heart and a right spirit, are the treasures which please one who looks into the secret recesses of the soul. Humility, self-denial, contrition of heart, are delightful to Christ. He was himself *meek* and *lowly* of heart, and a broken and contrite spirit he will not despise; it is to him a pleasing sacrifice, even as, to bind up the broken in heart, was one object of his mission into our world. And with regard to what men call riches, you may recollect the lesson which the Saviour read to his disciples upon one occasion, as they beheld the great of their day casting their riches into the treasury of God. There came a poor widow, and threw in two mites, which are equal to a farthing. "Verily," said the Saviour, "this widow hath cast in more than they all; for they contributed out of their abundance; while she of her penury hath cast in all that she hath." This shews us, that the Lord looks upon the heart, and forms his estimate on principles very different from those that prevail in the kingdoms of this world; he accepteth according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not. "Charge them that are rich in this world," says Paul, "that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works: ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life," 1 Tim. vi. 17, &c. These were the maxims which regulated the conduct of the church at Smyrna; and it is in reference to these that the Lord Jesus condescends to testify of them, "Thou art rich"—rich towards God—rich as heirs of eternal glory. It is added—

*"And I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."*

The apostle Paul, in writing to the church at Rome (ch. ii. 28, &c.) intimates a distinction among Jews, which it is important for us to attend to, if we would enter into the meaning of many parts of the apostolic writings, and these words of the Saviour in particular. I will explain, as briefly as possible, how I understand the matter, and its bearing upon the subject before us. The apostle's words are, "He is not a Jew which is one *outwardly*; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one *inwardly*; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God." Now it would seem that, according to this, the term *Jew*, and the term *circumcision*, had both a literal and a

mystical meaning. Outward circumcision in the flesh of Abraham's natural seed, was only a type of the circumcision of the heart of his spiritual seed, or of that "circumcision which is made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ," Col. ii. 11. Hence, New Testament believers are termed "*the circumcision*, who worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh," Phil. iii. 3. And what has now been remarked of the term "circumcision," applies with equal force to the word "Jew," considered in its mystical or hidden sense. The Jews, as such, laid claim to the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, on the ground of their connection with Abraham; but our Lord and his forerunner, and his apostles too, always repel this claim as utterly unfounded. Agreeable to which, we find the apostle saying, "they are not all Israel," in other words, they are not all *Israelites indeed*, "who are of Israel," viz. by natural descent; which is only saying, in so many words, that all were not real *Jews*, who claimed that name merely as descending from Abraham. Now, to apply these remarks to the subject before us:

In the days of the apostles, the Gentile churches were much troubled by a class of teachers of Jewish extraction, who, losing sight of the distinction to which we have just adverted, were for carrying matters with a high hand, insisting upon their right to all the privileges of the Messiah's kingdom, *because they were Jews*, because HE sprang from them according to the flesh; and, not content with this arrogant claim, they went still further, and insisted, that unless the Gentiles were circumcised, and kept *their law*, they could not be saved. Now observe, I pray you, how the apostle Paul treated these men. Thus he writes to Titus concerning them: "There are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially *they of the circumcision*; whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake," Tit. i. 10, 11. Hear him again, when warning the Philippians of the same description of men: "Beware of dogs; beware of evil workers; beware of the concision," ch. iii. 2. The churches of Galatia were much infested with these corrupt Jewish teachers, many of whom got access among the churches, where they did infinite mischief, by perverting the gospel of Christ from its original simplicity; but what does the apostle say of them? He denounces the severest anathemas against them in the first chapter, and having exposed their characters, and refuted their heresy, he adds, "I would they were even cut off which trouble you," ch. v. 12. Their object is, to make a fair show in the flesh, for which end they constrain you to be circumcised; but their sole motive is, that they themselves may escape persecution for the cross of Christ, ch. vi. 12, 13.



With such persons as these, the church of Smyrna appears to have been tried; but happily they had escaped the snare of the devil; and, we now see what the Lord himself says of such unruly and vain talkers, and deceivers; "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not; they are *the synagogue of Satan*," and thus he shews his high approbation of the conduct of this church in resisting their pretensions. He adds, "*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days.*"

To be the victims of persecution, to be called to endure affliction, to sustain tribulation for righteousness' sake, has, more or less, in one shape or other, been the lot of the righteous, the friends of truth and virtue, from the beginning. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and hers," said Jehovah to the serpent, "it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," Gen. iii. 15. This enmity soon began to make its appearance in the family of Adam, when Cain slew his brother Abel; "and wherefore slew he him," says the apostle John, "but because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous," 1 John iii. 12. When the Saviour was upon earth, he often drew the attention of his followers to this subject, warning them of it, and preparing them for it. "In the world ye shall have tribulation," said he, "but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world," John xvi. 33; see also ver. 1—4. "Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake; but he that shall endure unto the end shall be saved," Matt. xxvi. 9, &c. His apostles went forth treading in his steps, and teaching the same things, always apprising the disciples that it was "through much tribulation they must enter the kingdom of God," Acts xiv. 22. To the church of the Thessalonians, Paul says, "Ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which, in Judea are in Christ Jesus; for, ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews, who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men," 1 Thess. ii. 14, 15. Under these trying circumstances Paul would gladly have paid them a visit, "but Satan hindered him." And his advice to them when absent, was, "that no man should be moved by these afflictions," seeing that when he was with them he had repeatedly apprized them that they should suffer tribulation, even as it came to pass," ch. iii. 3, 4, appealing to themselves for the truth of all this. So the Saviour from on high, apprizes the church at Smyrna, of what they had to expect, namely, that the Devil, who was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, should excite wicked men to persecute them, causing some of them to be cast into prison, that

their constancy might be put to the test, and "they should have tribulation ten days." I believe it is usual with commentators to explain these "ten days" of ten prophetic days, that is, ten years, and thus to consider it as a prophecy of the ten years persecution which took place under the Roman emperor Dioclesian, and which grievously afflicted all the Asiatic, and indeed all the Eastern churches. I shall not quarrel with this interpretation; the fact may be so, that these ten days are prophetic of that ten years persecution. Let us not, however, overlook this fact, that the number *ten* frequently occurs in the Old Testament in a mystical sense. As for example, in Gen. xxxi. 7, 41, when Jacob complained that Laban had changed his wages *ten times*, the meaning is, that he had done it *many times*; in Levit. xxvi. 26, *ten women* is put for "many women." In 1 Sam. i. 8, *ten sons* is put for many sons. So Job says to his friends, "these *ten times* have ye reproached me," ch. xix. 3. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon found Daniel and his three associates *ten times* better than all the magicians and astrologers of his realm, Dan. i. 20. From these, and many other instances which might be adduced, it is plain that the number ten is not always to be understood literally.

Now to sum up our remarks on this subject we find that about ten years after the writing of these seven epistles to the churches of Asia, the imperial sceptre was swayed by Trajan, who appointed the ingenious and philosophic Pliny to the government of Bithynia, a province of Asia Minor, and in the vicinity of these seven churches. In the year 106 or 107, Pliny wrote to the emperor for advice, how he should conduct matters relating to the Christians in his province. You will find his letter at length, with the Emperor's answer to it, in my *History of the Christian Church*, vol. i. ch. ii. sect. i. It would occupy too much of your time to read the whole at present, but I will give you one short extract, as a specimen of what the condition of the christian profession was at that time. Thus the mild and amiable Pliny writes to the Emperor: "The method which I have hitherto observed with the Christians, who have been accused *as such*, has been as follows: I interrogated them,—“are you Christians?” And if they avowed it, I put the same question a second, and a third time, threatening them with the punishment decreed by the law: if they still persisted, I ordered them to be immediately executed, (put to death) for, of this I had no doubt, whatever was the nature of their religion, that such perverseness and inflexible obstinacy certainly deserved punishment." Unhappy man! He had no conception that religion had any thing to do with conscience!

From these hints, a tolerably correct idea may be formed, by a reflecting mind, of the temper of the Heathen magistrates towards

the disciples of Christ, in the provinces of Asia. We find that it was a capital offence for a man to avow himself a christian, and even the mild and philosophic Pliny, could not tolerate it. The Emperor, in his reply, approves the line of conduct which Pliny tells him he had pursued, but advises him not to encourage spies and informers, nor to listen to anonymous accusations, which, he says, would be establishing a precedent of the worst kind, and wholly inconsistent with the maxims of his government, for, after all, Trajan was a mild and tolerant prince, when compared with many of the Roman emperors.

But it would be doing great injustice to the subject before us, the state of the church at Smyrna, were we wholly to omit mentioning such matters connected with it as have been recorded by writers of ecclesiastical history who are worthy of credit. I will therefore, with your permission, pursue the subject a little further.

The emperor Trajan was succeeded in the government of the Roman empire, by Adrian, who swayed the imperial sceptre one-and-twenty years. During his reign and that of his predecessor, Christianity made a rapid progress through the Gentile countries, insomuch, that Pliny owned in his celebrated letter, that the Pagan temples had become "almost desolate." Under this state of things we cannot be surprised at what Dr. Mosheim, assures us was the fact, that "the Pagan priests set the populace in motion to demand from the magistrates, with one voice, during the public games, the destruction of the Christians; and the magistrates, fearing that a sedition might be the consequence of despising or opposing these popular clamours, were too much disposed to indulge them in their requests." It is a remarkable circumstance, however, and deserves our notice, that there was one magistrate, high in office during this period, who seemed to think that the Christians were very hardly dealt with. This individual was Seranus Granianus, the proconsul of Asia, and he even ventured to write to the emperor Adrian, in something like a tone of remonstrance; telling him that "it seemed to him unreasonable, that the Christians should be put to death, merely to gratify the clamours of the people, without trial and without being convicted of any crime." To the praise of the emperor be it recorded, that he admitted the force and propriety of what the Proconsul said; and he accordingly issued his rescript to the following effect: that he would not have his subjects disturbed without cause, and that sycophants should not be encouraged in their odious practices; if persons came forward publicly and accused the Christians of any crime, so as to allow them an opportunity of answering for themselves, he would have the affair examined in a proper manner by the magistrates, without giving place to rude demands and mere clamours. If the Christians were

convicted of breaking the laws, let them be punished, said he ; but if the charge were a mere calumny, he would have the calumniator punished as he deserved. This was noble on the part of the emperor, and its effects may be easily imagined ; it greatly checked the fury of the persecution.

But, perhaps, some of you are ready to ask, what connection has all this with the state of the church at Smyrna, whose epistle is the subject of consideration ? My reply is, that it has very much to do with it. 'Tis impossible for us to enter into the full import of that epistle, without understanding and taking into account, the peculiar circumstances in which that church was placed at the time in regard to their christian profession. The emperor Adrian died in the year 138, and was succeeded by a race of princes of the name of Antonines. At this time the venerable Polycarp was one of the pastors of the church in Smyrna, an office which he is said to have filled for more than eighty years.

In the year 162, a persecution broke out against the Christians at Smyrna, and some other of the cities of Asia ; and Polycarp, in a particular manner was marked out for destruction. The cry of the multitude was, " this is the famous teacher, the father of the Christians, the subverter of our gods, who teaches men they must not perform the sacred rites, nor worship our deities ; away with these Atheists." The friends of Polycarp, anxious for his safety, prevailed on him to withdraw from public view, and retire to a neighbouring village, which he did. During this time the most diligent search was made for him but in vain, which so incensed his adversaries, that they seized several of his brethren and put them to the torture to compel them to betray him. When this reached the ears of the venerable old man, he resolved to be no longer concealed,—“The will of the Lord be done,” was his pious ejaculation, and he instantly surrendered himself. When brought to Smyrna, he was carried before the Proconsul, who demanded whether he was Polycarp of whom he had heard such complaint ; beckoning to him, it is said, to answer in the negative. But when he refused to deny, the Proconsul urged him to “blaspheme and deny Christ, and on that condition promised him safety.” His answer to this was “Fourscore and six years have I served Christ, neither hath he ever wronged me at any time ; how then can I now deny my Saviour and King ?” The Proconsul then urged him to swear by the fortune of Cæsar : to which he replied “that the christian religion taught obedience to civil governors, but to swear by Cæsar’s fortune out of vain glory he must decline.” He was then threatened with wild beasts, fire, and torments ; he, however, stood unmoved, saying, “you threaten me with fire, which shall last but an hour and is quickly

quenched ; but you are ignorant of the everlasting fire of the day of judgment, and of those endless torments which are reserved for the wicked ! but why do you delay ? appoint me what death you please." Such confidence confounded the Proconsul, who was amazed at such a display of courage in an old man ; he then commanded the crier to make proclamation thrice, that Polycarp avowed himself a christian, and without further ceremony, he was sentenced to the flames, which were instantly lighted around him. In the midst of the fire, he thus addressed his prayer to heaven : " O, God ! the Father of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and through whom we have received the knowledge of thee ! O God, the Creator of all things, upon thee I call, thee I confess to be the true God ; thee I glorify. Oh ! Lord receive me and make me a partaker of the resurrection of thy saints, through the merits of our great High Priest thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and holy Spirit, be honour and glory for ever, Amen."

After hearing this, turn I beseech you to our Lord's address to the church at Smyrna, and remark what he says to them. "*Fear none of those things that shall come upon thee ; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death,*" ver. 11. Brethren ! I cannot help thinking, but it might be useful to us, could we bring this subject home to our own business and bosoms ; I mean could we be prevailed upon to realize the case of the Christians in Asia at that trying period, make it our own, and each put the question to his own heart, how should we have answered the interrogation of the magistrate ? Life is sweet to us all ; " skin for skin," says Job, " all that a man hath will he give for his life." But in the case of these, brethren, you see, there was no alternative. To avow themselves Christians was to forfeit life ; to deny Christ was to incur the second death. What should support the heart of man under such trying circumstances ? Nothing but faith in the revealed character of the Saviour, as " the first and the last ; He who was dead, but is alive again ;" who died for the sins of his people, and rose again for their justification ; and confidence in his power and faithfulness, when he says, "*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life—*" a crown to reward their poverty and their fidelity, and their conflict ; a crown of life to reward those that have been faithful unto death. Happy martyrs, the first death shall not hurt them ; and the second death shall have no power over them.

Let us improve this subject.

The Lord Jesus Christ, in this epistle to the church at Smyrna, speaks, you see, of the *blasphemy* of some who called themselves Jews, while in reality they were not so, but were in fact the syna-

gogue of Satan. Methinks we may take a useful hint from this! If the name of "jew" is blasphemed by those who lay claim to it, while they are not circumcised in heart, and consequently not Jews *inwardly*, what shall be said of those who profess to be Christians, while, in fact, they have nothing of Christianity about them but the name? The apostle James, referring to the oppressions which certain rich men, in his day, exercised over the poor of Christ's flock, asks, "do not they blaspheme that *worthy name* by the which ye are called? ch. ii. 7. And what shall we say of those in our day, who, while they assume the christian name, are walking after the course of this world, pursuing, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life?" Is not the worthy name of "*christian*" sadly abused, think you, when it is applied to such persons? And yet they would probably take it very much amiss, were we to say to them, as Christ said to the unbelieving Jews of his day, "ye are of your father the devil; ye are of the world that lieth in the wicked one." It is surely an awful matter to be deceived on a subject of such momentous concern as this; let us then look into it a little narrowly and see how the matter stands. If we examine the Bible with attention, we shall find that no one can be a christian by country, birth, or parentage; neither can he be made such by having what is termed baptism administered to him while an unconscious babe. That catechism is diabolical in its tendency which teaches persons to say, that by being sprinkled in their infancy, they were made "members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven." No; verily, this is all a delusion. To be a christian, a man must be born again of the incorruptible seed of the word, John i. 13; Jam. i. 21. To be a christian, in the New Testament sense of the term, a man must *believe* in Christ, as he is held forth in the holy Scriptures, that is, as the Word incarnate; Immanuel; God manifest in flesh; the Son of God, who came into the world to save sinners; the prophet, priest, and king of his church, who died for the salvation of guilty rebels, and rose again for the justification of all his people. To be a christian it is necessary to *possess the spirit of Christ*, for "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." A christian is one that *loves* Christ supremely, and that prefers Christ and his salvation to every thing else. In short, a true christian is one who *obeys* Christ, acknowledges him as the Lord of his conscience, and so takes up his cross daily and follows him, in a course of disconformity to this present evil world, in the way of patient suffering and self-denial, counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord.

One observation more and I close the present lecture. I address myself in an especial manner to the members of this chris-

tian church, and beseech them to look carefully to the state of their hearts and affections, in reference to the Saviour. Beware of taking your estimate of christian character from what passes currently in the religious world for such. No two things in nature can well be more unlike than the primitive disciples of Christ, and the nominal Christians of the present day. Look to the first and what do you see? men and women who had found in Jesus the pearl of great price, and were led by the value which they placed upon it to make the most costly sacrifices in order to retain possession of it: men who had turned their backs upon the world, whom its smiles could not allure, nor its frowns intimidate: men who lived above the world, going through it in the quality of strangers and pilgrims, who had here no abiding city, but passing the time of their sojourn in the fear of God, walking in the footsteps of their Heavenly Leader; and by patient continuance in well doing, waiting for his second coming to perfect their salvation. Such were the primitive Christians, and to them Christ was precious; they considered it an honour to suffer for his sake; and if called to lay down their lives, they could comply without reluctance. Where, in the present day, shall we look for their successors?

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Parent of Hope, immortal Truth! make known  
 Thy deathless wreaths, and triumphs all thine own:  
 The silent progress of thy power is such,  
 Thy means so feeble, and despised so much,  
 That few believe the wonders thou hast wrought,  
 And none can teach them, but whom thou hast taught.

These are thy glorious works, eternal Truth,  
 The scoff of withered age and beardless youth;  
 These move the censure and illiberal grin  
 Of fools, that hate thee and delight in sin;  
 But these shall last when night has quenched the pole,  
 And heaven is all departed as a scroll,  
 And when, as Justice has long since decreed,  
 This earth shall blaze, and a new world succeed,  
 Then these thy glorious works, and they who share  
 That Hope, which can alone exclude despair,  
 Shall live exempt from weakness and decay,  
 The brightest wonders of an endless day.—COWPER.

## LECTURE VI.

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And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; 13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. 14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. 16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. 17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth *it*.—Rev. ii. 12—17.

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### PERGAMOS.

PERGAMOS, in ancient times, was a city of very considerable note; and before Asia Minor fell under the dominion of the Romans, it was the metropolis of the kingdom of Mysia; and, consequently, the seat of regal government. It was situated about sixty-five miles north of Smyrna, and about one-hundred-and-ten from Ephesus. The river Caicus ran beside it, and it was the royal residence of Eumenes, and of the kings of the race of Attali, renowned in ancient history. There are so many extraordinary circumstances mentioned concerning Pergamos by the celebrated writers of antiquity, such as Livy, Tacitus, Pliny, and others, that I shall take leave to mention a few of them, by way of preface to my present lecture.

The chief ornament of this city, in ancient times, was THE ROYAL LIBRARY, which is said to have vied with that of Alexandria, in Egypt; and, according to Strabo, it was chiefly collected by king Eumenes, for the sake of rivalling that wonder of the world. Plutarch tells us, that it consisted of two hundred thousand volumes—but, to form a proper estimate of this number, and of the value of the whole, you must take into consideration that this was fifteen hundred years before the art of printing was invented—that these volumes were all written with a pen on papyrus, or parchment—and that the expense of writing a volume, such as our Bible, was then equal to that of building a country church.

Another thing which I may mention concerning Pergamos is,



that in that city parchment was first invented for the use of books, and it consequently obtained the name of *charta Pergamena*. The account given us by ancient writers, of this matter, is as follows: Ptolemy, king of Egypt, fired with jealousy at the rising fame of the library of Pergamos, prohibited the exportation of the Egyptian papyrus, in order to defeat the design of king Eumenes, and that circumstance gave rise to the invention of parchment. It may amuse some of my female friends, to be told, that in Pergamos were likewise invented those costly hangings which we call tapestry; and the hall of Attalus, one of their kings, was the first room adorned with this furniture. Galen, the famous physician, was born in this city; and here Esculapius is said to have practised the healing art with great success. After his decease, a celebrated temple was raised to his memory, in which he was worshipped as a divinity. We are told that the concourse of individuals to this temple, was almost without number, or cessation. They passed the night there, in prayers to Esculapius, who communicated remedies, either in dreams, or by the mouths of his priests, who distributed drugs, and performed surgical operations, not less to their own lucrative advantage, we may be sure, than to the benefit of the poor invalids. In short, such was the high repute in which this heathen deity, Esculapius, was then held, that one of the Roman emperors, Caracalla, in the year 215 after Christ, repaired to Pergamos, for the recovery of his health; but whether it were that he did not deserve a cure, or whatever other cause it were owing to, certain it is that Esculapius remained unmoved, even by the prayers of an emperor!

I observe some of my hearers to smile at this relation—nor do I wonder. Would God, however, that there was nothing upon record, concerning this renowned city, worse than what I have now mentioned; but I shall presently have to resume the affecting subject, and add to the melancholy catalogue of the wicked practices once prevalent in Pergamos. For the present, let what has now been said suffice, by way of introduction, and let us turn to the epistle to the church there, and consider its contents.

“*To the angel of the church in Pergamos write, These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges,*”—ver. 12. Concerning the origin of this church, we remain under the same uncertainty as regards the church at Smyrna; but I think we can have little room to doubt that Paul planted it during the two years he remained at Ephesus, as recorded, Acts ch. xix. and xx. I do not found this opinion merely on the circumstance of its contiguity to Ephesus, but from his own declaration, Rom. xv. 19, where he says, that “from Jerusalem and round about unto

Illyricum, I have *fully preached* the gospel of Christ." Now, if you only take a map of those countries into your hands, and examine the situation of Jerusalem and Illyricum, you will find that these seven Asiatic cities must have lain directly in his way, and that he could not have fully evangelized the intermediate country without preaching the gospel in these places. You may possibly remind me, that Paul might preach the gospel in these seven cities of Asia, during his abode in the vicinity, without any fruit to his ministry; and that, consequently, what I have said proves nothing. Granted—but, allow me to remind you of another declaration of the apostle's, when writing to the church of Corinth. "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and *maketh manifest* the savour of his knowledge by us *in every place*," 2 Cor. ii. 14; and, in addition to all this, allow me to remind you, that in Acts xvi. 7, we have express mention made of Paul and Silas being in this very country, Mysia, of which Pergamos was the capital. But, not to dwell on this point, the church in Pergamos is called to attend to the contents of this epistle, from the consideration, that what is addressed to them comes from "Him who hath the sharp sword with two edges." There is here a manifest reference to ch. i. 16, where the apostle John, giving us an account of the vision which he had of Christ in his glorified state, says, that "out of his mouth went a two-edged sword." I have already explained what I understand by this two-edged sword, namely, his word; which is "the sword of the Spirit," comprehending the law and the gospel—the grand instrument for conducting the affairs of his kingdom in this world—that wherewith he "wounds and he heals, he kills and he makes alive."<sup>a</sup> This is "the rod of his mouth, with which he smites the earth—the breath of his lips, with which he slays the wicked," according to Isa. xi. 4; and it is adverted to with singular emphasis, in an address to this church, in which the Lord had so much that was amiss, to rectify; a church which he calls to repentance, ver. 16; and threatens, in case of non-compliance, that he will come unto them, and fight against them "with the sword of his mouth."

"I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: the place where Satan dwelleth,"—ver. 13. Does it not strike you on the first glance as a singular thing, that the Lord Jesus should speak of Pergamos in such terms as these: "the seat of Satan—the very place of his residence?" He is spoken of in scripture, you know, as the God of this world,

<sup>a</sup> See Lect. iii.

the prince of the power of the air; holding all the human race naturally in a state of subjection to his authority, reigning over them with despotic sway. And though we are not warranted to attribute *ubiquity* to him individually, yet it is plain from scripture, that he has under his controul, and leagued with him in his efforts to ruin and destroy mankind, an army of subalterns, inso-much that there is no part of the habitable globe exempt from their influence. Our Lord's words, however, would lead us to consider, that it was in the city of Pergamos, Satan then held his royal, or rather infernal court; in plain terms, that the place was pre-eminently wicked. But it is natural for us to put the question, "Is there anything upon record, in the history of that country, to justify such an imputation?" This enquiry I certainly put to my own mind, when I first took up the consideration of this subject; but I looked in vain for any thing like a satisfactory answer to it in any of the commentators in our language. They seem, one and all, to have taken for granted that Pergamos must have been a very wicked place to call forth such a character from the Lord Jesus; but what were its prevailing vices, or where the proofs are to be found on these points, they are in a great measure silent. This led me to look a little carefully into the subject, and I shall now submit to you the result of my inquiries.

I have already mentioned, that in ancient times, and before the Romans subjected the country to their sway, the city of Pergamos was the metropolis of the kingdom of Mysia, and that a race of monarchs took up their residence there, whose pride and ambition prompted them to embellish the city, and make it a rival to Rome and Alexandria. The country in general was remarkable for its fertility, producing in great abundance all the bounties of Providence, the fruits of the earth; while the climate was one of the most delightful under heaven. Can we, then, wonder that riches should introduce luxury; and luxury lead to dissipation and dissoluteness of manners? This was precisely the case with the Asiatics at the period we are speaking of. Their manners formed a contrast to those of all the surrounding nations. The Romans, for instance, had been trained up in what are termed the hardy virtues; in industry, frugality, temperance, bravery, and a fondness for military glory. The Greeks, more polished and civilized than the Romans, were bent upon the cultivation of literature, and now carried philosophy and the sciences to a high state of perfection. The Asiatics, on the contrary, gave themselves up to a life of effeminacy, indulging themselves in luxury, dissipation, and the never failing train of vices which accompany these things; and Pergamos was the centre from which all these ungodly courses emanated. Can we marvel that our Lord should

term it the place of Satan's abode? And now, brethren, let us mark the result. The Roman arms were turned against the people of this country, and the latter, enervated by luxury, and enfeebled by dissipation and vice, fell an easy prey to the conquerors of the world. The Romans took possession of Pergamos, and the whole country became a province of the empire; and from this time they maintained a perpetual intercourse with the Asiatics: and hence, say the authors of the Universal History, "that inundation of vices of all kinds, which overran the whole state. The Roman republic gained, indeed, a considerable increase of power and riches by this new conquest; but she paid dear for it, in that universal depravity of manners which it introduced." Justin, the historian, speaking of this matter, says, "Rome gave law to Asia; but Asia, in her turn, revenged herself on Rome, by teaching the Romans refinements in debauchery, and profuseness in entertainments and furniture." To the very same purport are the reflections of the celebrated Pliny. He considered the conquest of Pergamos as the origin of the many disorders which afterwards prevailed in Rome. "With the wealth of Pergamos," says he, "debauchery, effeminacy, luxury, and all kinds of vices, came in crowds to Rome, and overwhelmed the capital of the world. Modesty and innocence were no longer countenanced in a city given up to the pleasures and delights of Asia. The citizens, dazzled with the splendour of the rich moveables that were shewn them, began to be ashamed of their ancient simplicity. They piqued themselves on knowing how to value what their ancestors took a pride in despising. They rivalled one another in the richness of their dress, in the furniture of their houses, and the expence of their tables. Thus Asia, when subdued, had her full revenge on us, by bringing our city under a much worse yoke, that of effeminacy." Thus far Pliny, whose testimony is confirmed by Florus, Valerius Maximus, Seneca, Juvenal, and all the other writers who make any mention of the general dissoluteness of manners, which at that time began to reign without restraint at Rome: *they were imported from Pergamos*; and, from the whole, we may learn on what accounts our Lord denominates that city "the abode of Satan."

I have probably dwelt longer on this point, and gone more into detail, than meets the approbation of some of my hearers, and to such I would tender an apology; but I felt anxious to bring before your view so much of the history of this place, as would account to you for its being characterized as the "head quarters," if I may be indulged in the use of so familiar a phrase, of the prince of darkness; and I hope that what has been said will not be without its use, in throwing a ray of light upon some other

things contained in the epistle to the church in Pergamos, to which we shall now turn our attention.

Let us, first, notice the Saviour's complaints against this church; and then, his commendation of it.

*"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,"*—ver. 14. I may take for granted, I presume, that you are all well acquainted with the history of Balaam here referred to. It is given at large in the twenty-second and two following chapters of the book of Numbers; and a most singular history it is. It would take up far too much of our time to go at length into it on the present occasion; but the following is a brief outline. When Israel had left Egypt, miraculously passed through the Red Sea, and defeated two armies which opposed their passage through the wilderness, the other nations adjacent to the desert, alarmed at their multitude, and what they had done to the Amorites, became very jealous of them; and, not aware of the supernatural method by which they were fed, thought "they would lick up the provision as the ox licketh up the grass." Amongst these, Balak, king of Moab, distinguished himself; and the most eligible scheme that occurred to him for succeeding against Israel was to execrate, or curse them; a common practice in those days, when witchcraft, incantations, and spells were prevalent. To effect his purpose, the king of Moab sent for Balaam, the son of Beor, then residing at Pethor, a village of Mesopotamia, near the river Euphrates, to come and curse Israel, tempting him by the offer of a large reward. But the thing displeased the God of Israel, and he interposed miraculously to prevent its being carried into effect, greatly to the regret of Balaam, whose heart lusted for the "wages of unrighteousness." Compelled, however, sorely against his will, to pronounce a blessing upon Israel, instead of a curse, he suggested a stratagem to Balak, whereby he might still prevail against Israel, and draw down upon them the displeasure of the Most High; and this was to be done by laying snares for the people's innocence, inciting them to unlawful indulgences with the daughters of Moab, and afterwards drawing them into idolatry. You have the narrative of this in Numb. xxv. 1—9, with ch. xxxi. 15, 16; and the scheme was so fatally mischievous, that it issued in the destruction of twenty-four thousand men!

Such is the piece of Old Testament history to which the Lord refers, and such the base, deceitful, hypocritical conduct of Balaam towards Israel, which he applies to some of the members of this church at Pergamos, and charges them with imitating.

“Thou hast there some who 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.” Look now at the existing state of things in the city of Pergamos, at the time this epistle was written. Call to mind that the established worship was the Pagan idolatry; that the city abounded with temples dedicated to these idols; that the people resorted to them in great numbers to offer sacrifice to them; and not only so, but that their worship was disgraced by the most lascivious and impure rites; that Christianity was proscribed, and its friends every where persecuted: think of the luxury, the effeminacy, the wantonness and profligacy in which the inhabitants were sunk; and you will then be enabled to form some estimate of the state of trial and temptation to which the church was exposed. But their chief difficulty arose, not from things without, distressing as these unquestionably were—No, it arose from things within. Some few individuals had gained access among them whose heart and soul were not in the profession; they were not prepared to cut all religious intercourse and fellowship with their idolatrous neighbours, some of whom might be, perhaps, the members of their own families; and to avoid persecution, which is not very pleasant to flesh and blood; they would, like some of the members of the church at Corinth, eat things sacrificed to idols; perhaps see no harm in going into an idol’s temple occasionally, and even plead for the lawfulness of intermarrying with unbelievers. From retaining among them such members as these, the whole church was in danger of being infected, for “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,” and the Lord mercifully warns them of their danger. Besides, like the church at Ephesus, they had also among them persons holding the impure principles of the Nicolaitanes, of which the Lord here, as he did to the Ephesians, expresses his detestation.<sup>b</sup>

These, then, are the things which the Lord has against this church, and for which he calls them to repentance, threatening to fight against them with the sword of his mouth. He would have them to put in exercise the discipline of his house, and exclude such unworthy members from their communion, and by every means show a decided abhorrence of their tenets, otherwise

<sup>b</sup> I mentioned in a former lecture, that the early writers of ecclesiastical history have omitted to hand down to us any particular account of the heresy of the Nicolaitanes; but that there existed such a sect is put beyond all doubt, by this fact, that Theodoret who wrote in the year 220, mentions one Hypolytus, whom he calls “a bishop and martyr,” and among several other things, says, that “he had written against the Nicolaitanes.” See *Lardner’s Works*, vol. ii., p. 424.

he would quickly visit them in judgment, and fight against the deceivers, and all who countenanced them, "with the sword of his mouth." Let us now notice what the Lord says to this church, in the way of commendation and encouragement.

*"I know thy works,—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."*

Here, again, we are called to lament the want of authentic information concerning Antipas. Many modern writers tell us, that he was bishop or pastor of the church in Pergamos, as Polycarp was in Smyrna; but, even of this there is no evidence whatever; and they who affirm it do it solely on the presumption, that if he had not been the minister, or bishop, his martyrdom would not have been so pointedly recorded. Certainly, it *may* have been the case, and there is even a probability that it was so, arising from a well-established fact, that in all the primitive persecutions the pastors of the churches, owing to the prominence of their station, were generally marked out as the first victims. I do not, however, admit the force of the remark, that Antipas must needs have been a bishop, to make it necessary that his martyrdom should obtain the notice and high commendation of his Lord and Master. This might have been the case, though he had been only an obscure and private member of the church, signalized by his zeal and intrepidity in his profession, for we must not judge the Lord's conduct by our erring standard, or what *we* may think fitting and proper to be done by Him who "seeth not as man seeth." Let us, brethren, be satisfied with this, that his own Lord and Saviour records his name, and attests his fidelity also, which is the highest honour that could be conferred upon him. Antipas loved not his life unto the death, but cheerfully laid it down for his Master's sake, and he will be sure to find it unto life eternal. The church at Pergamos were witnesses of his martyrdom, and so far were they from shrinking on the occasion, that they "held fast the Saviour's name"—boldly avowed their attachment to his cause—nor did they deny his faith, or their confidence in him as their God and Saviour; their once crucified, but now risen and exalted Redeemer—and this, even in the place where Satan held his throne. Under any circumstances, and in any place, this stedfastness in their profession would have ensured their Lord's approbation; but, to manifest such unshaken confidence in Pergamos, where Satan held his seat, is evidently taken notice of by Christ, as adding greatly to their praise. And now mark how he encourages them to persevere.

*"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." ver. 17. The promises that are made at the close of these epistles to such as overcome, have something various in each of them, though the blessings promised are not different in their nature or kind. The *hidden manna*, the *white stone*, and *new name*, imply privileges of the same nature, with "the fruit of the tree of life that is in the midst of the Paradise of God;" but the style may possibly be varied to teach us, that though spiritual and heavenly blessings are all the same in kind, and have all the same end, yet they are various and adapted to the diversified wants and capacities of the minds of men. In the phrase "hidden manna," here used by our Lord, there is an evident allusion to the manna which the Israelites ate of in the wilderness, and of which we read in Exod. xvi. 11, &c. The import of this Old Testament type is explained to us by the Saviour, John vi. 47—58, where he shews us that it was a type of himself, the *true bread* which came down from heaven to give life unto the world. This manna is *hidden* from carnal men, and known only to such as are the subjects of divine teaching, and so led to believe in Christ, who gave his flesh and blood for the life of the world. And thus the promise that is here made to the conqueror, that he shall "eat of the hidden manna," seems to import, that he shall participate in all that felicity with which the Lord Jesus is himself replenished, as the reward of his sufferings and death. As Christ himself, according to the beautiful language of the Psalmist, (Ps. xlv. 7), has been "anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows," "crowned with glory and honour, and made full of joy with the divine countenance," Ps. xxi. 3—6, and all this as the reward of his obedience to the will of his heavenly Father, so he promises his faithful followers a participation with him in his blessedness. It is added, "*and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name,*" &c.

For understanding something of the import of this, it may be useful to remark, that it was a custom, both among the Greeks and Romans, when they tried the causes of such as had actions in law brought against them, as soon as the pleadings were finished, for the court to pass sentence, by putting white or black stones into an urn, and in this way the acquittal or condemnation of the culprit was decided, the black stone indicating condemnation, the white one absolution or acquittal; and the decision hinged on the majority of white or black. It was a kind of ballot, by which a person's life or property was determined, and was called  $\psi\eta\phi\omicron\varsigma$  from the little stones that were used on the occasion; for the Greek word literally signifies "a little stone."



Such of you as have read Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, may recollect two lines, in which he thus speaks of it:—

“*Mos erat antiquis, niveis atrisque lapillis,  
His damnare reos, illis absolvere culpa.*”

ENGLISHED THUS:

“It was a custom in the earliest times,  
When men were tried for real or feign'd crimes;  
By pebbles white or black the judge decreed:  
The *black* condemn'd,—the *white* the pris'ner freed.”

The Roman Poet, you see, speaks of this as an ancient custom, even in his time, and he lived two thousand years ago. It was a thing well understood by the Asiatic Greeks, to whom John was commanded to write this epistle; but the question is, “what would they consider to be imported by it?” Beyond doubt, they would understand it to be a promise of entire absolution in the great day of account—the day of judgment; an open acquittal from every charge of law and justice. A promise that Christ would own them as *his*; redeemed by his blood, called by his grace, adopted into his family, sanctified by his word and Spirit, and meetened for the eternal inheritance. Such I conceive to be the import of the promise of giving them a *white stone*; but it is added, “*and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.*” There is probably an allusion here to a text in Isaiah, ch. lxii. 2, in which it is promised to Zion that she should be called “*by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord should name.*” And something of the same kind is repeated in ch. lxxv. 15, where, threatening the rebellious and unbelieving Jews, it is said, “*ye shall leave your name as an execration to my chosen; for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name.*” There have been various opinions, as to what is intended by this “*new and other name.*” Some think it was the appellation “*Christian,*” which was first given to the disciples of Christ at Antioch, see Acts xi. 26; a name which suited them well, and which they have ever since been proud to retain; but that name, it is probable, the brethren at Pergamos already possessed, and therefore it could not properly be the subject of promise, as it here is. I should therefore incline to think that the “*new name,*” which the Lord promises to write upon this “*white stone,*” is merely a figurative expression, importing, “*I will give him a title to heaven.*” Thus interpreted, it appears to me to comport well with the “*white stone,*” on which it is written; for, as the latter significantly and emphatically indicates an acquittal from guilt, or the blessing of justification, so the former may denote the believer's title to life, or the blessing of adoption into the family

of God, and a right to all the privileges and immunities connected with their being sons and heirs of God, and joint heirs of the eternal inheritance with himself. And I think this view of the subject is corroborated by what the apostle John says: "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not;" which seems to be much like the Saviour's words, "*which no man knoweth*, saving he that receiveth it;" and especially if we include in this new name, the spirit of adoption, witnessing with the believer's spirit that he is a child of God, and sealing him to the day of redemption; see Rom. viii. 15—17; Eph. i. 13—14.

To conclude: what is the improvement which we should make of the epistle to the church at Pergamos. You find at the conclusion of it, as is the case with all the other epistles, there is a call upon all to whom it comes, to attend to it. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." And if you make it the subject of mature deliberation you cannot fail to find that it suggests some very useful and important lessons of instruction. For instance, examine the state of society in Pergamos, at the time this epistle was written to the church there, and what do you find? Something akin to the state of Sodom of old, "pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness," as the prophet Ezekiel expresses it, ch. xvi. 49; "neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." Riches and luxury introduced the pride of life; and this drew along with it, "chambering and wantonness," dissipation and vice, in a thousand different forms. But what was the estimate which unerring wisdom formed of this sad state of things? The Lord Jesus looked down from heaven upon this renowned city, and mark how emphatically he has described it: the very *seat of Satan*; the place where he held his court, and from whence he sent forth his emissaries into all the earth! Let us, brethren, be instructed by this, what estimate *we* should form of these things. No doubt, the judgment of God our Saviour is according to truth. Encompassed about with such a train of evils, as his few disciples at Pergamos were, like Lot in Sodom "whose righteous soul was vexed from day to day with the filthy conversation of the wicked," the Lord Jesus perfectly knew what a source of temptation it presented to them; and their standing firm in the good profession which they had made of his name, at such a time and in such a place, draws forth, you see, his cordial approbation. He graciously encourages their perseverance amidst surrounding difficulties, and promises them a large reward at his second coming.

## LECTURE VII.

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AND unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write ; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine brass ; 19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works ; and the last *to be* more than the first. 20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. 21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication ; and she repented not. 22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. 23 And I will kill her children with death ; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts : and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. 24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak ; I will put upon you none other burden. 25 But that which ye have *already* hold fast till I come. 26 And he that overcometh and keepeth *my* works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations : 27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers : even as I received of my Father. 28 And I will give him the morning star. 29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.—Rev. ii. 18—29.

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### THYATIRA.

OUR present lecture must of necessity be chiefly of the didactic cast ; that is, doctrinal or practical. What I intend by this remark is, that the subject does not admit of being enlivened by any considerable portion of topographical or historical narration. For, except in this epistle, the city of Thyatira is only once mentioned in scripture, and that is in Acts xvi. 14, where, as you may recollect, we are told, that Paul and Silas being at Philippi, a city of Macedonia engaged in executing Christ's commission to preach his gospel among the Gentiles, went out on the Sabbath-day, to a certain place by the river side, to which the Jews were accustomed to resort for the purposes of worship ; and that they availed themselves of the opportunity of speaking to some women that resorted thither. Among these was one Lydia, " a seller of purple, who was *of the city of Thyatira*, whose heart the Lord opened to attend to the things which were spoken by Paul." She received his testimony concerning Jesus of Nazareth ; that he was the true Messiah, the Son of God, the only Saviour of lost

sinner; and on the profession of the faith of this she was baptized, as were also her household believing the same saving truth. Whether Lydia continued her residence at Philippi, or returned to her native place, Thyatira, after her conversion to the christian faith, we are no where told, and it is useless to conjecture. If she continued at Philippi, she and her household would, of course, unite with the jailor and his household in laying the foundation of the christian church in Philippi; and if, on the contrary, she and her household returned to Thyatira, they would carry the gospel into that city, and be the honoured instruments of contributing at least to plant a christian church there.

Thyatira was a considerable city in the road from Pergamos to Sardis; situated at the distance of about forty-eight miles south-east of Pergamos. It still exists, and has a population at this day of thirty-thousand inhabitants, who are all Turks, except about three thousand, which are Greeks. But in all probability its present extent, population, and respectability, are much inferior to what it maintained in apostolic times. The Turks now call it *Akhissar*, which means "the white castle," from the great quantities of white marble there abounding. Let us now attend to the epistle.

The character under which our Lord addresses this church is taken from ch. i. 13—15, with this variation, however, that he is there described as "one like unto the Son of Man," while here he is expressly called "The Son of God;" thereby denoting his oneness with the Father in nature and essence. You are aware that while he "tabernacled among us," the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, he laid claims to divine honour, called God his Father, and so was understood by the Jews, as making himself equal with God. Now this was the great point of controversy between him and them, during the whole period of his public ministry. The Jews saw him to be a man; but did not believe him to be any thing more; they did not believe him to be "Emmanuel," "God manifest in human nature," the eternal "WORD made flesh, or become incarnate," and therefore, consistently enough with this, they accused him of blasphemy, in thus calling God his Father, and claiming the honours of Deity, and on that ground they put him to death. It is now, therefore, too late to attempt to alter the import of the title "Son of God," as our modern Socinians would fain do, by shewing that the enemies of Jesus put a perverse interpretation upon his words, and understood him to mean more by it than he intended. The truth is, that there was no misunderstanding in the case: both parties were fully agreed that the title "Son of God," was assuming the honours of Deity; on this ground he was accused of blasphemy, and put to death, and both parties agreed

to refer the decision of the controversy to his resurrection from the dead. And this is one grand and fundamental point proved by his rising again on the third day; for in this stupendous event we see God the Father, interposing between the parties, vindicating all the claims of Jesus, and demonstrating him to be “the Son of God, with power, even by his resurrection from the dead,” Rom. i. 4. This title then, which has been awarded him by his Divine Father, Jesus Christ here appropriates as his undoubted right, in defiance of all his enemies; and he demands the attention of the church in Thyatira to it, to give the greater weight and efficacy to the things which he says. Let us then, see that we “refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that now speaketh from heaven,” Heb. xii. 25.

This divine personage is described as “having his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and whose feet are like unto fine brass,” ver. 18. The first of these metaphors, viz. “his eyes resembling a flame of fire,” represents to us his omniscience, that he discerns, not merely the outward conduct, but the very secrets of the heart also; for He knows our very thoughts afar off, it is his prerogative to search the reins and try the hearts of the children of men; and the other, viz. “his feet like unto fine brass,” denotes the stability and glory of his proceedings, in all the affairs of his kingdom, for he sits upon “the throne of David, to order it and to establish it, with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever,” Is. ix. 7. Schleusner, an eminent Greek lexicographer, remarks, on the original word *χαλκολιβανον* that it denotes *smelting brass, as if burned brightly in a furnace*, which corresponds exactly with the resplendent brightness of the thing seen in this vision.

In the church of Thyatira, as in most of the other churches, the Lord Jesus found something to blame as well as something to approve. Nor need we wonder at this, seeing that it corresponds with the account which he himself gave of the state of his kingdom, or churches in this world, in the days of his personal ministry. Read at your leisure those beautiful and instructive parables, relating to this subject, which are recorded in Matt. ch. xiii. that, for instance, in which there is an allusion to the “tares and the wheat,” “the good and bad fishes,” and I might add, in ch. xxv. “the wise and foolish virgins,” and you cannot help seeing how well this idea is supported. There is, in fact, nothing in this that ought to stumble any one. Churches are made up of fallible individuals. We cannot read men’s hearts; we can only be regulated in our conduct by the confession of the mouth and a corresponding deportment; in regard to both of which we may be mistaken; our danger lies chiefly in tolerating improper members when their characters are made manifest, and so neglecting the

discipline of the Lord's house, which is designed, to keep the communion pure. Let us now examine, first what the Lord finds amiss; then what he approves of in this church; and conclude with considering his promise to the conqueror.

"*I have against thee that 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.*" This is the subject of complaint against this church, and there are in it two or three things which demand our attention. What is intended by the woman Jezebel, the crimes of which she was guilty, and the punishment which the Lord threatens to inflict upon her? The term Jezebel may doubtless be understood *literally* as denoting the name of some female of great rank and influence in the church of Thyatira, who seduced the disciples of Christ to intermix idolatry and heathen impurities with the worship of the true God. It would appear as if persons of a similar character had got access into the church at Corinth in the days of the apostle, which led Paul thus to address them. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness, and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols, what concord hath Christ with Belial, or he that believeth with an infidel? Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you," &c. 2 Cor. vi. 14—18.

I incline, however, to the opinion of those who think that the name Jezebel here is *mystical*, and that it denotes a faction or corrupt part of the church, here figured out by a symbol taken from the history of ancient Israel. You are all acquainted with the history and character of Jezebel the wife of Ahab, king of Israel, recorded 1 Kings, xvi. 31; but to refresh your memories I will read to you two texts, which run thus, "Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him; and it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, that he took to wife *Jezebel* the daughter of Ethbaal King of the Sidonians, (an idolatrous nation,) and went and served Baal, and worshipped him." This you will say was abominable conduct on the part of Ahab, but it attaches no blame to Jezebel. Read, however, at your leisure, the particulars of the reign of that wicked king and queen, from the sixteenth to the twenty-first chapters of the first book of Kings, and you will there see what a patroness she was of idolatry and profaneness. I merely add, what is recorded, ch. xxi. 25. "There was none like unto Ahab, who sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom *Jezebel his wife* incited, or *stirred up*, to these things." Here you have in a few

words, a development of her character. On this piece of Old Testament history is founded the allusion, in the passage before us. This woman, this eminent patroness of idolatry, was married to a king of Israel, in flagrant violation of the law of God, and so her character and conduct are adopted by the Saviour, as a similitude to point out that corrupt part of the church in Thyatira, which, though united to the people of God, (as Jezebel was to the nation of Israel by marrying Ahab,) were yet in heart attached to the Pagan idolatrous worship, and laboured to seduce others into it. This is the mystery of Jezebel. There are three specific crimes laid to the charge of this wicked woman, or faction, viz. fornication, adultery, and eating meats sacrificed to idols, ver. 20—22.

I think it appears from several things recorded in scripture, that in the times of the apostles, there existed an intimate connection between the first and the last of these evils—between fornication and eating meats sacrificed to idols: the two sins were nearly connected together in the heathen institutions,—the impure rites of Paganism; and they introduced each other. *Fornication*, under which term are comprehended all those carnal impurities which were common among the heathen, and, what may be thought almost incredible in our day—even made a part of their sacred rites.

Eating meats offered unto idols, or to partake of these things when known or declared to be such, was to have fellowship with them in their worship; and this is the evil complained of by the Saviour in the conduct of some persons in this church. I apprehend, that some light may be thrown upon this part of our subject, by turning to Acts, chap. xv. You will there find that a question had arisen among the first Christians, of great importance to all the Gentile converts, viz. whether they should be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, or not? A class of judaizing teachers insisted upon it that they ought—that it was indispensable to their salvation. Paul denied it—warned the Gentiles against it, and in plain terms told them, that “if they were circumcised, Christ should profit them nothing.” To decide this dispute, Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem, to submit the matter to the consideration of the other apostles, and obtain their judgment upon it. In this chapter we have the result: “the apostles and elders,” we are told, “came together for the purpose of considering this matter,” ver. 6; much disputation ensued, in which Peter and James took a leading part, and their deliberation ended in drawing up an edict or decree, in which they were all brought happily to unite, securing the liberty of the Gentiles from the yoke that was attempted to be imposed on them; but, at the same time solemnly prohibiting their indul-

gence in several things there specified. Thus runs the decree: "It seemed good unto the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which, if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well: fare-ye-well;" ver. 20 and 28, 29. Now it is a neglect of this prohibitory decree, that constitutes the Saviour's complaint against a part of the church in Thyatira, and which he threatens to punish if persisted in, ver. 22, 23.

But we must not overlook another crime which is laid to the account of this Jezebel, and that is *adultery*. It may cast some light upon this to consider, that in prophetic language, nations and cities, and communities, are frequently expressed under the emblem of women, virgins, and so forth. Nor has this mode of representation been confined to ancient, or Eastern nations. Which of you has not seen Britannia personified—that is, represented as a woman, upon the coins of the realm, as are Judea, Rome, &c. on those of ancient days? The nation of Israel, or the church of God under the Old Testament, is constantly represented under this symbol of a woman. In the times of her purity, she is spoken of as a virgin; in her happy prospects a bride; in her impure connections, a harlot. The writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, abound with these metaphors. And in perfect conformity with this figure, the blessed God, who had taken that nation into covenant with himself, at Mount Sinai, in the days of Moses, is pleased to represent himself as the *husband who espouseth her*, and who, for her unfaithfulness to the marriage contract, *divorces* her. For, by a continuance of the same metaphor, she is described as "treacherously departing from her husband," committing *adultery* with stocks, stones, and idols.\* After chastisement and repentance, she is restored to favour and matrimonial distinction, and becomes fruitful in children; the multitudes of the Gentiles are begotten unto *her*, who was once barren, childless, and desolate, Isaiah, ch. xlix. and liv. *passim*. See also Ezekiel, chap. xvi. Agreeably to this style of writing, the apostle Paul expresses a godly jealousy about the church of Corinth, for, says he, "I have espoused you to one *husband*, that I might present you as a chaste *virgin* to Christ," 2 Cor. xi. 2. And in the Apocalypse, nothing is more common than the metaphor of adultery to express apostacy from the christian faith and worship, as we shall have many occasions, if spared, to notice.

Now to apply these remarks to the subject before us: *adultery* may here be understood either in a literal or a figurative sense,

\* See Jer. iii. 8, 9, 20. Is. xlix. 20, and ch. liv. 5. lxii. 1, 5. Ez. xvi. 22. and ch. xxiii. 37. Hos. ii. 2, 7, 16, 19. Jer. xxxi. 32.



according as we understand *Jezebel* to represent, either literally a woman, or figuratively a sect, party, or faction in the church of Thyatira. If taken in the figurative sense or meaning, which is most probably intended, then her sons or children to be slain, are those who are seduced into the practice of these vile rites,—this impure worship; and the adultery here spoken of, must be spiritual adultery, or what the apostle Paul on one occasion terms, “spiritual wickedness in high places;” worshipping in an idol’s temple.

Before we dismiss the crimes of Jezebel, and proceed to consider her threatened punishment, there is one thing more which claims our notice, and it is contained in ver. 24. It is the expression, “the depths of Satan,” which the Saviour imputes to Jezebel and her children; and this appears to me to confirm the view we have taken of the figurative sense of the term. Our Lord evidently represents her as having a *doctrine*—as teaching *deep mysterious knowledge*, calling it, not unlikely, after an expression of the apostle Paul’s, 1 Cor. ii. 10, “the deep things of God,” (τα βαθύ του Θεου). But the Saviour pronounces them to be “the depths of Satan:” they were *mysteries* into which noviciates were inducted, but they were “mysteries of iniquity;” and, it was to the praise of the church of Thyatira, that the greater part of its members were ignorant of them. Observe the words, “As many as have not, or *hold not* this doctrine—whosoever of you *have not known* the depths of Satan, as they speak,” &c.; in which the Lord plainly draws a distinction between the faithful and the corrupt part of the church. We shall now advert to the Saviour’s threatenings to these offenders.

“*I gave her space, (or a time) to repent of her fornication, and she repented not: behold, I will cast her into a bed, and those that commit adultery with her, into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds; and I will kill her children with death,*” &c. ver. 21—23. Here we see that the Lord had exercised much long suffering and patience with these offenders, and was still exercising it. “I gave her time to repent,” but it had not been followed by fruits meet for repentance—“she repented not,” but persisted in the same evil course in defiance of all the exhortations with which he had visited her, both by means of his word, and the dispensations of his providence; and, therefore, says the Saviour, “I will cast her into a bed,” with a manifest allusion to the sin with which she stands charged. The place which had been the scene of her transgression, is to be that of her punishment. “I will cast her into a bed;” but it shall not be a bed of pleasures, but of pain; and they that have sinned with her shall suffer with her; for “I will kill her children with death.” This is a

Hebraism, denoting by its repetition, the certainty of the event denounced. There is a similar expression in Genesis ii. 17, where it was threatened to our first parents; "in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt *surely* die," or, as the margin of our bibles has it, "dying thou shalt die." But the question will naturally occur to a reflecting mind, what interpretation are we warranted to put upon this threatening, so variously expressed, "I will cast her into a bed," a sick-bed, a bed of pain, in which she shall be grievously afflicted, and "I will kill her children with death." I believe it is usual with most commentators to explain this as a threatening of *the second death*. I think it very possible, however, that it may have a different meaning, which I would explain by referring you to what the apostle Paul says to the Corinthian church respecting their abuses of the Lord's supper. You will find the passage which I refer to, 1 Cor. xi. 30, "For which cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" or die. Now, in order to understand the meaning of the apostle in this place, we must remark that, in apostolic times, the Lord was pleased to punish the perverters of his truth and abusers of his holy ordinances, by temporal judgments in providence; to inflict upon them sickness, and even death, which I understand to be the meaning of the apostle's words, when he says, "Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, eateth and drinketh (judgment) to himself, not discerning the Lord's body; and what he intends by *judgment*, he immediately explains, when he adds, "for this cause many are *weak* and *sickly* among you, and *many sleep*." And lest it might be supposed that he referred to the eternal state of those who had suffered in their bodily health on account of their transgression against the ordinance of the Lord's house, he immediately adds, "but when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, *that we should not be condemned with the world*." This is the view that I have long taken of this memorable passage to the Corinthians, and if I am correct in it, I leave you to judge how far it supports the interpretation which I have offered of the threatening to this corrupt party in the church of Thyatira. We now proceed to the commendations which the Lord bestows on the faithful part of this church, and the encouragement given them to persevere.

"*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.*" This is unquestionably a very high commendation, coming as it does from Him "whose eyes are as a flame of fire;" who judges not according to man's judgment, but who "searches the reins and tries the hearts," and who will give to every one according to his works. He was intimately acquainted with their work of

faith and labour of love, and patience of hope, and he graciously approved them. Nay, he goes farther still: he places the obedience of this church, as it were, in a way of contrast to that of the church at Ephesus. That church he blamed for having left their first love—instead of growing in this christian grace, they had abated in the ardour of their affection, and he had not found their works perfect before God. But of the church at Thyatira, he bears honourable testimony that the case was otherwise. Mark, I beseech you, the tenor of his language, “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,” ver. 19. This is no tautology—this last word is not repeated without cause: it denotes their *persevering* and *abounding* in the good works of the gospel, the fruits of faith and love. These, probably, at the outset of their christian profession, had been feeble—like the bruised reed and the smoking flax; but they had grown upon the trial; they had waxed stronger and stronger; and their progress in the divine life had resembled that of the shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day. There are, I fear, but few churches in the present day, of whom this can with truth be affirmed. “Christ may know our *works*—and our *works*; (as it is here most significantly repeated) but, in most cases, the first are more than the last!” Brethren, let us individually, and as a church collectively, take a lesson from this, and examine how the matter stands with us. Most of us, it may be presumed, can recollect a time when Christ was precious indeed to us; when his name was as ointment poured forth; when our feet ran swiftly in the way of his commands; when it was our meat and our drink to do his will; when no sacrifices to which we are called, no privations, no hardships were made any account of; it was our joy to take up his cross daily and follow him, and we gloried in nothing but his cross. Is the case so with us still? From this digression, let us return to his address to this church.

“*Unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not (or rather hold not) this doctrine, viz. of Jezebel, and which have not known its depths, I will put upon you no other burden but that which ye have already, hold fast till I come,*” ver. 24, 25. I called your attention, a few minutes ago, to the decree which emanated from the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, securing the Gentiles from the yoke of circumcision, the burden of Jewish rites, and, at the same time, prohibiting the practice of fornication, and the eating of things strangled and blood, &c. To this most important decree, I understand the Son of God to refer, when he says to the brethren in Thyatira, “I will impose upon you no other burden.” Compare his words with what you read, Acts xv. 28: “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us, to lay

upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which, if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well." Such was the decree, and the Saviour renews, ratifies, sanctions, and confirms it to the brethren in Thyatira: "I will impose upon you no greater burden; that which has already been delivered to you, hold fast *till I come*," ver. 25.

You, who have read the Apocalypse with attention, cannot have overlooked the very frequent mention that is made in it of the coming of the Lord. Thus, in ch. i. 3, it is said, "Blessed are they that keep, or observe, the things written in this book, for *the time is at hand*." In ver. 7 it is said, "Behold, *he cometh* with clouds, and every eye shall see him." Again, "Behold, *I come quickly*," ch. xxii. 7. "Surely, *I come quickly*," ver. 20. And so, in the passage before us, the church in Thyatira is called to hold fast that which has been delivered to them as the rule of their conduct, in the view of Christ's second coming. The time which is here announced as fast approaching, is that wherein the Son of God shall have fully accomplished the ends of his mediatorial kingdom; shall have obtained the victory over all those powers which have opposed the progress of his truth in the world, when all his elect shall be called in, and when he shall return to raise the dead and judge the world, and deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, who shall then be all in all. It is usual with the inspired writers to announce this great day as *near* at hand, even when yet at a considerable distance if measured by years, and applied to successive ages. And the reasons of this are obvious: "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Besides which, we must remember, that this great day is always near to every individual, who, at the time of his departure from this world, will have made up his account. It is a very just observation, that the Scriptures never exhort us to prepare for death, but always for the coming of the Lord. "That which thou hast, hold fast till I come."

"*And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, 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.*" Here the Son of God evidently adopts the language of the second Psalm, which is a notable prophecy concerning the Messiah and his kingdom. The apostle Paul repeatedly quotes the seventh verse, and applies it to Christ's resurrection from the dead: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." In the eighth verse, the divine Father thus addresses him: "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and

the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession : Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Such was the decree of the divine Father ; and it was fulfilled when Jesus rose from the dead, and all power and authority were committed into his hands, both in heaven and on earth. He then took his seat as King upon his holy hill of Zion, being armed with power to rule the nations with an iron sceptre, or break them to pieces as a potter's vessel.

But some one will say, all this is plain enough as it respects Christ and his dominion ; but with what propriety can this same language be applied to the disciples of the Saviour in this world, as a motive and encouragement to them to persevere amidst all opposition, and surmounting all difficulties in the way to the kingdom ? A little attention to the Scriptures will explain this. Turn to Luke xxii. 29, and you will find the Saviour thus addressing his disciples : " I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." This is the hope of all his people, the hope of reigning with him, agreeably to his own promise, often repeated while on earth. This, however, you will tell me, refers to the happiness of the heavenly state, concerning which the apostle Paul says, " If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." Be it so : what then think you of the prophecy in Dan. vii. 27, " And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." If there be any meaning in this grand prophecy, it surely must denote, that a time shall come when Jesus will take unto him his great power and reign, and all the ends of the earth shall worship before him, when his enemies shall lick the dust. Hitherto we have seen his kingdom in a low and depressed state. No sooner was it set up, by the preaching of the gospel on the day of Pentecost, than it began to be persecuted by the unbelieving Jews. When it extended into the Gentile lands, it was everywhere assailed by the heathen governments. Having overcome these, it had to encounter a much more formidable opposition from Antichrist, the man of sin ; but his reign is now rapidly drawing to a close, and then shall it blaze forth in its meridian splendour. And this is the pleasing prospect with which the Saviour would cheer the hearts of his faithful disciples in the church at Thyatira, and in every subsequent period. But I must not here anticipate a subject which will presently come before us in all its glory and grandeur. I shall only notice one thing more on the present occasion, and that is, the promise contained in ver. 28, " I will give him the morning star." Let us endeavour, before we close, to ascertain something of the import of this beautiful metaphor.

It occurs again, ch. xxii. 16, where it is said, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches: I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."

Here we certainly have the *mystery*, or hidden meaning of this metaphor: the morning star is Christ himself. But what is the import of the promise, "*I will give*," &c.? Let it be observed, in the first place, that *a star*, in the symbolical language of the Apocalypse, denotes a teacher, or preacher of the everlasting gospel. Thus, in ch. i. 20, we are told, that the seven stars are the angels, or messengers of peace, the announcers of glad tidings in the seven churches. The Son of God was himself eminently such, for he was anointed of God to preach glad tidings unto the meek, to proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord," &c. Isa. lxi. 1, 2. With great propriety, therefore, does he claim the metaphor. Besides, he was prophesied of under this figure, "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel," Numb. xxiv. 17. It has an evident reference to his office as the Great Prophet of the church, for he came into this world "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel." He is the "*day-spring from on high*," who hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; to guide our feet into the ways of peace," Luke i. 78, &c. He is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by him." It is life eternal to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. But the words before us evidently include a blessing promised to succeed a victory; and it is made to such as already know the Son of God, and have overcome the world. What, then, can it import, but that he will manifest himself unto them in all the power and grace of his holy Spirit, John xiv. 21—23; giving them so clear an understanding in the mysteries of his kingdom, in the privileges, promises, and blessings of his gospel, as if a "*day-star* arose in their hearts;" they shall see with superior clearness, as by a bright light, the great encouragement and certainty of their reward, and rejoice in hope that the end of their warfare shall be victory, and their victory be crowned with a glorious recompense; in a word, that He himself will be their portion, through the countless ages of eternity!

## LECTURE VIII.

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AND unto the angel of the church in Sardis write ; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars ; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die : for I have not found thy works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. 4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments ; and they shall walk with me in white : for they are worthy. 5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment ; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. 6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. —Rev. iii. 1—6.

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### SARDIS.

THE city of SARDIS dates its origin at a very remote period. Six hundred years before the birth of Christ, it was a place of great renown—the capital of the kingdom of Lydia ; and while the greater part of the world lay buried in ignorance and barbarism, the Lydians had made considerable progress in arts and civilization. Assisted by a fertile territory, which abounded in the precious metals, they continued to advance in wealth and power, under three races of kings, who all appear to have taken up their residence at SARDIS, which thus became the metropolis of the kingdom.

Among these monarchs there was one, whose name you have all often heard, for it has been handed down from generation to generation, and is proverbial in our day. I refer to Cræsus—for which of you has not heard the common saying, when describing a person who rolls in affluence, “such a one is as rich as Cræsus ?” Well, this king took up his residence in the city of Sardis, and ascended the throne of Lydia five hundred and sixty-two years before the christian era. He was a successful monarch, and not only subdued the Grecian colonies in his neighbourhood, but extended his sway over almost all the nations of Asia Minor ; from the river Halys to the Hellespont, and from the Euxine to the Mediterranean sea. These conquests he was enabled to prosecute by the internal wealth of his native kingdom. The particles of gold rolled down by the river Pactolus, which ran through

Sardis, and the gold mines which were discovered in the neighbourhood, furnished him with such a quantity of treasure as made his riches proverbial.

There is an anecdote related by the writers of ancient history, concerning Cræsus and his immense wealth, which I should much like to detail to you did our time permit, were it only on account of the useful moral which attaches to it. The substance is this. While Cræsus was in the height of his glory, he was visited by Solon, the celebrated Athenian legislator. After Cræsus had ostentatiously shewed Solon the magnificence of his palace—the immensity of his treasures—and the pompous crowd of courtiers by whom he was attended, in the exultation of his heart, he put the question to Solon, “Who, in the course of his travels and extensive observation he thought, might be accounted the happiest man he had ever seen?” not doubting that the decision would be in his own favour. But Solon, who was too little of a courtier to read the king’s meaning, or too much of a philosopher to flatter him, bluntly replied, “Tellus, the Athenian.” “And what entitled Tellus to this distinction?” asked Cræsus, with an air of surprise mingled with chagrin, arising from mortified pride. “He had the good fortune,” said Solon, “to live under a free government—to enjoy good health, and to be in no want of the necessaries of life—to have sons and grandsons, brave and virtuous, who survived him; and, to crown all, when he had lived to an advanced age, he had the happiness to come to the assistance of his countrymen, in a hot and hazardous engagement; to turn the tide of battle, and die on the field of victory,” &c. “And is our condition,” said Cræsus, keenly incensed at such want of courtesy, “so contemptible in your eyes, Athenian stranger, as not to be thought equal to that of a private citizen?” “King of Lydia,” replied Solon, “the Greeks set no value on the splendour of royalty. Besides, we are so sensible of the vicissitudes of human life, as not to be elated with any present flow of fortune, or to adore that felicity which is liable to change. Futurity carries in its bosom, for every man, many uncertain events. He alone deserves the name of *happy*, who finishes his prosperous course in perfect serenity of mind.” Such is the substance of this conversation, as we find it in Herodotus; but, ’tis natural to ask, “what became of Cræsus and his immense wealth?” I will tell you: his dream of happiness was shortly after interrupted by the death of his darling son, Atys, who lost his life by an accident, while hunting the wild boar, and it threw his father into a state of profound melancholy, which continued for two years, and from which all his riches could not extricate him. He was, however, at length roused from his lethargy, by the reports which crowded upon him daily, that Cyrus, King of Persia, of whom you read in Isaiah,



chapter xlv. was in arms and invading his country. Cræsus alarmed at this unexpected intelligence, mustered his forces, and went out to meet him; an obstinate and bloody engagement took place; Cræsus was defeated, and Cyrus advanced next morning towards Sardis; a second battle ensued; the king of Lydia was again defeated, and Sardis was taken the following night. The conqueror saved the city from pillage, and spared the lives of the inhabitants; but ordered them as a ransom to deliver up all their gold and silver. Cræsus set the example by bringing forth his *immense* treasures; I say *immense* for the amount was beyond computation; and I mention it for the sake of pointing you to the fulfilment of a prophecy, which you will find in Is. lv. 3. "I will give thee (Cyrus) the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places; that thou mayest know that I the Lord, who call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel." This prediction was delivered by Isaiah one hundred and fifty years before the capture of Sardis by the arms of Cyrus, but it now met an exact accomplishment in the capture of both Sardis and of Babylon, which soon after took place. And thus ended the ancient kingdom of Lydia, which fell under the dominion of the Persians, till they also were conquered by the Macedonians, while they in their turn had, in the times of the apostles, become tributary to Imperial Rome. In the days of Augustus Cæsar, Sardis still retained much of its former greatness, but it was ruined by one earthquake after another about this period; yet it was again restored to its importance by the munificence of Tiberius, which you know was during the Saviour's ministry on earth; and consequently at the time John wrote this epistle to the christian church there, it must have been a large and opulent city.—Entreating your excuse for the length of this introduction, we now proceed to the epistle before us.

The address to the church is taken from the first chapter, ver. 4, 16, and 20. "Thus saith he who hath the *seven Spirits of God*, and the seven stars." For understanding what is meant by the "seven Spirits of God, it may be useful to turn to Revelation iv. 5, where it is said, in the glorious representation of the Deity, which John had in vision, "there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven Spirits of God." Here, in our text, chap. iii. 1, the Son of God describes himself as "having the seven Spirits of God;" and, if you look to chap. v. ver. 6. where he appears under the emblem of a Lamb that had been slain, he is described as having seven eyes, *which are the seven Spirits of God*, sent forth into all the earth." The comment of the venerable Bede on this passage appears to be equally forcible and just. "The Holy Spirit," says he, "is here described as *seven fold*, by

which is intimated, in prophetic language, fulness and perfection." All the most approved commentators, indeed, from the days of the apostles have understood by the seven spirits, and seven lamps of fire, the one Holy Eternal Spirit of God. The apostles tell us that when Christ had finished his work upon earth and ascended up on high to receive the reward of his obedience, the Holy Spirit was given him without measure, it was a part of that *fulness* which it pleased the Father should be treasured up in Him, for the completeness of his mystical body the church, as Paul writes to the Colossians, i. 19, and ii. 9, where he declares that "all the the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily." Hence the address to this church, "Thus saith he who hath the seven Spirits of God," the Holy Spirit in all the plenitude of his gifts, manifestations, and operations.

"*And the seven stars.*" These he has himself explained to be the angels, messengers, or ministers of the seven churches; the lesser lights; and these, he says, he has in his hand, or under his direction. He is himself "the Sun of Righteousness," shining with seven fold light, as Isaiah expresses it, ch. xxx. 26. Such is the sublime character under which he addresses this church. And now let us attend to what he saith to it. "*I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead.*" You will have noticed, probably, that all the addresses to these churches commence with a remark from the Saviour, that he *knows their works*, which I do not understand always to imply his approbation of those works, but merely that he is an attentive observer of their proceedings; for wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, there is he in the midst, Mat. xviii. 20. In the church of Sardis, there was but little that the Saviour found to commend. Taking the church as a whole, it appears to have been in a very low, flat, and languishing state. "Thou hast a name," that is, a character or reputation, "*that thou livest and art dead.*"

It is of material importance to us in reading the Scriptures to pay careful attention to the figurative use of the words *death*, *die*, and *dead*. I will quote a few instances for the sake of illustrating this point. Thus we find our Lord, on one occasion says to his disciples, "Let the dead bury their dead," Mat. viii. 22. Here, you see, the word *dead* occurs in both a literal and a metaphorical sense, and that in the same line, "let the *dead* in trespasses and sins bury the *dead* body." "To be carnally minded is *death*; to be spiritually-minded is *life* and peace." "She that liveth in pleasure is *dead* while she *liveth*." This figurative way of speaking was so common with the Jews, that, as Maimonides informs us, "they proverbially say, 'The wicked are dead even while they are alive;' for he, saith Philo, 'who lives a life of sin is dead as to

a life of happiness; his soul is dead, and even buried in his lusts and passions." And because the whole Gentile world lay more especially under these unhappy circumstances, (on which account the apostle styles them *sinner*s of the Gentiles,) it was proverbially said by the Jewish doctors, "The heathens do not live." Now to apply these remarks to the subject before us. The Saviour testifies of this church that, notwithstanding its high character and reputation in the world, it was *dead*, not literally, nor yet metaphorically in the full and strictest acceptation of the term, but comparatively speaking. It was in a low, flat, languid state; greatly deficient in the power of vital godliness. Our Lord, addressing his disciples, on one occasion says, "Ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world," but he gives them this caution, "if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men," Mat. v. 13. The church at Sardis appears to have fallen into this unhappy state. It is a good remark which is made by a late writer on this subject, when he says, "It is bad for the world to be dead; for a church to be so is worse, this is salt without savour, which is neither fit for the land nor the dunghill. It is bad for individuals to be dead; but for the body of a church to be so is deplorable." But the Saviour's complaint against this church goes somewhat farther than to a want of spirituality; for, not only had he *not found their works perfect before God*, but he charges, not the whole church indeed, but the greater part of its members with "*defiling their garments*," ver. 4, they had not "*kept themselves unspotted from the world*," which is essential to "*pure and undefiled religion*," James i. 27. A profession of Christianity which can be maintained in a consistency with the course of this world, even in its most decent and respectable forms, is not that which the Lord approves. Hearken, my beloved brethren, to the words of one of his ambassadors: "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is your reasonable service: and *be not conformed unto this world*; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God," Rom. xii. 1, 2. What is this world better than a masquerade, in which the actors assume feigned characters to deceive! Our Lord himself testified of it that it was evil, John vii. 7, and this testimony drew upon him the world's hatred. The apostle Paul gives no better character of it when writing to the Ephesians, he describes it as under the dominion of Satan, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience; and he adds, "among whom also we all had our conversation, or course of life, in times past, fulfilling the

desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as others," Eph. ii. 1, 2. So also, writing to Titus, ii. 3, he confesses, that "we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." What an acknowledgment was this to proceed from one, who, after the strictest sect of the Jew's religion, had lived a Pharisee; yea, and who, as "touching the righteousness which is in the law, thought himself blameless," Phil. iii. 6. The truth, however, is, that there is no holiness in the world but what is the effect of the gospel understood, and believed, and loved, and obeyed; and at that time Paul was an enemy to it. The church at Sardis professed to believe this gospel, but many of them walked unworthy of the high vocation wherewith they were called. They seem to have been, in general, a rich and worldly minded people. The Saviour does not accuse them of having imbibed any pestilential heresy, like that of the Nicolaitanes, or corruption of doctrine. On the contrary, they appear to have been speculatively orthodox, to have professed the "form of sound words," "the faith once delivered to the saints;" but the impressions which they first had of its importance and excellency, were greatly impaired, and the greater part of them had become negligent and supine. Mark, then, brethren, how kindly and graciously the Lord deals with them; he does not cast them off at once as unworthy of his notice or regard; but he warns them of their danger, calls upon them to review their state, and retrace their steps.

"*Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God,*" ver. 2.—"Strengthen the things that remain!" What are we to understand by this? I humbly conceive that this brings us to the hinge—the pith and marrow, of the whole epistle to the church in Sardis; and that, upon a right understanding of it, depends any valuable use which we can make of it. Let us not pass it over lightly.

There are three things essentially necessary in order to constitute a christian; and that which is true in regard to a christian, will hold equally true when applied to a christian church, such as that at Sardis. These three things are, *faith, hope, and charity*, or love. So the apostle writes to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xiii. 13, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity,—*these three.*" They are constituent principles of real, genuine Christianity, and they have a mutual dependence and co-operation in the christian life, so that one cannot exist in the mind without the other. Bear with me, then, while I endeavour to illustrate this important matter a little, for the sake of such of my hearers as may not have attended to it.

The gospel of our salvation, you know, is the testimony which God hath given of his Son, with a promise, that whosoever believes it, shall be saved. Now, to be a christian, in the scripture sense of that term, it is necessary to *believe* in Christ, or really to credit what God testifies concerning the divine dignity of his person and character, as—the Son of God—the Word made flesh, or God manifest in the flesh—his mission into this world, with the end and design of it—the offices he sustains in the economy of redemption, viz. the Prophet, Priest, and King of his church—the work he accomplished by his obedience unto death—the benefits he has procured for all in whose behalf he died; and who, as the consequence of receiving this testimony, put their whole trust in him, as a suitable and all-sufficient Saviour, every way answerable to their lost and needy situation. Without this, no one can be a christian—for, it is *by faith* that men are connected with Christ, and partake of his salvation, John iii. 36; 1 John, v. 11, 12; Heb. iii. 14. And all this is the effect of divine teaching, or the work of the Holy Spirit, who enlightens the understanding into the import and meaning of the gospel-testimony, takes of the things which are Christ's and shews them to the mind, and so produces faith unfeigned. Now this “faith works by love,” that is, it produces love in the heart—love to God, for the great love wherewith he hath loved us, in giving his Son up to the death for guilty rebels—love to Christ, for his amazing grace and condescension in dying for us—love to the brethren for the truth's sake, which dwells in them, agreeable to the Saviour's new commandment, John xiii. 34—and love to the gospel, which reveals this wondrous grace. It is impossible that true faith can exist in the mind, without producing charity or love. And it is impossible that faith and love can reign in the heart, without producing hope; for what is the hope of the gospel, but the confident expectation of possessing or enjoying those good things which are promised and held forth in the faithful testimony. Hence the apostle says, “being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God,” Rom. v. 1, 2. Consider, further, how the apostle gives thanks to God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, in behalf of the Colossians, since he “heard of their *faith* in Christ Jesus, and of the *love* which they had to all the saints, for the *hope* which was laid up for them in heaven, and of which they had heard in the word of the truth of the gospel,” Col. i. 5—7. This word of the truth of the gospel, presents a faithful testimony to be *believed*—it exhibits an amiable object to be *loved*—and good things to come, to be *hoped* for: *faith*, then, respects the truth of the testimony—*love*, that which is amiable in it—and

*hope*, the good things in prospect. Let us now apply these things to the case before us.

The church at Sardis, individually and collectively had heard the word of the truth of the gospel; that truth they had received in the love of it, as is manifest from ver. 3, where it is said, “Remember how thou hast *received* and *heard*, and *hold fast*, and *repent* ;” all which implies that they had once known the grace of God in truth; and though, they were now in a cold, formal, *lifeless*, and comparatively *dead* state, the truth must have been still among them, otherwise there could be no propriety in calling upon them to “strengthen the things that remain, that were ready to die,” and to “hold fast, that which they had received and heard.” The christian life, obedience, and warfare, requires the *joint exercise* of faith, hope, and love; but all these were now in a weak, imperfect state in the church at Sardis. In the nature of things it must be so; for, let faith be in lively exercise, and hope, and love will keep pace with it; on the other hand, if we once lose sight of the gospel of divine grace; its importance and excellency; the suitability of Christ’s salvation to our wretched, fallen, indigent circumstances, faith will grow feeble, love will wax cold, hope languish, and our case resemble that of the church at Sardis, which had a name to live, while comparatively dead. Such, appears to have been the state of the church at Sardis, with a small exception; and now let us attend to the admonitions, the cautions, and warnings, which the Saviour graciously gives them.

“Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain—*remember how thou hast received, and heard, and hold fast, and repent; if therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee,*” ver. 2, 3. This language evidently supposes the persons to whom it is addressed to be in a state of slumber, approaching to that of the ten virgins in our Lord’s parable, Matt. ch. xxv. while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept, ver. 5. Instead of being like sentinels upon their watch tower, looking out for the coming of their Lord, their minds are engrossed with the things of time and sense, “the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things” had gradually crept in, and was now choking the word, and rendering them unfruitful, Matt. xiii. 22. The Saviour in mercy to their souls calls upon them to arouse from their slumbering state, to exert all their vigilance, lest they slept the sleep of the second death. And he kindly points them to the means of preserving and strengthening that which remained, and recovering that which they had lost. The exhortation here given them to “be watchful,” supposes and implies a

state of danger, and the New Testament abounds with calls upon the disciples of Christ, to this duty. See Mark xiii. 32—37; Luke xii. 35, &c., and ch. xxi. 34—37.

The world is an enemy ever at hand, and which calls for watchfulness on the part of the christian; one moment it *allures* by its gilded baits the pleasures of sense; at another, it *terrifies* by its tribulations and frowns! The great adversary of souls, Satan, the god of this world, goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; tempting the christian, as he formerly did his lord and master, Luke iv. 1—12; and here is another call for vigilance, which you may remember is strongly enforced upon us by the apostle Peter, (1 Pet. v. 8, 9,) from that very consideration. To all which we must add, the native inbred corruption and depravity of the human heart, “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked” out of which proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, lasciviousness,” &c. &c. in short all those things which defile a man. Surely this calls for watchfulness; and accordingly, Solomon gives this exhortation, “Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life,” Prov. iv. 23. I know not brethren how it comes to pass, that in our day, an attention to these christian duties is stigmatized as being a self righteous labour, and as partaking of pharisaic pride. There must surely be something far wrong in those systems which cut out all place for the exercise of watchfulness over the state of our own hearts and affections God-ward; and I am quite confident that the apostolic epistles to the churches go upon very different principles. Is it uncandid, or unreasonable to suspect, that the church at Sardis, at least many of the members of it, had lost sight of this important duty, which occasioned the Saviour’s call upon them to awake from their slumber? To call into vigorous exercise what remained of their faith, hope, and love; to use every scriptural method for encreasing them, and to enforce this by an awful threatening, which we shall presently have to consider?

But how were they to set about this important work, and what are the means which he prescribes for their recovery? Why, the first step was to call to remembrance “*how they had received and heard:*” that is, to retrace in their recollection the circumstances attending their first *hearing* and *reception* of the gospel, how it found them dead in trespasses and sins, addressed them as with the voice of thunder, saying, “Awake, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” He would have them to call to remembrance, the views and impressions which they then had of their own lost, undone, helpless, hopeless state, when they saw nothing between themselves and the pit of hell, but the atoning blood of Jesus, and the all-sufficiency of that blood, to cleanse from all sin. *Then* the gospel was indeed to them, “glad tidings

of great joy," and they rejoiced in it as those that find great spoil. Thus they were to remember *how* they had received and heard; and in this way they would find powerful inducements to *hold fast* the saving truth which first gave them relief, to change their mind and conduct; to return to the Lord with supplication and weeping, imploring forgiveness for the past, and the enlightening, quickening, and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit to invigorate their faith, confirm and establish their hope, and quicken their languid affections, causing them to run in the way of his commands with enlargedness of heart.

"*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,*" ver. 3. The coming of Christ in a way of vengeance on his enemies, is often in scripture represented to be like the approach of a thief in the night, when men lulled in security, awake suddenly to see their own ruin. Hear his own words, "This know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not suffered his house to be broken through: be ye therefore ready; for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not," Luke xii. 39, 40. You see that our Lord speaks in similar terms to the careless and supine professors in the church of Sardis. And on this part of the epistle, we cannot possibly have a finer comment, than what is contained in 1 Thess. v. 1—7, "But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you, for ye yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh *as a thief in the night*; for when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that *that day* should overtake you as a thief; ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness; therefore, let us not *sleep* as do others, but let us watch and be sober."

"*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,*" ver. 4. This shews us that the Saviour discriminates between his faithful followers, and mere nominal professors in the same church. Corrupt as the state of matters was in the church of Sardis, yet, there were a few *names*, that is, a few *persons*, Acts i. 15. Rev. xi. 13. (Greek *ονοματα*, *names*,) *who had not defiled their garments*. The term "garments" is evidently a metaphor, and a common one in the Scriptures, denoting a conversation becoming the holy profession which they made of Christ's name. Paul compares the christian profession to a pillar, or monument, on which are two inscriptions: the first is, "the Lord knoweth them that are his," and, on the reverse, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Pure and undefiled religion



consists in "visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keeping ourselves *unspotted from the world.*" Jude uses the same similitude, when he says, "hating even *the garment spotted by the flesh,*" ver. 23. Sin defiles the soul, just as earthly impurities do the bodily raiment: and there is no other way of cleansing but by the blood of the Lamb—this is "a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem." The redeemed company are described as having washed their robes, or garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, ch. vii. 14; and when it is promised, as in this place, "they shall walk with me in white," it seems to denote, that such of his disciples in Sardis, as had been preserved from the common corruption, who had kept their purity, and maintained their christian profession uncontaminated by the influence of the world, he would account worthy of great honour and happiness, and confer upon them distinguishing marks of his favour:—worthy, through his worthiness which he puts upon them; they shall walk in communion with him *here*; and in the world to come, they shall be admitted into his blissful presence, and walk with him in glory, honour, and purity.

"*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,*" ver. 5. Here is encouragement for perseverance! White or shining garments, were, in ancient times, marks of favour and honour. Under the law they were the garments of the priests, and they were also worn in the courts of princes. Thus, Pharaoh honoured Joseph, by arraying him in vestures of fine linen, as well as putting a gold chain about his neck, Gen. xli. 42. A white garment is also an emblem of purity, and therefore in Rev. xix. 8, it is interpreted of the "righteousness of saints," as well as a mark of honour. It is often mentioned in scripture as the apparel of angels—whence we may see the propriety of this emblem to express the peculiar honour and favour which the Lord will show to those who have remained constant and faithful to the worship and service of the true God. It is added,

"*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.*" There is here an allusion to a custom which prevailed in ancient times, in states and cities, where those who obtained freedom and fellowship, were enrolled in the public register, which enrolment was their title to the privileges of citizens. Agreeably to which the blessed God is represented as keeping a register of his servants, not as elect, or as redeemed, or as called, justified, and accepted; but according to their outward and visible profession. When any of these turn back, their names are said to be blotted

out; and so at the last judgment, it is made the rule of condemnation, "Whoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire," ch. xx. 15. Hence, also, it is sustained as the rule of admission into the New Jerusalem, to have been "*written in the Lamb's book of life,*" ch. xxi. 27.

That which stands opposed to having our names "blotted out of the book of life," is, our being owned by the Saviour as his sheep, in the great day of account—an ineffable privilege, with the promise of which he often cheered the hearts of his disciples in the days of his humiliation: "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God," Luke xii. 8. This will be a greater honour than to be heir to the riches of Cræsus, or to inherit his throne and kingdom. This was evidently the view which Moses took of the matter, when he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ, greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward," Heb. xi. 24—26.

"*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches,*" ver. 6. This epistle to the church in Sardis holds out a useful lesson to all the churches of Christ, in every age and every country. They should be taught by it to beware of judging of their real state in the sight of God, by what others think of them. Paul, referring to the conduct of a faction in the church of Corinth, among whom there seems to have been no little vain-glorious boasting, gives them this fine but cutting reproof: "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that *commend themselves*: but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, *are not wise,*" 2 Cor. x. 12. In other words, it was in the apostle's opinion, very foolish conduct; and so he says, in the same connection, "Do ye look on things after the outward appearance?" ver. 7. q. d. "Do ye judge of me and of my doctrine, by comparing them with the doings of these men, whose leading object is popular applause?" Let us never forget that we may have a name to live amongst our brethren, and yet be dead. Our names may be written amongst the professed followers of Christ, and yet be blotted out when he comes to judgment.

I close the present lecture, with earnestly and affectionately recommending to each of my hearers, an imitation of the wise choice and noble example of Moses.

## LECTURE IX.

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith He that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth; 8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. 9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. 10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out, and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name.—Rev. iii. 7—12.

## PHILADELPHIA.

PHILADELPHIA, as we learn from history, derived its name from Attalus Philadelphus, the brother of Eumenes, king of Pergamos, and successor to him in the throne, by whom it was founded, about three hundred years before Christ. Its situation lay about seven-and-twenty miles to the south-east of Sardis. A remnant of this once-famed city remains to the present day, and is called by the Turks, Alah Shar, or, the beautiful city, intimating rather what it once had been, than what it now is. Its situation, however, is said to be delightful, standing on the declivity of Mount Tmolus, and having an extended view of the surrounding plain, well-furnished with villages, and watered by the river Pactolus. One of our countrymen, Mr. Arundell, the present chaplain to the British factory at Smyrna, visited each of the seven cities of Asia, to which these epistles were written, so lately as the year 1826, and slept two nights at Philadelphia, taking up his residence in the palace of the Greek bishop. In describing the city, he says, "the view of the place, as we approached it, was extremely beautiful, and well-entitled to the appellation of the 'fair city.' We walked through the town, and up to the hill on which formerly stood the Acropolis, (the castle or citadel;) the

view from these elevated situations, was magnificent in the extreme: highly cultivated gardens and vineyards lay at the back and sides of the town; and before it, one of the most extensive and richest plains of Asia. It was extremely pleasing to see a number of turtle-doves on the roofs of the houses—they were well-associated with the name of Philadelphia (or brotherly love). The storks retain possession still of the walls of the city, as well as the roofs of many of the houses.”<sup>a</sup>

Another of our countrymen, Dr. Smith, chaplain at Constantinople, who visited the scene of the seven churches of Asia, in the year 1671, tells us, that “Philadelphia was formerly a city of as great strength as beauty, having had three strong walls toward the plain, a great part of the inmost wall yet standing, though decayed and broken down in several places, with several bastions upon it.” But the frequent earthquakes to which it was subject in primitive times, proved very destructive to its grandeur—even the walls of the city were not secure; and the inhabitants who lived in perpetual apprehension, were continually employed in repairing them. To which I may add, that since it has fallen under the dominion of the Turks, it has become an insignificant place, compared with what it once was; nevertheless, it still comprises about three thousand Turkish, and three hundred Greek houses; or about fifteen thousand inhabitants, with five-and-twenty places of worship; but the lamp has been long since extinguished. I cannot, however, dismiss these introductory remarks, without quoting one short sentence more, from Mr. Arundell’s book,<sup>b</sup> as I confess, it pleased me much when I first read it. Speaking of the kind reception which he met with from the Greek bishop, he thus proceeds: “He pointed out to me from his corridor, a part of a high stone wall, having the remains of a brick arch on the top, which he said was part of the church of the Apocalypse, and dedicated to St. John! It would have been useless to have attempted to convince him that such a structure would only have been erected after the empire became christian [that is, in the days of popery] and that the early followers of a crucified Master, had not where to lay their heads, much less magnificent temples to worship in.” This is a very just observation, and shews a reflecting mind. Mr. Arundell might, with equal propriety, have added, that the term “church” in scripture, is never once applied to a building of brick or stone, but either to the whole redeemed company both in heaven and on earth, or else to a company of believers coming together into one place for the worship of God, and their mutual edification. We now proceed to consider the contents of this epistle.

<sup>a</sup> Arundell’s Visit, pp. 168. 169.

<sup>b</sup> Ibid. p. 170.

“*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 ;*”—ver. 7. The titles here assumed by the Saviour, or the character under which he addresses this church, contain a conclusive proof of the deity of Christ. “He that is holy,” is an epithet which belongs appropriately to the only true God, for “He alone is holy,” Rev. xv. 4. Yet this essential property of deity is frequently attributed to the Lord Jesus Christ, “the Son of the Father, in truth and love.” He is “that holy thing which was born of the Virgin,” Luke i. 35 ; not according to the ordinary laws of generation, but as produced by the power of the Highest overshadowing her. Even in his human nature, therefore, he was holy, perfectly exempt from the least moral taint, such as all the human race have derived from fallen Adam. Add to which, that his heart and life were ever in perfect accordance with the requirements of the holy law of God—perfect love to God, and perfect love to man—he always did those things which were well-pleasing to his heavenly Father, and it was his meat and drink to do his will. As the great High Priest of his church, he was “holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.” And, as the great Prophet of his church, he is the faithful and *true* witness, “the express image of the Father,” who is the only *true* God, John xvii. 3 ; and so the apostle John sums up the doctrine of the scripture on this head, in the following remarkable words : “We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know *him that is true*, or, the TRUE ONE ; and we are in *him that is true*, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the TRUE GOD, and ETERNAL LIFE,” 1 John, v. 20. The prophet Isaiah was favoured with a vision of him in his glorified state, just as the apostle John was, at the time this Revelation was delivered unto him ; and you may see how he describes it, ch. vi. 1—3 ; “I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple : above it stood the seraphims, each one had six wings—with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts ; the whole earth is full of his glory.’” The evangelist John refers to this vision, ch. xii. 41, and says, “these things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory—the glory of Christ, and spake of Him.” From all which, we may see with what propriety he presents himself to the notice of the church in Philadelphia, as “He that is *holy*—he that is *true*, giving them to understand, that their holy profession, and their contention for the holiness of that profession, however disagreeable to the world around them, was very agreeable to Him, the High Priest of

their profession. And, while they take his word alone for their rule, in opposition to the word of man, and have all their dependence upon it, however much they may expose themselves to the ridicule of their enemies, and be even accounted as enthusiasts and fanatics for following it, they have abundant ground for the course they take, for he is faithful who hath promised—he will be found TRUE to all he has said, whether of promise or threatening.

“*He that hath the key of David, and openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth.*” If you look back to the eighteenth verse of the first chapter, you will find the Son of God thus addressing the apostle: “I am He that liveth and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell, and of death,” or of the grave and the invisible world, which I understand to be of the same import with the text before us. It is proper, however, for us to notice, that in this address to the church in Philadelphia, the Saviour quotes a verse from the prophet Isaiah, and appropriates it to himself, on which account it will be necessary for us to examine it more particularly. You will find it in ch. xxii. 22, and it reads thus: “And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder, and he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.” These, you see, are the very words which Christ adopts, in his epistle to this church, as his own; but then here is a difficulty which requires to be cleared up; for, as they stand in the writings of Isaiah, they refer to quite a different person and another subject. If you read the chapter at your leisure, you will find, that the prophet is speaking of Eliakim, the son of Hilkiyah, who was treasurer, or household steward to king Hezekiah, 2 Kings, xviii. 18. Shebna, the scribe, had drawn down upon himself the anger of the Lord God of hosts, for which he is banished from Hezekiah’s household, and Eliakim is entrusted with the sole and exclusive management of all the affairs of the royal household, which is intimated by his having “the key of the house of David laid upon his shoulder.” Perhaps it may be useful to some now present to be told, that in former times, and in eastern countries, the key was viewed as the ensign of power and authority; and the unlimited extent of that power is here expressed with great clearness and force, by the sole and exclusive authority to open and shut. Our Lord, you may recollect, used this similitude when, addressing Peter, he said, “I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” &c. Matt. xvi. 19, intimating that he should have the honour to open the door of faith to both Jews and Gentiles. This is the very same similitude; and as it applies to Eliakim, it imports, that all the concerns of the house of David were put under his direction and management, that he

was vested with unlimited controul, to order all the affairs of the kingdom, at that time, as he thought best. But you naturally ask, How is it that the Lord Jesus Christ appropriates these words to himself, as he evidently does, when he says, that he "hath the key of David, that he openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth?" I apprehend that the difficulty will vanish if you consider Eliakim as *a type of Christ*, for which, in my opinion, there is ample authority, even from the bare circumstance of the Saviour's quoting the text, and making it his own. But you have only to consider the subject calmly, examine it in all its bearings, and run the parallel between Eliakim and Christ, to be convinced that this is the case. To give you a specimen of what I mean, take the following hints. The *house of David* is an expression which often occurs in the Old Testament, denoting the royal house of the kings of Israel. David himself was a type of the Messiah, and so were all his successors in the throne of Judah. The kingdom, over which David and his descendants reigned, was typical of Christ's kingdom, the throne of which, or seat of government, is in heaven. The Messiah and his kingdom were not only predicted, but they were *prefigured* under the Old Testament, both by persons and things; and we have an instance of this in what is recorded of Eliakim and his stewardship in the house of king Hezekiah, the earthly house of David. The keys of that house were committed wholly into his hands, or laid upon his shoulder, as it is here expressed, to denote that a heavy burden, or, as we should say, an office of great trust and responsibility was committed unto him: "he shall open and none shall shut, and shut and none shall open." All the affairs of the kingdom were put under his management and subject to his controul. Now turn your attention to the Antitype of Eliakim, the Lord Jesus Christ, who claims to possess "the key of David." God hath set him as Lord over his whole house, or kingdom, and committed the entire management of all its concerns into his hands. Having put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, he has removed that which otherwise must have for ever precluded an entrance into his kingdom, and thus he hath opened the door of admission for his people to the everlasting glories of the heavenly state. He is himself the *way* to the kingdom, the *door* through which all the sheep enter, and no man cometh unto the Father but by him. There is nothing that concerns any of his true followers in their passage through this world towards eternal glory, by means of which they may be either quickened or retarded in their progress, but the care of it is committed into his hands, as the Captain of Salvation, or great Shepherd of the sheep; for all authority and power is vested in his hands both in heaven and on earth, that he

may give eternal life unto as many as the Father hath given him. He is in sole possession of the key of David ; he opens the kingdom of heaven to all who believe his gospel, and obey his will ; and he bars the door of admission against all who would climb up some other way :

“ To heaven or hell, his hands divide  
The vengeance or reward.”

“ *I know thy works ; behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it,*”—ver. 8. The door which he has set open, is the door of mercy ; and there are two ways whereby he has done this. The first is, by becoming the substitute of sinners ; bearing their iniquities in his own body on the tree ; satisfying all the claims of law and justice by his own voluntary obedience unto death ; expiating sin by the shedding of his own most precious blood, and thus opening a way for the exercise of mercy to guilty rebels, in perfect consistency with the holiness of God, the honours of the divine government, and the strictest requirements of the divine law. Every impediment, therefore, to the exercise of mercy, on the part of the moral Governor of the universe, has thus been removed out of the way, by the mediation of the sinner’s Friend ; for, in virtue of this, God can be just in justifying the *ungodly*, and dispensing pardons to the guilty. But another way in which this door of mercy has been set open, is by means of the gospel of peace, and the promise of salvation to him that believes. What is the gospel, but a proclamation of mercy to guilty rebels ? It is a publication of peace and pardon, and the free remission of sins ; all sins, however numerous—every transgression, however aggravated, through faith in Christ’s blood. When the Son of God had finished the work which the Father gave him to do, he commissioned his apostles to go into all the world, and preach the gospel, or make known the good news, declare the glad tidings to every creature ; and how did they execute this charge ? You may take, as a specimen of this, Paul’s sermon to the people of Antioch, recorded Acts xiii. 38, 39 : “ Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins ; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.” Thus they opened “ the door of faith ” to both Jews and Gentiles ; and they did it in the name, by the authority, and conformably to the commandment of their God and Saviour. This door of mercy still stands open, and Christ, by means of his gospel, invites the vilest of the sons of men to enter in, to take the waters of life freely. Now is the accepted time : now is the day of salvation. “ Hear, and your soul shall live.”



“*Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name,*”—ver. 8. “*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,*”—ver. 10. The church at Philadelphia does not appear to have been distinguished by the opulence of its members, nor any of those things which render a society respectable in the eyes of the world. They had none of that which man’s wisdom terms strength; the secular power, the sword of the civil magistrate, was hostile to them; the grandees of this world looked upon them with disdain and contempt. Nevertheless, *they had a little strength*, and it was of the right kind; it was that strength which is derived from the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and, though comparatively feeble, its genuineness was proved by their keeping his word, or holding fast the truth concerning him, standing firm under all opposition, and not denying his name, notwithstanding the temptations laid to ensnare them; and this was of more account in the estimation of Christ, than all other things. They had *kept the word of his patience*, and therefore he promises to keep them from being overcome in a most trying season, which was coming on all the world. Patience, you know, has respect to two things; viz. a state of present suffering, and the prospect of future reward. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution in some shape or other; for it is his good pleasure, that those who hereafter share with him in his glory, should be conformed to him in his sufferings. “It is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom.” Now, patience consists in a composed waiting the good pleasure of God, with humble submission to whatever be his will, or that he shall see fit to exercise us with; and so it is a patience influenced by the hope of obtaining the heavenly inheritance when Christ shall come again. Hence the apostle says to the Hebrews, “Cast not away your confidence, which hath so great recompence of reward, for ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the promise,” Heb. x. 35, 36. It is a patient waiting for Christ, 2 Thess. iii. 5; and it constitutes that patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, which is connected with the work of faith and labour of love, 1 Thess. i. 3. You remember the exhortation which James gives on this subject: “Be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord: behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain; be ye also patient, stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh,” James v. 7, 8. It was to the honour of the church in Philadelphia, that, small as their strength was, they had been enabled to keep the word of Christ’s patience, and he promises to preserve them from a storm of impending evil.

What particular judgment is here pointed at, it is difficult to say. We know that a severe persecution took place soon afterwards; I refer to that in which Polycarp suffered, and, on the same occasion, twelve of the members of the church in Philadelphia also lost their lives. But Dr. Gill is quite confident, that this persecution cannot be intended, because the church in Philadelphia was *not* preserved from it! I do not, however, think there is much weight in the learned Doctor's argument; because, if the Lord supported these suffering brethren under the fiery trial; if he kept them from fainting, and enabled them to maintain their constancy amidst the flames, I am sure the Saviour's promise would be fulfilled. That persecution took place under the reign of the Roman emperor Trajan, and was far more extensive and severe than the two preceding ones under Nero and Domitian, which may account for the terms in which it is here expressed: "it shall come upon the whole region."

"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,"—ver. 9. It is manifest from various things recorded in the Holy Scriptures, that the Gentile churches in the days of the apostles suffered greatly from the rage and malice of the unbelieving Jews. We have an instance of this in Acts, ch. xiii. Paul had been preaching the gospel at Antioch in Pisidia, and with wonderful success; "Almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God," ver. 44. Now observe what followed: "When the Jews saw the multitudes, they were *filled with envy*, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, *contradicting and blaspheming*," ver. 46. Nor was this all, for it is added in ver. 50, "The Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts." Much the same conduct was pursued by the Jews at Thessalonica, as you will find by turning to ch. xvii. 5, and at Berea, ver. 13. Now, in order to understand the import of what Christ says to the church in Philadelphia, in the verse under consideration, you have only to suppose that something like that which took place at Antioch, occurred also at Philadelphia. You know that when the destruction of Jerusalem took place, the Jews who escaped the devouring sword of the Romans, dispersed themselves abroad, taking up their residence wherever they could procure the means of subsistence; and the fertile provinces of Asia Minor were filled with them. These men, carrying about with them their former prejudices against Christ and his gospel, had beheld with envy the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom amongst the Philadelphians, and vented their spleen against it. As was usual,

wherever there was a sufficient number of them in any town or city, they formed a synagogue, in which, as in former ages, public worship was stately carried on, and in which they would as a matter of course, blaspheme the name of Jesus, and do all they could to impede the progress of his religion. It is then, in reference to such a state of things as I have described, that the Saviour says to this church, "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." As if he should say: They call themselves a synagogue of Jews; but they are in reality a synagogue of Satan; for, all opposition to the gospel comes from him; they may think that in blaspheming my name and persecuting you, they are doing God service; but I will convince them ere long of their mistake; they shall have such signal proofs of my love and favour towards you, as shall disarm them of their hostility, and make them confess that God is with you of a truth.

"Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown,"—ver. 11. The second coming of Christ is a most important article of the gospel testimony. He appeared once in the end of the Jewish age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; but unto them that look for him, he will appear again, not to offer himself a sacrifice for the sins of men, but to perfect the salvation of all who believe in him; to raise the dead and judge the world, and bestow the crown and kingdom on all his faithful followers. Now there is nothing that tends so much to promote the believer's stedfastness in the good profession of Christ's name, as a firm conviction of this most important article of the christian faith, a realizing perception of its being *at hand*. And hence we find the Saviour calling the attention of the brethren in Philadelphia to it: "behold I come quickly," most assuredly, unexpectedly. While the scoffers are saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" and from its delay, taking occasion to walk after their own lusts, as Peter says, 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4, Christians must not be ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance; but the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night," and this is what he would have his people to watch for. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he shall return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately," Luke xii. 35—36.

“Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching; he will gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and serve them,” ver. 37. It is in the view of these interesting realities, that the church of Philadelphia is thus warned and exhorted to *hold that fast which they had, that no man took their crown*. The apostolic writings abound with similar exhortations to Christians. “Let us *hold fast* the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised.” “Be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.” The same exhortation was given to the church in Smyrna, ch. ii. 10. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” This is the palm of victory promised to him that overcometh; a crown, not a corruptible, but an incorruptible one, 1 Cor. ix. 25. “Blessed is the man that endureth trials,” saith James, “for when he is tried he shall receive the *crown of life* which the Lord hath promised to them that love him,” ch. i. 12. Peter terms it “*a crown of glory*,” 1 Pet. v. 4, a crown that fadeth not away.” *Hold fast* the faith, that is, with all thy might, says the Saviour to this church, let none of thine adversaries wrest the crown out of thine hands, and so rob thee of thy reward.

“*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,*” ver. 12. It was customary with nations in ancient times, and indeed the practice still exists, to erect pillars, or columns, in honourable memorial of their heroes. Absalom having no son to keep his name in remembrance, “built a column on which his name was inscribed, and it was called Absalom’s pillar,” 2 Sam. xviii. 18. The same thing is understood by the columns or pillars of Hercules, though a Grecian fable. In our day, pillars have been raised to perpetuate the victories of Nelson and Napoleon! And the christian conqueror is here promised such an honourable memorial in the temple of God—his everlasting temple in the heavenly state; in that “city which hath foundations, and whose builder and maker is God.” The magnificent temple which Solomon erected in the earthly Jerusalem for the worship of the Most High, was supported by numerous massy pillars, as you will find, if you read 1 Kings, ch. vi. and vii.; but those pillars were insufficient to protect it against the arms of the Chaldeans and Romans; they contrived to lay it in ruins. But it shall not be so with those who overcome in the christian warfare, and are consequently made pillars in the heavenly temple, for they shall

*never be removed* from their station, they “ shall go no more out.” “ And I will write upon him [that is, upon the conqueror] the name of my God,” &c. This keeps up the metaphor of perpetuating the remembrance of victorious exploits, by inscribing them upon pillars or columns erected for that purpose. The writing upon them the name of God, and the name of the city of God, “the New Jerusalem,” and of the Saviour’s own name, cannot import less than this; that they shall be treated as the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, and as those who are redeemed from among men. Perhaps their having the name of God inscribed upon them may denote that they were objects of his everlasting love, predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, given to the Saviour to redeem, called by his grace, sanctified by his word and Spirit, and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. And when it is said by the Saviour, “I will write upon him my *new name*, may it not suggest to us, the name by which he now stands distinguished to us in the economy of redemption, in contradistinction to the names, characters, or titles which he sustained prior to his incarnation. As the eternal WORD, all things were created by him, not only the heavens and the earth, but the highest order of intelligent beings, “ thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers;” all things visible and invisible are the operation of his hand; but he hath now effected a far greater work than that of calling the universe into existence; he has redeemed myriads of fallen, apostate rebels from impending ruin, and this is the name by which he delights henceforth to be known, namely that of Jesus, the Son of God, the Saviour of the lost and miserable, the Christ of God.

“ ’Twas great to speak the world from nought;  
 ’Twas greater to redeem !”

This is a name “above every name that is named in heaven, or earth, or under the earth,” and this *new* name, acquired by his dying love and rising power, he will inscribe upon those that overcome in the christian warfare, marking them as trophies of his redeeming grace, and heirs with himself of the eternal inheritance.

## LECTURE X.

AND unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; 15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness, do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me. 21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. 22 He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.—Rev. iii. 14—22.

## LAODICEA.

THERE were, in the days of the apostles, several cities which went by the name of Laodicea. But that to which John addressed this epistle, was situated upon the river Lycus to the south of Philadelphia, in the road from that city to Éphesus; and at the period immediately preceding the date of the vision, it was a city flourishing in wealth and opulence. It is mentioned more than once by the apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Colossians; see ch. ii. 1; and iv. 13—16, for it was situated very near the city of Colossæ, and it would appear that being sister churches, of the same faith and order, they had frequent intercourse with one another. Paul wrote epistles to each of them, which he requested might be read interchangeably by both. It is a natural enquiry, however, what has become of the epistle, which Paul wrote to the church of the Laodiceans, and why does it not form a part of the sacred canon? This subject has been considerably discussed among the learned, and though we cannot now go into it at any length I may briefly mention to you the result of their discussions. It is, then, the opinion of many able writers, that the epistle, which Paul speaks of, as having been written by him to the church in Laodicea, is the same, or a copy of that which we have in our bibles under the title of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and they explain the matter thus. The Epistle to the Ephesians,

say they, is a catholic, universal address, applicable to all the churches, and was written by the apostle with the view of being distributed to all, and not confined to any particular church, but intended to be circulated, not at Ephesus only, but in all the adjacent region, and accordingly, at Laodicea. The epistle was written while Paul was a prisoner at Rome, and committed to the hands of Tychicus, who was sent with it into Asia Minor, and had to travel through many regions before he would arrive at Ephesus. The copy left at Ephesus had the inscription  $\epsilon\nu$  Εφεσω inserted, and this copy principally was preserved, and admitted into the canon of Revelation. But in some of the MSS. now extant, the words  $\epsilon\nu$  Εφεσω are not to be found, and in some, the words  $\omega\sigma\iota$   $\alpha\gamma\iota\omega\iota\varsigma$  "to all the holy (brethren)" are substituted (such is the case in the famous Alexandrian MS.) which certainly gives some colour to the supposition of its being a catholic epistle, designed for many of the Gentile churches.

With regard to the origin of the church in Laodicea, though we have no positive testimony on the subject, yet the learned Drs. Macknight and Lardner, appear quite confident, that both that church, and also those of Colossæ and Hierapolis, were planted by the instrumentality of Paul and Timothy. It is indeed true, that a different opinion has prevailed currently, founded on the apostle's language, Col. ch. ii. 1, where he speaks of the "conflict which he had for the brethren at Colossæ and Laodicea; and he adds, *for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh,*" from which last words, it has been inferred, that such was the case with the brethren at Colossæ and Laodicea, which Macknight and Lardner contend is quite a wrong conclusion from the apostle's words. See Acts xvi. 6, and xviii. 23. Of all the seven churches, that at Laodicea, appears to have been, at this time, in the worst state. Though there was little in the church of Sardis to draw forth the divine approbation, yet there were a few persons, even there "who had not defiled their garments;" but in Laodicea there is no exception; a spirit of lukewarmness and supine indifference, the usual concomitants of riches and voluptuousness, paralyze the whole body; and one cannot but admire the divine long-suffering and patience, which did not cast them off, as unworthy of any further notice from him; but who rebukes them in love, and calls them to repentance.

"To the angel of the church in Laodicea, write: thus saith the AMEN, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the Creation of God," ver. 14. The word "Amen," imports truth and certainty; and when the Lord addresses them under this title, it is as though he said, "I am HE, all whose threatenings and promises will be most strictly and assuredly fulfilled," "the faithful and true witness," as in ch. i. 4, the Great Prophet of the church by

whom the Father hath spoken unto us in these last days ; and “ the beginning of the creation of God.” I mentioned in a former lecture, that the Greek term, ( $\alpha\rho\chi\eta$ ) which is here translated “beginning,” often denotes the *head* or, *chief*, and this I understand to be its meaning in this place. We cannot have a better illustration of this title than that which is contained in Col. i. 16, 17. “He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of of every creature ; for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are on the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers : all things were created by him, and for him : And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” See also Heb. i. 2, 3. In his incarnate state, He is the first born, or first begotten from the dead, the appointed heir of all things, to whom belongeth the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power ; “ the Prince of the kings of the earth.” Let us now attend to his message or address :

“ *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot ; so then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue,*” [that is, vomit, nauseate, eject, thee with disgust and loathing] “ *out of my mouth,*” ver. 15, 16. This language very strikingly describes the state of lukewarmness, insensibility, and self-righteousness into which this church had fallen. We all know what is meant by heat and cold as applied to the body. Here, however, the terms are used figuratively, in reference to the mind. “ *They* may be said to be *cold*, who have no religion, and pretend to none : and those to be *hot* who are zealously engaged in Christ’s work : but these people were neither the one, nor the other ; they were not decidedly religious, and yet conscience would not suffer them to let religion alone,” and take up with this world as their portion. But theirs was no singular case : many, alas, are the professed christians, in all countries, as well as in Laodicea, who, contented to be named after Christ, are indifferent about their conduct and its consequences. There were such persons during the Saviour’s personal ministry, and you may see what he said *to* them, and *of* them, by turning to Luke vi. 46, “ *Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say, or command ?*” In another evangelist, it runs thus—“ *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*” You see he does not complain of the heterodoxy of their speculations, nor the want of verbal professions of love and attachment to him : there is no intimation of a lack of confidence in the goodness of their own state—no deficiency of talk about the gospel. Where, then, lay their fault ! Why, it consisted in this : that while they had so



much to say about Christ and the gospel, they were not doing the things which he commanded—they were not obedient to the will of the Father, who is in heaven. Notwithstanding their high professions, they were altogether deficient in practice. They might boast of their *faith*; but “faith without works is dead,” Jam. ii. 20. With their mouth they might show much *love*: but the scripture saith, “This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments,” John xiv. 15. 1 John v. 3. Verbal professions are but empty sounds, which cost men nothing; but practical christianity requires us to renounce the world as our portion: it requires self-denial, taking up the cross, and following Christ: and whatever flaming professions men may make, ’tis all vain without the real, self-denied obedience of the gospel. The Laodiceans were falling into this error, contenting themselves with a routine of religious observances, while their hearts and affections were not actively engaged in the duties of the christian profession. The Lord speaks to them, as the bridegroom of the church, in the jealousy of affection. He had done much to gain their hearts, and deserved the warmest returns of love: but instead of this he found nothing among them but a supine, listless indifference, altogether unsuitable to his worth, to the fervency of his affection towards his church, and to the obligations he had laid them under, by redeeming their souls from death, and calling them by his grace. No wonder that he complains of this state of mind as nauseous to him, and that he would rather they were altogether cold.

“*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,*” ver. 17. This is something like a state of self-deception—a state above all others to be deprecated and dreaded! a state in which the individual never dreams of danger, but fancies himself in perfect security, when the next step he takes may plunge him into endless and irretrievable ruin. Examine their situation: they considered themselves as *rich*, probably in the Redeemer’s merits, and as *wanting nothing*; whereas, in fact, they were poor, in reference to heavenly treasure, or being “rich towards God,”—“rich in good works.” Their case was the very opposite to that of the church at Symrna. *They* were indeed *poor*, in respect of worldly property; but the Lord testifies of them that they were *rich* in faith, and heirs of an eternal inheritance, ch. ii. 9; they had a treasure in heaven which no worldly calamity could destroy. At Laodicea all was the reverse: “these people,” as one well observes, “appear to have been very proud, and withal, very ignorant of themselves. Their opulence seems to have lifted them up. Religion seldom thrives

with much worldly prosperity. Men covet such things, and value themselves upon them: but they are commonly snares to their souls. It is a hard thing for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. If these were the *riches* of which they boasted, it shews that the estimate of worldly greatness formed by the "faithful and true witness" is very different from that of the generality of men. Of what account is it in his sight to be rich and increased in goods, while as respects our spiritual concerns, we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked?"

"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," ver. 18. It would appear from this, that the *riches* with which this church was puffed up, included those of the mind; that they were conceited of their knowledge and gifts, or attainments, which rendered them insensible to their wants. The church at Corinth is blamed for something of this kind, when they gloried in their gifts. "Now ye are full; now ye are rich: ye have reigned as kings without us," says the apostle, 1 Cor. iv. 8. It is very probable that the Laodiceans were proud of their gifts, their outward privileges and their attainments, and were quite pleased with themselves in all respects; and as this made them insensible to their real condition, so it cooled their affection to Christ, who is precious only to those that see their need of him. But mark, brethren, the kind admonitions which the Saviour gives them. In preference to the things in which they made their boast, he counsels them to "buy of him," that is, receive as a free gift, "without money and without price," Is. lv. 1, 4; Matt. xiii. 44—46; Prov. xxiii. 23, "gold that is purified,"—durable riches and righteousness. To attain these valuable things, he does not send them to the streams of Pactolus, from which Cræsus collected his immense wealth; nor does he send them to the mines of Potosi; he invites them to HIMSELF, who is "the pearl of great price." But what would he have them to do? why, beyond all doubt, to go back to their first principles; to look anew into the guilty, wretched, helpless, miserable condition in which the gospel found them, perishing in their sins; and replenish their minds with realizing perceptions of his own glorious character and rich abounding grace, to give up with their self sufficiency, and come afresh to him with their poverty and emptiness, and so receive out of his fulness. To give up with their own wisdom and reasonings, which is but blindness in regard to the things of God, and resign themselves to his word and Spirit; thus their eyes should be opened to behold wondrous things out of his law, to see their way and appreciate their end,

their duty, and their interest: a new and glorious scene would then open to their souls, and all things should become new to them.

“*As many as I love I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent,*” ver. 19. Thus the Lord graciously assures them, that the sharp and humbling reproofs which he had dealt out to them in this epistle, were not the rebukes of an enemy, but the kind expostulations of a friend; of one who had their best interests at heart, and who wished to prevent their ruin, See Heb. xii. 5—12. And this shews us the great forbearance and long-suffering goodness of the Lord, even towards those who have abused his kindness and justly merited his displeasure. It should also teach us to put a right construction on the rebukes and chastenings of the Lord, receiving them as the rod of correction to heal our backslidings and bring us to repentance.

“*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,*”—ver. 20. These words, I scarcely need to tell you, plainly allude to the Canticles, or Song of Solomon, ch. v. 2, and we may remark, by the way, that the reference which Christ here makes to them, ought to silence all the objections which men of corrupt minds make to the divine authority of that book. The words of Solomon are, “I sleep, but my heart waketh; it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.” Here the bride is represented as in a careless slumbering state, while the bridegroom is standing without knocking, and calling upon her, in the most earnest and affectionate manner to open to him. But this is a part of the subject which requires a little explanation, and the importance of it will justify me in dwelling upon it with some particularity.

The words are evidently figurative. The *door* signifies the entry or admission into the human heart. The Saviour *standing* and *knocking* at the door, imports his importunity for access, and the methods he uses to obtain it. And his promise to him that openeth, “I will come in to him, and *sup with him*, and he with me,” signifies, that he will come in to the soul with spiritual refreshments, and give the believer sweet communion with himself in the consolations of the Holy Spirit. On each of these particulars I shall offer a short illustration.

1. Allow me to direct your attention to the *person* who is here said to stand at the door. It is no less than Christ, the Son of the living God; a divine person, who styles himself in this chapter “The Amen; the faithful and true witness; the beginning of the creation of God,” ver. 14. This is he who says, “Behold I stand

at the door and knock." Think of his dignity, as Emmanuel, "God manifest in flesh"—"the express image of the invisible God," and you may well wonder at his condescension in thus suing for access into the hearts of sinful mortals. Well, indeed, may it be introduced with a note of admiration, "BEHOLD!" But what is it that bars the "door" of the human heart against him, so as to make it necessary for him to stand without and knock for admission? This is a point that deserves a moment's consideration. It is the case with us all *naturally* until the heart be touched by divine grace; and therefore I answer, that,

One thing which has a powerful influence in shutting the heart against Christ and his gospel is, the *ignorance* of men both of their state by nature, and of his suitableness as a Saviour. The apostle Paul gives this account of the matter when writing to the Ephesians, ch. iv. 18. "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Agreeable to which he received a commission from Christ to go and preach his gospel, by which means he was "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God," &c. Acts xxvi. 18. These texts describe but too faithfully the case of all men naturally, and it holds true even of many of those who have had access to hear his gospel. They may indeed have some speculative knowledge of these things in their judgment, but no such spiritual discernment as to open their hearts to Christ; for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14. It is not until "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, [in the first creation,] shines into the heart, giving the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Christ," that the Saviour gains admittance into the human heart so as to subdue the will, regulate the affections, and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And hence, to this natural blindness or ignorance which pervades the human mind, is to be added,

The power of *unbelief*. This makes the word preached not to profit. "Light is come into the world, but men naturally love darkness rather than light; neither will they come to the light lest their deeds should be reprov'd." Hence the complaint of the Saviour, "Ye will not come unto me, [that is, believe on me,] that ye might have life." And even though they should not deny the truth of the gospel, yet, without divine teaching, or the illumination of the Holy Spirit, they have no proper perception of its evidence as the very word of God, and consequently they do not receive Christ into the heart as the object of their supreme love and cordial esteem, as Paul did when he counted every thing

else as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of him. May I not add, that

*Pride and self-righteousness* have a powerful influence in barring the door of the heart against Christ. It was this which shut the hearts of the Pharisees against him. They fancied themselves whole, and consequently as standing in no need of the physician of souls. This awful mistake placed them at the greatest distance from the kingdom of heaven, insomuch that publicans and harlots entered before them, Matt. ch. xxiii.

And as an inevitable consequence of what has now been said, we may mention the pernicious tendency of *strong prejudices* against the gospel plan of salvation. These shut the hearts of both the carnal Jews, and the philosophic Greeks. You know how the apostle Paul dwells on this topic in his writings, particularly 1 Cor. i. 23. "We preach Christ crucified, says he, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called [or divinely taught to know him,] Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." I add, that

*Worldly-mindedness*, or the prevailing love of the honours, pleasures, and riches of this world, must, in the nature of things, forestal the affections and shut out the Saviour and his love from the human heart. What an instructive parable is that which he himself spake in the days of his public ministry, touching this subject. "A certain man made a great supper, and invited many to partake of it; and sent his servants at supper-time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began make excuse: the first said, I have bought a piece of ground and I must needs go and see it, I pray thee have me excused. Another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come," Luke xiv. 16—20. Such are the flimsy pretents urged by the most decent and respectable part of society, for declining to open the heart to Christ and his gospel; after which it is needless to expatiate upon the influence of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, all which must be sacrificed when Christ is received.

I have one remark more to offer on this subject, and that is, that *presumption* and *carnal security* not unfrequently exclude Christ from the human heart. Inconsiderate mortals often imagine that they are in a safe state already, because they make an outward profession of the name of Christ—enjoy outward ordinances—and keep up a form of godliness, though Christ has never got access into their hearts. This is a rock on which it is to be feared multitudes of our fellow-creatures split, and it behoves us all to

look well to it that we are not deceiving ourselves with a name to live while we are dead.

But we must remember that Christ, in this epistle, addresses one of the primitive, apostolic churches, all the members of which, had made a scriptural profession of his name. It was at the door of *their* hearts that the Saviour is here represented as standing, and knocking; consequently they must have been, in some sense, shut against him, notwithstanding all their privileges and profession. What was it, then, that shut the hearts of one of Christ's churches against himself? No doubt, a certain degree of some of the things we have now mentioned, had a share in it; particularly their love of this present evil world—their presumption, and carnal security. Examine, for instance, his own complaints, and mark what the things are for which he blames them: their lukewarmness—their insensibility to their own wants—their self-satisfaction, and conceit of their own gifts and attainments; but, having already spoken of these things it is needless, at present, further to enlarge.

2. Christ's standing at the door and knocking, sets forth his earnest solicitude for access into the hearts of his disciples. Was it not sufficient, in order to gain upon their hearts, that he condescended to take their nature upon him—to die for their sins—and to make this known to them by the gospel; but must he, after all, stand suing for access into *their* worthless hearts?—even the hearts of those who had tasted of his grace, and been blessed with his special favour? Oh, what a display does this give us of his love on the one hand, and of the depravity of the human heart on the other! I know the objection which some are prepared to start; Why does not Christ *force* his entrance into their hearts, without standing upon men's opening? To this, however, we reply, that to do so would not be congruous, or consonant to the nature of the soul of man. There is no access to the heart, without the consent of the will, and the will must be moved by motives presented to the understanding and judgment. The influence of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is of a *moral* nature; it is by *suasion*, or persuasion, and not by force. "I drew them with *the cords of a man*, [that is, by inducements suited to human nature—by rational motives] by the bands of love."

In knocking at the door of the heart, the Saviour has recourse to various means. For instance, he makes use of HIS WORD, bringing home *convictions* from it to the conscience. Hence, to this church at Laodicea, he says, "thou art neither cold nor hot—thou art poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked." He has recourse to its awful *threatenings*—"I will vomit thee out of my mouth, except thou repent." He avails himself of alluring

*invitations and promises*—"I counsel thee to buy of me purified gold, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed," &c. "If any man hear my voice, and open unto me, I will come in unto him, and sup with him, and he with me." "Him that overcometh, I will grant to sit with me in my throne." In this way, the Lord makes use of his word, to effect his benign and gracious purpose of gaining admission into the hearts of his people; and I may further add, that he also knocks

By means of *his dispensations in providence*. So he says to this church, "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." He makes the various troubles and afflictions of life to second the voice of his word—he subjects his backsliding people to distress of body or of mind; perhaps, in their own persons, or, it may be in the persons of others, near and dear to them. Sometimes, as in the case of the patriarch Job, he afflicts them by the loss of health and property at once—thwarts their best concerted schemes—deranges their plans of worldly aggrandisement—and, by unexpected losses in trade, reduces them from a state of affluence and comfort, to toil, poverty, and indigence. Nor is it by means of affliction only, that the Lord speaks providentially to his people: his dispensations of *mercy* and goodness are also wisely and graciously adapted to second the voice of his word. "The goodness of God leadeth to repentance." He causes the christian to sing of *mercy*, as well as of judgment. One while his path is beset with difficulties; clouds and darkness hover around it; all is perplexity and distress, and, with the patriarch he exclaims, "all these things are against me." But, in the hour of extremity, divine compassion interposes—the cloud he so much dreaded, begins to disperse—relief comes from an unexpected quarter—and, at the moment he looked to be overwhelmed, he finds himself called upon to say with the Psalmist, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all *his* benefits, who crowneth thee with loving-kindness, and tender mercy." And thus it is that Christ knocks at the hearts of his people; by the counsels of his word, and by the dispensations of his providence, calling them to repentance, as was the case with this church.

But it may be asked, What is implied in *hearing his voice*, and *opening* the door to him? I answer, that to *hear* the voice of Christ, is to attend to what he says in his word in all the application he makes for access to the heart, whether it be in doctrine, reproof, correction, or instruction in righteousness: to hear it as *his voice*, now speaking from heaven; and to take it home to our particular case, or in the way of personal application. This is to *hear his voice*; and to *open the door to him*, is to be duly affected with what he says, in the way of conviction and repentance; and

especially to be won by the motives of his love and grace to give him our hearts and supreme affections.

Consider, now, his *promise* to him that heareth his voice and openeth the door. "*I will come in unto him, and sup with him, and he with me.*" To enter into the import of this, we must bear in mind, that the blessings of the gospel are frequently held forth in scripture under the similitude of "a feast of fat things," a marriage supper, as in the parable, Luke xiv. 16, to celebrate the nuptials of a king's son. Christ is the *bridegroom*; and his servants sit in his house to a late hour, waiting his arrival, when returning from the wedding, according to the eastern custom, "he cometh and knocketh," and they open to him, and he maketh them to sit down to meat, Luke xii. 36—38. Now, divest the subject of its metaphor, and what does it import, but that Christ will communicate to the soul spiritual refreshments, and grant sweet communion with himself, by the consolations of the Holy Spirit. He will visit with the joys of his salvation; bestow a renewed sense of the pardon of sin—peace with God, that peace which passeth all understanding, to keep the heart and mind through Christ Jesus; shed abroad the love of God in the heart by the Holy Spirit; grant his disciples the spirit of adoption, witnessing with their spirits that they are the children of God, and sealing them to the day of redemption. In a word, they shall have fellowship with himself in his joy, and be made happy in the foretaste and full assurance of ultimately possessing the heavenly inheritance. This is that manifestation of himself which Christ promises to those who love him and keep his commandments; as when it is said that He and the Father will come unto such, and make their abode with them, John ch. xiv.

The epistle concludes with a most grand and comprehensive promise: "*To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father in his throne.*" This is the last reward promised to those who *overcome*; and it is the richest, the most ample, the most glorious. It comprehends all that he had promised to the other six churches, and indeed, every thing that his followers can wish to make them happy through the countless ages of eternity. Let us dwell a little upon the interesting theme, and endeavour to fill our minds with some realizing perceptions of its glory and grandeur.

The christian life, you see, is here represented, as in many other parts of scripture, under the idea of a race, a conflict, a warfare, in which Christ himself hath gone before his disciples, setting them an example that they should walk in his steps; and he holds out the palm of victory, a glorious reward, a heavenly crown to him that overcometh; they shall participate with him



in that glory and blessedness which he now enjoys as the reward of his humiliation and suffering. I said, the christian life is a state of warfare; we are here in an enemy's country. *The world* in all its diversified forms—the men of the world—the course of society is hostile to the christian profession. Christ says of his disciples, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world:”—“I have given them thy word and the world hateth them.” Indeed, “he gave himself for their sins, that he might deliver them from this present evil world,” Gal. i. 4. And so he calls them not to be conformed to it, but to keep up a continual warfare with it, as he himself did; and to follow him in his disconformity—his heavenly mindedness, and patiently bearing its reproach and hatred.

This, then, is one enemy which the christian warrior is called to contend with daily; and another is his own inbred corruptions—the depravity of his own heart; or, what the scripture terms, “*the flesh*,” which lusteth against the spirit:—the “body of sin,” which he hourly carries about with him, and the lusts and propensities of which he is called to mortify and subdue. It is of this that Paul speaks when he says, “I keep under my body and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast away,” 1 Cor. ix. 24—27. It is of this that he speaks in Rom. vii. 18, when he says, “I know that in my flesh dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.” It is this of which he complains so feelingly, ver. 24, when he thus bewails, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?” It was a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin and death, and he groaned to be delivered from it. To all which we must add, the great enemy of souls: *Satan, the god of this world*, “who goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” You may see how he tempted the Saviour in the days of his flesh, Matt. iv. 1—11. And we see, also, how *he* vanquished the tempter, leaving an example to his followers, engaged in the same spiritual conflict. “Wherefore, my brethren, be ye strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might: put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, &c. Above all, taking the shield of faith—the helmet of salvation—the sword of the Spirit—Prayer and watchfulness,” Eph. vi. 10. And while thus engaged, let hope be called into lively exercise. It is a very remarkable expression of the apostle's, “We are *saved by hope*.” He is treating of the influence of this christian principle in the spiritual warfare. Hope has a respect to the unseen realities of a future state, and it leads to a patient waiting for the

accomplishment of the promises of the gospel. Now, look at the promise with which this epistle to the church at Laodicea concludes: "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." When he had done the Father's will of obedience and suffering here below, he arose from the dead and ascended into heaven, where he sat down upon the throne of God, at the Father's right hand, (Heb. viii. 1, and xii. 2; Mark xvi. 19) crowned with glory and honour, and made blessed for ever with the light of his countenance; and there he has prepared mansions of rest and felicity for his true followers; that where he is, there they may be also," John xiv. 2. When he rose from the dead, it was as the first-fruits of them that sleep in him, 1 Cor. xv. 20; and when he ascended on high, it was as their fore-runner. They are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus." It is promised to them, that they shall "reign in life;" but it is in virtue of their connection with Him, on whom the crown and kingdom are bestowed, as the reward of his unparalleled sufferings on their behalf; for "grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ the Lord," Rom. v. 21.

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Having thus taken a review of the epistles to these seven Asiatic churches, I dismiss the subject with remarking, that in those churches we are presented with a fair representation of the state of Christ's kingdom in this world under the gospel dispensation, from the time of his ascension into heaven to his second coming. It is a kingdom in which faith and patience go hand in hand; it is founded upon THE TRUTH: its real subjects are those who know, believe, and love this truth; they are gathered out of the world by the influence of this truth on their hearts and affections; they love one another for its sake, and this is the bond of their union; and they are waiting for Christ's second advent to raise them from the grave, and put them into the possession of the promised reward. Let us beware of confounding this kingdom with national establishments of Christianity, all of which, even in the purest forms in which they ever have existed, are ANTICHRISTIAN.

## LECTURE XI.

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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. 2 And immediately I was in the Spirit : and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne. 3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone? and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. 4 And round about the throne *were* four and twenty seats : and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment ; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. 5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices : and *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. 6 And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass like unto crystal : and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beasts full of eyes before and behind. 7 And the first beast *was* like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast *was* like a flying eagle. 8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him* ; and *they were* full of eyes within : and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. 9 And when those beasts give glory and honour 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 honour and power : for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.—Rev. iv. 1—11.

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HAVING gone over the first three chapters of the Apocalypse, we now enter upon the SECOND PART, or section, into which I proposed dividing this mysterious book, for our convenience in examining its contents. This portion begins with the first verse of ch. iv., and concludes with the last verse of ch. vii. The apostle tells us, ch. i. 19, that he was commanded to “write the things which he had seen, and the things which are, and the things which should be hereafter.” The existing state of the seven churches, as discovered by their all-seeing Lord, at the time the apostle was favoured with this vision, I understand to denote “the things which are,” or then were, which terminates the first part ; and we now enter upon the second, comprising a disclosure of events that were then to come to pass, and the time for accomplishing which was at hand. Accordingly it is a new vision that is now presented to the apostle’s view, as is manifest from the words “Immediately I was in the Spirit,” which otherwise he needed not to have repeated from ch. i. 10.

The scene of the vision is laid in heaven. “*After this*” says the inspired writer, “*I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven.*” The veil is drawn aside which conceals the Holy of holies, the immediate residence of the King Eternal, from the view of mortals; and he hears *a voice like a trumpet, saying, “Come up hither, and I will shew thee things that must be hereafter,”* ver. 1. Having entered within the veil, he immediately finds himself “*in the spirit*” under prophetic inspiration, like Isaiah, Ezekiel, and other Old Testament prophets, and a vision of heaven is presented to his view. In the scene which now offered itself to his enraptured senses, he beholds the antitype of what he had often surveyed with his bodily eyes, the interior of the temple at Jerusalem, which Paul tells us was a figure, type, or “*pattern of things in the heavens,*” Heb. ix. 24. The first object that struck his view was “*a throne and one sitting on that throne.*” This representation has a near resemblance to what it pleased the Holy Spirit to exhibit to the prophets of old of the *majesty of Jehovah*. Thus, for instance, when Isaiah was favoured with a similar vision, he says, “*In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple,*” ch. vi. 1. Ezekiel also informs us, that he had a vision similar to this of the apostle John. “*As I was among the captives by the river of Chebar,*” says he, ch. i. 1. “*the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God,*” “*Above the firmament was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone, and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness of the appearance of a man above upon it,*” ver. 26. This he repeats, ch. x. 1, and terms it “*the appearance of the likeness of a throne,*”—“*the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah,*” ch. i. 28. As the blessed God dwells in light which is inaccessible to mortals, he must consequently be invisible to them, and his ineffable presence can only be represented by sensible and earthly images. In all these representations of him, the imagery is borrowed from the utmost magnificence of eastern state. John beheld a throne, and “*upon the throne one sitting.*” There is great sublimity in this nameless majesty of God. No description is given, or attempted to be given of him; he is merely described as *sitting*, to intimate the power and authority of his rule. His glory, however, is compared to the lustre of certain precious stones.

“*He that sat, says the apostle, was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone,*” ver. 3. The jasper is represented to be a pellucid watery gem, its colour various; the sardine is also transparent but of a fiery tinge. So, to express, in some measure, by sensible images, the ineffable brightness of Him who sate upon the throne; the clear jasper first presented itself to the apostle’s mind, but a

fiery glow was wanting to complete the description, and for this purpose he adds the sardine stone. In Exod. ch. xxiv, Moses informs us, that he and Aaron and the seventy elders, "saw the God of Israel," and the description which he gives of his similitude, bears a great resemblance to this of John: His words are, ver. 10, "there was under his feet, as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in clearness:" again ver. 17, "And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire." John adds,

*"There was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald."* You may compare this again with the vision of Ezekiel, ch i. 27, 28. "I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about, as the appearance of the bow that is in the clouds in the day of rain." Such was this circular glory; it was not a literal rainbow, but a radiance which resembled it, and of a green hue and lustre, like an emerald.

Before we proceed, it is proper I should inform you, that the generality of writers who have undertaken to interpret this book, have had much to say about the mystical meaning couched under the colours and properties of the precious stones here mentioned. Thus in the jasper, which the learned Grotius supposes to be a diamond, he finds an emblem of the invincible power of God: while Mr. Daubuz, who considers it only a stone of a white and bright shining colour, looks upon it as a symbol of good will and favour. I might make similar remarks on the sardine stone, and the emerald; but as it does not appear to me that the prophetic representation intended such mystical meanings, in the colour of the stones, I decline troubling you with them. I think it a very just remark that is made by a French Catholic writer, that "We are not to imagine each word and circumstance to have a particular application; the whole figure generally tends to one point only, or directly means but one thing; the rest is added, not to make a part of the comparison, but to paint in more lively colours, the thing from whence the comparison is taken." And I may add, that the remarks now made concerning these precious stones and their colours, are equally applicable to the "rainbow." It is a rare thing to meet with an expositor who does not view it as symbolical of God's everlasting covenant, and as here denoting that the glorious majesty of God, which in itself was too much to be endured, would be displayed towards his church in connection with covenant mercy. This inference, I think, we shall admit is instructive and edifying; that it was intended by the Spirit of prophecy, I am not so sure. However, let each one judge for himself.

Comparing this vision, so far as we have proceeded, with those exhibited in the Old Testament, to the prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel,

and Moses, we cannot hesitate to admit, that, to use the words of those prophets, it represents "The King, the Lord of hosts, the glory of the God of Israel." Let us now attend to the apostle's account of his retinue. He adds, that

*"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,"* ver. 5. Such is the inspired writer's description of the retinue of the King eternal, immortal and invisible. He beheld twenty-four seats or subordinate thrones, on which sate twenty-four Πρεσβυτεροι presbyters or elders; but who *are* these favoured individuals, seated in state, and dignified with crowns? They are admitted to distinguished honour in the divine presence; and yet they are certainly servants; for, in ch. xi. 16, we read that "the four-and-twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God," &c. We find them, also, officiating as the servants of the most High, in ver. 10, in postures of humble adoration, as before an eastern monarch, with crowns abased, doing homage to the Supreme King. That they are not angels, the usual attendants of the Majesty of heaven, is very manifest, for in the very next chapter (v. 8—10,) we read "that the four-and-twenty elders fell down before the Lamb," and celebrated *his* praises who had redeemed them to God by his blood. Beyond all controversy, then, they denote *redeemed sinners*, made kings and priests unto God and the Lamb, and so we find them exulting in the prospect of reigning on the earth, ver. 10.

But they are not "the general assembly and church of the first-born," spoken of by Paul, in Heb. xii. 23; they are not that "great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," of which this apostle speaks in ch. vii. 9, and whom he saw standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands:" they are a select body, in number "twenty-four," and they are further distinguished by the title of presbyters or elders, as well as by the high honour conferred upon them of sitting upon thrones, in the presence of the eternal King.

Now, in order to arrive at something like probability respecting the import of these twenty-four elders, for there is no end to the whimsical things that have been said and written on this truly sublime and solemn subject; I conceive it to be of vast importance to us to keep our attention steadily fixed upon the instituted worship of God, in the temple of Jerusalem, the earthly sanctuary, for that was of divine appointment; and there the Spirit of Inspiration has taught us to look for "the patterns of things in the heavens." On this principle, then, we ask, is there any thing to be found on record, regarding the temple worship

which appears to correspond with the matter in hand? In answer to this, I would direct you to 1 Chron. ch. xxiv. where we have an account of the distribution of the priests and levites into their respective classes, for the more regular discharge of their official duties in the worship of God. You will find they were divided into *twenty-four courses*, and the priests, twenty-four in number, were chosen by lot to preside in the affairs of the sanctuary, in their several courses and turns. The levites also had twenty-four stations allotted them, to attend in *their* turn the daily service of the temple; and these represented the whole body of the people of Israel, putting their hands upon the sacrifices and praying in behalf of the worshippers. Among these twenty-four courses, the eighth is that of Abijah or Abia, ver. 10, which is mentioned, Luke i. 5, as the course which Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, was of: by which it appears that those twenty-four courses, which David then settled, continued in succession till the destruction of the second temple. I am well aware, that it is usual with expositors to explain these twenty-four elders, as denoting the twelve Patriarchs, or heads of the twelve tribes of Israel, and the twelve apostles of the Lamb; these twenty-four being the representatives of the church of the living God under the two dispensations, the Old and the New Testament, now reconciled into one body, or general assembly under Christ, their head; and to that interpretation I have no objection. They are evidently a select number, who appear in the dress and dignity of magistrates and chief ministers, attending on the court of the King of kings; clothed in white raiment or shining apparel; "robes that have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb," and thus rendered a fit costume for persons raised to royal honours; for persons of distinction in the courts of the greatest princes, having crowns or coronets of gold on their heads. The apostle proceeds to remark, that

"*Out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices,*" ver. 5. This may remind us of the terrific pomp with which the Majesty of God appeared at Mount Sinai, on the giving of the law; on which occasion, Moses tells us, there were "thunders and lightnings, and the sound of a trumpet, so that all the people in the camp of Israel trembled," Exod. xix. 16. These terrible phenomena are fit emblems of the divine administration. The sound of thunder is awful and impressive; it is one of the most sensible demonstrations of the power and presence of the Deity. Lightning is the most penetrating substance in the world of matter. In the twinkling of an eye it shivers the oak, razes the foundation of the firmest building, destroys the principle of life, and reduces the hardest metals to a state of fusion. These

were accompanied with "*voices,*" audible sounds proceeding out of the throne, denoting the awful declarations he makes to his church of his sovereign will and pleasure; and intimating that, on the present occasion, important communications were about to be made, and demanding attention.

"*And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.*" Here, again, alluding to the lights in the earthly sanctuary, or the candlestick of pure gold, which Moses was instructed to make (see Exod. xxxvii. 17), consisting of one stalk, from which six branches of the same metal were to proceed. On the top of the stalk, and at the extremity of each of the branches, a globe or lamp was to be fixed, which was to be filled with oil, and trimmed and lighted by the priests every evening. It is in allusion to this that we here read of "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne;" and the meaning of the symbol is explained to us, when it is said "they are the seven Spirits of God," the signs or figures of the one holy eternal Spirit of God, as in ch. i. 4; pointing out to us, by the number seven, the perfection, the fulness, and the variety of his gifts and influences, 1 Cor. xii. 4, 5.

Another thing that attracted the prophet's attention was, a "*sea of glass,*" or glassy sea, a beautiful laver, placed also before the throne, ver. 6, "*like unto crystal.*" And thus we are again referred to Solomon's temple, in which there was a capacious basin, termed the laver, and molten sea, constructed by divine appointment, as you will find by recurring to Exod. xxx. 18, &c. and 1 Kings, vii. 23. It was made of brass, and its dimensions were about fifty feet in circumference, and nearly nine feet deep. It was filled with pure water, and the officiating priests were commanded to wash their hands and feet in this water, whenever they were employed in their public functions, or when about to offer sacrifices; and that on pain of death, ver. 20, 21. The antitype of this molten sea, John beheld in heaven, before the throne of God, and we can be at no loss to understand what it symbolized; it denoted "the blood of Christ," which is said to be "a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness," Zech. xiii. 1. Turn to Rev. xv. 2, and you will find this "sea of glass" again mentioned, in terms which sufficiently determine the meaning of the figure: "I saw *as it were* a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, &c. stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God." Thus, you see, its purity and cleansing efficacy are expressed by the epithet *ἑαλινα*, *glassy*; while the martyrs, who are introduced as triumphant on this *glassy sea*, obtain their conquest "by the blood of the Lamb," in which they are represented to have "washed their



robes, and made them white," ch. xii. 11; vii. 14; and i. 5. This is the true brazen sea of Solomon's temple. We may now resume the prophet's vision.

"*In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes, before and behind.*" Though I am little disposed to act the critic on any occasion, and have an utter dislike to pedantry, I cannot help remarking, that I think our translators have been very unfortunate in their rendering of the Greek word *Zōz*, by the English term *beasts*, the plain literal version of which is "living ones," or *living creatures*. A beast is inferior; these living creatures are far superior in intelligence to man. But what are these "living creatures," to which such extraordinary qualities are ascribed? I think it is scarcely necessary to tell you, that to find a proper answer to this question, is the most difficult part of our subject on the present occasion. A living author, of great learning and high respectability, from whose judgment I rarely dissent but with hesitation, has been at extraordinary pains to prove that they are *cherubims*, the highest order of angelic beings. In support of this hypothesis he argues, first, that the description here given of them is borrowed from the seraphim mentioned by Isaiah, ch. vi., and the cherubim of the temple, mentioned in Ezek. i. 10; and, secondly, because they are here placed nearest to Him that sitteth upon the throne. His reasoning, however plausible, does not carry conviction to my mind, and I object to his conclusion on the following grounds:—First, these four living creatures are uniformly spoken of as distinct from angels. In the following chapter, ver. 11, they are represented as forming one circle of worshippers, and angels another; the angels, the living creatures, and the elders, are distinctly enumerated, which would not have been the case, had they been the same as angels. But, secondly, they are evidently redeemed sinners of the human race, and consequently cannot be angels. They are made to sing an anthem of praise, which in the mouth of any but human beings would be untrue. Look at ch. v. 9: "Thou<sup>s</sup> was slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign upon the earth." This song, the apostle tells us in the eighth verse, was sung by the "four living creatures, and the four-and-twenty elders," having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours or incense. They are, in fact, throughout the Apocalypse distinguished from the angels.

But the question returns upon us in all its force: If they are not beings of the angelic nature, what then are they? what is intended, what denoted by them? They must have some mean-

ing—where shall we look for the interpretation of this symbolical language?

Now, in attempting to find a proper answer to this difficult question, according to a principle which I lately stated to you, our first object of enquiry must be, was there any thing to be found in the Hebrew ritual, regarding the tabernacle and temple worship, that is answerable to these four living creatures taking so prominent a part in the worship of the heavenly sanctuary—any thing by which we can resolve the figure, as we did the twenty-four elders, the sea of glass, &c. &c.? The propriety of proceeding in this way, seems to have suggested itself to the learned Dr. Gill, whose solution is as follows: “There is here an allusion,” says he, “to the four standards of the camp of Israel in the wilderness, to which, indeed, there seems to be some reference in the whole of this account. As the tabernacle there was placed in the midst, so is the throne of God here. As the priests and levites were round about that, so are the four-and-twenty elders here. As there were seven lamps over against the candlestick in the tabernacle, continually burning, so there are seven Spirits here before the throne. And as there were four princes that were standard-bearers, who were placed at the four corners of the camp, so here four living creatures are standard-bearers. The standard of Judah, with Issachar and Zebulon under him, was at the east of the tabernacle; Ephraim, with Manasseh and Benjamin, at the west; Reuben, with Simeon and Gad, at the south; and Dan, with Asher and Napthali, at the north.” The doctor goes on to add, that “the Jewish writers say, that on Judah’s standard was the figure of a lion, on Ephraim’s the figure of an ox, on Reuben’s the figure of a man, and on Dan’s the figure of an eagle, to all which the four living creatures had been likened.” So far Dr. Gill, in allusion to the reference which these four living creatures in the vision, bore to the Hebrew ritual; and I may add, it is the view which the learned Joseph Mede, and many others, take of the subject. I must tell you, however, that Lowman, a very judicious writer on the Apocalypse, dissents from it *in toto*, and considers them as the representatives of the angelic host, which I do not. But then, you are aware, that this says nothing for the mystical import, the hidden sense or meaning of this singular hieroglyphic. We must still pursue our enquiry into the interpretation of these four living creatures, which fill so conspicuous a place in the worship of the heavenly sanctuary. You will find them introduced about twenty different times in the book of the Revelation; and sometimes they are represented as principal actors upon the scenes described in it; which makes it the more necessary for us to determine, and, if possible, ascertain with some degree of accu-

racy, the meaning of these symbols; for without this, several things contained in this wonderful book of prophecy must remain in great obscurity to us.

I need not hesitate to tell you, then, that the prevailing, the general, I might almost say the universal opinion, which is now taken by expositors and commentators of these "four living creatures," is, that they are the representatives of the servants of Christ, the heralds of salvation, the preachers of righteousness: those who under the different dispensations of religion, the patriarchal, the Jewish, and the Christian, have been actively engaged in promoting the cause of God and truth on the earth. We all know that this cause has existed from the beginning; a contest has been carrying on between the powers of light and darkness,—the seed of the woman and that of the serpent—and that in every age, the blessed God has had his witnesses, testifying against all immorality and profaneness, idolatry and superstition, and pleading the cause of pure and undefiled religion. Such was Enoch, the seventh in descent from Adam; and such was Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with many others, no doubt, under the patriarchal dispensation. Such were Lot and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Melchizedec, Job, and Moses after the flood. Such were the prophets and sons of the prophets under the law, who for the testimony which they bore God and truth, were "killed all the day long, they were accounted as sheep for the slaughter:" and such were the holy apostles, prophets and evangelists, by whose labours the kingdom of Christ was set up in the world. And you know that when He ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, it was that he might give gifts unto men, raise up pastors and teachers for the work of the ministry, the perfecting of the saints, the edifying of his body, the church. With these, his servants, he promised to be "always, even to the end of the world," encouraging, supporting, and comforting them, and blessing their labours in his cause and interest. Now there are many things upon record in the word of God, intimating that the Lord has a special favour and regard to such, and that although in this world they be accounted base and "the offscouring of all things," there is a rich reward reserved for them in heaven, where they shall be admitted to distinguished honours. Allow me to quote to you a few of the texts of scripture which bear upon this subject. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever," Dan. xii. 3. "Ye are they that have continued with me in my temptations: and I appoint unto you a kingdom, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," Luke xxii. 38. This you will say, respects the apostles and is peculiar to them. Be it so; what think you then of the

apostle Peter's words. "The elders which are among you, I exhort ; —feed the flock of God, taking the oversight, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind ; and when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away," 1 Pet. v. 1-4. Of this distinguished class, or order of persons, the four "living creatures," which John beheld in his vision, are supposed to be the representatives. And now, let us take up this idea, and examine how far it is supported, borne out, and sanctioned by the figures under which it was exhibited to the prophet's view.

In entering upon this subject, I must remind you, that to teach important truths by emblematical figures was a usual method of instruction among the Egyptians and Greeks. An animal, whether bird or beast, was drawn, or sculptured, to denote a corresponding quality in some distinguished individual. Your own reflections will supply instances of this kind in the teaching of our Lord himself. For instance, when he would describe the craftiness and cunning of Herod, he said, "Go and tell that *fox*," &c. To his own disciples he said, "Be ye wise as *serpents*, and harmless as *doves*." Upon this principle, you see, one individual might be represented, hieroglyphically by a serpent to denote one quality, and by a dove to represent another quality. Keep this in mind, then, while you go over the particulars, in ver. 6-8.

"*In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes, before and behind; the first was like a lion, the second like a calf, the third had the face of a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle,*" &c. Suppose, now, that it was the design of the Holy Spirit, in this scenery to present to the prophet's mind, the properties of the whole collective body of the servants of God and Christ, in the view already given of the subject ; it is manifest that the entire description is not intended to apply to each individual. In this view, their various forms will denote their various qualifications for the work in which they are engaged. Thus, the first was *like a lion*, the symbol of boldness, fortitude, and courage, a fit emblem of such men as Luther and Knox. The second *like a calf*, or more properly *ox*, as the word should have been rendered, and thus it is the symbol of a meek, patient, and laborious disposition strikingly characteristic of such men as Owen, and Charnock, and Baxter, and Howe. The third had the face of *a man*, indicating wisdom, prudence, sagacity, and intelligence, for man is distinguished from all other animals by his intellectual endowments. The fourth was *like a flying eagle* denoting, probably, their readiness to serve the Most High, as well as that their employment has an immediate respect to things above, and not the

concerns of this sublunary world; for the eagle is distinguished by his natural affection, the rapidity of his motion, the strong piercing quality of his eye, and the height to which he can soar in the air. Hence this bird is the symbol of deep research, and of ardent and elevated affections.

Apply these symbols to the Christian ministry. Among the servants of God there is a great diversity of gifts and attainments. Some are lions in respect of courage, they can stand unmoved in the midst of dangers, that would make others tremble like the shaking of a leaf. Some are oxen for their laborious exertions, and their patient endurance of hardships. Some, like the man, are distinguished by their understanding, their wisdom, skill, and prudence. And some, like the eagle, have a strong mental eye, a deep insight into the mysteries of the kingdom, with glowing and elevated affections. But we have not yet done with these hieroglyphics; for, of these "living creatures," it is said that *they were full of eyes before and behind.*" Eyes, emblematically denote sagacity, vigilance, and circumspection. You may have remarked concerning the living creatures in Ezekiel's vision, which has such a near resemblance to this of the apostle John, that all of them had four faces, by which means they could see in all different directions at once. Those in John's vision were possessed of what was equivalent; they were full of eyes behind and before; which seems to point out the importance of circumspection and watchfulness in the servants of God; on which subject, indeed, we have many and impressive lessons on record in the Holy Scriptures. Moreover, "the living creatures *had each of them six wings about him,*" ver. 8, intimating, that the servants of God should be prepared to fly to execute the divine will, this is the use of the first pair of wings; while with the second they cover their face in token of their unworthiness when they minister in the presence of a holy God; and with the third they covered their feet, teaching us what Solomon does by express precept, when he says, "keep thy foot, when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to offer the sacrifice of fools," Eccl. v. 1-3.

Perhaps I ought, at an earlier part of my lecture, to have taken some notice of *the number* of these living creatures, and their position, or place of station, which is remarkable. With regard to the first particular;

The number *four* is often used in scripture to denote completeness or universality. It seems to derive this force from the figure or formation of the human body; which is so fashioned as to occasion a four-fold division of the objects which surround it. For instance, a man faces the south, and he has the north behind him; his hands extended, point to the east and west.

Hence is derived in scripture, the determination of those four cardinal points, and their corresponding winds, "the four winds of heaven," Dan. vii. 2; Rev. vii. 1. And thus the "four corners of the land," denote the whole country, Is. xi. 12; Ezek. vii. 2. When, therefore, in prophetic language the number *four* is used, it implies universality or completeness. In the instance before us it seems to import the *whole* throne, every side or corner of it is surrounded by the living creatures, which are here described as the nearest attendants upon him that sitteth upon the throne.

It has, indeed, been remarked that there is in this part of the vision, an obvious reference to the manner in which the Jewish Sanhedrim sat before their president. The throne itself is the segment of a circle; so that the four living creatures being within the segment and before the Lord, might not improperly be said to be in the midst of the throne and round about it. One of them was standing in the front of the throne, another immediately behind it, and the other two were stationed, one on the right side of the throne, and the other on the left. They were in the space between the elders and the throne, standing, like the priests under the law, between God and the people. I add a remark of Mr. Fuller's on the place, which I think is entitled to record.

"Those who led the worship under the Old Testament," says he, "might be meant by the living creatures of Ezekiel; and those who lead the worship under the New Testament, may be signified by those of John. They and the elders, like the stars and the candlesticks, appear to be the representatives of Christ's ministers and churches in the heavenly assembly. They are not described as being themselves on earth, or in a state of affliction, but as before the throne of God; as though a number of the spirits of just men made perfect had been chosen of God, to represent in his immediate presence, their brethren on earth; who, as things should be described which concerned the church, would express the interest they felt in them."

I shall close the present lecture with merely reading to you, the apostle's account of the worship of this heavenly assembly: "They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is, and art to come—Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created," ver. 8, 11.

## LECTURE XII.

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AND I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? 3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. 4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. 5 And one of the elders said unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. 6 And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. 7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. 8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and the four-and-twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. 11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, 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 honour, 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.—Rev. ch. v.

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THE chapter, on a consideration of which we are about to enter, is evidently a continuance of the same vision which formed the subject of the foregoing. In that chapter the prophet describes to us, so far as language would permit him to do it, the palace of the great King, the God of the whole earth. He beheld him upon his throne, high and lifted up, surrounded with a retinue of servants, the spirits of just men made perfect, clothed in white raiment, and having on their heads crowns of gold. He witnesses them engaged in the worship of the heavenly sanctuary; celebrating the praises of the Almighty Former of the universe, who, for the display of his own glory created the heavens and the

earth with the countless myriads of beings which inhabit them ; and, in the very act of worship, casting down their crowns at his feet, in token of their profound adoration, while they cry "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power ; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and do exist." He then proceeds,

"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," ver. 1. You will find some difficulty in conceiving of this, unless you keep in mind that the books of the ancients generally consisted of skins of parchment, not folded as ours are, into sheets of four, eight, sixteen, or twenty-four pages, and bound together, but rolled up ; on which account they are in Latin, called volumes or rolls. Hence it is that Ezekiel speaks of "the roll of a book," and of its being also "spread" open before him ; that is, that he might read it, ch. ii. 9-10. When closed, it is called "the volume rolled up," Rev. vi. 14 ; Is. xxxiv. 4, for it was customary in those days, to roll them round a piece of wood, and then bind them with clasps, or fasten them with strings. The book which John beheld, consisted of seven sheets, connected in this way, each sheet being rolled upon the other, but verging a little to one side, so that the seal of each sheet might appear distinctly to the eye of the apostle ; and yet when one seal was loosed, the other sheets still remained bound, and their contents concealed. This was the usual method by which the contents of a book were kept secret, among the ancient Jews, as is apparent from Is. xxix. 11, where it is said, "men deliver a sealed book to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee ; and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed." Indeed, it is the custom of the Jews to use such rolls of parchment in their synagogues, to this day.

It is said concerning this book or roll, that "it was written within and on the back side;" at least, so our translators represent it, and so many have understood it. But, it is proper I should tell you, that it has been remarked by the learned Grotius, two hundred years ago, that the apostle's meaning is quite altered by an inaccurate punctuation. For instance, if you remove the stop, and place it after the word "within," then it will read thus : "*a book written within, and sealed on the backside with seven seals,*" which better comports with the contents being secret, as was the case until the seals were unloosed.

But here comes an important enquiry, which demands our attention. What are we to understand by this "sealed book," which John saw in the hand of Him that sate upon the throne ? Is there any thing said about it in any other part of scripture, any thing upon record to which it has an allusion or reference, or is it now for the first time introduced to our notice ?



In answer to this, I must request you to turn to the prophet Daniel, ch. xii. 4, where you will read as follows: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and *seal the book*; even to the time of the end;" and again, in ver. 9, "Go thy way, Daniel, for *the words are closed up and sealed*, till the time of the end." For understanding this, you must observe, that Daniel had been divinely inspired to deliver a series of prophecies concerning the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world, and the events that were to befall it; which prophecies occupy the greater part of his writings; but the import of those prophecies he did not himself comprehend; though, as was very natural, he was extremely solicitous to obtain an interpretation of them. Hence, he says, "I heard, but I understood not, [he spake as he was moved by the Holy Spirit,] then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end, or accomplishment, of these things?" ver. 8. Now it is in answer to this anxious enquiry, that he is told to "*seal up the words*," namely, of his prophecies, "till the time of the end," or the period when they should be fulfilled. The sealed book, then, is the book of Daniel's prophecies; and the reason why it was then sealed, is, because they were not then to be fulfilled, and consequently, could not be understood. But if you look to Rev. xxii. 10, you will find it said to John, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for *the time is at hand*," viz. the time for their accomplishment. The opening of the seals then, is the bringing to pass of the events foretold in the dark prophecies of the Old Testament, and especially of Daniel, so as exactly to fulfil those predictions; and this is the proper work of Jesus Christ, the mediator of the New Covenant, the head of the church, and head over all things to it, as we shall presently see. Let us now return to the apostle who thus proceeds.

"*And I saw a strong or mighty angel, proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?*" ver. 2. The proclamation that was made for one that should be worthy to open the book and loose the seals, seems to intimate, how desirable it was that the divine purposes concerning his church in the ages to come should be revealed, for the confirmation of the faith and hope of the disciples of the Saviour here below; and as the apostle had been called to "come up," for the very purpose of being made acquainted with the "things that should be hereafter," ch. iv. 1, we can readily account for the anxiety which he must feel to know the things that should befall his christian brethren in the latter day. He beheld, in the right hand of him that sate upon the throne, a book in which they were all developed, but "no one in either heaven or earth, neither man nor angel, is found worthy to open it, nor to look thereon."

“*And I wept much because no one was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon,*” ver. 3. The office of making known the secret purposes, or counsels, of Jehovah, was an honour too high for any mere creature in heaven or on earth; it is due only to Christ, and is conferred on him as the reward of his obedience unto death; and he is accordingly introduced, with a grace and dignity befitting the important occasion. In the extremity of the apostle’s distress and grief, he is accosted by one of the elders, (it *may be* the prophet Daniel, for aught we know,) who says unto him,

“*Weep not; behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof,*” ver. 5. There is, in these words of the elders, a reference to some Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah, which demands a moment’s consideration. “The Lion of the tribe of Judah,” evidently directs our attention to Gen. xlix. 9, 10. “Judah is a lion’s whelp, he stooped down; he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.” In this chapter we see the patriarch Jacob, who was about to die, calling his sons together, and giving them prophetic intimations of what should befall their respective tribes in the last days. The verses now read contain his prophecy concerning the tribe of Judah; intimating that “he should prevail above his brethren; and that of him should come the chief ruler,” the Messiah, 1 Chron. v. 2, which came to pass accordingly; for, “it is evident, our Lord sprang out of Judah,” Heb. vii. 14. He is termed by the elders, “the Lion of the tribe of Judah,” denoting his dignity and excellence, as standing at the head of that tribe; and having been typified by all the princes of the house of Judah, among whom were David and Solomon. He is also termed “the root of David,” in which there is a reference to Isa. xi. 10. “In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people,” &c., intimating, that David, the son of Jesse, was only a branch, of which the original stem was Christ. He was both David’s Lord, and David’s son; and so in Rev. xxii. 15, he is called both “the root and offspring of David,” the former having a reference to his divine, and the latter to his human nature, Rom. i. 3, 4. Truly did the prophet Isaiah term him the “Wonderful,” ch. ix. 6. His person is wonderfully constituted; for he is, in one view, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; at the same time that he is, “God over all, and blessed for ever.” This is the sublime and glorious personage who was found worthy to open the book of prophecy, and loose its seals.

“ *And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, 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; and he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne,*” ver. 6, 7. One can scarcely forbear anticipating some little surprise in the breast of the apostle on this occasion. He had been taught to expect the appearance of “a Lion,” when lo! in the midst of the throne and the worshipping assembly, he beholds “a Lamb,” as though it had been recently slaughtered for the purpose of being offered in sacrifice; yet living again, and not only living again, but invested with perfect authority, and possessing perfect knowledge, (denoted by his having seven horns and seven eyes,) so as to qualify him for the arduous undertaking of opening the book, and loosing the seals. There is something so peculiarly interesting in the character under which the Redeemer is here presented to the apostle’s view, that you will pardon me in detaining you a little, while we take a nearer survey of it.

“I beheld, and lo, a *lamb* stood in the midst of the throne.” The Lord Jesus Christ, for whom alone so dignified a station could be designed, is frequently represented under this symbol of innocence, in the sacred pages. It was in this character, and as suffering a victim to divine justice, for the sins of his guilty people, that he was prefigured in the daily service of the temple; for thus runs the divine injunction respecting the Hebrew ritual: “Command the children of Israel, that they take two lambs of the first year without spot, day by day, for a continual burnt offering; the one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even; this is the offering made by fire, which ye shall offer unto the Lord,” Numb. xxviii. 3, 4. This was the type or figure, kept up in the earthly sanctuary from generation to generation. When Jesus entered upon his public ministry, John the Baptist directed the attention of his disciples to him, in these emphatical words: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,” John i. 29. He now presents himself to John, as having accomplished his undertaking; and, consequently, as the antitype of the legal sacrifice. Still, he appears in the character of a suffering victim, the character which above all others endears him to sinful mortals; but which, when duly considered, will be found to agree perfectly, and coincide with the more splendid description of him, in which he is styled, “the Lion of the tribe of Judah.” For, be it remembered, that it was in this lowly and suffering form, that he encountered the enemies of his church; the law, sin, death, and hell, and vanquished them all. He fought as the Captain of Salvation, and obtained the victory; but it was through suffering. The

ancient prophets, describing the Messiah, sometimes represent him as a despised sufferer, "he is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep that is dumb before its shearers, so he opened not his mouth," Is. liii. 7; at other times they exhibit him as an irresistible triumphant conqueror, "treading down his enemies in his anger, and trampling them in his fury," ch. lxiii. 3. All this appeared dark and irreconcilable until the event shewed the truth and consistency of both classes of prediction; when "the Lord of Glory" effected the salvation of the world, under the character of an innocent, unresisting victim. That victim now presents himself to John as having received the deadly blow at the altar, yet, as he himself declares, ch. i. 18, "I am he that was dead, and behold I am alive again, and live for evermore." He was crucified in weakness, but he now "lives after the power of an endless life." This divine and glorious personage, in whom are united the majesty of the lion, and the gentleness of the lamb, approaches Him that sate upon the throne, and takes the book out of his right hand, ver. 7. Let us not, however, pass over without comment the apostle's description of the Lamb. He had, says he, "seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth."

I have shewn in a former lecture,<sup>a</sup> that the number *seven* is expressive of universality, fulness, and perfection. But with respect to the *horn*, I may remark, that, from its being commonly that part of the animal by which he asserts his energies, it has been usually received by the eastern nations as the symbol of power or might. Hence, Christ himself is called "a Horn of Salvation," Luke i. 69, that is a *mighty Saviour*. By the *seven horns* here attributed to the Lamb, is imported that universal and irresistible power with which he was vested, when raised from the dead, "all power being given to him both in heaven and on earth," Matt. xxviii. 18. And as the "seven horns" of the Lamb denote his *omnipotence*, so do the seven eyes his *omniscience*. These seven eyes are described in Zech. iii. 9, and ch. iv. 10, to be "the eyes of the Lord which run to and fro through the whole earth."

This Almighty and all-seeing Being, came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sate upon the throne. He came because he was worthy, and he was worthy because he was a person of infinite dignity and excellence, who by his unparalleled obedience and sufferings had brought the highest glory to God, and procured the greatest possible good to man. And now the whole church of God, by their representatives, are described as falling prostrate before the Lamb, and joining in a chorus of

<sup>a</sup> See page 19, &c.

praise. The majesty of the Son of God had hitherto appeared clouded under the covering of the slain lamb, as it was in the days of his flesh, when he appeared as the Son of Mary and of the Carpenter, "a root out of dry ground, without form or comeliness." But his splendour breaks forth with astonishing effect, when he receives the book out of the right hand of the Father, for then, all the armies of heaven, "thrones and dominions, principalities and powers," fall prostrate before him and do him homage.

"And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and four-and-twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having, every one of them, harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints," ver. 8. Harps and other musical instruments were common in the worship of Solomon's temple. The tones of the harp are plaintive and solemn, but peculiarly pleasant. "Take a psalm," says David, "and bring hither the pleasant harp with the psaltery," Ps. lxxxii. 2. It was therefore an instrument admirably suited to that branch of the worship of the worldly sanctuary in which instrumental music was employed. The figure, or symbol, in this vision, is probably intended to denote, that every feeling of the souls of the worshippers was in delightful unison with the service in which they were engaged. But, as in the militant state of the church, the exercise of prayer must always constitute an important part of our worship, so the four living creatures and the four-and-twenty elders were furnished with *vials*, a kind of goblet or basin, belonging to the temple service, in which were deposited before the altar, the offerings of meal, or of incense. It was distinct from the censer, on which the offering was presented, though frequently confounded with it. These vials were full of *odours*, more properly *incense*, which was a compound of various sweets, Exod. xxx. 34. and xxxvii. 29; Lev. xvi. 12. This incense, contained in the vials, is explained to mean, "the prayers of saints;" and thus, while these worshippers skilfully touched the strings of the harp with one hand, they held in the other, a kind of goblet, smoking with incense, denoting at once the two leading branches of divine worship, prayer and praise. Thus the Psalmist, "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands, as the evening sacrifice," Ps. cxli. 2. In the ninth and tenth verses, we are furnished with the matter of the song of these worshippers:

"They sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." This is termed a *new song*, and it is adapted to the *new covenant* state of things,

which is founded on the sacrifice, and ratified by the blood, of Christ. A new song is suited to a new manifestation of mercy; the burden of this song is *redemption*, not from Egyptian servitude, or Babylonian captivity, which topics formed the basis of the songs of praise under the old covenant, but it is a redemption from the curse of a broken law: from the guilt, power, and pollution of transgression; from impending wrath and everlasting misery; all which they ascribe to the blood of the Lamb. HE is found worthy to take the book, and to open the seals; and they perceive the ground of it to lie in his having redeemed them to God by his blood. Hence arise their ascriptions of praise, for this they bless his name, and also for his having made them kings and priests, or a royal priesthood; and given them to expect that, however much they were at present the subjects of persecution, affliction, and distress on earth, they should even there be finally victorious; that He, who is now vested with Almighty power, would maintain his cause in the world, and bring forth judgment unto victory.

Here, however, you must allow me to detain you, while we examine the gloss which is put upon the concluding words of ver. 10, by the Millenarians of the present day; I mean, those who contend for the personal reign of Christ upon the earth during a thousand years. The song closes, you see, with the words, "*We shall reign on the earth.*" The doctrine which they found upon them is, "That all the redeemed church, from the beginning of time to the end of the world, will be raised up from their graves to reign upon and inherit this earth." This, they contend, is the meaning of that remarkable text, Rev. xx. 4, "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." This last verse they connect with the words, ch. v. 10, and thus make them the basis of their scheme of the millenium. As it would be quite out of place here to enter upon a consideration of Rev. xx. 4, I shall not at present attempt it, but reserve it for the proper time and occasion. All I now intend is, to endeavour to rescue my text from the perverse use which they make of it.

The words, "we shall reign on the earth," are, you perceive, part of a song, which is sung by the four living creatures and four-and-twenty elders, as the representatives of all the redeemed company; in which, after an ascription of glory to the Lamb, they are led to anticipate a period when he should subdue all his enemies, and his cause and kingdom everywhere prevail in the earth. The whole

is replete with important matter and spiritual instruction ; but we are not authorized to explain it like a literal history of facts. The book, the seals, the proclamation, the Lamb, the four living creatures of different forms, with wings, the four-and-twenty elders on thrones, with crowns, having harps and golden vials full of incense, the Lamb's taking the book out of the right hand of him that sate upon the throne, &c. &c. : these are all figurative and emblematical representations ; and so this song must be considered as a part of the scheme of the vision, the design of which is to introduce with greater solemnity the succeeding events of this prophetic book, and particularly to set forth the exalted Redeemer as alone worthy and able to know and to reveal the divine purposes, and to manage and dispose all events for the good of his church, unto the end of the world. This song, which is evidently a part of the divine revelation given to John, is sung in his hearing, by that same agency of the Spirit of inspiration which presented the visions, as it were, to his sight. Still, however, the subject matter of the song remains the same ; and the words, " we shall reign on the earth," must unquestionably be considered as a prophecy concerning a future period of the church on earth. But, while we admit that these words are sung by the representatives of the church of the redeemed, it will not follow, that they shall all be raised from the dead to reign on the earth at that period. The redeemed company, though living in different and distant ages of the world, are all but *one body*, most intimately connected, and have all one common cause and interest ; so that what is said of a visible church may apply to them, collectively considered. If, in some periods, those of them on the earth suffer, all suffer with them ; if, at other periods, they are honoured, all rejoice with them, 1 Cor. xii. 26. It is impossible for us to say how far the departed saints in heaven may know, or be affected with the state of the church below. The souls of those under the altar are represented as knowing that their blood was not yet avenged on them that dwell on the earth ; and they seem as if they were longing for it, and would be happy at its accomplishment, ch. vi. 9-11. Accordingly we find, that when Babylon falls, the heavens and the holy apostles and prophets (who had long before departed this life) are called to rejoice over her, ch. xviii. 20. Why, then, may not the redeemed company, even those of them in heaven, be represented as expecting in this sense to participate with their brethren on earth the millennium reign, without supposing them raised from the dead for that purpose ?

But the millenarians lay great stress on the relative pronoun " WE," which, they insist, is the declaration of the whole redeemed church, both in heaven and earth ; consequently, that none of the saints can be excluded from this happy reign. In this, however,

they seem to have overlooked the fact, that the first person plural, "we," is sometimes used to express only a *part* of the redeemed company; and, what seems still more unnatural and strange, it is used both exclusive of the speaker and the persons spoken to. Thus the apostle Paul says, "We shall not all sleep," 1 Cor. xv. 51. Now he could not include himself and the Corinthians, in this "we," nor indeed the greater part of the redeemed; it could only be true of such of them as happened to be alive at the second coming of Christ. Again, he says, "We who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord;—we who are alive and remain, shall be caught up," &c. 1 Thess. iv. 15, 17. Here it is manifest, that he neither includes the whole of the redeemed company in this "we," nor yet himself and the Thessalonians, as would naturally be thought to be the case, but only those who should be on the earth at a very distant period; and yet he exhorts the Thessalonians to comfort one another with these words, ver. 18. The redeemed company, therefore, may with equal propriety sing, "We shall reign on the earth," and rejoice in the prospect of it, though that should be peculiar to those of them who live in the world during the millennium period. And though their brethren, who have died in the faith and gone to glory, are raised above the most prosperous state of the church on this earth (Rev. vii. 9); yet even these happy spirits may receive an addition to their joy, at the destruction of the persecuting powers, in answer to their cry "How long," &c. ch. vi. 10, and at the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world, ch. xix. 1-9, even as the Old Testament departed saints did, by what took place at Christ's first coming, though they were not raised up from the dead at that period.

From this digression, we now return to the prophet's vision.

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honour and glory, and blessing," ver. 11, 12. Here we have a new class of worshippers introduced; it is "the innumerable company of angels," of whom the apostle Paul speaks, Heb. xii. 22. When the Redeemer ascended up on high, they attended him as his charioteers, and graced his triumph, Ps. lxxviii. 17. When he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, the heavenly mandate was issued, "Let all the angels of God worship him," Heb. i. 6; and now the prophet sees them uniting with the representatives of the redeemed company in doing him homage, and celebrating his praises. "On such an occasion they could not be silent, but must join in the choir. Myriads of myriads, beyond



computation, unite in ascribing "worthiness to the Lamb," and on the very same ground that the redeemed had done, viz. his having submitted unto the ignominious death of the cross. True, he took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham; yet angels unite in praising him for his love to man.

"In enumerating the things which he was worthy to receive, it deserves our notice, how they keep their eye on those perfections of which he had *emptied* himself in his humiliation. He did not lay aside any thing pertaining to his *goodness*, but merely what belonged to his *greatness*. He was no less holy, just, faithful, and merciful, when on earth, than he is now in heaven; but he emptied himself of *power*, as laying aside his authority and taking upon him the form of a servant, in which capacity he acted here below; for the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister: of *riches*, as becoming poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich: of *wisdom*, as making himself of no reputation: of *strength* as becoming weak and subject to death like other men, for he was crucified in weakness: of *honour*, as not appearing in his native dignity, but as a man, and a man of obscure birth, despised of the people: of *glory*, as subjecting himself to shame and disgrace: and of *blessing* as receiving not the benedictions so much as the execration of those among whom he sojourned."—"And now all these honours revert to him, as his native right, and are heaped upon his head. The purport of the song, therefore is, "By how much he hath emptied himself on earth; by so much let him be magnified and exalted in heaven!"<sup>b</sup>

The song, however, is not confined to angels; "Every creature in heaven, and on earth, and in the sea;" that is, all creation re-echoed the exalted theme, "saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever," to which the four living creatures, responded "AMEN," while the four-and-twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever. "A scene more sublime than this cannot be conceived. Let us endeavour to fill our minds with some faint apprehensions of it. Call to your recollection the superlative glory of the place; it is in heaven, the palace of the King of kings. Think of the transcendent dignity and glory of the actors: the spirits of just men made perfect; an innumerable company of angels; Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant; and God, the judge of all. Consider the adorable and awful majesty of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Realize the divine power and exalted honour of the Lamb that is associated with the Father in these songs of praise. Meditate on the

<sup>b</sup> Fuller.

sublimity of the songs ; the sweet melody of voices and harps ; and the deep and awful interest which we must ever feel, both in the subject matter of the songs, and in the important occasion which drew them forth from so many well-tuned voices and fervent hearts ; and say, whether the scene was not transcendently grand, and whether it was not altogether befitting the high and important events which were about to be disclosed.”<sup>c</sup> I close with the beautiful lines of Milton :

“ The multitude of angels, with a shout  
 Loud as from numbers without number, sweet  
 As from blest voices uttering joy : heav’n rung  
 With jubilee ; and loud hosannas fill’d  
 Th’ eternal regions : lowly reverent  
 Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground  
 With solemn adoration down they cast  
 Their crowns. . . . .  
 No voice exempt ; no voice but well could join  
 Melodious part—such concord is in heaven.”

PARADISE LOST, book iii. 344, &c.

<sup>c</sup> Hutcheson, p. 14.

## LECTURE XIII.

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

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### FIRST SEAL.

WE are now arrived at the *prophetical part* of the book of the Revelation, to which the five chapters we have gone over, are merely introductory. And before we advance further, it may be proper to lay down a few preliminary observations which may be found useful to us all in our investigations into its meaning and import.

It will be remembered that in the last lecture we had under consideration "the Sealed Book," which the prophet saw in the right hand of Him that sate upon the throne, ch. v. 1, which book he saw the Lamb "come and take out of his hand," ver. 7. It was then remarked that this "Book," was none other than the prophecies of Daniel; which, though committed to writing five hundred years before John was favoured with this vision, had, by Divine command, been "sealed up," till the time of the end, Dan. xii. 4-9. This period had now arrived—the Lamb is found worthy to open the book and loose the seals; in other words, he is found worthy to reveal and make known to his servant John, and through him to the churches on earth, the events predicted by Daniel, which had lain hid for ages and generations.

Now as the book of Daniel's prophecies is the sealed book that was opened in the days of John, it follows that the same relation must subsist between the writings of these two prophets, as between a lock and its key. They are adapted to each other, and, if we would understand "the words that were closed up and sealed to the time of the end," we must use them together; attending at the same time to what has been written upon the same subject by other prophets and apostles. Instead of following the Jewish and Anti-christian interpretations of the book of Daniel, which have been the principal causes that have prevented him from being understood, let us carefully attend to the explanation that has been given of this prophet, by "the Faithful and True Witness" as recorded in the Apocalypse, in which the seals are removed from that book: the time for which the vision, and the

prophet who saw it, were to continue sealed, having expired. The substance of what has been now said, therefore, amounts to this ; that, in making our way through the subsequent chapters of the book of Revelation, it will be indispensably necessary for us to revert continually to the book of Daniel, in which is to be found the *germ* of those predictions relating to the christian church, which it is the object of the Apocalypse to more fully unfold. For, however plausible and ingenious any exposition of the Revelation may appear, if it proposes any thing that has not a direct reference to the contents of the sealed book of Daniel, as the plain and obvious sense of what was “shut up and closed to the time of the end,” it must be rejected by those who wish to “hear the words of this prophecy.” It is only by attending to the voice of “the Faithful and True Witness,” in opposition to the comments and glosses of those who substitute darkness for light, that a right understanding of this mysterious book can be obtained.

A second observation which I find it necessary to offer in this place, regards the style or language in which the wisdom of God hath seen fit to deliver this book to us. No person who examines it can doubt that a large portion of it is conveyed in symbols, or the language of symbols, that is, pictures, or significant signs are substituted in the place of words. Now we must carefully distinguish between this, and what is called a figurative or metaphorical style. All primitive languages are highly figurative or poetical ; and they are so from necessity. Men must possess ideas before they seek words to express them ; and when new ones are produced, making use of the language they possess, they are obliged to have recourse to such objects in nature as are known, or supposed to possess qualities or properties in some way resembling the idea they wish to communicate. Hence the language of *metaphor*, which uses such expressions as these : “God is my rock, my fortress, my high tower, my shield, and the horn of my salvation.” In such modes of speech, the fitness of the figure is manifest and occasions no ambiguity ; but the original poverty of the language introduced another mode of conveying ideas, and this is what is styled the *symbolical* language, in which the figure employed is put in the place of the object itself. This is a style of writing widely different from what is called the figurative or metaphorical ; a word used figuratively, may signify one thing ; but taken as a symbol it may have quite a different meaning. For instance, fire taken figuratively, may denote any thing that purifies ; but when used as a symbol it stands for the divine judgments. Thus the horn is used as a figure to denote strength ; but as a symbol it stands for a kingdom. Strange as this method of writing may appear to us moderns, it was carried to such perfection among the Egyptians in days of yore, as to possess powers

of expression far beyond what can now be easily conceived : in proof of which it may be remarked that those traditions and mysteries, which were thought of sufficient importance to be handed down to posterity, were engraven on the pyramids, the walls of their temples, and other works of art ; and hence came the name *hieroglyphic*, from the two Greek words *ἱερός*, *holy*, and *γλύφειν*, to *engrave*.

Now in order to study the book of the Revelation to advantage, it is absolutely necessary to make ourselves acquainted with the language of symbols, in which style it is conveyed to us ; to take care that we do not confound a symbol and a metaphor ; to remember that symbols are never used in radically different acceptations ; for if that were the case there could be no certainty in prophetic interpretation. Having once ascertained the import of any symbol or hieroglyphic, we must steadily adhere to that meaning, and not allow it to signify *this* thing in one text, and *that* in another ; it must have a determined sense from which no radical variation can be admitted.

One additional remark which I have to offer, before we proceed, respects the date of the commencement of the series of prophecy on which we are about to enter. It has been common to compute it from the time when John was favoured with the vision ; that is from the end of the first century, thus leaving out the whole of the period which elapsed from the ascension of Christ to heaven, to the time when John wrote ; which appears to me to be an error, and one that has had a fatal influence on the explanation that has been given of the opening of the first and second seals. I am decidedly of the opinion that the subject of prophecy is taken up from the period of Christ's ascension into heaven, or the setting up of his kingdom by the preaching of the apostles on the day of Pentecost, as we shall presently see ; and this you will find to correspond with the division of the book which is contained in the instructions John received to "write the things which he had *seen*, and the things which *were*, and the things which should be *hereafter*." John had *seen* some of these things already take place ; he had witnessed the progress of the gospel by means of the labours of himself and fellow apostles ; he had witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem by the arms of the Romans, and he now saw the church assailed by a severe persecution ; and what he had now to be made acquainted with would carry on its affairs to the time when Christ should come again. This makes the sealed book to comprise an entire system of New Testament prophecy, from Christ's ascension to the end of all things. Having briefly premised these things, let us now attend to the verses first read, and consider their import.

*"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 living creatures, saying, *Come and see,*" ver. 1. Those of you who have read your bibles with attention, will have observed how common it is with the inspired writers to describe the voice of the Lord as a "great, a terrible, a glorious voice," and to compare it to "thunder." Of this kind was the voice from heaven described in John xii. 28, in answer to the prayer of Jesus, "Father, glorify thy name." It is said that there came a voice from heaven, so loud, that some who heard it remarked that "it thundered;" while others said that an angel spake to him." So in the vision of Isaiah, ch. vi. 4, at the voice of the cherubim, it is said, "the posts of the door of the temple moved at the voice of him that cried." This awful voice from the throne of God is described as the sound of many waters.<sup>a</sup> It proceeded from one of the four living creatures, in a voice like thunder, and called upon John to "Come and see" the providence of God as displayed towards his church.

"*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,*" ver. 2. As the Lamb breaks the seal of each separate roll, the sheet which is thus set at liberty, unfolds, and presents to the prophet's view, a hieroglyphic painting, for it is only by that means the colours of the different horses could be known; this painting exhibited a white horse, with a person riding upon him, having a bow in his hand and a crown on his head, going forth in a victorious career, "conquering and to conquer." There is a passage very similar to this in ch. xix. of this book, to which I beg to call your attention, as being much calculated to throw light upon the import of this first seal. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, *a white horse*, and he that sat upon him was called *Faithful and True*, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes are as a flame of fire; and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written which no man knoweth but he himself: and he was clothed in a garment dipped in blood, and his name is called **THE WORD OF GOD**. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean; and out of his mouth went a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the wine press, of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God; and he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written *King of kings, and Lord of lords,*" ver. 11—17. We can have no doubt to whom this sublime description appertains; it is to the Captain of Salvation; the Son of God, who like one of the mighty champions of old, has vanquished his enemies, and returns in triumph at the head of his armies, loaded with the spoils

<sup>a</sup> See on ch. i. 15 p. 36.

of victory. Put, now, these two passages together, viz. ch. vi. ver. 2; and ch. xix. 11—17, and you will see that the former *white horse and his rider*, represents to us the setting up of the Redeemer's kingdom, with the glorious success of the gospel when preached by his apostles and others with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven—and *the latter* presents us with a view of the same divine personage as having subdued Antichrist, avenged the blood of his saints, and now as about to give rest to his church in the millennium period which immediately follows it, see ch. xx. 1—6. There is also a passage in the forty-fifth Psalm, which may be pertinently quoted in illustration of the import of this first seal: the words run thus—"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," ver. 3, 4. This Psalm is so often quoted by the apostles and applied to Christ in his kingly office, as risen from the dead, and as subjecting the nations to himself by the power of his gospel, that I need not stop to prove its connection with the opening of the first seal. I proceed, therefore, to direct you to another ancient prophecy, which seems to be pointed at in the opening of this first seal. You will find it Gen. ch. xlix. particularly verses 24 and 26. It is the prophecy of Jacob, concerning the family or tribe of Joseph; but to perceive its force, you must consider the latter as a type of the Messiah: thus it reads—"But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob: (from hence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) the blessings of thy father have prevailed, above the blessings of thy progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." Obscure as this may at first sight appear, I am of opinion that if you examine it narrowly and compare it with the forty-fifth Psalm just quoted, and both of them with the language of our text, you will find them to reflect light on each other.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>b</sup> The setting up of the Kingdom of Christ by the labours of the apostles, was the subject of prophetic intimation from the time of Samuel, as Peter tells the Jews of his day, Acts iii. 24. We may therefore expect to meet with dark allusions to it in all the writings of *all* the prophets. Thus, for instance, there is a passage in Zechariah, ch. x. 3—6, which appears to bear strongly upon it, though the prophet's meaning seems to have suffered from a defective translation. The following is the version given of it by archbishop Newcome.

“ But Jehovah, God of hosts, will visit  
 His flock the *house of Judah*,  
 And will make them as *his goodly horse in war*.  
 From him shall be the corner-stone, from him the nail,  
 From him the *battle-bow*,  
 From him shall go forth every ruler together,

But it is now time that we directed our attention to the book of Daniel, because, if we are correct in considering his prophecies to be the "sealed book," which was now opened to the view of John; and if the opening of the first seal, which presented to his view, a white horse, having one sitting thereon, with a bow in his hand, and a crown upon his head, going forth conquering and to conquer—if this symbolical representation denotes the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world, with its conquests by the preaching of the apostles, it is very manifest that we ought to find the foundation of this in Daniel's prophecies. Turn then to ch. ii. of that book, and you will find that, at the time of writing those prophecies, Daniel was a captive at Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar, the king, had an extraordinary dream, which troubled him greatly. When he awoke, the particulars of the dream had entirely vanished from his recollection, though the effects attending it still harassed his mind. As his court abounded with diviners, soothsayers, magicians, and pretended wise men, the monarch convened them together, declared to them what had happened to him, and insisted on pain of death, that they should make out his dream, and furnish an interpretation of it. Unable to do this, they were on the eve of being sacrificed to the king's wrath, when Daniel interposed, being divinely instructed to furnish all the particulars of the dream, and also to interpret its meaning. The dream was that of a huge image representing a human figure, the form of which was terrible to look upon, ver. 31. It was compounded of four different metals, viz. gold, silver, brass, and iron mixt with clay, ver. 32, &c., and this Daniel interprets of four kingdoms succeeding one another in the same order as these metals are placed in the image, reckoning from the head to the feet, ver. 37-44. Having explained these things, the prophet reminds Nebuchadnezzar, that, in his dream he had also seen "a stone which was cut out without hands, smite the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and break them to pieces, until they became as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor; and the stone that smote the image, became a great mountain and filled the whole earth," ver. 34, 35. But what is Daniel's explanation of this part of the monarch's dream? You will find it given in ver. 44, &c. of the same chapter, in the following manner: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be

And they shall be as men that tread down  
The mire of the streets in war.  
And they shall fight: for Jehovah shall be with them:  
And the riders on horses shall be confounded."

The *going forth* of this Christian armament, seems to be represented by the white horse in this first seal.—*Woodhouse*, p. 132.



left to other people ; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold ; the Great God hath made known to the king, what shall come to pass hereafter."

Here, then, we have, in the prophecies of Daniel, that which constitutes the contents of the first seal, which John saw opened by the Lion of the tribe of Judah : namely, the Kingdom of Christ. This is a subject of deep interest to us all ; and I humbly conceive, that our time cannot be more usefully employed during the remainder of the present exercise, than in taking a review of of what the Scriptures say concerning it, keeping our eye more particularly fixed on Daniel's account of it.

According to this prophecy, you perceive that it was to commence its origin during the existence of the Roman empire, the last of the four great monarchies that were to succeed each other, ch. ii. 44. And it was to be set up by "the God of heaven," *ib.* Again ; it was, in its infantine state, to resemble *a stone cut out of a mountain "without hands,"* thereby intimating that it should be destitute of all worldly glory, power, and pomp, not the result of human agency or policy ;—nevertheless, it was to undergo a wonderful change ; for, in process of time it should itself "become a great mountain and fill the whole earth." Such is Daniel's description and prophecy concerning it ; and now let us direct our attention to the New Testament and see what further account is given us concerning it by the evangelists and apostles.

When John the Baptist commenced his public ministry, he called the attention of his countrymen to this important subject : "Repent," said he, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Our Lord and his apostles took up the same theme, and much of the ministry of Jesus was occupied in illustrating by parable its nature, immunities and blessings. This drew upon him the rage and malice of the unbelieving Jews, who understood him to claim to be the true Messiah, and they therefore preferred an accusation against him to the Roman governor of making himself a king, and consequently interfering with the claims of Cæsar. You know the issue of all this ; he was apprehended on a charge of high treason, or blasphemy, and brought before Pontius Pilate, who interrogated him closely—"Art thou, then, a King?" He acknowledged that he was a king—but added, "*My kingdom is not of this world, if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews ; but now is my kingdom not from hence—to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth—every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice,*" John xviii. 36, 37. Thus he confesses himself to be a King, even

at the moment when he stood as a culprit at Pilate's bar; and the account which he gives of his kingdom is in perfect harmony with the prophecy of Daniel concerning it, viz. that it should be set up by the God of heaven—that it should never be destroyed—nor should it be left to other people, but should break in pieces all the kingdoms of the earth, and stand for ever.

Our Lord, by his good confession, endeavours to shew Pilate, that, such was the nature of his kingdom, it could in no wise interfere with Cæsar's. There was no occasion in it for the power of the sword, nor had it any dependance on the usual means by which the kingdoms of this world are supported. Now, a kingdom that is *not* of this world, must be distinguished from one that *is*, by the things that are spiritual and heavenly. Worldly kingdoms commonly originate in the bad passions of those by whom they are founded, such as ambition, pride, avarice, and a fondness for worldly glory. The kingdom of Christ did not take its rise from any thing of this kind: it originated in the amazing grace, and love, and mercy, of the Most High, towards guilty rebels, and it is founded upon the condescension, self-denial, humiliation, and sufferings of the Son of God. Its object is not to confer upon the followers of Christ the honours or riches of the world, but to “deliver them from this present evil world,” and save them from perishing in the destruction that awaits it. The laws and institutions of this kingdom are not the result of human wisdom or policy, for they are all of heavenly origin, and of *divine authority*. Their grand design is, to promote conformity to its King and Founder, and so they run counter to the spirit and maxims of this world—they contain a complete system of nonconformity to it, inculcating humility, meekness, gentleness, the forgiveness of injuries—all of which are enforced by motives drawn from the world to come. And then, with regard to the subjects of this kingdom, they are distinguished from the world at large by this, that they are “*of the truth, and hear the voice of their Lord and King.*” They believe the testimony of God concerning his Son—they are born again by the incorruptible seed of the word—they understand and believe the gospel, and so they are “*of the truth,*” or of faith. In consequence of which, they hear Christ's voice—give earnest heed to his doctrine, precepts, promises, and threatenings, yielding unreserved obedience to him as their Saviour and their King.

Let this, then, suffice for the *nature* of this kingdom, and let us proceed to notice the means by which it was set up in the world, and the progress which attended it at the beginning.

When the Lord Jesus Christ had finished the work which the Father gave him to do, and was about to return to heaven, he assembled his apostles, gave them a commission to go into all the world and preach his gospel, promising to be with them always (in

doing so) even to the end of the world, Matt. xxviii. 18-20. He instructed them, moreover, that they should tarry at Jerusalem until they had received the promise of the Father, that is, the gift of the Holy Spirit, in his miraculous influences. Accordingly, on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit was poured out upon them from the risen and glorified Jesus, even as he had promised. And now the apostles, in diversity of languages, boldly testified the truth, concerning his person, character, mission, and the salvation he had procured for perishing sinners. Peter's first discourse was attended with the conversion of three thousand. "These gladly received the word, [or believed the gospel] they were baptized, and added to the church," Acts ii. 42. A few days afterwards, Peter and John preached in the temple to a numerous audience, with still greater success; five thousand more were added to them. The numbers converted unto God at Jerusalem, were afterwards dispersed, and thus became the instruments of spreading abroad the knowledge of Christ. The apostles were also sent by the direction of heaven to convey the gospel, not only to the Jews scattered abroad, but likewise to the Gentiles. And those who believed, and made a scriptural profession of the faith, were collected into societies, and called CHURCHES. These were composed solely of such as appeared to be *of the truth*, or to believe the testimony concerning JESUS CHRIST, THE TRUE GOD, AND ETERNAL LIFE. They had officers, or office-bearers, ordained among them, who are addressed under the titles of BISHOPS, or overseers; and DEACONS. And, as the apostles were faithful men, they taught the disciples to do whatsoever Christ had commanded them. Accordingly, it is said, "they continued stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and prayers, praising God;" and the Lord added to them daily such as should be saved, Acts ii. 42-47.

Thus was the kingdom of Christ established, with all possible evidence, that it was *not of this world*, but of heavenly origin. What power appeared was the power of God, working in a miraculous manner, and with supernatural efficacy: the laws that were given, were held to be superior to all human laws. "We ought [say the servants of Jesus] to obey God rather than men," Acts v. 29. They had been taught to lay their account with being exposed to poverty, contempt, and every form of persecution, on account of their religion; but they were armed with patience, and taught to wait for the return of their Lord from heaven, and expect to reign with him in glory. The most extraordinary concord and affection appeared among them; for "such as had possessions sold them, and distributed as every one had need;" but the source of this affection was not a union of civil interests—not the similarity of their education and temper; but their common faith in the divine Saviour: they "loved one ano-

ther for the truth's sake dwelling in them." For they had all found enough in the death and resurrection of JESUS, to give them a lively hope in the divine mercy, and free access to God.

It was thus that the Captain of Salvation went forth, in the chariot of his gospel—I ought rather to have said, "upon his white horse," conquering sinners by his love—making a willing people in the day of his almighty power—giving testimony to the word of his grace—and crowning the labours of his servants with wonderful success. Paul was, in an especial manner, chosen to that work. He preached the gospel first at Damascus, afterwards at Arabia, Jerusalem, Syria, and Cilicia: then at Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Perga, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth. At this last place, he and his companions continued a year and six months, teaching the word of God. After this, he preached at Ephesus nearly three years: so that "all they who dwelt in Asia, heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." Reciting his own travels and labours, he says, "From Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." He had not then been at Rome, but being afterwards sent there as a prisoner, he continued two whole years in that city, preaching the doctrine of the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, and his salvation.

Of the labours and travels of the other apostles, we are not so distinctly informed as we are of those of the apostle Paul; but, that they also were assiduous in prosecuting their mission, we cannot reasonably doubt. Christ foretold that the gospel of the kingdom should be preached in all the world, that is, in every part of the Roman empire, for a witness unto all nations, before the destruction of Jerusalem; and about nine years before that dreadful event took place, Paul tells the Colossians that this had actually taken place. So rapid and universal, indeed, was the spread of the gospel, that he applies what is said of the heavenly luminaries to the publishers of it: "Their sound went *into all the world*, and their words unto *the ends of the earth*," Col. i. 6, 23. The canon of scripture was not completed, that generation had not passed, when Jesus Christ had disciples and churches in Judea, Samaria, Syria, Phœnicia, Mesopotamia, Arabia; in the countries of Asia Minor, Greece, Macedonia, Italy, Egypt, and as far as Ethiopia. This we learn partly from the books of the New Testament, partly from the remains of the apostolic fathers. Whilst the faith of the gospel was deeply rooted in all those who professed it; whilst nothing but a conviction of its truth could induce any one to make the profession; whilst the professors themselves were harassed on every side with the most violent persecutions,—the kingdom of Christ, in spite of all opposition, and every species of discouragement, increased daily. In less than

three centuries from the period of the first publication of the gospel at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, Christianity had made its way into Gaul, Spain, Britain, and the African countries lying on the Mediterranean, and had become the predominant religion of the Roman empire, which comprehended the greater and better part of the known world. Nor was its extent limited by the empire; it did, indeed, with wonderful celerity, overspread the most populous countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa. But the limits of the present exercise does not admit of further enlargement on this head.

Having thus briefly explained to you what I understand to be imported by the opening of the first seal;—having glanced at the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world by the labours of his apostles, with the wonderful success that attended them, all which I take to be included in the hieroglyphical symbol of the "white horse and his rider, going forth conquering and to conquer,"—we must now draw towards a close of this lecture; and I do not see that I can do that more properly, than by laying before you an extract from the writings of a clergyman of the church of England, who died exactly a hundred years ago [1729.] You will readily perceive the bearing which it has upon the subject of the present lecture.

"So long, and so far as Christianity was planted according to the standard of its great Author: in plainness and simplicity of incorrupt doctrine, and with meekness and humility, love and charity in practice: when Christians continued stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship [and in the breaking of bread and prayers, Acts ii. 43]: when the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul, and great grace was upon them all (Acts iv. 32, 33); then did their light shine forth indeed before men, and cause them to glorify the God of heaven. It was the praise and wonder of those who beheld its blessed effects, and might have been the joy of the whole earth. Had Christians continued to walk worthy of the vocation with which they were called [in all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace, Eph. iv. 1-3], the christian church, established on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, might in its whole building, fitly framed together, have grown up into one holy temple in the Lord. But an enemy soon sowed tares among this wheat, and contentious men very early began to build hay and stubble upon the foundation of Christ. Not content with the simplicity and plainness of the gospel, which could furnish no materials for strife and contention, vain men soon began to mix their own uncertain opinions with the doctrine of Christ; and had no other way to give them weight and authority, but by endeavouring to *force* them upon the faith of others. And out of

this bramble, as Jonathan foretold the men of Shechem, a *fire* proceeded which hath *devoured the cedars of Lebanon*. Or, as the prophet Ezekiel expresses himself concerning the vine of Israel, a *fire* is gone out of a rod of her branches, which hath devoured her fruit. For, from a desire of being *many masters*, from a desire of *forcing* mutually our own opinions upon others, instead of exhorting them to study and obey the gospel of Christ, have arisen strifes and contentions, hatred and uncharitableness, schisms and divisions without end. From a zeal for the religion and the commandments of Christ, from a concern for the promoting of truth, righteousness, and charity, it is evident, in the nature of things, and from the experience of all ages, that wars and fightings, hatred and animosities, never have nor ever can proceed. These precious fruits have always sprung from that root of bitterness, a zeal for the doctrines and commandments of men, a *striving for temporal power and dominion*. At the first beginning of 'the mystery of iniquity,' the builders of hay and stubble on the foundation of Christ went no farther than to censoriousness and uncharitableness towards their brethren; but in process of time, as water in a farther distance from the fountain, divides itself continually into more streams, and becomes less pure; so when men had once departed from the simplicity and purity of the doctrine, and from the charitableness of the spirit of Christ, their hatred and animosities increased continually, till they literally fulfilled that remarkable prophecy of the Saviour, in which is contained a most severe reproof of those corrupters of the gospel, who, he says, would arise in the following ages: 'I am come to send fire on the earth.' Nay, even that description which he gives of the persecution which the Jews should inflict on his disciples, 'The time cometh, that whosoever *killeth* you will think that he doeth God service;' even this, in time, came to be fulfilled by one (professed) Christian upon another."

Thus preached, and thus wrote (for my extract is taken from one of his printed Sermons) the celebrated Doctor Samuel Clarke (vol. iii. pp. 312-315), one of the most learned divines, and certainly one of the ablest reasoners, which this or any other country ever produced. How far he steered clear of these charges in his own conduct, it is not for me to say; but, that the national establishment of religion, in the service of which he spent his days, has much of this evil lying at its door—I mean, in corrupting the doctrine, changing the laws, and persecuting the friends of the kingdom of Christ—is either true, or I have laboured under a gross delusion for half a century. In the quotation, however, which I have given you from his writings, you will find something very much like the history of the second seal, or, at least, a clue to guide you into its meaning, as will be seen, if we be spared to enter upon it.

Before I close the present lecture, allow me to recommend to you, my brethren, a personal application to your own particular case and circumstances—I mean in your social capacity as a christian church—of the doctrine contained in it. If you would know what primitive Christianity *was*, or what the kingdom of Christ really *is*, you must not collect your estimate from what now passes currently for such in the professing world. I speak not merely of national establishments, which in their very nature are *antichristian*: but I include, in my remark, the general state of matters among the dissenters of the present day. If you carefully examine these societies in their constitution, order, and discipline, and compare them, in these respects, with the pattern exhibited in the churches planted by the apostles, under divine direction, I fear you will find but little resemblance. In few of them is THE TRUTH concerning Christ, the bond of their union; and in fewer still, is there any conscience made of treading in “the footsteps of the flock”—imitating those churches which, in Judea, were first in Christ Jesus. Instead of coming together on the first day of the week to break bread—in place of “continuing *stedfastly* in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers”—they have agreed to differ quietly about the doctrines of the gospel, and the laws and institutions of the kingdom of Christ, without interruption of visible fellowship. They have learned to distinguish carefully between *fundamentals*, or things necessary to be believed and practised; and *circumstantials*, or things that are indifferent, as though the religion of Christ contained any thing which his disciples may neglect without incurring his displeasure! And they have *nearly* agreed to hold all those things to be indifferent which would be inconvenient and disreputable; and to have communion together in observing somewhat like the customs of their forefathers. This is a spurious Christianity, against the influence of which you cannot be too carefully guarded. Never for a moment, let it enter your thoughts, that you can improve upon the model of the christian church which is laid down in the New Testament; to suppose so, is to suppose yourself wiser than Christ: nor ever imagine that you can depart from that model without opening the door to every innovation which the folly and caprice of men may dictate. It would argue great self-conceit in any society of people, in this day, to imagine itself equal to the first churches in fervency of love, in purity of worship, and in strictness of obedience—but it implies no such vanity, to be *studious of following them*. Let this be your ambition, without heeding the charges of bigotry, sectarianism, or a want of charity which will be plentifully heaped upon you.

## LECTURE XIV.

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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.—Rev. vi. 3, 4.

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### SECOND SEAL.

IN our last lecture, we had under consideration, a highly interesting and pleasing subject, the setting up of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world, or the first planting of Christianity, by means of the labours of his apostles and their associates ; and this I understand to be the main thing revealed to the Church by the hieroglyphical symbol which presented itself to the view of the apostle John, on the opening of the first seal—viz. that of a *white* horse, having one sitting thereon in whose hand was a *bow*, and to whom was given a *crown*, and he went forth *conquering* and to *conquer*, ver. 1, 2. We now proceed to notice the opening of the *second seal*, which, as you see from the verses read, exhibited to the prophet's view, another horse with a rider thereon, but differing in colour from the former, and consequently indicating a change of character. For, whereas the *white* horse denoted, the *purity*, and *peaceable* nature of the kingdom of Christ, a kingdom which consists in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit," and the subjects of which were "Knit together in love," the second seal being opened, another sheet or roll unfolds itself, and presents to view a horse that was *red*, (Greek *πυρρος*, from *πυρ* *fire*,) an alarming intimation of the change of the dispensation, which indeed is put beyond all controversy by the words that follow, "and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another ; and there was given unto him a great sword." I need not tell you, my brethren, that it cannot possibly be the kingdom of Christ which is here symbolized by *fire* and the *sword*, and *confusion*, and *slaughter* ! He is himself, you know, "the Prince of peace," his mission into this world was to promote "peace on earth and good will among men," his religion was propagated in the world by the preaching of *peace*. You remember, that, in the days of his public ministry, he was on one occasion addressed by some of his zealous disciples in this way, "Master, shall we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them as Elias did ?" intend-



ing thereby to resent an affront that had been given them: but what was his answer? You have it in Luke, ix. 55; "He turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save." When the chief priests and captains of the temple, and the elders accompanied by a mob, came to apprehend him, he thus addressed the multitude, "Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour and the power of darkness," Luke xxii. 52. And in the same awful hour, when one of his followers drew a sword, struck a servant of the high priest, and smote off his ear—Jesus said unto him "Put up thy sword again into his place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," Matt. xxvi. 52. Thus saying he for ever discharged the sword from having any thing further to do in his kingdom. It may indeed make hypocrites, as it has made thousands and tens of thousands, but it never produced him one genuine disciple, one faithful subject; it may coerce the body, but it cannot reach conviction to the mind. But if it be not the kingdom of Christ that is here represented by the *red*, or fire-coloured horse, and the implements of slaughter and devastation, what kingdom is it? Is there any other part of this book of the revelation, which is calculated to throw light upon the import of this second seal, and which may consequently serve as a clue to its meaning? Turn to ch. xii. and read ver. 3, 9, 17. "And there appeared another wonder in heaven, behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads; and the great dragon was cast out, that old Serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world, he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him:—and the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

I have called your attention to these verses, because, as I shall more fully explain hereafter, I consider the whole of this twelfth chapter to be merely an enlargement of the contents of this second seal, and consequently as opening up to us its import and meaning. That the dragon is a symbol of the Devil, is placed beyond dispute by Rev. xx. 2. In the verses which I have just quoted from ch. xii. you find him identified with the seven-headed, and ten-horned beast, viz. the Roman Empire. And in my text, the opening of the second seal, the *red horse* is, in plain terms, an emblem of Satan and his kingdom. Our first object, of course, must be to justify this interpretation of the symbol, and then to attempt an illustration of it.

When we look into the Scriptures at large, and carefully attend to the account which they give us of the state of things in this world, we find them dividing mankind into two classes, two families, two empires or kingdoms, and only two ; hence we have the expressions, the righteous and the wicked ; the children of the wicked one, or the devil, the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God's dear Son. At the head of these two grand divisions, or classes of the human race, the inspired writers place, the King of saints, and the Prince, or god of this world ; and the latter and his associates are termed "the rulers of the darkness of this world." His dominion is called "the power of *darkness*," in opposition to the light of divine glory which shines in the work of redemption. So all who are rescued from his power by the influence of the gospel, are said to be "turned from darkness to light." He is further described to us by two Hebrew names, which signify "the adversary," and the "destroyer ;" and by two Greek ones, which import, "the accuser, or calumniator," and "the evil or wicked one." And so we find the apostle John ranks the whole of mankind under two heads ; for speaking of himself, and all who held the same truth with him, he says "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one."

These, then, are the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, and between these two seeds there has existed in all ages an irreconcilable opposition, even from the beginning. It is founded in the original curse pronounced upon Satan, Gen. iii. 15. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed : it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Now, this serves to shew us the meaning of the Saviour in such texts as these—"I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled ? Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth ? I tell you nay, but rather division ; for, from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two ; and two against three—I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother ; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

Such, then, is the account which the Scriptures give us of the origin of persecution ; it takes its rise from the enmity that subsists between the two seeds, or, to speak more correctly, from the hatred which Satan bears to the saving truth, and those that are of it ; and we cannot reasonably doubt, that all opposition to this truth, is instigated by the prince of darkness, who was a murderer from the beginning. But though this be included, as I have no doubt it is, in the contents of the second seal ; I incline to think, that to enter into its full import, we must take a more extended view of the *red* horse, and the sword, and the power that was given to him to take peace from the earth.

It is a fact which admits of no dispute, that no sooner was the kingdom of Christ set up by the preaching of the apostles, than Satan instigated the unbelieving Jews to oppose it by force; and made use of them as his instruments in seeking its total overthrow. We have an account of this in Acts viii. 1, where it is recorded that, "at that time there was a great persecution against the Church, which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles." It was in this persecution, that Stephen, the deacon, fell a martyr to their rage, and Saul of Tarsus, was consenting unto his death. And though, after the conversion of Saul, as we read ch. ix. 31, "*The churches had rest throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified,*" &c.; yet, that was the case only at intervals, for in ch. xii. 1, you read of "Herod the tetrach, stretching forth his hand to vex certain of the church; putting to death James, the brother of John, with a sword; and because he saw *it pleased the Jews*, he proceeded further to take Peter also." This shews us how the spirit of hostility was kept up in Jerusalem between the believing and unbelieving Jews; and how "he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born of the Spirit." And when the gospel found its way among the Gentiles, by the preaching of Paul and his associates, and the kingdom of Christ thus became extended and enlarged, they were still the victims of persecution, as you cannot fail to have observed in reading the apostolic epistles to the churches. To refresh your memories, I will adduce one passage from Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians: "For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea, are in Christ Jesus; for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us, and they please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway," ch. ii. 14-16. In all this, you may trace the footsteps of the *red* horse, and the exploits of him who sat upon him; to whom power was given to take peace from the earth. There has been no age of the church, from that day to the time in which we live, in which we cannot trace the enmity between the two seeds breaking out into blood and slaughter, so as to give occasion to the disciples of Jesus to say, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep to the slaughter," though evidently in a more sanguinary manner at one time and place than another; and though the "god of this world," the prime agent, the moving spring in all this scene of havoc and destruction, makes use of different classes of men to accomplish his diabolical purposes. At the outset, it was the unbelieving Jews, into whose hands he com-

mitted the "great sword;" after that, it fell into the hands of the heathen magistrates, as we shall presently have occasion to notice; but for more than a thousand years past, the destroyer of mankind has had no occasion to avail himself of the polluted hands of idolatrous Pagans; he has found in the (so called) *christian priesthood*, a race of men as active and as willing to do his work, and in all respects, as completely fitted to his mind, as were either the jewish sanhedrim, or the heathen magistrates, of which melancholy fact, we shall have to lay before you, ample evidence hereafter. The system is still in progress, and the struggle will continue, until the final overthrow of Satan; and until the rider upon the *white horse*, who is marching forward, "conquering and to conquer," shall pluck the crowns of the earth from the brow of his proud and malignant adversary, and appear, in due time, in all the splendour of royalty, as "King of kings, and Lord of lords," and "crowned with many crowns," Rev. xix. 12-16.

But, however true, and important these remarks are, yet it is possible they may be found too general to suit, in all respects, the language in which the writer of the Apocalypse has couched the symbolic representation of the opening of the second seal. Let us return to his words, and take a more careful survey of them.

"*There went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword,*" ver. 4. I have already intimated my judgment, that the colour of the horse, in this second seal denotes the kingdom of Satan, which is founded in cruelty, blood, and injustice—the reverse of the kingdom of Christ. But, when it is added, that "there was given to him a great sword," I understand it to import that the power of the Roman government was put into his hands, to employ it in the destruction of men's lives; and this idea is strengthened by its being said, that "power was given to him to take peace from the earth;" or, that he might involve the empire in war. But what I would particularly fix your attention upon is the expression, that "they should kill *one another*." This, you see, is quite a different thing from their embreuing their hands in the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus. It evidently represents the breach of peace among them that had confederated together against Christ and his gospel; namely, the Jews and the Romans. To adopt the words of the Psalmist, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers (of the Jews) took counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us," Ps. ii. To effect this one object: to overthrow the cause and kingdom of the Redeemer, they had joined counsels; and the "great sword" of the Roman govern-

ment was unsheathed to effect it. But, "He who sitteth in the heavens," and who had undertaken to maintain the cause of his Son, so overrules it in his providence, that a breach of peace ensues between the parties themselves; a dreadful and disastrous war breaks out, and they slaughter *one another*. Nor do I think we can be at much loss to understand what this refers to. Such of you as have read Josephus's History of the Wars of the Jews, and especially that dreadful war which issued in the destruction of the city and temple, by the Roman armies under Vespasian and his son Titus,<sup>a</sup> will find in it a clue to the full import of this second seal. You may there read the terrible overthrow of the Jews, in consequence of their strange divisions among themselves, effected by the Roman armies; and all this as the righteous judgment of God upon them for their rejection of the Messiah, and their employing the Roman power against the kingdom of Christ. This work of the Father's zeal for the cause of his beloved Son, against the enemies of his gospel, took place about six and thirty years after the establishment of his kingdom, on his ascension into heaven. It was then that he destroyed those murderers and burnt up their city: then it was that "wrath came upon them to the uttermost." This was the entire abolition of the Jewish church and state: the most awful revolution which had then taken place in all the dispensations of God,—and which, in his adorable providence, he overruled and rendered contributory to the success of the gospel, and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, in various ways. There is a very pointed prediction concerning it in the prophecies of Daniel, ch. ix. 26, 27, which demands our notice. Thus runs the record: "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood; and unto the end of the war desolations are determined: and he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

These verses, as you are all aware, comprise a prophecy—one of the most remarkable in all the bible, concerning the Messiah, the promised seed. We have in it, not only a general testimony respecting his coming, but it fixes *the time* also of his advent. The work assigned him, or the specific ends for which he should appear is detailed with wonderful minuteness, viz. to finish transgression—make an end of sin-offering—make reconciliation for

<sup>a</sup> Josephus de bell. Jud. lib. v. vi. vii.

iniquity—bring in everlasting righteousness—seal up the vision and prophecy—to be cut off but not for himself—confirm the covenant with many, and cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease. Here, then, we have a summary of the Old Testament state of things, the substance of all the institutions of the temple worship, the centre of all the promises,—in a word, a concise delineation of the whole work of the promised seed. To illustrate these particulars at large would require an entire discourse, and is foreign to my present object. What I had in view in referring you to it, is to direct your attention to what the prophet says concerning the calamities that should come upon the Jewish nation, at the time when this prophecy should be fulfilled. You see he plainly points to the Roman armies: “the people of the prince that should come:” that they should destroy the city of Jerusalem and the holy temple, and that the end or final catastrophe should be “a flood,” an overwhelming torrent of war and bloodshed, desolating the whole land with fire and sword. The Roman armies, in themselves abominable, and abhorred by the Jews, would overspread the country, wasting and laying it desolate: nor was this to be for a season or short space of time only, but unto “a consummation,” or until the judgments of heaven determined upon by the Most High should be fully accomplished. And now let us turn, for a moment, to the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew’s gospel, and attend to the “Faithful and True Witness” forewarning his disciples of these same things. In ver. 15. he expressly refers to this prophecy in Daniel, as being on the eve of accomplishment in *their* day: “When, therefore, *ye shall see* the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place: then let them which be in Judea flee unto the mountains,” &c. And observe how he proceeds to describe the miseries that were coming upon the nation: “Woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! And pray that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath-day: for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time; no! NOR EVER SHALL BE,” ver. 19-21. Such are the predictions, how have they been fulfilled?

To obtain an answer to this, as I before intimated, you have only to read the history of Josephus, who was an eye and ear-witness of what he relates. He narrates the siege of the city by the armies of Titus—the famine and pestilence which ensued—the dreadful cruelties which the inhabitants, driven to desperation, inflicted on each other; and thus he winds up the appalling narrative: “I should undertake an impossible task,” says he, “were I to enter into a detail of all the cruelties of these iniquitous wretches: let it suffice to say, that I do not think that since the

creation of the world, any city ever suffered such dreadful calamities, or abounded with men so fertile in every species of wickedness." The siege continued from the 14th of April, to the 8th of September, an interval of five months; on which last mentioned day, Titus entered the city at the head of his army, abandoned it to the fury of his soldiers, who set fire to it in every direction, putting to the sword all who fell into their hands. Of the number of Jews who fell a sacrifice during this terrible war, the amount has been computed at a million and a half, or, as some say, two millions, independent of those that fell on the part of the Romans, which could not be few. And in this way, he that sate upon the red horse, to whom was "given a great sword, and power to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another," commenced his sanguinary career. The same sword he still wears, and has continued to wear from that period to the present.

Here, however, you must permit me to detain you while I make an observation, which you would do well to attend unto, and keep constantly in mind, while studying the book of the Revelation; for without it you never will be able to form any adequate conception of its admirable structure and wise arrangements. I will explain myself as fully and concisely as possible.

Here, you see, is a book, sealed with seven seals: these seven seals are opened—not all at once, but in orderly succession: the first seal is opened, and the other six remain closed. The second is opened, and the other five remain closed; and so on till the whole seven are unfolded. Now that which I would have you particularly to observe is this, that you are not to suppose the contents of the first seal to be completely exhausted before the second seal is opened: or that the contents of the first and second are exhausted before the third seal is let loose. That is indeed the opinion which is entertained by bishop Newton, and many others who have undertaken to explain this mysterious book; but it is a totally mistaken notion, and it has done more to obscure and mystify, and perplex those who have attempted the study of the book, than could be easily imagined. To explain myself more fully on this head, take for example *the first seal*, that of the *white horse*, ver. 1, 2; which we had lately under consideration. The explanation that was then tendered of the import of this symbol, was, as you remember, that it represented the setting up of the Redeemer's kingdom, by the labours of his apostles, and the progress which his gospel made in the world. But then you are not to imagine that this subject terminates, before the second seal is opened and the *red horse* makes its appearance, whose rider had power to take peace from the earth. To demonstrate the erroneousness of such a view of the matter, you have only to consider

the representation which the prophet Daniel gives of the nature and progressive increase of that kingdom which the God of heaven was about to set up in the world. He beholds it at first as a stone cut out of a mountain without hands—inconsiderable in bulk, but gradually enlarging in size, expanding itself on all sides, until at length it swells into a great mountain, and fills the whole earth. And this account of the matter, you may recollect, agrees with the similitudes which Christ himself gave of his kingdom in the days of his public ministry. See Matt. xiii. 31-33, “The kingdom of heaven,” said he, “is like to a *grain of mustard seed*, which a man took and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.” “Another parable spake he to them: the kingdom of heaven is *like unto leaven*, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.” You perceive how the idea of the progressive increase of this kingdom is kept up in these similitudes: the grain of mustard seed rising gradually into a tree, and sending forth its ramifications, strikingly corresponds with the stone growing into a mountain; all of which perfectly agrees with the hieroglyphic which represents the Captain of Salvation marching forward from one conquest to another, “making his arrows sharp in the hearts of the king’s enemies, whereby the people fall under him,” according to Ps. xlv. 5; or as it is expressed in another place, “sending the rod of his strength out of Zion: ruling in the midst of his enemies: making a people willing in the day of his power,” Ps. cx. 2, 3.

Now to apply these general remarks to the subject in hand. If we would take up the contents of the first seal in a just and scriptural light, we must not restrict it, as many do, to the triumphs of Christianity over the idolatrous state of things in the Roman heathen empire; but we must extend our view to its triumph over Papal superstition, and Mahomedan delusion, and all antichristian error, even to that grand period when it shall be said, “The kingdoms of this world are become our Lord’s and his Christ’s, and he shall reign for ever and ever.” We must keep in view that this sealed book includes not only the seven seals, but also the seven trumpets and the seven vials. And consistently with this, the first seal extends itself down to the millennium period, when all opposition shall vanish—all injustice cease, and the triumphs of the doctrine of the cross be complete. We now return to a consideration of the opening of the second seal.

We have seen something of the exploits of the *red* horse and his rider, with his power to take peace from the earth; inciting



the Jews and Romans to “kill one another”—at the commencement of the Messiah’s kingdom; but then we must not restrict the contents of the second seal to this, but, as I have already shewn with reference to the first seal, we must regard that as a specimen of what was to follow in subsequent ages, and of which, alas, abundant instances are upon record to justify the correctness of the principle on which we proceed. I give you the following instances in a quotation from Mr. Lowman’s History of this second seal.

“In the latter end of the reign of the Roman emperor Trajan,” (viz. about the beginning of the second century) “the Jews resident in Egypt and Cyprus, rebelled against the Romans, (to whom they were tributary) and are reported to have put to death, of their oppressors, with marks of excessive cruelty, four hundred and sixty thousand men: yet the Jews were every where subdued, and prodigious numbers of them were slain by the Romans.” Eusebius remarks on this part of history, “that the doctrine and church of Christ daily increased; but the calamities of the Jews were aggravated with new miseries.

“Not long after, in the reign of the emperor Adrian, (who ascended the imperial throne in the year 138) the Jews were led into a new sedition, headed by one who pretended to be the Messiah. He was called Barchocheba, or son of the star, because he gave out that he was the star foretold by Balaam. The whole Jewish nation now rose against the Roman government, and for some time did much mischief to the Romans, though with great loss to themselves. In these wars, besides the number of lives lost on the side of the Romans, the Jews had a thousand cities and fortresses destroyed, with the slaughter of above five hundred and eighty thousand men. Thus did the persecutors of the christian faith perish by each others’ hands. The Romans by their idolatrous worship of Jupiter Capitolinus, provoke the Jews to rebellion; and the Jews are destroyed, following a false Messiah as their leader, when at the same time they rejected the true Messiah, and persecuted his followers: and they fall by the hands of a heathen nation, which had joined with them, in opposition to the christian faith and profession; so that even the temporal evils which the church of Christ was permitted to suffer by the persecution of its enemies, were not so great and dreadful as the calamities and judgments which the providence of God permitted the persecutors themselves to bring upon each other, by their own hands.”

In addition to what Mr. Lowman has said on the subject of this unhappy state of things between the Jews and the Romans, I may further remark that before this pretended Messiah was subdued, the greater part of the Roman army is said to have been

cut in pieces—some of the legions being almost annihilated. Historians are not agreed respecting the number of the Jews that fell in this rebellion; the lowest computation makes them half a million, while others have stated them as high as two millions. A Jewish writer supposes, that twice the number of those that came up with Moses out of Egypt, perished in the war respecting Barchocheba. The termination of this sanguinary contest was followed by a decree of the Roman emperor Trajan, which banished every Jew from Judæa, and forbade them, on pain of death from coming within sight of their native soil.<sup>c</sup> From the commencement of the Jewish war, in the time of Nero, till the close of the reign of Adrian, the demon of discord (symbolized by the red horse and his rider) seemed to rage incessantly among the Jews. For sixty or seventy years after the subversion of their national state and polity, their history is so replete with their plots and murders and exterminating wars, that it almost surprises us to find such a people are still extant. So much did they render themselves the execration of mankind, they could find no refuge in any quarter of the globe; every man's hand was turned against them. They appear, indeed, now to have realized in all its frightful extent and magnitude the prophetic denunciations of Moses, Deut. xxviii. 25-65, viz. that "the Jewish people would be besieged in all their gates throughout their land, that they would be removed into all kingdoms of the earth—that they would become an astonishment, a proverb, and a bye-word among all nations, that whereas they were as the stars of the sky for multitude, they would be left few in number, and that among those nations whither they would be scattered, they would find no ease, neither should the sole of their foot have rest." These tremendous judgments they certainly merited by embreuing their hands in the blood of the Son of God, the Lord's anointed. But, as the cup of their iniquities had not been filled up even with this aggravated crime, the long-suffering of God waited for them until they utterly rejected his gospel, persecuted his apostles, and would not permit his followers to live. It was then, and not till then that "wrath came upon them to the uttermost,"—the sword of the Romans was unsheathed against them, and the direful calamities now mentioned was the consequence. And these things, brethren, I understand to be represented by the hieroglyphic of the red, or rather *fire-coloured* horse, and his rider, into whose hand was committed the "great sword" of the Roman government—with "power to take peace from the earth."

<sup>c</sup> Universal History, vol. vi. pp. 39, 40, *folio edition*: and Goldsmith's. Rome, vol. ii.

## LECTURE XV.

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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.—Rev. vi. 5, 6.

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### THIRD SEAL.

BRETHREN, before I enter upon the present lecture, and by way of preface to it, I must take leave to apprise you that there is no part of the Apocalypse on which we have yet been called to pass a judgment which has so much perplexed the commentators and others who have undertaken to illustrate this book, as the two verses now read, namely, the opening of the third seal. In proof of the truth of this remark, I may add, that one of the latest and most judicious writers on the subject has dismissed it in about twenty short lines, and those, unfortunately, but little to the purpose; from which, I think it neither unreasonable nor uncandid to infer, that he despaired of throwing any light upon it. Others, indeed, have written more copiously with that view; but, I am sorry to say, with scarcely better effect, for the amount of all that they have said upon the contents of the opened seal is simply this—that the symbol of the “black horse and his rider,—the pair of balances in his hand—the measuring out wheat and barley, and the caution not to hurt the oil and the wine”—denotes that the Roman empire during an approaching period, should suffer greatly from a scarcity of provisions—wheat and barley would be at high prices, at a period of time when the luxuries of life, “oil and wine,” should be abundant.

Now, although those learned writers were able to make out the fact, that the empire was actually afflicted with famine during the reigns of Trajan and the Antonines, yet I object to their making that an explanation of this third seal, for this important reason, that it divests the hieroglyphic of its main attributes, and reduces it, if not to a cypher, at most to a literal history or prophecy. And this, I think, is an error to be guarded against. We must look further than the surface for the import of the hieroglyphical symbols.

But, then, you will ask me, if the literal famine which scourged the empire during the second century, be not the import of the *third seal*, what does it intend? I answer in few words; it is *the beginning of the corruption of Christianity, after the days of the apostles*, that is denoted by it. And, now, having put you in possession of the conclusion at which it is my object to arrive,—let us take up the words of the apostle, examine them carefully, availing ourselves of such lights as the inspired writings afford us in the matter, and try how far we can justify that conclusion.

“*And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature 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. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures 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,*”—ver. 5, 6. We have an account of the four living creatures in the midst of the throne, in ch. iv. 7, and of them it is said, that the first was like a lion, the second resembled an ox, or calf, and the third had a face as a man, i. e. the human countenance, emblematical of sagacity and policy. On the opening of this third seal, John was addressed by the third of these living creatures, inviting him, as before, to come and make himself acquainted with the things which should befall the church, or kingdom of Christ, in the latter days. He then proceeds to narrate what he saw, and what he heard. On the opening of the two former seals, he had beheld a horse on each occasion,—the first was *white*, the second *red*; but he is now presented with the view of a *black* horse, intimating, not only that he was about to contemplate a different order of things from any thing that he had hitherto witnessed, but that the events were founded upon a dark and insidious policy. The colour of this third horse is the very opposite of white; it is a colour denoting darkness, ignorance, mourning, and woe. In the hands of the rider was “a pair of balances,” as our translators render it; but, it is conceived, very improperly. The original Greek term is ζυγος, *a yoke*, which is the badge or symbol of slavery; and it has given rise to no little criticism among the learned. The word, they say, ought to have been translated “*a yoke*,” and not a “pair of balances.” They contend, that in the former acceptation it is used by the Seventy, and also in the New Testament, and *in no other sense whatever*.<sup>a</sup> It is used *metaphorically* to signify the burthensome ceremonies of the Mosaic law, from which the Christian “law of liberty” has delivered us, and which are termed “*a yoke of bondage*,” Gal. v. 1; “*a yoke* which neither the apostles nor their fathers

<sup>a</sup> See Gen. xxvii. 40; Isa. ix. 4, and x. 27; Nah. i. 13; Jer. xxvii. 2-13.

were able to bear," Acts xv. 10. See also Matt. xi. 29, 30; 1 Tim. vi. 1. And taking the symbol in this view,—that is, considering the rider as carrying "a yoke" in his hand,—it denotes that it would be the object of his policy to bring mankind under subjection to his laws and his dominion; in other words, to fetter them with "the doctrines and commandments of men," the origin of all will-worship and superstition. The apostle proceeds, "And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures say, A measure of wheat for a penny, [that is, about one English wine quart, for sevenpence-halfpenny of our money] and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou deal not unjustly with the oil and the wine."

The voice which issued from the throne, does not appear to be the voice of any of the four living creatures, for they had their station close around the throne, ch. iv. 6. This voice proceeds from the throne itself; it is a voice of the highest authority, and most dread command, and is uttered as a warning to all the churches of Christ, that a yoke of dark ignorance and superstition was about to be imposed on the necks of the disciples, threatening to annihilate the pure law of christian liberty. Many ingenious things have been written about the contents of the *charnix*, or *measure* of wheat, and of the *price* at which it was to be retailed; the whole amount of which is, that the latter was very high, and consequently indicated great scarcity of the necessaries of life, the articles here mentioned. I need not tell you that wheat, barley, oil, and wine, were, with the eastern nations of antiquity, the main supports of human life. Under these terms, it is usual with the inspired writers to denote a state of plenty. Thus, for instance, when Isaac blessed his son Jacob, it was in these words: "God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine," Gen. xxvii. 28. The Lord, by the mouth of his prophet Joel, promising plenty to Israel, says, "the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil," ch. ii. 24. Adverting to a time of scarcity, the Lord says, Hag. i. 11, "I called for a drought upon the land, upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil," &c. And thus, upon the opening of the third seal, in language evidently borrowed from things in nature, there is a *spiritual famine* intimated as attendant on the progress of the black horse. And if you would know what is imported in this spiritual famine, you have it in Amos viii. 11, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord." But this is not all; for, not only have we an intimation of a spiritual famine, but we have a merchandize also in that of which there is

a scarcity, and this is pointedly intimated to us by the prices at which these necessaries of life were dispensed.

In the days of our Lord and his apostles, the word of life was dispensed throughout the world, in the most free and gratuitous manner. Of himself he could say, during his own public ministry, and while preaching the glad tidings of salvation, "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." And when he sent the Seventy forth upon the same benevolent mission, he thus addressed them, "Freely ye have received, freely give." When about to leave the world, he commissioned his apostles to go forth throughout the nations, and preach his gospel to every creature; and we find them treading in his steps. Paul, one of the most active of his servants, could make this appeal to those among whom he laboured: "Our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: but as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts; for neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness: God is witness; nor of men sought we glory, neither of you nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome as the servants of Christ; but we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us: For, ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail; for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God," I Thess. ii. 3-9. Addressing the elders of the church at Ephesus, the same disinterested servant of Jesus could say, "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel; yea, you yourselves know that these hands have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me: I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak; and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive," Acts xx. 33.

Now, if the wheat and the barley be intended to denote the word of God, and the oil and wine, the comforts of the gospel, as I understand the thing, and as I think must be admitted by us all, if a spiritual famine be intended; and if a scarcity of this imports a failure of that growth and multiplying of the word of God, which so signally characterized the apostolic age, (Acts xix. 20.) as well as a scarcity of the fruits of the gospel among Christians—then this merchandize must be spiritual merchandize in a bad sense—it must denote the making a gain of godliness, and

rendering the gospel subservient to the worldly interests of its professors, contrary to Christ's command of self-denial.

That such would be the actual state of things, after their decease, the apostles have, indeed, left the churches many intimations in their writings. I will recal a few of them to your recollection. Thus, for instance, the apostle Peter foretold this merchandize, "There shall be false teachers among you who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them;—and through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandize of you," 2 Pet. ii. 1-3. Addressing the Ephesian elders, Paul says, "I know that after my departing, 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," Acts xx. 29, 30. The first preachers of the gospel counted all things but loss, for Christ's sake; and even their own lives they "reckoned not dear unto themselves, so that they might fulfil the ministry they had received of the Lord Jesus, and testify the gospel of the grace of God," ver. 24. Yet, even in their day, they took notice of some who served their own temporal interest by means of the gospel, which they perverted in order to shun the cross, "minding earthly things," Phil. iii. 19. Paul was compelled to say of many of his companions in travel, that they "sought their own things, not the things which were Jesus Christ's;" and he contrasts with their conduct that of his son Timothy, of whom he says, "I have no man like minded, who will naturally care for your state." In an epistle addressed to this same Timothy, he forewarns him of an awful apostacy that was coming upon the churches in these words: "Now the Spirit," that is, the Holy Spirit which dictated the writings of the ancient prophets, and those of Daniel in particular, "this Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times," or after the decease of the apostles, "some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils: speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their consciences seared with a hot iron," &c. 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2. And he is still more explicit on this subject when writing to the church of the Thessalonians: (2 Epist. ch. ii.) correcting an error into which they had fallen, concerning the second personal coming of Christ, he says, that before this would take place, there must previously be an apostacy, or falling away, and "that man of sin must be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God," ver. 3, 4. He adds, "for the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth, (or restraineth) will do so until he be taken out of the way (that is, until the heathen Roman

emperor was removed and gave place to one professing Christianity, an event which took place about the year 325.) And then shall that wicked (one) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish—because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” These verses we shall often have occasion to recur unto hereafter, as we advance to the sounding of the seven trumpets, Rev. ch. viii., and shall then consider them attentively; at present, I merely point you to them to shew that the corruption of Christianity, denoted by the black horse and his rider who had a yoke in his hand, was beginning to shew itself even while the apostles were yet living to watch over the churches which they had planted—“the mystery of iniquity doth *already* work,” says the apostle. And John, to the same effect, pointing to certain false teachers which had made their appearance in his day, says, “this is that spirit of antichrist, *whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world,*” 1 John, iv. 3.

These, then, are some of the apostolic testimonies concerning that corruption of Christianity, which I understand to be represented in the symbol, or hieroglyphic, of the black horse, the yoke, &c., and which was to be accompanied by a spiritual famine, and spiritual merchandize. Symptoms of this state of things could be discerned by the apostles before they left the world: but when the Jews, the first enemies of the gospel, were broken as a nation, and driven as fugitives into every quarter of the world, as we saw in our last lecture; when all the apostles were removed by death, *then* did the mystery of iniquity shew itself more plainly at work in the churches, and especially among the ministers of the word. *Then* it was that they began in a more especial manner to make a gain of the gospel, and to seek to exalt themselves and their own worldly interests by it, and so became spiritual merchants, making their own advantage of the souls of men by the gospel; and you may see from the xviii<sup>th</sup> chapter of this book of the Revelation, to what a height this mystery of iniquity at last arrived in the antichristian church, or “Babylon the Great.” But here you will, perhaps, indulge me with the liberty of corroborating my own sentiments, by introducing an extract from the writings of a divine of the last century: Thus he speaks:

“When, by the corruption of the gospel, which took place very early, yea, began to work before the death of the apostles, a correspondent change happened in the members composing the



(churches, or) christian assemblies, as well as their numbers, and their union became subservient to some secular purposes; then they began to look out with the appearance of a worldly faction, even long before they got possession of the power and wealth of the Roman empire: so that their minds were fully ripened and prepared for that remarkable change in their circumstances, by the time that it happened. When Christians began to appear as a worldly faction; though they still laboured under the disadvantages attending dissenters from the established religion, yet there were motives sufficient, besides the hope of being great after death, to prompt men to aspire after pre-eminence among them. Many questions now arose concerning subordination, the exercise and extent of authority, and various other matters, necessary to be considered by those who would make a decent and creditable appearance in the world as a religious party. It was in vain to consult the New Testament; a new book of discipline was necessary. Revered fathers gravely told lies to help on the pious designs. Learned questions also, concerning the christian faith were moved, in such a manner as the apostolic writings, which had been composed for the vulgar, could by no means decide. The *form of sound words*, which the first Christians were commanded to *hold fast*, as the best preservative against heresy, came now to be in a great measure, laid aside, and to give place to the wisdom of words, the wisdom of the scribes, and the disputers of this world. However, to make the apostles some amends for this neglect, they knighted them, and called them *saints*, even as, in latter ages, when the contempt of their doctrine increased, they deified them under that title," and worshipped them. So far, my author—on which, the only remark I have to make is, that "*this testimony is true.*"

From the things which have been now submitted to your consideration, you, my friends, will be able to collect the view that I have taken of the contents of this third seal, and will be able to form a tolerable judgment for yourselves, how far I am right or wrong in the interpretation which has been offered of the verses under consideration. The subject is, unquestionably, of deep interest to us all, and it forms a prominent feature in this book of the Revelation—so prominent, indeed, that without taking it into account, and admitting it in its full latitude, it is useless for us to attempt to study the Apocalypse, which is full of it. And viewing the subject in this important light, I shall offer some further observations by way of illustration.

It must be obvious to every reflecting mind that, to have any adequate idea of what is meant by Antichrist, the man of sin, or the corruptions of Christianity, it is absolutely necessary to go back to the times of the apostles, and settle it well in our minds,

in what Christianity itself consisted as it came pure from the hands of its founder. This is a subject on which I have more than once had to address you already in this course of lectures. Nevertheless, knowing it to be one on which we need to have "line upon line, and precept upon precept," I shall risk a little repetition.

Christianity, as it lies in the New Testament, is, beyond all doubt, a very simple thing, and it resolves itself into two parts, viz, doctrine and practice. With regard to the former, the doctrines which we are called to believe, these are all summed up in what is termed the GOSPEL, that is, the good news, or glad tidings concerning Jesus Christ the Son of God, with a promise of salvation to him that believes it.<sup>b</sup> The gospel testifies of the character and personal dignity of the Saviour, that he is the Word made flesh, the Son of the Highest, God manifest in flesh: it holds him forth as the anointed prophet, priest, and king of his church—declares that he died for the sins of his people, rose again on the third day, according to the writings of the Old Testament, and ascended up to heaven, to take possession of his throne and kingdom; from whence he will come again at the last day, to raise the dead and judge the world, and put an end to the present dispensation. This is the doctrine on which his kingdom is founded—the genuine apostolic gospel—the faith once delivered unto the saints. This doctrine, Jesus Christ commanded his apostles to preach in all the world and to every creature; and he has promised his blessing to attend it unto the end of the world.<sup>c</sup> By means of it he makes disciples; quickens the dead in trespasses and sins; and gathers his sheep into his fold, or collects them into churches, to which he has given ordinances of worship to be observed until he return. The first churches, intended as patterns of all that should follow, were formed by the influence of the gospel operating on the minds of individuals of every class of men, and not on bodies politic; and the apostles taught them "by love to serve one another," as the proper expression of the great article of their creed, that Jesus Christ "came not to be served but to serve." Every society of this kind was, by the truth which united them together, placed in such circumstances, that nothing but the hand of God could maintain their union; and as no common worldly interest could be promoted by it, they had no motives, no encouragements to attach them to it, but what came from heaven and the prospects of the life to come. In every church the apostles appointed the men who were best skilled in the motives to serve, had greatest courage to utter them, and appeared most influenced by them, to lead the rest, in a deter-

<sup>b</sup> Mark xvi. 15, 16; 1 Tim. i. 15; John xx. 31. <sup>c</sup> Matt. xxviii. 20.

mination common to them all, to count all things loss, that they might win Christ and be found in him. Hence it is obvious, that in the primitive churches, the progress of preferment went downwards, even as he who leads a company down hill, by being foremost is the lowest. Accordingly, we find that the prime leader among christians, who himself took the lowest and most ignominious place in service, lays it down as a fundamental law in his kingdom, that the course of preferment should be just the reverse of what takes place in worldly societies.<sup>d</sup> And to this, the matter of fact corresponded at the beginning: for the higher a man rose in the kingdom of Christ, the lower and more despicable a figure he made in the world. To see the truth of this observation, you have only to consider the history of the disciples, the deacons, the elders, the apostles, and Christ Jesus the Lord. All idea of a christian teacher making merchandize of the gospel, was totally out of the question, in such a state of things; it presented no temptation to any man to covet the place of a leader among christians, nothing to animate him to acquit himself with diligence therein, but the hope of a crown of glory when the Chief Shepherd should appear.<sup>e</sup>

Such was Christianity, in its pure and primitive state, undebased by any alloy of corrupt doctrine, unsophisticated by human traditions or the commandments of men; but the enemy soon began to sow tares among the wheat; and then "the gold became dim, and the most fine gold changed." An attempt was made by the judaizing teachers, even in the days of the apostles, to impose "the yoke" of circumcision and other Jewish rites, on the neck of the Gentile believers, as we saw when lecturing on the seven Asiatic churches: but the effort was frustrated.<sup>f</sup> The doctrine of Christ crucified, as preached by Paul and his associates, and which was "the power of God to the salvation of all who were called," became corrupted by Gentile philosophy at a very early period;<sup>g</sup> but these were only the beginnings of evil. As the stream of christianity flowed farther from its fountain it became more and more corrupt; and as centuries rolled on, ignorance and superstition advanced with them. But this, as Paul foretold, was a gradual thing; "Evil men and seducers waxed worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."<sup>h</sup> Unauthorized mortifications and penances, and rigorous fastings, and vows of celibacy, and monkish retirement and austerities, and stylitism, and the jargon and repetition of prayers not understood, and tales of purgatory, and pious frauds, and the worship of saints and relics and images, took the place of pure and simple

<sup>d</sup> Matt. xx. 25-28.    <sup>e</sup> 1 Pet. v. 4.    <sup>f</sup> Acts xv.    <sup>g</sup> Col. ii. 8; 1 Cor. i. 17-24,  
<sup>h</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 13.

christianity; till, at length, the book of God being laid aside for legendary tales and the "traditions of men," all these corruptions were collected into a regular system of superstition and oppression, well known by the name of the *papal yoke*, and which was expressly foretold by the Holy Spirit, as about to be produced in the latter times, 1 Tim. iv. 1. Now it needs no argument to prove that before this abominable mass of will-worship and superstition could invade and deluge the churches, the simple doctrine of the gospel must have been dreadfully corrupted, so as to be almost wholly lost sight of. For, so long as men continued to abide firm by the doctrine of the cross, and viewed the work finished on Calvary as the *sole requisite to justification*; so long as they believed God to be already well-pleased in his beloved Son, for his righteousness sake, and hoped for pardon only through his death, and the atonement made for transgression by the shedding of his most precious blood; I say, so long as this was the case, there was no room left for the mortifications and penances, and fastings, and monkish seclusion, and the thousand other superstitious rites which came to be imposed upon the consciences of men, by those who made merchandise of them. And thus you may see how the yoke of human traditions, the doctrine and commandments of men, drew in its train, a spiritual famine. The word of life, the simple doctrine concerning Christ and his salvation, which is the only thing that ever did or ever can give solid peace to the guilty conscience, and purify it by the hope of a blessed immortality, was scarcely to be heard amidst the zeal and clamour which every where prevailed for the traditions of men. "They shall turn away their ears from the truth," says Paul, "and be turned into fables."

But, probably, some of you may be ready to start an objection to the view which I have taken of this third seal, on the ground that no reference has been made to the prophecies of Daniel, though it was said, in a former lecture, that "the sealed book" was none other than Daniel's prophecies, and that every interpretation of the Revelation ought to be rejected which was not sanctioned by the writings of that prophet:—If that principle be well founded, it ought to be shewn where Daniel has said anything about *the corruptions of Christianity*. I admit the pertinency of the remark, and will now attend to it.

If you turn to Dan. ch. vii. you will find it to contain a remarkable vision with which he was favoured, and in which he saw four kings, or kingdoms arise out of the earth, ver. 17, succeeding one another, (these were the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman empires, which arose in succession and gave place to each other.) Out of the last of these he sees ten *horns* (afterwards explained to be ten *kingdoms*) arise, and in the

midst of these “ behold, there came up among them another little horn—and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things,” ver. 8. In ver. 20, it is further said, “ that the look of this little horn was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them,” ver. 21. He is described, in ver. 24, as “ diverse from the other ten horns,” and, it is added, “ he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand, until a time, and times, and the dividing of time,” ver. 25. I shall not detain you at present, with any remarks on these words, either critical or explanatory, but reserving those for a future occasion, when the subject will come more fully before us, I content myself with observing, that in this seventh chapter of Daniel I find, “ the man of sin, the son of perdition ” spoken of by the apostle Paul, 2 Thess. ii.—the “ antichrist ” of the apostle of John, 1 John iv. 3 : in a word, here I find, “ the black horse and his rider,” the yoke of human traditions, and the spiritual famine, represented to us in the hieroglyphic of the third seal.

To conclude the present lecture : the subject we have had under consideration, admits of an important application, and holds out a lesson of useful instruction to us as a church. It sets before us the alarming consequences of departing from the written word, and listening to the dictates of human prudence in what regards the worship and service of God. “ To the law and to the testimony ; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,” Isa. viii. 20. See what has been the miserable result of departing from it. The church of Rome arrogates to herself the claims of infallibility—She is the holy, Roman, apostolic church, the mother of all churches ! But bring her pretensions to the test of the New Testament and you will find her to be “ Babylon the great, the Mother of Harlots,” the object of the divine vengeance. The cry is gone forth, “ Come out of her, my people, that ye partake not of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues, for her sins have reached to heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities,” Rev. xviii. 4, 5. But, the Church of England—oh, yes ! the Church of England :—such of you as have attended to what has been going forwards in the great council of the nation during the past week, will not need to be informed of the high-sounding panegyrics that have been bestowed upon the Church of England, in that august assembly. We have been told, that is, the people of England have been told, and the people of Scotland and Ireland have been told—in fact, it has gone forth into all the world, that “ the Church of England—our reformed Protestant church

establishment has heaped eternal blessings on the moral and religious people of this country; and is *as pure a system of Christianity as the mind of man is capable of conceiving* ;—" *the purest system of Christianity the world ever saw.*"<sup>i</sup> The church of England professes to be the *reformed* church, and so she is, in a measure; but her constitution is just as antichristian as that of the Church of Rome; for, if the latter be the *mother* of harlots, the former is one of her unchaste *daughters*, and will assuredly fall in the general wreck which awaits all national establishments of religion, and every system of man's device. What says this church of England, with all her boast of reformation? Why, that she "has power to decree rites and ceremonies, and settle controversies in matters of faith." Here is the worm at the core—the germ of all antichristianity; and see what fruits have issued from this root of bitterness. Compare even the church of England with the sketch given you in a former part of this lecture of the primitive churches, and see if you can find any resemblance. The apostolic churches acknowledged no other head but Christ—no other law or rule of duty but the New Testament. The head of the church of England is the monarch for the time being, whether male or female. In the first churches there was a sanctity in the office and employment of their bishops and deacons; all their worship and discipline was to be venerated on account of *divine institution*: but we must confound and destroy all proper use of the words *sacred* and *holy*, if we suppose them applicable to human and worldly establishments—to a church essentially connected with national interests—to a religion which derives its authority from the power of princes, and is regulated in its customs by the commandments of men. "The church of England is manifestly a secular kingdom: it is established by human laws, and acknowledges a political head. It is a creature of the state, supported by the state, incorporated with the state, and governed by a code of laws confirmed by the state—a code very different from the sacred canons of the New Testament. Its principal officers are such as have not even a name in the sacred records, but are appointed by the crown, and, in virtue of ecclesiastical station are lords of parliament. Nay, even the doctrines professed, and the worship performed in the establishment are all secularized. [Its religion is "part and parcel of the law of the land."] Its creeds and forms of prayer, its numerous rubrics and various rites are adopted and used under the sanction of civil authority. Its liturgy, therefore, may be justly considered as an *Act of Parliament* respecting religious affairs. It must, consequently, be considered as a kingdom of this world."<sup>k</sup>

<sup>i</sup> *Speech of John, Earl of Eldon, in the House of Peers, Friday, April 10, 1829.*

<sup>k</sup> Booth's Essay on the kingdom of Christ.

## LECTURE XVI.

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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.—Rev. vi. 7, 8.

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### THE FOURTH SEAL.

IT may be in the recollection of such as you as have attended this course of lectures, that I have taken occasion, more than once, to remark, what appeared to me a great defect in the plan or scheme of things adopted by many able and learned writers, who have undertaken to illustrate the system of New Testament prophecy contained in the Apocalypse, namely, their resting too much in the literal import of the terms employed to set forth the predicted events. This complaint applies more especially to those writers who are attached to national christianity ;—such as bishops Newton, Hurd, and Warburton ; Messrs. Lightfoot, Scott, Faber, and others, among whom I include several Scotch divines. Though they all admit the principle, that the language, in which these things are conveyed to the church, is symbolical ; yet, it somehow happens that, in interpreting these first four seals, though they differ widely from one another in regard to the particular events to which they refer them, all seem to agree in resting in a literal application of them to the political occurrences of the empire.<sup>a</sup> Thus, the famine or scarcity, denoted in the contents of

<sup>a</sup> “ With respect to the third seal,” says *Mr. Towers*, in his *Illustrations of Prophecy*, “ I differ from all former writers ; and it is therefore necessary, that I should give an account of its symbols, as well as of its supposed completion. That it has been generally misunderstood, cannot be denied ; for in their explanation of it, the best commentators differ extremely. Mede and Goodwin, Grotius and Hammond, Lightfoot, Waple, and Fleming, Vitringa, Bengelius, and the anonymous French author of the *New System of the Apocalypse* ; Lowman, Johnston, and Daubuz, all differ materially from each other, in their interpretation of the third seal, and, of these commentators, the first twelve are at variance with each other with respect to the time, or date of opening the seal.”

I have quoted this extract from an intelligent writer, merely in illustration of what is said above, and to shew how little dependence is to be paid on *great*

the third seal is regarded by them all, as referring to a scarcity of the necessaries of life, apparently forgetting that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that God hath spoken." As these prophecies are not given to the world, or political bodies of men, but to the churches of Christ, so if we would understand them to any useful purpose, we ought always to keep this in mind, that it is the state of the christian profession, or the interests of that kingdom which the God of heaven set up in the world, which forms the leading object, the capital theme, in the mind of the Holy Spirit. It was on this principle that I found myself compelled, in explaining the third seal, to adopt an interpretation differing from all the writers I have mentioned; to explain the "balances," or rather *yoke*, of the traditions of men, and the scarcity referred to, as a scarcity of the ministration of the gospel, and the merchandize which corrupt teachers soon began to make of the souls of men. And if the principle which regulated our views of the *third seal*, be well founded, to proceed in a consistency with it, we shall find ourselves under the necessity of departing, in a great measure, from the view which is commonly taken of this *fourth seal*. However, let us return to it, and examine the language in which it is couched.

"And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature, say, COME and SEE. 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."

It has been remarked by a respectable writer on the subject before us, that there is a sublime climax, or scale of terrific images, exhibited in the colour of the horses in the first four seals, denoting the progressive character of the early ages of Christianity. It begins with *pure white*, (emblematical of the nature of that kingdom which the God of heaven set up)—a kingdom, *not* of this world; but the governing principles of which are "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." It then changes to the *fiery* and *vengeful*,)—denoting the implacable hatred and animosity which should prevail amongst its unhappy enemies, and the cruelties, they should inflict upon each other. Next, it changes to *black*—indicative of mourning and woe; a portentous intimation of a state of darkness, ignorance, superstition, and error, when

*authorities* in the matter before us. Mr. Towers himself has given us an explanation of the *third seal*, very different from that which I have offered; and against which, in my humble judgment, there are weighty and insurmountable objections! He carries it forwards to the invasion of the Roman empire by the Goths and Vandals, A.D. 410—566, and resolves the hieroglyphical language into a *literal* scarcity of the necessaries of life!!!



men should be, as it were, groping for the light at noon-day; and when we imagine that nothing more dreadful in colour can appear, then comes another gradation much more terrific, even this "deadly pale," as the original term, *Χλωρος*, imports. The word is used in the Greek Scriptures to express the colour of *grassy green*, which, though beautiful in the clothing of the trees and fields, is very unseemly, disgusting, and horrible when it appears upon flesh. It is there the *livid* colour of corruption; and such a gradation was there from heavenly-pure to foul and horrible, in the christian church, at the opening of this fourth seal. There is a passage in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, ch. iv. 7, 8, which has been sometimes quoted, in illustration of this remarkable change in the christian profession, which I would refer you to, without pledging myself, however, that there is any direct reference to it, in this fourth seal. It is said of the sons of Zion, "her Nazarites were *purer than snow*, they were *whiter than milk*, their polishing was of sapphire; their visage is *blacker than a coal*; *darker than blackness*; they are not known in the streets; their *skin cleaveth to their bones*; it is withered," they are become mere spectres or skeletons.

But passing, for the present, any further observations on the symbol of the *pale, livid, or ghastly horse*; let us notice what is said of *his rider* and attendant. "*His name that sat on him, was Death, and hell followed with him.*" I need not tell you that, upon the principle of interpretation which was followed, with reference to the foregoing seal, *Death* here cannot mean natural death; nor can hell denote the place of endless misery.—Neither can death here signify the dissolution of those who were slain for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ. The deaths of such are precious in the sight of the Most High; and therefore would never be represented by the imagery employed in this fourth seal. I therefore understand it to be *spiritual death, or apostacy from the Christian profession*, that is here intended by the epithet "death." And so also with regard to the term, "hell," which is said to follow the spectre "death," close at his heels, as a page or footman; I understand it to be a symbol of *the grave*, which indeed is its most usual acceptation in the scripture, without taking into account the actual state of the dead, or their happiness or misery. This grisly king of terrors, so mounted, forms a striking contrast to the benign conqueror, who came forth on the opening of the first seal, seated on the white horse. Yet he is not described in the ordinary hieroglyphic of death, which you all know is that of a skeleton leaning upon the pole of a scythe—the name only is given and the picture of him is left to be supplied by the imagination of the reader, where (such is the natural horror of dis-

solution) he stands delineated in terrific colours. It is common with the scriptural writers to personify death, as an invader, a conqueror, a king; and such he now appears in formidable power with *hades*, or the grave, the receptacle of the dead, close at his heels. You recollect how the prophet Hosea, ch. xiii. 14, connects these two things together, in a passage quoted by the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 55. "O DEATH, I will be thy plagues; O GRAVE, I will be thy destruction." But let us proceed with the prophet's further account of this fourth seal: he adds,

"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." I have already said, that I cannot acquiesce in the opinion of those who think that nothing more is intended by this highly figurative imagery, than a *state of great mortality*—that the Roman Empire was, under the period of this seal, to be afflicted with a time of very general and grievous calamity. "The facts were," says Mr. Fuller, "that between the years 193, and 270, that is, in less than eighty years, there were more than twenty emperors, and at one time, thirty pretenders to the throne. It is said also there were thirty usurpers, who raised wars for themselves in different parts of the empire." He adds, "such a state of things is sufficient to account for all that is here predicted: for, intense wars must needs produce famine and pestilence, and by destroying men give an ascendancy to the beasts of prey." This is the common explanation of this fourth seal, which Mr. Fuller has adopted from Gill and Lowman; but I marvel that it should have satisfied his own mind; and for this reason, that it leaves the church of Christ, or the christian profession entirely out of the question; thus giving the word of prophecy a private interpretation. I humbly conceive that this imagery has a far higher import; and this I shall endeavour to make appear, in the course of the present lecture.

I think it must strike every reflecting mind as a formidable objection to the interpretation which is usually given of this fourth seal, as merely indicating a state of *great mortality* in the Roman empire, that it makes it to be of the same import with the second seal. According to this view of the matter, the hieroglyphical symbol of a red, or *fire coloured* horse, ver. 4. and that of the *ghastly-pale* or grass-green, ver. 8, denote one and the same thing, which is another powerful reason with me, for departing from it. In short, the more I have been able to think upon the subject, the more convinced I have become, that this fourth horse, his rider, and his retinue, are all symbolical of a peculiar state of the Christian profession, consequent upon, and nearly allied to, what we had under consideration in our last lecture, viz. the commence-

ment of the corruptions of Christianity, implied in the symbolical language of the third seal, as hath been already intimated. I understand this fourth seal to present to the church, the picture of a *portentous state of declension* in the religion of Christ; a period when there should be an abundance of mere *nominal christians*, having a form of godliness, but destitute of its power, and so, like the church in Sardis, being *spiritually dead*, while they had a name to live, ch. iii. 1. This view of the subject, I incline to think, the whole imagery in the text will be found to support; and the explanation is in perfect accordance with matter of fact: I mean with the history of the church, from the end of the second century, and downwards, to the period of the reformation. To an illustration of these two particulars therefore, I shall chiefly direct what I have further to say on this seal.

In entering upon the subject, I remark that there is no one feature of the primitive church more remarkable and worthy of regard than the fervent brotherly love which subsisted among them, the manly fortitude with which the believers in Christ met the rage and malice of their ruthless persecutors, whether Jewish or Heathen, and the readiness with which they could lay down their lives for the sake of Christ and his gospel. In making this observation I would not be understood as restricting it merely to the days of the apostles, but as applicable in an almost equal degree to the second century, that is, so long as the christian doctrine and practices were maintained in their purity, and regulated by the unerring standard. It would be perfectly easy to justify the truth of this statement by an appeal to facts, but as the subject will come more directly before us in the ensuing lecture, I forbear to enter upon it in this place. Of that noble army of martyrs, it is with truth recorded, that "they loved not their lives unto the death," ch. xii. 11. Such was the implacable animosity of many of the Roman emperors, and of the heathen magistrates, to the Christian profession, because the friends of the latter refused to throw a grain of incense on the altars of the Pagan deities, or to have any fellowship in their idolatrous worship, that it became a capital offence for any one to declare himself a Christian, and the disciples of the Saviour avowed their allegiance to him with their lives in their hand. But he had apprised them of this state of things, during his personal ministry, when he said, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; fear him which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, FEAR HIM. Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God," Luke xii. 5-9. During the period we are speaking of, those principles were remark-

ably put to the test ; persecution succeeded persecution ; but the followers of Christ stood firm amidst the fiery trial with which they were tried, and “ they overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony.” If you ask what it was that supported them and gave them the victory, the scripture answers expressly, it was their *faith*, or confidence in the gospel, in the divine power and veracity, 1 John v. 4. This faith wrought by *love* to the Saviour, and led them to count all things but loss, that they might win Christ and be found in him. Enjoying the love of Christ in their hearts, they were armed with patience, and enabled to triumph amidst racks and stakes and the devouring flame. Their fortitude often struck their very enemies with amazement, and put them upon considering whether there might not possibly be something more in Christianity than a mere name, and enquiries of this kind in innumerable instances issued in the conversion of the persecutors. But this was the golden age of the church ; and it lasted no longer than the christian doctrine retained its purity, and its professors were influenced by its constituent principles—faith, hope, and love. At the opening of this fourth seal, a very different order of things takes place, and it is the native effect of the corruption of Christianity that was introduced under the preceding seal. The great body of professors had now let go the faithful word ; they could no longer endure sound doctrine ; but turning away their ears from the truth, they were turned unto fables ; now they gave heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. And can we expect that under this new order of things, the same self-denial, the same disconformity to the world, the same readiness to make sacrifices of character, property, and even life itself, for the sake of Christ and his gospel, should be manifested as when men were actuated by other principles ? As reasonably might we expect to gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles ! “ The christian religion which had begun its progress in white array, and under the guidance of apostolical teachers, is now (under this fourth seal,) not only so changed in colour and appearance as to be scarcely discernible as the same ; but it is under the guidance of deadly and infernal directors, who destroy in her all that remains of primitive purity.”

“ *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.*” We read in the prophecy of Ezekiel, that when the Lord afflicted the literal Jerusalem of old, he sent upon her, what he terms, his “ four sore judgments ; the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beasts, and the pestilence,” ch. xiv. 21. These appear to be nominally the same instruments of grievous suffering with those mentioned as being put in operation under this fourth seal, in order to in-

inflict *spiritual* death on the fourth part of the earth. Men were thus killed,

1. *By the sword*: if persecution be intended by this weapon of the divine indignation, we know that it was in active operation under the Heathen persecuting powers, and that it was one prominent cause of apostacy from the christian profession; thus demonstrating the spiritual death of multitudes who had a name to live. The sword, here, however, may denote the sword that proceedeth out of the mouth of him that walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and with which he threatens to fight against those with whom he found fault in the church of Pergamos, ch. ii. 16.

2. Another instrument wherewith chastisement is inflicted under this seal, is *famine*; or that scarcity of the word of God, and the fruits of it, occasioned by the spiritual merchandise referred to in our last lecture. Instead of having the bread of life dealt out to them, as the only rational nourishment for their immortal souls, nothing was to be found but unprofitable controversies, and ambitious dissensions among the leaders utterly subversive of that peace and edification which the religion of the gospel is designed and calculated to promote.

3. A third judgment here spoken of is *death*; giving professors up to the lusts of their own hearts, the lusts of this world; an eager grasping of the riches, the honours, and the pleasures of life. This is to be dead to the life that lies in the divine favour; dead to real happiness, for to be carnally minded is death; and they that live absorbed in the pleasures of sense, are dead while they live. It is added,

4. In the last place that power was given to him that sat on the pale horse, to kill, or inflict spiritual death by means of the *beasts of the earth*, denoting, probably, false teachers, concerning whom Paul said to the elders of the church of Ephesus, "I know that after my departing shall *grievous wolves* enter in among you not sparing the flock:" see also John x. So much for the symbolical import of the imagery here employed; to which, before dismissing this part of the subject, let me add a word or two concerning the fourth living creature, which addressed the apostle John, inviting him to "come and see."

Of this living creature, it is said, ch. iv. 7, that it was "like a *flying eagle*." The eagle is the hieroglyphic of air or wind; just as the latter is the emblem of the Holy Spirit; and in the Hebrew and Greek languages, the same words express both wind and spirit. You remember how the Lord Jesus, in his conversation with Nicodemus, compares the influences of the Holy Spirit with the wind blowing where it listeth, John iii. 8. When this divine agent came upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost, it was

with a mighty rushing wind, Acts ii. 2. He descended on the Lord Jesus at his baptism, in the likeness of a winged creature, a dove, Matt. iii. 16. See also Gen. i. 2, and Deut. xxxii. 11. Now, what I have in view in referring to these texts, is to suggest for your consideration, whether, from the whole of the symbolical language employed in this fourth seal, we are not taught that what came to pass under it is the greatest opposition to the Spirit of God,—is the effect of hardening them judicially, and a ceasing to strive with those who have always resisted him; in a word, that it corresponds with the awful words of the apostle Paul, when, speaking of the delusions of the man of sin, he says, “because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved,—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,” 2 Thess. ii. 10-12.

Perhaps this is not an improper place to offer a few remarks concerning the date, or chronological period, when the opening of these four seals take place. There is, I conceive, a considerable difficulty in ascertaining this point with precision, and especially that of the third and fourth. And one main cause of the difficulty arises from this, that the change from one state of the church to another is generally gradual. In such cases, though we can see clearly, as in the colours of the rainbow, that the change from one to the other has taken place, yet it is not so easy to ascertain at what point of contact it began. With regard to the opening of the *first* seal, I have already delivered my opinion that it dates from the day of Pentecost, when the kingdom or heaven was set up by the preaching of the holy apostles. Nor do I think there is much scope for controversy about the date of the *second*, provided we are correct in explaining it as relating to the wars that took place between the enemies of Christ's kingdom, the Jews and Romans; for those wars certainly commenced about the year 68, or just before the destruction of Jerusalem. The *third* seal, which I have interpreted of the rise of the corruptions of Christianity, when a *yoke* of ignorance, superstition and priest-craft was prepared for the necks of the disciples; when the doctrines of the gospel were converted into a matter of merchandize, and rendered difficult of attainment; when ignorance became blind submission, and priestcraft advanced into civil tyranny; this was evidently a gradual work, proceeding by little and little, though scarcely perceptible before the beginning of the third century. And as the corruption, and ravages of the *fourth* seal came on likewise by degrees, growing as it were out of the third seal, it is obvious that we must place it somewhat posterior in point of time. I am inclined to think, however, that under this fourth seal is to be placed that ever memorable, and ever-to-be-

deplorable event, the alliance of church and state; which, you know, took place under the reign of Constantine the Great; the first of the christian emperors, A. D. 325. This is what the Waldenses were wont to denominate, "pouring poison into the church." It was secularizing the kingdom of Christ; making it a compound of things spiritual and temporal, so as to render that earthly which is altogether heavenly and divine. To accomplish this, it was necessary to corrupt the doctrines, prostitute the ordinances, and secularize the whole system of Christianity. By this means they converted a "kingdom which is *not* of this world," into an engine of state, and made it "part and parcel of the law of the land," thus rendering it subservient to the purposes of pride, ambition, and sensual gratification. As one proof of the rapid progress that corruption had made *before the times of Constantine*; that is, previous to its establishment by human laws, I will give you a quotation from the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius; it speaks volumes on the subject. He has been describing the progress which the gospel made during the first and second centuries, and he then comes to narrate a dreadful persecution which took place under the emperor Decius, about the year 260, and you will perceive, as we proceed, how he resolves this terrible persecution into the just judgment of God for the prevalence of corruption.

"But after that our affairs through too much liberty, ease, and security, degenerated from the proper rule of piety; and after that one Christian pursued another with open contumely and hatred; and when that we impugned ourselves, by no other than ourselves with the weapons of spite and sharp spears of opprobrious words, so that bishops against bishops, and people against people raised sedition; last of all, when cursed hypocrisy and dissimulation had risen even to the height of malice; then, the heavy hand of God's high judgment, after his wonted manner, began to visit us by little and little. So that the persecution that was raised against us took its first rise from the brethren of our own camp. Still we were touched with no sense or feeling thereof; neither did we seek to placate the divine anger; but heaped sin upon sin, thinking, like careless Epicures, that God neither cared, nor would visit our iniquities. And they who were our shepherds, laying aside the rule of piety, practised contention and schism among themselves, aggravating contention, threatenings, mutual hatred, and enmity; every one proceeded in ambition much like tyranny itself."<sup>b</sup>

This, brethren, is an appalling picture of the progress which apostacy had made, before the end of the third century; but it is drawn by one who well knew the evils he describes, and who had

<sup>b</sup> Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, lib. 8. ch. i.

neither interest nor inclination to exaggerate them. May I not appeal to your own judgment, whether it does not bear me out in the application which I have made of the bold imagery of the *fourth seal* to such a state of things; carefully keeping this in our eye, however, that the description of Eusebius, sombre as is its complexion, only presents it in its incipient state, and not as having arrived at its climax of abominations in "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots," that sink of impurity, that cage of every foul and hateful bird.

The advocates of national Christianity, I refer more especially to the clergy of the church of Rome, the church of England, and the kirk of Scotland, with their retainers and followers; these, I say, can find no evil in what was effected by Constantine the Great, when the profession of Christianity was incorporated with the state; on the contrary it has been the theme of their constant exultation and loftiest panegyric, though some of them cannot but lament the abuses to which it gave rise.

As the subject of the present lecture brings this particular point fairly before us, and especially as it enters so deeply into the whole contents of the book of the Revelation, I shall offer no apology for bestowing a few thoughts upon it in this place.

We object, then, to the incorporation of Christianity with the political constitutions of this world, as a *positive evil*, to which no reasonings, however ingenious and plausible; no beneficial results however apparent and specious, can possibly reconcile us. We are compelled to view it as contrary to the will of its divine Founder, as incompatible with its real nature, as calculated to give a false representation of its genius, character, and pretensions; in short, as a thing which never did, nor ever can take place in this world without drawing in its train that corrupt state of things which is represented to us under the imagery of this fourth seal.

Now to substantiate these charges, I begin by laying down the following propositions, and assuming them as indisputable, viz. that Christianity is a revelation from God; that as such, if I have any thing to do with it, I must take as it stands; I must implicitly acquiesce in its doctrines and submit to its precepts, and receive its own account of the way in which it is to be supported and propagated in the world. This is my first proposition; to which I add a second, namely, that there is an essential difference between *persuasion* and *force*; between acting under the impulse of personal conviction, and acting from the authority of the civil power. These two principles are not only different, but they are directly opposed to each other; thus, where conviction exists, power is excluded; there is in this case no room for its operation. On the other hand, the application of power implies the absence of conviction. Its aid can only be needed, where



conviction, as a principle of action, is not to be found. But it is this power which properly belongs to the civil magistrate; he does not depend upon the influence of persuasion. It is no doubt well when he can shew the reasonableness of his requisitions, but the sword is his proper and legitimate weapon. Whatever be the state of the mind, he comes clothed with authority, to enforce immediate compliance with whatever he demands. Now, consider for a moment, what a civil establishment of Christianity really is; taking it in its purest form, as it exists in the church of England, or that of Scotland. Is it not that institution by which the government of a country employs its authority to *compel* a portion of the community to support certain authorized teachers of the christian faith? To this definition, I apprehend no one can object; it enters into the very essence of every ecclesiastical establishment in Christendom, however various their forms, and whatever measure of toleration may be given by the government to dissenters. But it is to this most general and simple view of such institutions that we object, as being inconsistent with the general spirit as well as with the particular precepts of the Christian revelation.

When we look into the New Testament, we there find certain truths addressed to the understanding and conscience; these truths we find to be of the most important kind, deeply interesting to every human being, calculated to produce the most beneficial effects on the individual who embraces them; and thus by their general dissemination evidently adapted to regenerate the world. But we see also that this religion is entirely *spiritual*, that its effects are to be produced by the truths which it contains, obtaining access to the understandings and consciences of men. This, however, they can only do by *persuasion*, by an address to the understanding and the heart; no other kind of influence is admissible here. The moment you have recourse, in any shape, to coercion, to civil authority, you act upon a totally opposite principle, and such as appears altogether unscriptural; you employ a power in this service which is quite incompatible with the genuine influence of a spiritual religion. The application of force to this religion of the conscience is like the application of touch to the sensitive plant; it instantly shrinks, however cautiously it be applied, and the finger must be removed before this delicate plant can again expand and present to the eye of the beholder its native form and beauty.

Such, then, is the general character of Christianity as a religion spiritual in its nature, addressed to the understanding and the conscience, and such the incongruity of applying civil authority to its support. Look, now, at the declarations of its divine Founder, and you will find how expressly he has excluded the appli-

cation of force in its defence, or in advancing its interests in the world. "My kingdom," said he, "is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence," John xviii. 36. Here it is distinctly stated, that because his kingdom is not of this world, or in other words, because it consists in the influence of certain principles on the understandings and hearts of men, his servants were not to fight; external force was not to be employed in supporting it. See now the radical distinction that exists between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdoms of this world. No earthly kingdom can exist without the power of the sword; but Christ has for ever discharged the use of that weapon in supporting or maintaining his empire in the world. And if you consult the regulations of this kingdom, and the history of its progress, as recorded in the New Testament you will find every thing to correspond with the description of its character given by the great Lawgiver himself. Every act of obedience must be voluntary. The laws of the kingdom so far regulate the motive as well as the action, that whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Those who enjoy the benefits of public worship and gospel ordinances are commanded to contribute voluntarily to their support, Gal. vi. 6. But in all national establishments of Christianity, the thing is put upon a totally different footing. The support of those who officiate about the altar, is not voluntary *there*; it is matter of constraint. The civil power secures it, and the application of this power is often necessary before that support can be obtained. But whether the contribution be granted cheerfully or not, *the power of demanding* the payment exists; and, let it never be forgotten, that it is the very same power which at one period can demand a part of my property to support the religion of the state, that at another could imprison my person for attending a conventicle, and which still, in another quarter of Christendom, could drag me before the tribunal of the Inquisition, to atone for the errors of my faith by the forfeiture of my liberty and even life. The power is radically the same, though there are various forms and degrees in which it is exercised.<sup>c</sup>

Here, then, we take our stand in the argument. Here we arrive at the very marrow of the system denominated "the Man of Sin;" "the mystery of iniquity," and the essence of which is to be found in every national establishment of Christianity, amidst all the various modifications by which they may be distinguished. Let no dignitary of the Establishment, then, imagine for a moment, that a conscientious dissenter envies him when he contemplates

<sup>c</sup> See an excellent little tract, entitled, "*The Principles of Lord Bacon's Philosophy applied to the Inquiry, How far the civil Establishment of Christianity is countenanced by the sacred Scriptures.*" Edinburgh, 1817.

that superior rank in society which is derived from being connected with an opulent hierarchy, or when he hears of the ample emoluments with which it is endowed. No man deserves the name of a dissenter; at any rate, he does not understand the true principles on which he should assume such an appellation, if he does not feel a full conviction, that though the highest dignities of the church, and its most extensive revenues, were laid at his feet, he could not on any account, partake either of the one or the other. His views of the kingdom of Christ must be completely altered before he could take any part in the support of a system which he believes to be derogatory to the honour of his divine Master, by introducing a power into that kingdom which he expressly condemns.

And before I dismiss the subject, let me entreat you to observe how much the view we have taken of it, corresponds with the current language of this Book of the Revelation. That system of iniquity which is there termed "Babylon the Great," is allowed generally by protestant interpreters to denote the Romish hierarchy. It is also denominated the "Great Whore," evidently in reference to the illegitimate connexion between the kingdom of Christ and the powers of this world, expressed in the corresponding figurative language of prophecy, by her committing fornication with the kings of the earth. And in this character, in reference to the numerous persecutions with which she is chargeable, she is said to be *drunk with the blood of the saints*. But, observe, another title is given her; she is called "the mother of harlots." The epithet *mother*, implies that she has daughters; but where shall we find these? Where! why in every country in Christendom, where the same illegitimate alliance has been formed between the religion of Christ and the civil power: there you will find the daughter of the "Great Whore," who has corrupted the earth with her flatteries, and of whom we shall have much to say hereafter, should we be spared to prosecute this course of lectures to the end of the book. In the meantime, suffer me, my brethren and friends, to recommend to your serious attention, what has now been said upon the radical distinction between the kingdom of Christ, and all national systems of Christianity. It is of incalculable importance to the disciples of Christ to be well informed on this subject. To darken, confound, and mystify this essential difference is, and ever has been, since the days of Constantine, a leading object with Antichrist and his supporters; but unless our views are clear, and regulated by scripture on this point, we never can see the glory of the Redeemer's kingdom; and the Apocalypse must necessarily remain to us a sealed book; a collection of enigmas and spiritual riddles, which in truth it is in the hands of many learned men who have undertaken to explain it.

## LECTURE XVII.

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

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### FIFTH SEAL.

THE subject of our present lecture, the opening of the fifth seal, will necessarily lead us to take a more close and intimate view, than we have hitherto done, of the persecutions to which the church of Christ was subjected from the heathen magistrates, or *Rome Pagan*, prior to the times of Constantine the Great. The subject has, indeed, been several times glanced at, in this course of lectures, and mentioned in a general way: but it forms so prominent a feature in the verses which I have just read, that it will be expedient, in order to their elucidation, to go more into detail, and give something like a history of those persecutions during the first three hundred years, or until the government of the Roman empire, became christianized, when persecution, from that quarter, ceased. This review will lay a foundation for our examining the symbolical language, or hieroglyphical representation of this seal, and of entering into the subject with better effect than we could otherwise do.

The first Christian martyr, or to speak more properly, the king of martyrs, is He whom we venerate as our Lord and Saviour, the beloved Son of God. When questioned by the Roman governor concerning his kingdom, he replied, "to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the TRUTH," John xviii. 37. This truth, to which he came to bear witness, is none other than the true character of God, as the just God and the Saviour. This was the central point of all his preaching during his personal ministry; and to this truth he died a martyr, sealing his testimony with his blood. His holy apostles, in preaching the gospel, attested the same truth; for in exhibiting the death of Christ as the one, alone, all-sufficient propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of men, as that

through which, and only through which God is just in justifying the ungodly, they did no more than state, illustrate, and defend this one capital truth, in which all the lines of divine revelation centre, and all the perfections of Deity gloriously harmonize. Jesus Christ perfectly knew the price which his testimony to this truth would cost him, he well knew that it would issue in his death; and in looking forward to the awful scene of his sufferings, he speaks of it as a "baptism wherewith he was to be baptized," and he apprized his apostles that, in adhering to his cause, and bearing their testimony to the same truth, they also should drink of the cup which his heavenly Father had given him to drink of, and be baptized with the baptism with which he was baptized, Matt. xx. 23. The experience of those chosen witnesses was in perfect accordance with this intimation. Hence, we find one of them thus recording that experience: "I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men; even unto this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labour working with our own hands; being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the filth of the earth, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day," 1 Cor. iv. 9-13. And if we carefully attend to their writings, we shall find them warning their christian brethren not to expect any better treatment from the world than they themselves had met with. For, when they went abroad among the nations, testifying the gospel of the grace of God, they did not conceal from such as received their testimony that it was "through much tribulation they must enter the kingdom of God," Acts xiv. 22. They apprized them, that it was the will of Christ, that his followers should be conformed to him in his sufferings, before they partook of his glory. This was the lesson which he himself continually inculcated in his doctrine during his personal ministry, when he called upon his professed disciples to take up their cross and follow him. Agreeably to which thus ran the apostolic testimony: "It is a faithful saying; for, if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us," 2 Tim. ii. 11, &c. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy; but let none of you suffer as a thief, or a murderer, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy body in other men's matters; yet, if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this

behalf," &c. 1 Pet. iv. 12, &c. From these passages of scripture, and others that might be quoted, it is plain, that it was the will of the Captain of Salvation, who himself was "made perfect through sufferings," that all the subjects of his kingdom should be called to the exercise of patient suffering for his sake. Hence Paul warning Timothy against the corruption of Christianity which was to take place, says, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution; but evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

Having recalled to your recollection these scripture testimonies, you will do well to bear them in mind, while we take a survey of the suffering state of the first Christians from the days of the apostles to the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the Roman empire, which I understand to be the period alluded to in the opening of this fifth seal. It is doubtless true, that the first attack that was made upon the kingdom of Christ in the way of persecution was by means of the Jewish church and its rulers, who both killed the Lord Jesus and persecuted his followers; but this I pass over, because I do not consider it as so immediately entering into the contents of the seal. They are the persecutions inflicted on the followers of Christ, by Rome Pagan, or the idolatrous heathen magistrates, symbolized by a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his head, Rev. xvii. 9-12, which I take to be pointed at in this seal.<sup>a</sup>

NERO was the first emperor who enacted laws against the Christians; and it would have been surprising, as the learned Mosheim justly remarks, had they been permitted to enjoy the sweets of tranquillity and freedom under the reign of such a monster. But this was far from being the case, for this perfidious tyrant accused them of having set fire to the city of Rome, that horrid crime which he himself had committed with a barbarous

<sup>a</sup> Of these persecutions the learned Dr. Cave, without taking into the account several that were local and confined to a particular province, has enumerated ten; of which I here subjoin the list, with the times when they commenced, and the name of each emperor under whose reign they took place.

1.	Commenced A.D. 64,	under the emperor Nero.
2.	93,	Donitian.
3.	107,	Trajan.
4.	118,	Adrian.
5.	163,	} The two Antonines.
	177,	
6.	202,	Severus.
7.	235,	Maximinus.
8.	250,	Decius.
9.	257,	Valerian.
10.	303,	Dioclesian.

pleasurè. In avenging this crime upon the innocent Christians, he ordered matters so, that the punishment should bear some resemblance to the imputed offence. He, therefore, caused some of them to be wrapped up in combustible garments, and fire set to them when the darkness came on, that thus, like torches, they might dispel the obscurity of the night; while others were fastened to crosses, or torn in pieces by wild beasts, or put to death in some such dreadful manner. This horrid persecution was set on foot in the month of November, in the year 64, and in it, according to some ancient accounts, the two apostles, Paul and Peter, suffered martyrdom; for the correctness of this, however, I do not vouch. This dreadful persecution is said to have continued nearly four years, and was terminated only by the death of Nero, which took place in the year 68, during which period, the Christians suffered every species of torment and affliction, which the malice of their enemies could suggest. The learned are not entirely agreed concerning the extent of this persecution under Nero. Some confine it to the city of Rome; while others represent it as having raged throughout the whole empire. This latter opinion is not only the most ancient, but also the most probable; because it is certain that the laws enacted against the Christians under the government of Nero, were enacted against the whole body, and were, consequently, in operation in the remotest provinces of the empire. It is, moreover, confirmed by the authority of Tertullian, who tells us, that Nero and Domitian had enacted laws against the Christians, which were partially repealed by Trajan. But to proceed:

Though immediately after the death of Nero, the rage of this first persecution against the Christians ceased; yet the flame broke out anew about the year 93 or 94, under the emperor Domitian, a prince but little inferior to Nero in all kinds of iniquity. This was the *second* persecution, and it is said to have been occasioned by the fears which Domitian was under of losing the government of the empire. He had been informed, it seems, that an individual should arise, among the relatives of Jesus Christ, possessed of a turbulent and ambitious spirit, who should excite commotion in the state, and aim at supreme dominion. To counteract the effects of this, he set on foot a violent persecution, though it was not of long duration, for his own untimely death put a stop to it. According to Gibbon, he was assassinated in his own palace, and so odious had he rendered himself to his subjects by his cruelties, that his memory was condemned by the senate; his acts were rescinded; and those whom he had sent into exile were recalled, among whom was the apostle John, the writer of this Book of the Revelation, who had been banished by him to the isle of Patmos. Lactantius, in his "Relation of the deaths

of the primitive persecutors, adds, "Thus all the acts and edicts of this tyrant being repealed, the church not only recovered its former quiet, but became much more flourishing under a succession of worthy princes, who, as they governed the Roman empire very happily, so the church suffered no hardships under them; and being thus freed from the rage of her enemies, she dilated herself both in the eastern and western provinces, so that there was no corner of the world so remote, nor any nation of it so wild, that was not visited by this divine light, and that was not tamed by its discipline; but this peaceful state of things came at last to an end."<sup>b</sup>

In the beginning of the second century, says Mosheim, there were no laws in force against the Christians, the emperor Nerva having abrogated the sanguinary laws of his predecessor Domitian; yet, notwithstanding this, a horrid custom prevailed of persecuting them, and even putting them to death as often as a sanguinary priesthood, or an outrageous populace, instigated by them, demanded their destruction. Hence it happened that under the reign of the good Trajan, popular clamours were raised against the Christians, many of whom fell victims to the rage of a merciless multitude. Such were the riotous proceedings that happened in Bithynia, under the administration of the younger Pliny, as mentioned to you in a former lecture.<sup>c</sup> The answer which Trajan returned to the inquiry of the latter, amounted to this: "That the Christians were not to be officiously hunted after; but that such as were accused and convicted of an adherence to Christianity, were to be put to death as wicked citizens, if they did not return to the religion of their ancestors." This edict being registered among the public and solemn laws of the Roman empire, set bounds to the fury of those that persecuted the Christians; it was, nevertheless, the occasion of martyrdom to many, even under the best emperors. For, as often as an accuser appeared, and the person accused *confessed himself a Christian*, the only alternative was apostacy or death; since, according to this edict, a perseverance in the christian faith was a capital offence. Accordingly, the venerable and aged Simeon, son of Cleophas, and bishop of Jerusalem, was by this very law crucified, in consequence of an accusation brought against him. By the same law, also, Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, was ordered by Trajan himself, to be thrown to the wild beasts in the Roman theatre; for, as the law denounced simply death to such as were convicted of the crime of being Christians, the kind of punishment was left to the option of the judge.

Under the reign of the emperor Adrian, and his successors of

<sup>b</sup> Lactantius' Relation, by Burnet, p. 61.

<sup>c</sup> See Lecture v. p. 60.



the family of the Antonines, the heathen priests breathed nothing but fury against the disciples of Christ. The populace, set in motion by the Pagan priests, who were enraged at seeing their temples forsaken, and idolatrous worship every where giving place to the profession of Christianity, demanded of the magistrates with one voice, during the public games, the destruction of the Christians ; and the magistrates fearing that a sedition might be the consequence of despising, or opposing these popular clamours, were too much disposed to indulge them in their request. It was about this period that the Christians began to vindicate their profession from the monstrous and unjust charges that were brought against them by their enraged adversaries ; and the admirable Apologies of Quadratus and Aristides, of Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, and Tatian, which are still extant, did much to expel the angry prejudices which were then prevalent, at least in the minds of those who had any sense of equity and humanity left. Under the reign of Antoninus Pius, a new method of attacking the Christians was adopted, and that was by accusing them of impiety and atheism ; and though Justin Martyr triumphantly refuted this calumny in his Apology, it was not sufficient to suppress the rage of blood-thirsty persecution. Some earthquakes having taken place about this time in Asia Minor, the Christians were strangely accused of being the authors of these calamities ; the populace renewed their violence against them, and they were consequently treated in the most cruel and injurious manner. The emperor, however, was no sooner made acquainted with these unjust and barbarous proceedings, than he addressed an edict to the whole province of Asia, in which he denounced capital punishments against such as should for the future, accuse the Christians without being able to prove them guilty of any crime ; and this was a noble act of justice, which did honour to his memory.

This worthy prince was succeeded by Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, the philosopher, as he is usually termed, and, if we except that of Nero, there was no reign under which the Christians were more injuriously or cruelly treated than this. He did not indeed revoke the edict of his predecessor, or abrogate the laws which the preceding emperors had enacted in favour of the Christians ; but he did what was equally pernicious to them. For without impartially examining their cause, he lent an easy and attentive ear to all the most virulent insinuations of their enemies, and more especially to the malignant calumnies of the philosophers, who accused them of the most horrid crimes, and the most monstrous impiety, too horrible to be named ! The consequence was that this philosophic emperor issued out against the Christians, whom he regarded as a vain, obstinate, and vicious set of men, edicts

which were very unjust. In consequence of these imperial edicts, the judges and magistrates received the accusations, which the vilest of the rabble brought against the Christians, who were put to the most cruel tortures, and condemned to meet death in its most barbarous forms, notwithstanding their perfect innocence, and their persevering and solemn denial of the horrid crimes laid to their charge. To detail to you the nefarious proceedings on the part of a wicked magistracy; the dereliction of all the principles of justice and clemency, which characterized this period, with the sufferings to which the disciples of Jesus were exposed; whilst it would harrow up your feelings, would require more time and space than can now be allotted to it. Let it suffice to say, that among the many who now fell victims to a cruel superstition, were persons of illustrious piety, and some of eminent learning and abilities, such as, the venerable Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, and Justin Martyr, so deservedly renowned for his erudition and philosophy. Many churches, particularly those of Lyons and Vienne, in the heart of France, were almost entirely destroyed during this violent persecution which raged in the year 177, and fixes an indelible stain upon the memory of the emperor by whose order it was carried on.

Towards the close of the second century, Severus was declared emperor; under whose reign Asia and Egypt, and other provinces were deluged with the blood of the martyrs, as appears from the testimonies of Tertullian, Clemens of Alexandria, and other writers; and it was this series of calamities, under which the christian church groaned, that induced Tertullian to write his Apology, and several other books in defence of the Christians. But I hasten to glance at the state of the church during the third century.

In the beginning of this century, the Christians suffered greatly throughout the provinces of the Roman empire. But their sufferings increased in a terrible manner, in consequence of a law made in the year 203, under the reign of the emperor Severus, by which every subject of the empire was prohibited to change the religion of his ancestors for that of the Christian or Jewish. In virtue of this law, many of the disciples of Christ were put to death, both in Egypt and several parts of Asia and Africa. Among these, Leonidas, the father of Origen, Perpetua and Felicitas, two highly respectable African ladies, with other martyrs of both sexes, acquired an illustrious name by the fortitude with which they endured the most cruel sufferings.

Under the reign of Maximin, the Christians were treated most barbarously. This tyrant issued an edict, ordering all the pastors of the churches to be seized and put to death; but the shocking effects of the edict reached much further than this, for it animated

the Pagan priests, the magistrates, and the multitude, against Christians of every description, rank, and order. This tremendous storm, however, was succeeded by a calm, in which the Christians enjoyed a happy tranquillity for many years. But the accession of Decius to the imperial throne, in the year 249, raised a new tempest, in which the fury of persecution fell in a dreadful manner upon the church of Christ. This emperor, either from an ill-grounded fear of the Christians, or from a violent zeal for the superstition of his ancestors, published most terrible and cruel edicts, by which the prætors were ordered on pain of death, either to extirpate the whole body of Christians without exception, or to force them, by torments of various kinds, to return to the Pagan worship. The consequence was, that in all the provinces of the empire, multitudes of Christians were, during the space of two years, put to death by the most horrid punishments which an ingenious barbarity could invent. To give you some idea of the complicated and multifarious sufferings to which your Christian brethren were at this time exposed, I will quote a single paragraph from a well authenticated history of this period; Dr. S. Chandler's History of Persecutions. "The most excessive and outrageous barbarities," says he, "were made use of upon all who would not blaspheme Christ, and offer incense to the Pagan deities. They were publicly whipped; drawn by the heels through the streets of cities; racked till every bone of their body was disjoined; had their teeth beat out; their noses, hands, and ears cut off; sharp pointed spears run under their nails; they were tortured with melted lead thrown on their naked bodies; had their eyes dug out; their limbs cut off; were condemned to the mines; ground between stones; stoned to death; burnt alive; cast headlong from high buildings; beheaded; smothered in burning lime-kilns; run through the body with sharp spears; destroyed with hunger, thirst, and cold; thrown to the wild beasts; broiled on gridirons with slow fires; cast by heaps into the sea; crucified; scraped to death with sharp shells; torn in pieces by the boughs of trees; in a word, destroyed by all the various methods which the most diabolical subtilty and malice could devise."

Here, however, I presume that I may be allowed to desist; I have said enough to give you an idea of the nature and extent of the persecutions which the primitive Christians underwent at the hands of "the great red dragon," the Pagan Roman government. Similar instances of cruelty and atrocity, were continually occurring till the times of Constantine; that is, for about 70 years more; but on this, our time will not permit me to enter, and I proceed to take some notice of the opening of the fifth seal.

“*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,*” ver. 9. The soul of man, is that vital, spiritual, and immortal principle, which, they who kill the body cannot destroy, Matt. x. 28. The martyrs, though slain by persecution, “for the word of God, and the testimony which they held,” are still alive unto God. They had suffered as victims at the altar, and from under the altar we hear their complaints. But I may not overlook a difficulty which will strike the minds of some of my hearers, to this effect: as the soul is *spiritual*, and as these were in a disembodied state, how was it possible for John to see them? Yet it is said not only in this place, but also in Rev. xx. 4, that the apostle “saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God,” &c. But this is only half the difficulty, for it is added in ver. 11, that “white robes were given to every one” of these souls; and if you look forwards to ch. vii. 9, you will find it said of these same souls, that “they *stood* before the throne and before the Lamb, *clothed* with white robes, and palms *in their hands,*” &c. Now, putting these texts together, I should think it very manifest that we are not to take the words of John *literally*. He was under an extraordinary impulse of the Spirit; and though it is not more unreasonable to suppose that he was made capable of discerning spirits, (for the Scriptures lead us to suppose that when the soul leaves this earthly house of its tabernacle or clay-tenement, it does not exist without a covering, but is furnished with a building or house which is from heaven, and with which it is *clothed upon*, (2 Cor. v.) than to suppose that spiritual substances are capable of seeing and conversing with one another; yet I have no idea that John saw the identical spirits of the martyrs, any more than that he saw a material altar in the place where he stood. What he saw was an hieroglyphical figure, representing by way of symbol, an altar, under which the souls of the martyrs appeared to rest in hope.

The cause of their being slain was their reverence for “the word of God, and the testimony which they maintained” to its truth and excellency. Their enemies had brought many railing accusations against them. Because they refused to worship the Pagan divinities, and to throw a grain of incense on their altars, they were accused of atheism and impiety; while the holy, tender, and circumspect lives which they led, were no security against the imputation of crimes the most aggravated. In fact, the more they studied to give no just ground of offence, the more the spirit of an ungodly world was roused against them; because they ran not to the same excess of riot with others, their characters were malign'd, and their persons evil-treated. But whatever their own

enemies might allege, the text discloses the true ground of the quarrel, and the cause of their being slain. It was their tenacious adherence, both in profession and practice to the glorious gospel of the blessed God. We have next an account of what the prophet heard.

“*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?*” ver. 10. Here, again, we are presented with what has stumbled some conscientious people. “Can a thirst of revenge,” say they, “lodge in the bosom of any of the spirits of just men made perfect?” We answer, *certainly not*. While the martyrs were upon this earth, they were not actuated by a disposition to retaliate on their persecutors. Look at the conduct of the king of martyrs, when his enemies were nailing him to the tree: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Look at Stephen, when his persecutors were stoning him to death; he kneeled down and prayed for them, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” Many that followed him in the cause of martyrdom drank deep into the same amiable disposition, which, in fact, was only carrying out into practical exercise the strict injunction of their Divine Master; “I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also,” Matt. v. 39. See also Rom. xii. 14; and 1 Pet. iii. 9; and ch. iv. 1.

What, then, is to be understood by this cry of the souls beneath the altar? I answer, that one thing imported by it may be, the aggravated guilt of putting to death the saints of the Most High. The blood of Abel is said to have cried unto God from the ground, Gen. iv. 10. In like manner, the sin of murdering the martyrs was so enormous, that their souls are represented as crying with a loud voice, to God, the moral Governor of the world, the Judge of all the earth, who will do right; the sovereign Arbitrator and Disposer of all things—to vindicate his own character and faithfulness. But, further, it is thought by some, that the cry here, “How long dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on those that dwell on the earth?” is not to be understood as a cry for vengeance on individual persecutors, but a kind of expostulation, how long would he endure the provocations of the persecutors before he proceeded to judge their cause, and avenge their blood on the inhabitants of the earth, by the overthrow of the persecuting power of the Pagan Roman government? Taken in this view, it may be considered as the language of their zeal for the honour of God, and their desire for the prevalence of the gospel. When innocent blood is shed, not by individuals, merely, but by communities of men, it seems to be peculiarly fit, that vengeance should be taken on those communities, in this world, in the course

of divine providence independent of that account, which every guilty individual must give for himself at the bar of God. As it is only in this world that communities or governments exist, in their collective capacity, it is in this world only that they can be punished in their public capacity. Accordingly, we shall find, when we come to consider the import of the next seal, how the prayer of those martyrs was answered. Even as in a subsequent chapter of the book of the Revelation, ch. xvi. 6, we find that because Babylon the Great had shed the blood of saints and prophets, blood is awarded her to drink, for of that she was worthy.

*“And white robes were given to every one of them;”* (denoting the heavenly honours that were conferred upon them): *“And it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled,”* ver. 11. This is the answer returned to the cry of the martyrs, and we see they are encouraged to expect a retribution “after a little season,” and when the number of their fellow-servants and brethren who should be killed, as they were, should be fulfilled. There are two views taken of the import of this answer. It is supposed by some, that this cry proceeded from the souls of those who had been slain under *nine* of the persecutions, inflicted by the Pagan Roman government, and that they had only to wait the completion of their number under the *tenth*, which being accomplished, God would avenge their injured cause, by the destruction of heathenism in the empire, which accordingly took place. If this be the view, then the opening of this seal would refer to about the year 270, when the terrible persecution broke out, which befel the churches under the reign of the emperor Decius, and of which I read you such a horrifying recital. The professed and avowed object of that persecution was nothing less than the utter extirpation of Christianity, name and thing, from the earth. Others, however, date the opening of this fifth seal, posterior to the tenth persecution, which took place under the emperor Dioclesian, about fifty years afterwards, A.D. 303, and so, they understood what is said respecting their “fellow-servants and their brethren who were to be killed” as they had been, to look forwards to the persecutions which were to be renewed under Rome papal, or Antichrist, of which we shall be called to speak by and bye. If this last be the correct view of the answer returned to the appeal of the martyrs, then the period of time, occupied by this seal, must be taken from the death of Christ, the first christian martyr, to the great day of recompense, when the noble army of martyrs will be completed and their injured cause avenged.

## LECTURE XVIII.

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AND I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood. 13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together: and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free-man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains. 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?—Rev. vi. 12—17.

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### SIXTH SEAL.—PART I.

IN entering upon the consideration of the contents, or import of this sixth seal, I cannot forbear remarking to you, that I find the writers on the Apocalypse much more agreed respecting its meaning, than of any of the five seals which have preceded it. Almost all our commentators and expositors consider the subject which is symbolized by this highly figurative, I might say, this truly grand and sublime imagery, to be *the downfall of heathenism in the Roman empire*, or the destruction of that persecuting Pagan government, which occasioned the dreadful havock among the churches of Christ, of which I submitted to you a specimen in our last lecture. In the complaint of the martyrs under the fifth seal, it was asked, "*How long?*" how long the day of recompence should be delayed? the answer to which was expressed in general terms; "they should rest for a little season, until the number of their fellow-sufferers should be completed." The sixth seal represents the arrival of this awful day: "*the great day of his wrath is come, and who may be able to stand?*"

But though I mentioned a *general* concurrence among the learned respecting the import of this seal, it is proper to apprise you, that there are exceptions to this opinion; and they are founded upon the peculiar strength, and the magnificent grandeur of the language employed in the verses first read, which it is contended *can* denote nothing less than the end of the world; the final dissolution of universal nature. This is known to have been the opinion of Cyprian, an eminent Father of the Christian

church, who flourished about the middle of the third century.<sup>a</sup> As the prophecy had not then met with its fulfilment, we can scarcely wonder that he should have taken this view of it; especially as we find some able writers of our own time contending that such boldness of figure and expression cannot be applicable to any other events than the dissolution of the material system, and the general judgment of the world. Among these last, is the late Dr. Tilloch, who, after commenting at some length upon the phraseology of the verses, thus sums up the matter: "Suffice it to say, that the period intended is the same to which Paul alludes in his second epistle to the Thessalonians, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; which shall be punished with everlasting destruction."<sup>b</sup> And so he speaks of "the great earthquake," ver. 12, as that "by which *all* the enemies of Christ's kingdom shall be ultimately destroyed." But as I conceive this to be a mistaken view of the matter; and as the evil consequence of this mistake has been a complete confusion in the abstract arrangement of the Apocalypse, you will pardon me in detaining you while I offer a few remarks by way of refuting it.

I begin by observing, what indeed must strike every reflecting mind, that if the sixth seal, which we are about to consider, relate to the literal day of judgment, then it is obvious that the five preceding seals must be loosely spread over the long and indefinite period which *precedes* that day. Now let us for argument's sake suppose this to be the case, and mark the consequence. If this sixth seal refer to the day of judgment, then the seventh seal must inevitably be viewed as prior in point of time to the sixth seal; for if the sixth bring us to the end of our present world, it is quite clear that the seventh, being unable to advance any farther, must of necessity *retrograde* in point of chronology. This single circumstance effectually subverts the arrangement before us; and I may venture to assert once for all, that it is utterly impossible to bring out any consistent interpretation of the Apocalypse, if we depart from the simple and intelligible, and self-approved principle, that the seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials succeed each other in a chronological series. This order forbids the application of the sixth seal to the literal day of judgment or consummation of all things: and, as I hope to shew presently, the magnificent imagery of the phraseology does not require us to do it. Let us now attend to the verses which I first read.

"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

<sup>a</sup> Cyprian, ad Novat. Hæres. i.

<sup>b</sup> Tilloch's Dissertations, p. 183.



hair, and the moon became as blood; 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; and the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places," ver. 12-14. In the course of these lectures, I have had occasion oftener than once, to apprise you of the importance of acquainting yourselves with the *symbolical* language in which the prophecies are delivered, if you would enter into their real import and meaning. Ignorance of, or inattention to, the system of emblems, has led many professed interpreters of prophecy into lamentable mistakes, particularly in their attempts to explain the highly wrought and intricate imagery of the Book of the Revelation. In the figurative language of prophecy, great revolutions, whether temporal or ecclesiastical, are described under the imagery of confusion among the heavenly bodies, and of violent agitation in regard to the earth. The great objects in nature, such as the heavenly luminaries; the sun, moon, and stars; mountains and hills, lofty trees, particularly the cedars of Lebanon, and the oaks of Bashan, are used to denote kings and conquerors, princes and nobles, the grandees, and persons of high estate. Plains and lower-grounds, branches and underwood, and the land or earth put generally, represent the mass of the people. The daughter of any state or city, denotes its inhabitants. Savage animals and beasts of prey are put for tyrants and oppressors. A horn signifies authority or power; a rod the exercise of authority: earthquakes, tempests, eclipses, the dissolution of the earth and the heavens, and all things falling into primitive chaos, represent invasions, conquests, revolutions, and extraordinary convulsions in nature. These are merely a few general hints which I throw out, in passing, to enable you to apprehend something of the sublime imagery in the verses under consideration; but it is a style of writing, not peculiar to this place, for you will find it pervading all the prophetic parts of scripture. Now let us apply these remarks to the subject under consideration. The prophet tell us that on opening the sixth seal there was, *a great earthquake.*

It would be trifling with your time to occupy it with any laboured explanation of the term "earthquake." When it takes place in the natural world, we all know, that it consists in the globe which we inhabit being violently shaken by subterraneous commotion; and this phenomenon in nature is adopted by the Spirit of prophecy, as a symbol, to denote any signal commotion, which by divine appointment, shakes and overturns an existing order of things in the ecclesiastical or political fabrics and empires. There are, I believe, four distinct earthquakes, mentioned in the Apocalypse; the first is that which took place at the open-

ing of this sixth seal; the second is mentioned, ch. viii. 5; the third in ch. xi. 13; and the fourth in ch. xvi. 18. Reserving the latter three for consideration in their proper course, we, for the present, confine ourselves to that first mentioned.

The *great earthquake*, here spoken of, evidently imports a mighty change which was about to take place, in what I may be allowed to call the "Ecclesiastical Polity" of the Roman empire; consisting in the total overthrow of that heathenish persecuting power which had recently deluged the earth with the blood of the saints and martyrs. This stupendous event, which was brought about by the arms of Constantine and his subsequent measures, produced a radical revolution in the state of matters as respected the Christian profession; but in what the change consisted will come more properly under consideration hereafter. At present, let us attend to the prophet's account of the attendant circumstances.

"*The sun became black as sackcloth of hair; and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto earth.*" The allusions here are obviously borrowed from the appearance of the heavens about the time of an earthquake. The sun was made for the dominion of the day, and the moon and stars for the dominion of the night; but when an earthquake is about to take place, we are told, the sun is rarely visible; the moon is veiled in sable gloom, and assumes a bloody appearance; fiery meteors glide through the atmosphere, and drop like stars from their spheres; the whole firmament puts on the most scowling and ominous appearance. Even the brute creation are amazed and terrified, hastening to their dens and places of retreat. In our text it is said "the sun became as sackcloth of hair;" it seems no longer to shine, but is enveloped in raiment of *mourning*; the moon glares horribly like blood, and the stars fall. Now transfer these emblematical allusions to the Pagan Roman government, and mark what they denote.

The sun, in the empire, must be the chief ruler, or supreme power; the moon and stars must be delegated authorities; for the heavenly luminaries are to the earth, what the ruling powers of the world are to the common people; hence great changes in the affairs of nations are expressed by Jehovah, "shaking the heavens and the earth," Hag. ii. 6, 7, 21, with Heb. xii. 26. The heavens denote the church or state; mountains and islands are great and little kingdoms; the stars, being a part of that system of which the sun is the centre, must, in this prophecy, denote the ministers of church or state; the public functionaries, employed in the service of the Pagan government. These therefore may be considered as comprehending not only ministers of state, but also the entire body of priests, augurs, vestals, and other

public officers who ministered at the altars of the heathen deities, or were any way engaged by their official station in the celebration of the rites of divination or Pagan worship. When these ministers of the fabulous deities of Paganism were degraded from their rank, and stripped of all their emoluments; when they were not only restrained in their ministrations, but their very names and orders were abolished; the stars of that system might with great propriety, be said to fall to the earth. And now observe the bold figure by which the manner of their fall is described. It was,

*“Even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.”* We find this metaphor in Isa. xxxiv. 4, where, the Lord denouncing judgments on the enemies of his church, it is said: “All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host (that is, the stars in the firmament,) shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree.” See also Nahum iii. 12. The fig-tree is so little cultivated in this country, that we are, perhaps, less competent to understand the metaphor than those were who inhabited eastern climes, to whom the fig-tree was familiar. But to appreciate something of the force of the figure, it is necessary to keep in mind that when the fruit of the fig-tree is fully ripe, it falls from the tree of its own weight, as it were “into the mouth of the eater,” as expressed by the prophet Nahum, like fruit in Autumn. On the contrary, such is the tenacity of the stem, that, before the fruit is ripe, it requires “the shaking of a mighty wind,” to make it quit its hold. Apply this idea now to the subject before us; the dispossessing of the Pagan priests and public functionaries belonging to the heathen Roman government of their offices and emoluments, and it imports, that their fall would not be voluntary like ripe fruit in Autumn, but by the hand of violence; as when unripe fruit is shaken off by means of a boisterous wind. They should not resign their honours, and quit the lucrative rewards of divination spontaneously; nor, indeed, could such a thing be expected of them, unless their minds were enlightened by the gospel to discern the monstrous errors, absurdities, and wickedness of the Pagan mythology, in which last mentioned case they would have imitated the noble conduct of their brethren at Ephesus, recorded in Acts xix, when they that believed the gospel, “came and confessed, and shewed their deeds, and brought their books of necromancy, and publicly committed them to the flames.” This was a singular case and afforded a striking proof of the powerful influence of divine truth over the energy of error. In the downfall of heathenism, symbolized by the opening of the sixth seal, the reverse was to be the case. But to proceed:

*“And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.”* Heaven, in the symbolical language of prophecy, is, I believe, always used to denote an ecclesiastical state; a state of society with which religion, whether it be true or false, is connected. And here I understand it to represent the entire system of the Pagan worship or idolatry. Such was the revolution effected by the establishment of Christianity under the auspices of Constantine, that this system is described as “departing like a scroll when rolled together,” more literally, as “a volume rolled up.” A sheet of parchment, upon which, in ancient times, books were written, being in its nature elastic, is seen to roll up in an instant when he that extends it, quits its hold. Then the characters written or painted upon it, vanish from the sight, with great rapidity; and so instantaneous should be the downfall of Paganism in the empire. Mountains and islands, taken literally, are places of the greatest security in times of hostile invasion; the mountain is difficult of access, by reason of its height and steepness; the island from its surrounding waters. Under these images, the securest places seem to be represented as no longer affording safety during this dreadful visitation. Or if we take the terms “mountain and island,” to signify the various provinces, states, and principalities within the limits of the Roman empire; then their being moved out of their places must intimate that every part of the empire was to be revolutionized, and no place escape. The mountains were not to be levelled so as to become plains, nor were the islands to be swallowed up and buried in the depths of the sea; neither the one nor the other disappeared; they only changed their place or situation. It appeared, as if by some violent shock of an earthquake, they had been heaved from their base, and thrown into other latitudes.

*“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; 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: for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?”* ver. 15, 16. It is scarcely possible for language to describe in more glowing terms than is here done, a flight of terror and dismay, before a victorious enemy, who having destroyed all the fortresses and cities, pursues the hopeless fugitives into their last places of refuge. But as the extraordinary magnificence of this language has perplexed many, and led them to insist that it can denote nothing less than the final dissolution of this world, and the general judgment, it may not be amiss to spend a few moments in con-

paring it with some other parts of the prophetic writings, where this same topic, the downfall of Paganism, is acknowledged to be the subject in view. Turn, then, to Isaiah, ch. ii., which is admitted on all hands to be a prophecy of the *first coming* of Christ, and the effects that should be produced on men of all ranks and degrees by the preaching of the gospel and the establishment of his kingdom in the world. Read from ver. 10-21, and compare it with the language in which the opening of this sixth seal is described. Turn next to Isa. ch. xxxiv., in which God denounces his vengeance on the enemies of his church, and read ver. 1-8, in which, particularly in ver. 4, you will find the very same imagery implied as in our text; yet *Idumea* is mentioned by the prophet as the especial object of the divine indignation. See also Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8.

The fact is, that, in the very nature of things, the language of figured prophecy must always be hyperbolic. If you strip it of its apparent exaggeration, you destroy the language itself; for, without such exaggeration, the language of symbols cannot subsist. We may avoid the hyperbole by refusing to employ the symbols, which, if employed, will inevitably produce it; but if we discard the symbols, the result must be a complete metamorphosis of the language. It is true, that in that case, the exaggeration exists no more; but in ridding ourselves of the hyperbole, we have ceased to speak in the language of hieroglyphics. This hyperbolic strain, however, must not be considered as a designed exaggeration; it is the inevitable result of what may be denominated the hieroglyphical language of prophecy. If rulers be symbolized by the heavenly bodies, great revolutions can only be described in language which, at first sight, would appear to set forth the literal end of the world; and if revolutions be thence described in language literally appropriate to the day of judgment, consistency will demand that the liberation of the disciples of Christ from a state of persecution, through the medium of some such great event, should be exhibited under the imagery of what follows the day of judgment, namely, the entrance of the long-harassed saints into the beatific presence of God, which is the subject of the ensuing chapter, and forms the second part of this sixth seal.

Before we quit this part of our subject, there are two additional observations which I must submit to your consideration. The first is, that the language employed by the Spirit of prophecy in describing the events of this sixth seal, is understood by some judicious writers to contain a pledge, an earnest, and a type of the final destruction of all persecuting power in that great day of vengeance which is promised; I mean, the last day, as in 2 Thess. ch. i. I think this remark is entitled to our attention on two accounts; the first is, that it is sanctioned by the use which our

Lord, in his public ministry, evidently made of the destruction of Jerusalem. If, for instance, you read at your leisure the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, the thirteenth of Mark, and the twenty-first of Luke, which all treat of the same subject, viz. the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem by the Roman army, you will find him evidently making use of that event, as typical of the end of the world, and so he carries forward the views of the reader from that dreadful judgment which came upon the Jewish nation, to the great day, the dissolution of the world, and the final judgment. What, then, should hinder us from considering the downfall of the heathenish power in the Roman empire, as described in these verses, as looking forwards to the destruction of papal Rome, or Babylon the great, and ultimately to the final consummation of all things. It appears to me, that, taking up the subject in this point of view, we reconcile all the discordant opinions that subsist among the writers on this subject.

The other observation which I had to offer is, that the thing imported in this sixth seal, the subversion of Paganism in the empire, is again resumed in Rev. xii. 7-9, where it is represented under the emblem of a war in heaven between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels, in which the latter prevailed not, but was cast down from that high station in which he persecuted the church. I merely direct your attention to this matter now, as we shall have to resume the subject in a future lecture, and then go more particularly into it. Let us proceed to examine how far the state of affairs in the Roman empire can be thought to justify the use of this high-wrought imagery, this sublime and magnificent language, in which the events of this sixth seal are presented to us.

I am aware that it is a very difficult thing for us, in the present day, to enter properly into this subject, not merely from the want of full and authentic information respecting the actual posture of affairs at the period alluded to, and the mighty change that was produced by the elevation of Constantine to the imperial throne, his making a profession of Christianity, wresting the weapons of persecution from the hands of the heathen magistrates, who had now for more than three hundred years wielded them so successfully against the Christians; but more especially because, to realize the subject in all its interesting forms, we would need to have been spectators of the terrible events that then occurred. It may, perhaps, help us a little in this difficult matter, if we have recourse to a similitude, which I adopt merely for illustration's sake. Christianity, you know, is the established religion of the British isles; it is "part and parcel of the law of the land." But suppose, for a moment, that the monarch of this country should change his religion, and turn Mahometan: as the effect

of this change in his sentiments, he adopts measures for putting down the Christian religion, and establishing Mahometanism in its place. Now mark the necessary consequences of such a measure. We will begin with the royal household—his court, and council, and cabinet ministers. Hitherto these high stations have been occupied by professed Christians; henceforward they must either follow the example of their royal master, and change their faith, or take the consequence, that is, be removed from their station. Would not this, think you, produce great consternation in the higher circles? But let us advance a step further: the judges and magistrates of the land are all Christians, and they have been administering the laws in a consistency with that order of things; now, however, that system is overturned, and the maxims of the Koran are incorporated into a system upon which the proceedings of the courts of law and justice are to be administered. What shall these great men do in such a case as is now supposed? These things are bad enough; but advance one step farther yet, and contemplate the effects of such a change on the hierarchy of the church of England; think of the archbishops, the bishops, the deans and the prebends, the canons and minor canons, the vicars, the rectors, and the curates, who are all incorporated with and dependent upon this order of things; take into account their numerous connections, their families and friends, all of whom are more or less interested in the permanent continuance of a system that is to be overturned and give place to one of an opposite kind; and connect with all this their long, deep-rooted, and inveterate prejudices. . . . I apprehend, we have only to suppose such an event to take place in this day, and in our own country, in order to enable us to realize, in a degree, the mighty change, the concussion, the “earthquake,” that took place in the days of Constantine, and shook the Roman empire to its very base. Only you will take this into your account, that the pagan mythology, the system of polytheism, the absurd rites, the abominable practices, the monstrous abuses, which had been accumulating from the period of the deluge to the days of Constantine, and which had overspread the whole earth, the small canton of Judæa excepted, constituted, in the aggregate, a mass of corruption, idolatry, and abomination, to which nothing that exists in our day, no, not even the hierarchy of the church of Rome, is comparable; and therefore, by how much greater the accumulation of evil that was to be removed then was, by so much more terrible must the earthquake have been that brought it about. In fact, the new order of things which took place at this time throughout the Roman empire, was something like a new world rising into existence.

It is proper, however, that I should give you a sketch, or out-

line of the leading events of the period which we understand to be referred to under this sixth seal. You may recollect that in my last lecture, I gave a concise detail of the sore persecutions which the Christians had undergone from the days of Nero to the times of Decius, A.D. 64, to 270, which is considered to have been the *ninth* persecution—when the souls under the altar were heard to cry with a loud voice, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” And they are given to understand that the work of persecution by the hands of the heathen emperors was not yet completed. Accordingly, about the commencement of the fourth century, another persecution ensued, under the emperors Dioclesian and Galerius, which was conducted with unrelenting violence, and continued for the space of ten years. During this long period, the Roman world was stained with the blood of the saints; and so memorable did this last persecution become, in the history of the church, that it acquired the name of “the era of Dioclesian, or of the martyrs.” There seems to have been a systematic plan formed by these sanguinary emperors for the absolute extinction of the christian name; and so nearly was the diabolical scheme accomplished, that a medal was struck which is still in existence, bearing an inscription to that effect:—“*Nomine Christianorum deleto,*”—*the name of the Christians being extinguished.* Yet the christian church survived this tremendous attack. Galerius, who, after the abdication of Dioclesian, had promoted it, being brought to the brink of the grave by a dreadful and lingering disease, published an edict in the year 311, commanding the persecution to cease; and restoring freedom and repose to the harassed Christians. At this moment the affairs of the church had been brought to the lowest ebb: and now commenced that wonderful revolution which is denoted by the earthquake and its concomitant circumstances, which forms the burden of the sixth seal: the whole system of Paganism was overthrown and Christianity raised up in its stead to power and authority. We consider this sixth seal to have been opened in the year 313, when Constantine, having succeeded to the imperial throne, issued an edict in favour of Christianity, which soon after led to its establishment on the ruins of Paganism, and thus liberated the church from heathen persecution.

We cannot reasonably doubt that the revolution which at this time took place in the government of the Roman empire, produced a great amelioration in the state of affairs as pertains to the friends of Christianity. It would, consequently, be quite absurd to apply to them the sublime and terrific imagery in these verses, particularly what is said in ver. 15-17: “The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and



the mighty men," &c. &c. are evidently such as were in authority, the rulers, judges, magistrates, military officers and so forth, who held their stations under the ancient régime—the system of Paganism; and who are represented as utterly confounded at the overthrow of that system, and in the hour of their extremity calling upon the rocks and the mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. Hitherto their efforts had been exerted in every possible way, against the Lord and his Christ—their utmost rage had been vented against the Christians, to extirpate them root and branch, from the face of the earth—but they had now the mortification to witness, not only a total failure of these violent measures; not only had they proved abortive, but the very cause which they had laboured to destroy, was, through a signal interposition of Providence, raised from the dust, and elevated to distinction and renown. The influence, authority, and power, hitherto vested in *their* hands, was now wrested from them, and nothing remained to them, but fearfulness, anguish, and dismay.

*"Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"* "The wrath of the Lamb" is certainly a very singular expression. The lamb is an animal which is generally considered as void of passion. When led to the slaughter, or under the hand of the shearer, it is dumb. But we must not forget, that He, who, in this book is symbolized by a lamb, is also represented under the emblem of a lion; and that, while he is all gentleness and meekness to his saints, he can display qualities of an opposite character to their implacable adversaries. The expression marks the hopeless condition of the incorrigible enemies of Christ and his church; for, if the Lamb of God, the only Saviour of men be their adversary, desperate, indeed, must their case be! If he be against them, what avails it, who of their fellow-creatures is on their side? The expression is equally fitted to remind us of the true grounds of this awful quarrel. It is only in the church, that the executioner of judgment is known under the title of a lamb; and when we read, as here, of the wrath of the Lamb, we are led to conceive of him as pleading the controversies of Zion, and executing the vengeance of his temple. They had shed the blood of his saints and prophets, and now the hour of recompence was come.

I cannot prevail upon myself to take leave of this solemn subject, without a word of application. It has been already suggested, that the contents of this sixth seal, the downfall of Paganism in the Roman empire, with its attendant circumstances, may not improperly be viewed in the light of a type of the end of the world;—let us take a hint from it, and make this improvement of it.

Throughout the whole of the prophetic Scriptures, a time of retribution and of vengeance on the enemies of God and his Christ is denounced. It is called "the day of the Lord,"—"the day of wrath and slaughter;—of the Lord's anger, visitation, and judgment,"—"the great day,"—"the last day;" and whenever it is described, the signs which occur under this seal will be found, more or less, to compose its dreadful apparatus. Let us individually be reminded that this day awaits us all, and that it is approaching us with rapid strides. How are we prepared to meet it? It is true, we are now under a dispensation of grace—it is the merciful time of our visitation. "Behold, now is the accepted time—now is the day of salvation." The gospel sounds abroad and proclaims peace, pardon, and salvation to the chief of sinners, through faith in Christ's blood. "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." It does not call upon you to do anything with the view of making your peace with God—that hath been already effected by the sinner's friend—and God is well-pleased in him for his righteousness' sake, as a proof of which he raised Him from the dead, and exalted him to the highest glory in the heavens. It calls upon you to live by what he has done—to take up the cross and follow him. The language of the gospel is, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation—for the scripture saith, whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed;" that is, he shall never be put to confusion, Rom. x. 9-11. But we ought ever to keep this in mind, that all true faith is powerfully operative—that it works by love, Gal. v. 6,—purifies the heart, Acts xv. 9,—and overcomes the world, 1 John v. 5. It leads to any imitation of the character of Christ, for, "he that saith he abideth in him, ought himself so to walk, even as he walked," 1 John ii. 6. And, indeed, the apostles put a decisive negative upon that profession of Christianity which is not supported by a corresponding life and conversation; for, "He that saith, I know him (Christ) and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him," ver. 4. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap; he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Gal. vi. 6, 7.

## LECTURE XIX.

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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 winds should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. 2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. 4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. 5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. 6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. 7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. 8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.—  
Rev. vii. 1-8.

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### SIXTH SEAL.—PART II.

THE contents of this seventh chapter would seem to form a part of the sixth seal, which we had under consideration in our last lecture. Some have called it a second part or portion of that seal; and others describe it as a supplement to it; while a third chuse to term it, a preface to the seventh seal. It is of little consequence which of these terms we adopt when speaking of it. The things here related by the prophet, as having passed in vision, are represented as taking place prior to the opening of the seventh seal, of which we have the account in the beginning of the eighth chapter. If you ask what is the leading subject treated of in this second portion of the sixth seal, my answer is, that it presents us with the consequences of the mighty revolution which took place, through the overthrow of the long-established Paganism of the Roman empire. To the eye of sense, and considering what the disciples of the Saviour had to encounter under a succession of persecuting emperors, the elevation of Constantine to the imperial dignity, and his patronizing the cause of the Christians, would appear to have been a most auspicious event. But the consequences were of a mixed nature, and far from being wholly felicitous, as we shall presently see. The Most High seeth not as man seeth: that which short-sighted mortals are apt to regard as a

great acquisition, he often knows to be a great temptation. Waiving, however, any farther preliminary remarks, let us turn our attention to the verses first read.

“*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,*” ver. 1. Angels, we know, are ministers of the divine will, and sent forth by the Most High to execute his purposes, whether in a way of mercy, or of vengeance. The number *four* is evidently cardinal, and expressive of universality, as has been shewn in a former lecture.<sup>a</sup> Here, you see, they correspond with the four winds and four corners of the earth—that is, the whole earth, which now appeared in the scenery presented to the prophet’s view, below heaven and the throne, not in the form of a globe, but stretched out as a plain, with four sides and angles—and in this way it continues to be presented through the whole series of the seven trumpets.

I had occasion to say something, in a former lecture, on the *wind* considered as an emblem, or symbol, in the language of prophecy; and we shall here be under the necessity of resuming the subject, and going into it rather more largely, for the better understanding of the point in hand. I begin by repeating what I formerly stated, that in the symbolical style of prophecy, the wind is used as an emblem of the Holy Spirit—and consequently, as in the instance before us, when the four angels are represented as “holding the four winds, that the wind should not blow on the earth,” &c. it denotes the withholding of the influences of the Holy Spirit, which give life to the christian profession, and without which it can be nothing else than a form of godliness without the power thereof. To justify this view of the subject, let me call your attention to three or four texts of scripture, in which this metaphor of the *wind* occurs—and from which, you will readily perceive the inference that is to be drawn.

Turn first to Ezek. ch. xxxvii. The subject of the chapter is, the resurrection of the dry bones, which the prophet beheld lying about the valley, the whole account of which you can read at your leisure. In ver. 9, Ezekiel says, “Then said the Lord unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, Son of man; and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the *four winds*, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live,” &c. The result, or rather the explanation, is given us in ver. 14, where the Lord promises to “put *his Spirit* into them, and cause them to live.” Look next to John iii. 8, where Christ is illustrating to Nicodemus the doctrine of the new birth: “The *wind* bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not

<sup>a</sup> See Lect. xi. p. 135.

tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of *the Spirit*." When this same Spirit descended upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, as you read Acts ii. 2, it is said, "there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing *mighty wind*—and they were all filled with the *Holy Spirit*," ver. 4. The apostle Paul shews the absolute necessity of the influences of the Holy Spirit to the formation of the christian character, when he says that "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit," 1 Cor. xii. 3. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14. Collect, now, into one point of view, the doctrine of these several texts, and what is the amount of it? Why that divine teaching, or the influences of the Holy Spirit, in the way of light, joy, peace, consolation, and holiness, are essential to the christian life and profession, and that where these influences are withheld or withdrawn, the main thing in christianity is wanting. Let us now look to the subject before us, and apply to it the remarks we have made.

The fall of heathenism, and the power which supported it in the Roman empire, however desirable as a mean of exempting the churches of Christ from persecution, was attended with one great evil which proved very much to the detriment of the profession of Christianity in the world; and this consisted in the "holding of the four winds," as here expressed, or, dropping the metaphor— withholding the influences of the Holy Spirit, in consequence of which, a form of godliness prevailed without its vital power.

In order to illustrate this point to you a little, I may remark, that while the churches of Christ were in a suffering state, few, except such as were christians by conviction, would be disposed to join them; but when christianity became the religion of the emperor, converts of a much more ambiguous character might not unreasonably be expected to shew themselves, and a lamentable increase of secularity was to be anticipated. The faith of the reigning prince would, as a matter of course, be the faith of every well-bred courtier, for who would be so unpolite as not to be of the same faith as his prince! The profession of christianity would be made the high road to imperial favour; the hierarchy would be infected with the baneful spirit of clerical tyranny and ambition; and, by a very intelligible revolution of sentiment, the lately despised and persecuted gospel would become the fashionable religion of the Roman world. All this, I have no doubt you will agree with me, was no more than what was to be expected, and so, accordingly, it fell out. From this time, our Lord's doctrine of the new birth, without which none can see the kingdom of God, seems to have been, in a great measure, laid aside, and conversion was little more than being baptized, and consenting to

wear the professor's garb, or be called by the christian name. The glory of the church, henceforth, seems to have been placed more in splendid edifices and pompous ceremonies than in conformity to its Head. In short, from this time she became a courtier; and, laying aside her own simple attire, she appeared in a dress more befitting the mother of harlots than the bride of Christ.

This mixture of sincerity and hypocrisy, of spirituality and secularity, when assisted by the growing superstition of the age, and by the honours which Constantine so profusely heaped upon an aspiring priesthood, paved the way for a state of things which had hitherto been unknown, but which has continued through all the middle ages, down to the present day. Before we advance farther, however, I think it may be useful for us to pause, recapitulate the events that have transpired, and examine the period at which we are arrived; I mean, in this course of lectures.

We have witnessed the opening of the first six seals, commencing with the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world; we have traced its progress under the persecuting power of Pagan Rome; and find it at last become the established religion of the Roman empire, which takes place at the opening of the sixth seal. Now, the opening of these six seals made way for a most important event in the annals of the church, namely, *the rise of Antichrist*, or the full manifestation of the Man of Sin; the son of perdition, foretold by Daniel, and more particularly described by the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Thessalonians. Before Antichrist could arise and reign over the empire, it was necessary that the gospel of Christ should first be published throughout the empire, and a profession of Christianity, or of subjection to Jesus Christ, must take place in various parts of that empire; for, not only was Antichrist to sit in the temple of God, but he was to rise up among the churches of the saints, where the mystery of iniquity was to begin to work. We have seen how the gospel of Christ actually was preached, and a profession of subjection to Christ raised throughout the empire, by the opening of the first seal.

Again; Antichrist could not take place by virtue of the Christian profession, until the gospel was in various ways perverted, and the profession of Christianity corrupted, by the pride, fleshly wisdom, and spiritual merchandize of the leaders of the churches, more especially, and by false teachers creeping in among them. The mystery of iniquity must necessarily work in the churches before the Man of Sin could be brought forth; but this was done by the opening of the third and fourth seals, as we have formerly seen.

Lastly, Antichrist could not possibly take possession of his

throne and kingdom in the empire, until the measure of the church's sufferings from the sixth head of the great red dragon, or the heathenish power of the empire was filled up, and until Paganism was no longer the religion of that empire. Now this was effected by the opening of the fifth and sixth seals. And when the empire had obtained a form of Christianity suited to such a body, it thereby became a fit kingdom for Antichrist, of whom Daniel speaks, under the similitude of "a little horn, which had eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things," ch. vii. 8. The apostle Paul evidently foretels the rise of this monstrous power, as a dreadful judgment from God upon the professors of Christianity, when he says, "Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned which believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness," 2 Thess. ii. 10-12.

We need not, brethren, search any farther than this, for the sore calamity that was to come upon the world, as the consequence of the four angels holding the four winds; "That the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." To be given up to such a deplorable state of mental darkness as to be unable to distinguish between the kingdom of Christ, and that of Antichrist; and even to take pleasure in such a mass of iniquity as the latter, is truly dreadful. And yet so far was this from being a rare case, that we read of a period of time when "all the world wondered after the beast," Rev. xiii. 3. We must not, however, understand this in its most extensive latitude of meaning; because, the blessed God has at no time left himself without witnesses in the world; he always had a seed to serve him, and a generation to call him blessed. And, however general the defection was during the reign of Antichrist, yet the Lord, as in the days of the prophet Elijah, reserved to himself a remnant," which neither worshipped the beast, nor his image, nor received his mark in their forehead, or in their hand;" and the subject which we now have under consideration, leads us to contemplate the divine economy in discriminating between this favoured few, and the followers of Antichrist. Thus the prophet proceeds:

*"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, saying: Hurt not the sea, nor the earth, nor the trees; until we have sealed the servants of our God upon their foreheads; and I heard the number of them which were sealed; and there were sealed an*

*hundred forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel,"* &c. ver. 2-4. On this I remark,

1. That the imagery here, as in the fourth and fifth chapters of this book, is evidently borrowed from the Old Testament dispensation; ancient Israel were our types, 1 Cor. ch. x. And here agreeable to that system of types, and antitypes, which pervades the whole bible, the house of Israel is employed as a figure of the Christian church. But as the apostle teaches us, all are not Israel who are of Israel; in other words, all the natural descendants of Abraham were not the true Israel of God: so, all who bear the Christian name, are not Christians in reality. Hence at the period of the rise of Antichrist, the mystical number of one hundred and forty-four thousand of the real children of God are described as separated, by the allegorical act of sealing, from the general mass of the figurative Israel. In other words, a separation takes place, at this special era, between the faithful followers of the Lamb, and the great bulk of professed, but merely nominal Christians. Such, when stripped of its symbolical imagery, is the obvious meaning of the vision before us.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>b</sup> Since these Lectures began to be issued from the press, the public has been favoured with, what the learned author is pleased to call, "*A Key to the Revelation of St. John, the Divine, being an Analysis of those parts of that wonderful book, which relate to the general State of the Christian Church, through all the times since it was written, and to the peculiar signs of those Times.*" By the Rev. PHILIP ALLWOOD, B.D., Fellow of Magdalen College, Cambridge. 2 vols. 8vo. 1829. The work is highly creditable to the author's talents and character, as a scholar and a gentleman. It displays very considerable reading and research; but of his capability to execute the office he has undertaken, namely, that of furnishing the Christian Church with "*A Key to the Book of the Revelation,*" a single specimen, it may be presumed, will suffice to such as consider the Apocalypse to be a prophetic delineation of the history of the church, or kingdom of Christ in the world, from his ascension to his second coming. The following is this author's illustration of Rev. vii. 2, 3.

"The fifth angel, who is here endued with authority so superior to that of *the rest*, was evidently Constantine the Great. He is seen 'ascending,' or rising to the plenitude of his power 'from the east,' partly because he became sole monarch of the empire by his conquest over Licinius, who, after the defeat and death of Maximin in the year 313, had been sovereign of all its *eastern* provinces; and, partly, because in the year 330, and seven years after the death of Licinius, he formally transferred the seat of empire from Rome to Constantinople, which magnificent and beautiful city he had then completed for that express purpose.

"He is said to have had 'a seal of the living God,' that is, he encouraged by every means in his power, the propagation of Christianity throughout his extensive dominions, professing it himself, establishing it as the religion of the empire, and constituting himself the temporal head of the church. The particular initiation, requisite for the right profession of this sacred system, is *by the sacrament of baptism*, which is '*the seal of the covenant,*' between God and his church *now*, in the same manner as the *rite of circumcision*, was the '*seal of the covenant,*' between God and his peculiar people *in ancient times*. For the convenient solemnization of *this*, therefore, he took care that every



2. In what is here recorded concerning *the sealing of the servants of God*, there appears to be a manifest reference to Ezek. ix. 4-8, where we see, that when the Lord was about to inflict evil on the city of Jerusalem, for the abominations that were done in the midst thereof, he appointed an individual to go through

suitable accommodation should be afforded; and accordingly *baptismal fonts* were now erected in the *porch* of every church. And, besides these *places*, peculiarly set apart for the commodious administration of this initiatory sacrament, there were also particular *seasons* appointed for its celebration: these were during the vigils of Easter and Whitsuntide. Having thus contributed towards the *sealing* of multitudes of his subjects in all parts of the empire, with this 'seal of the living God,' he himself, before his death, was consoled with the same sacred *impress*.

"He is further represented, as giving a *solemn charge to the four angels*, which was, in some degree, at variance with the very purpose for which they had been created. It has been already observed that these [four angels] were the Praetorian Prefects of the *four* pagan emperors, as Dioclesian, Galerius, Maximian, and Chlorus," &c. &c. &c. pp. 229-231.

All this the learned author delivers with the utmost gravity and apparent seriousness, as the mystery, or hidden meaning of "the sealing of the servants of God," &c.; and I doubt not that he does it with the most perfect good faith, and fully convinced in his own mind that what he has said is true and relevant! Had such a statement, however, been found in the writings of any Baptist of the present day, he certainly would have been assailed with no little portion of raillery and ridicule! But the quotation gives a fair specimen of the leading principles on which Mr. Allwood's "Key to the Revelation," is constructed.

Before I put an end to this note, may I be permitted to add that,

Notwithstanding Constantine's profession of Christianity, and his patronage of the clergy of that religion, justice demands it to be known, that his reign was disgraced by acts of atrocity which render it but too apparent that his pretended conversion was nothing better than a political manœuvre. Among other things of this kind may be instanced, his conduct towards Licinius, who, after his resignation of the purple, having been received by Constantine with singular demonstrations of kindness, and sent by him into Thessaly, with an assurance that he should live unmolested so long as he created no new disturbance, was, nevertheless, soon after strangled by his order. Another blot upon his character was his unjust and cruel treatment of his own son Crispus; whom, contrary to all laws of justice and equity, in direct opposition to the usual clemency of his own nature, and without giving the prince an opportunity of clearing himself of an accusation which had been preferred against him, he ordered to be put to death. Of a similar description was the cruelty with which he conducted himself towards his nephew, the young Licinius, whom he caused to be slain in the twelfth year of his age. St. Jerome styles these executions the effect of an "unheard-of cruelty."

Now, although Mr. Allwood is constrained to admit this to be a fair representation of the character of Constantine the Great, he finds nothing in it to deter him from considering that monarch as an angel of God: nay, more; he can still regard him as vested with a divine commission, and as actually performing that which is the sole and exclusive work of the Holy, Eternal Spirit of God, Eph. i. 13; ch. iv. 30. There is something in all this so daring—one had almost said blasphemous,—that it can scarcely be contemplated without horror!

the city, and set a mark on the foreheads of those men who were found to sigh and cry for these abominations. The verse reads thus: "And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof." It was a temporal judgment which the Lord was about to bring upon the city, from which those that had received the mark in their forehead were preserved in the common calamity of the captivity, as would appear from Jer. xxxix. 18, and ch. xlv. 5. And the reference which is made to it, in this sealing of the servants of God, under the sixth seal, would seem to denote, that it was a type of the eternal destruction that came upon the professors of Christianity by the New Testament captivity, or Antichrist, concerning whom and his followers it is said, "They received not the love of the truth that they might be saved; God sent them strong delusions that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Here the servants of God are sealed, to distinguish them from those who received not the love of the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness; and to secure and preserve them from the condemnation that was coming upon the profession, or outward state of Christianity in the world. Agreeable to which, it is said of the elect, by the apostle Peter, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." And of such Paul says, "they are sealed unto the day of redemption." Such also are they who are here described as sealed: they are termed "the servants of God," in contradistinction from those whose consciences are subject to the doctrines and commandments of men, which give them ease in the service of their lusts, wherein they take pleasure.

3. Another remark, which I would offer in this place, regards *the number of the servants of God*, that are here said to be sealed; for we are not to suppose that this is without meaning. They are stated to be a hundred and forty-four thousand, which we see is here made to arise by multiplying twelve thousand by twelve, according to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel. As the Old Testament church sprang from the twelve patriarchs, so the new Jerusalem has twelve foundations of its wall, on which are written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, Rev. xxi. 14. Indeed, we find the number *twelve* much used in the description given us of the new Jerusalem, in this book of the Apocalypse, sometimes with, and at others without, the addition of thousands. Thus, for instance, it is said to have twelve gates, at which were twelve angels, with the names of the twelve tribes written on the gates. Its wall, as I have already remarked, had

twelve foundations. The tree of life bare twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit each of the twelve months. The measure of the whole city with the reed was twelve thousand furlongs. We find, likewise, the number a hundred and forty-four, which arises from twelve multiplied by twelve, mentioned in the description of the new Jerusalem, without the addition of thousands; as where it is said, he measured the wall thereof a hundred and forty-four cubits; and this is the wall that stood upon the twelve foundations, on which the names of the twelve apostles were written. The reason of the addition of thousands to the number twelve, and to that of a hundred and forty-four, in enumerating the followers of the Lamb, from the first rise of Antichrist to the period of his final destruction, seems to be for the purpose of denoting A GREAT MULTITUDE, a certain number being put for an uncertain one. But the number twelve is evidently insisted on, in the chapter before us, and also in ch. xxi., with a particular reference to the twelve patriarchs, of whom the twelve tribes of typical Israel, the Old Testament church, sprang; and to the twelve apostles of the Lamb, on whose doctrine the New Testament church is built. In fact, the number, a hundred and forty-four, appears to be insisted on for no other ostensible reason, but because it arises from twelve multiplied by itself; by all which we are taught, that the true church of Christ, in opposition to Antichrist's company, is wholly founded on the doctrine of the twelve apostles, and depends solely upon it. In a word, the inference that I would deduce from these miscellaneous observations is this: that, whatever it be in the profession of Christianity, and in the order and worship of the house of God, that cannot be measured by twelve, or, in other words, by the doctrine of the twelve apostles of the Lamb,—*that is not Christ, but Antichrist*. If, therefore, we would not be reckoned among the worshippers of the beast, let us cleave strictly to the New Testament, and to the plan of the church laid down by the twelve apostles of the Lamb, without the least addition to, or diminution from it; and let us reckon upon no profession of Christianity, in ourselves or others, that is not produced by the gospel itself, and the influence of the words of Christ and his apostles upon our minds. With these general observations, I dismiss this part of our subject for the present, foreseeing that we shall frequently have occasion to resume it, and dwell upon it in various ways, when we come to contrast Christ and Antichrist, the beast and the Lamb—the name of the beast, and the number of his name—the mark of the beast, and the number of his followers, all of which are contrasted in this book with the Lamb and his company. At present, let this suffice.

4. Another observation which I would make in this place respects the exact prophetic epoch, *the precise period of time*,

when this sealing of the servants of God may be viewed as commencing. This is a point, as we shall hereafter find, of no small numerical importance. Mr. Faber is of opinion, that its true date is the year 324, when Constantine, who had then become sole emperor of the Romans, publicly announced to the world, by a special edict, his own conversion to Christianity; and when he thus made the religion of the gospel the tempting and secularized religion of the court.<sup>c</sup> One thing certainly deserves attention on this point, namely, that it takes place under the opening of the sixth seal, or, at any rate, prior to the opening of the seventh; and that, as the general chronology of the prophecy fixes the sealing of these hundred and forty-four thousand servants of God to the times of Constantine, by making it immediately follow the last persecution of the pagan empire, so the determinate language of the prophecy ascribes it to a season of profound peace and tranquillity, which is another thing that merits your attention. Look at the fact: four angels, or ministers of God's purposes, stand on the four corners of the earth, holding for a season the four winds, and restraining their genial influences. These four angels, however, are the appointed agents, to whom it is given, in due time, to injure the earth and the sea, that is, the Roman empire, or countries subject to the arms of Constantine; and they are withheld from executing their task, only until the servants of God are sealed. A short period of tranquillity is allotted for this work; and it comprehends the much celebrated season of tranquil repose, on which Eusebius and Lactantius dwell with so much triumphant pleasure: a period of about seventy years under the reign of Constantine, and his three sons, who succeeded him in the government of the empire; during which time the church sustained no persecution from without, and the number of nominal Christians multiplied in vast abundance. But when the work of separation has been accomplished, and the line of demarcation drawn between the true and the false church—between Christ and Antichrist—the followers of the Lamb and the worshippers of the beast,—all restraint is then taken off from the four destroying angels, and they appear again, as you will find at the beginning of the next chapter, as the angels of the first four trumpets, under whose influence the Roman empire is devastated or broken up into ten distinct kingdoms, by the Gothic warriors of Germany, according to the prophecy of Dan. vii. 23, 24.

5. I have one remark more to trouble you with, brethren, on this subject, and I must request attention to it, as you will find it of considerable utility in enabling you to enter into the meaning

<sup>c</sup> Faber's Sacred Calendar of Prophecy, vol. ii. p. 334. Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. i. p. 321, &c. Gibbon's Decline and Fall, vol. iii. p. 252, &c.

of these prophecies: it is this. Here, you see, is a line of demarcation drawn, in the age of Constantine, between the true and the false church. The real servants of God are sealed in their foreheads to distinguish them—from whom? from all the rest of the world. From this time, the Christian profession is represented as consisting of two classes, viz. *sealed* and *unsealed* members, the former separated from the latter; and as the sealed are declared to be “the servants of God,” it follows by necessary implication that the unsealed are *not* the servants of God in reality, however they may profess to be so in outward appearance. But that which I would in an especial manner have you to notice, is, that this sealing, and consequent separation, is not to be considered as restricted to that one generation of professors, for it continues throughout the whole duration of Antichrist’s reign,—a period of twelve hundred and sixty years, as I shall hereafter have to shew you; for the time of the continuance of this awful apostacy is ascertained to us by prophetic figures, both by Daniel and the writer of the Apocalypse. If you look to the beginning of the eleventh chapter of Revelation, you will find this separation, which began in the days of Constantine, again noticed, in symbolical terms borrowed from the ancient Levitical dispensation. A reed is put into the hands of the prophet, and he is commanded to “rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.” But the outer court of the temple he was not to measure, for it is said to be given up to a race of Gentiles, or paganized apostates, who defiled the temple, and who were to tread under foot the holy city forty and two months, which, as I shall shew you in due time, is only another expression for one thousand two hundred and sixty years. Now, that it is one and the same succession of men that is intended by those who were *sealed* in the days of Constantine, and by those who were *measured* by the prophet as constituting the true temple of God, I hope to make appear when we arrive at the subject. At present I only observe, that the *measured* worshippers of God are allegorically placed in the temple, which was built upon mount Zion; and in this same mount Zion you find “the Lamb surrounded by a hundred and forty-four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads,” ch. xiv. 1: they are again mentioned in ver. 3, as consisting of the same number, and further described as those which were “redeemed from the earth”—“virgins which followed the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, redeemed from among men, first-fruits unto God and the Lamb,” ver. 4; and from the whole it is obvious, that these are the same who were first sealed in the peaceful age of Constantine, and so separated from their mere nominal professing brethren.

Now, the key to the present remarkable chain of prophecy,

commencing with the age of Constantine, and extending itself during a period of twelve hundred and sixty years, is to be found in the history of the Waldenses and Albigenses, who, while all the world wondered after the beast, made a noble stand for the truth of the gospel, and the simplicity of New Testament worship. Struck with the rapid growth of secularity and superstition which characterized the age of the first christian emperor, their forefathers deemed it their incumbent duty to withdraw from a communion which had ceased to exhibit the genuine spirit of the gospel, and become dissenters from the established church. Even at that early period, they could trace the lineaments of the man of sin in its infantine state; for it was a usual saying with them, that "pope Silvester was the son of perdition, mentioned by the apostle Paul;" and it was their avowed doctrine that, from the moment Christianity became the established religion of the Roman empire, the visible church ceased to be the faithful spouse of Christ. The consequence was, that they retired into the deep recesses of the mountains, and there continued to form societies on the model of the churches planted by the apostles. Here, secluded from the world, these sealed servants of the Lord maintained a scriptural profession of the faith once delivered to the saints, and regulated the order of their churches by the New Testament. Should it please God to permit us to continue this course of lectures to its termination, I shall presently have to introduce these churches to your notice, under the symbol of two chosen witnesses, prophesying, clothed in sackcloth, until "the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, makes war against them, and overcomes them, and kills them," ch. xi. 7. This, indeed, was a grand triumph to the beast and his supporters; they are described as "rejoicing and making merry, and congratulating one another, on having got rid of these two prophets, whose testimony had been a source of incessant torment to them," ver. 10. But these, brethren, are topics at which at present we can only glance; they will by-and-bye come before us in orderly succession, and we shall then go into an ample discussion of them. In the mean time, it is absolutely necessary, for the sake of order and regularity, that we keep things in their proper places, by pursuing the line of discussion marked out for us by the Spirit of prophecy.

To conclude the present lecture, and by way of improvement, permit me to impress seriously on all your minds, the importance of studying intently the great subject which has engaged our meditations on the present occasion—the *difference between Christ and Antichrist*; between the simplicity of New Testament worship, which God approves, and that system of will-worship which is not regulated by the doctrine of the apostles, and the approved

practices of the first Christian churches, but which has its foundation in the wisdom, or rather in the folly of men. The world in general think little or nothing of these things; nor is it reasonable to expect they should; their "fear of God is taught by the precepts of men." It is no part of their inquiry, "What is written—what hath God said—what rule hath he given us to walk by, that we may approve ourselves his dutiful children, by observing all things whatsoever he has commanded?" But his *real servants* are distinguished from such by their "trembling at the word of the Lord," Isa. lxvi. 2, and having their consciences bound by its authority. It was a making light of the example of the first churches, a departure by little and little from the instituted order of Christ's house, accommodating his religion to the depraved tastes and fancies of men, that paved the way for Antichrist, and opened the door for that monstrous system of corruption, against which you find the wrath of heaven pointed throughout the book of the Revelation. The bringing of the nations of this world under the Christian name, and into the communion of the Christian worship, without the influence of the gospel upon their hearts, which alone made men professors of Christianity at the beginning, took place in the days of Constantine, and laid the foundation for the antichristian apostacy. It is, indeed, true, that many superstitious practices had crept into the churches before the days of Constantine, against which Tertullian wrote, and Novatian and his brethren loudly protested; but when once the Roman heathen emperor was taken out of the way, the prevailing disposition towards superstition got vent, and the simplicity of gospel worship was no longer regarded. Now they began to pay religious veneration to the martyrs, and to honour their very bones and ashes; and now the Christian worship began to be adorned with worldly pomp and grandeur, a thing infinitely more seemly to men who were influenced in their profession by worldly motives, than by the true glory of that worship which they could not perceive. Thus matters proceeded by little and little till Antichrist came to his throne, and the ten kings, or kingdoms, into which the Roman empire was divided, gave their power to the beast; and as *his* kingdom grew, superstition and abominable idolatry grew with it. Jesus Christ no longer received from such worshippers the homage of the heart, love, gratitude, and dutiful obedience; but they found a succedaneum for these, and he was honoured in pretext with gold, and silver, and precious things, until, at length, all the abominable superstition and idolatry of the Gentiles came under the name of Christian worship; and thus the outer court of the Lord's house was trodden under foot of the Gentiles.

## LECTURE XX.

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AFTER this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. 13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto 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.—Rev. vii. 9-17.

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### SIXTH SEAL.—PART III.

In our last Lecture we had under consideration the sealing of the servants of God; a subject which naturally led us to take a prospective view of that awful apostacy from the faith and spirit of Christianity which was predicted by the prophet Daniel, still more clearly revealed by the apostle Paul, 2 Thess. ch. ii. and realized in the rise and reign of Antichrist, the man of sin, and son of perdition—the most subtle, the most dangerous, the most malignant and cruel adversary which the kingdom of Christ had yet had to encounter. It is, in fact, the mystery of all the ancient enemies of the people of God—Egypt, and Sodom, and Babylon, and Jerusalem—and the sink of all the abominations of the earth; a monster, which, under a corrupted profession of Christianity, availing itself of every species of deceit and violence, and supported by the kings of the earth, made war with the Lamb, and they that were with him “the called, and chosen, and faithful.” It was against the soul-destroying influence of this monstrous power, which was to prevail, and practise, and prosper twelve hundred and sixty years, that the real servants of God were secured by receiving the impress of his seal in their foreheads; and no sooner had the prophet seen this accomplished than a fresh scene is presented to his view.



“*I beheld,*” says he, “*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,*” &c. ver. 9. It may, I think, justly excite one’s surprise, that any person should, as Dr. Gill and others have done, apply this vision to the state of the church on earth during the period of the millenium, or thousand years’ reign of the saints. In my opinion, there is great beauty, propriety, and force to be perceived in it, when taken in its obvious and plain sense, as drawing aside the curtain, if we may so speak, and furnishing the church militant with a view of the state of things in heaven, inviting them to look within the veil, and listen to the universal, unanimous concurrence of the redeemed, and the innumerable company of angels, engaged in the worship of the heavenly sanctuary, adoring the perfections of the Deity, and ascribing worthiness to the Lamb that was slain. The reason of this transporting vision being here introduced appears to be, that the followers of the Lamb yet on earth, and who had to encounter the rage and malice of this new adversary, the man of sin, by a view of that eternal state of felicity on which their brethren who had suffered martyrdom under the persecution inflicted by pagan Rome had now entered, might be strengthened and encouraged to follow their example. As great numbers would be against them in this world, they are invited to take a view of the number of their friends in heaven—those who have gone before, who have passed through a sea of tribulation—having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and who, while they look back to their own deliverance and ascribe it all to God, are looking down upon their brethren on earth, and saying, “Hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering.”

It is not my intention, on the present occasion, to go over the verses which I first read, in the exact order in which they lie, and consider each apart—the whole evidently forms but one subject, and it is a most grand and interesting one. No reflecting mind can read the words without finding his attention arrested by a consideration of the place, the assembled multitude, the contrast between their past and present state, the employment in which they are engaged, their joy and triumph, and its permanent duration. Allow me to call your attention to a few remarks on each of these particulars.

I. *The place* or scene of this vision is evidently *heaven*. I am quite aware that I may be told, heaven is a *state* and *not a place*; but I do not subscribe to that doctrine: on the contrary, I regard it as a modern refinement, unauthorized by the current language of divine revelation. I consider heaven to be a place, and a happy place too—nor does it, in the least, militate against the

idea of its being a place, that a state of happiness is essential to its existence. If you ask me where its *local* habitation is, I reply, that wherever the glorified body of Jesus Christ is, there is heaven,—the dwelling-place of the Most High—the palace of the King eternal, immortal, and invisible. And what should hinder us from believing, that there is some portion of the universe specially set apart to be the residence of its adorable author, where he holds his royal court surrounded by myriads upon myriads of angels? What should hinder us from admitting, that there is, within the boundaries of creation, some glorious world, where the Son of God, still vested in our nature, now lives and reigns, officiating as the great High Priest of his church, receiving the homage of saints and angels in his glorified state, and where he will eventually assemble all the heirs of salvation—that innumerable company, the purchase of his blood—the “many sons whom he was to bring to glory.” It surely can be no just objection to our considering heaven to be a place, that it lies beyond the reach of mortal ken. If that were a well-founded objection, it would lead us to deny the existence of God himself; for certain it is, that “no man hath seen God at any time”—“He dwelleth in light which is inaccessible to mortals, and full of glory.” The truth is, that we must receive these things upon testimony: we read much about heaven in our bibles, and all that we there read concerning it leads us to conceive of it as a country having a local habitation, as well as a name; nor can I bring myself to believe, that the Scriptures would designedly lead us to wrong conclusions on this interesting subject. They tell us something of the glories of the place, and more than our limited capacities can fully comprehend: but still, the most glowing descriptions that language can convey, and the most exalted conceptions to which our imagination can reach, must fall infinitely short of the dazzling splendour which fills the courts of the living God. The world which we inhabit, though defiled by sin, and under the curse of God, has yet so much order, beauty, and magnificence in it, that we are often delighted and astonished as we contemplate its scenes. What, then, must be the glory of that world which has never “felt the polluting touch of sin; which was prepared, before the foundations of this earth were laid, to be the habitation of the redeemed; and adorned with a full display of Jehovah’s unclouded brightness?”

II. Turn your attention to *the assembled multitude*; “a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,” ver. 9. But here it may be asked, From whence could this countless multitude come? We read our Bibles, and there we find the people of God spoken of as *a little flock*; we look around us in the world, and there we see the multitude everywhere walking in the broad way that leadeth

to destruction. We hear the Redeemer himself, in the days of his personal ministry, complaining, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" or, in the language of the prophet on another occasion, "Then I said, I have laboured in vain: I have spent my strength for nought," Isa. xlix. 4. His kingdom has, hitherto, in every age appeared as a "bruised reed and smoking flax." How, then, should this innumerable multitude be brought to glory? From what unknown globe has sovereign grace collected them? These, I say, are natural enquiries, coming as they do from such shortsighted creatures as we are; but the same Scriptures do not leave us without sufficient hints to correct our hasty and mistaken judgment on this interesting subject. Millions of the human race are, we have reason to believe, every year snatched from a world of sin and sorrow, and conveyed in their infancy to the realms of light—for so the Saviour himself taught in the days of his public ministry, when, taking up a little child in his arms and blessing it, he said, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." His very mission into this sinful world was that he might "bring many sons unto glory;" in other words, that he might redeem an innumerable company of sinful mortals from impending misery and bring them to the happiness and glory of the heavenly state. Nor will he be disappointed of his aim in this respect—for, even now "he sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied." The gospel of the kingdom, like the leaven hid in the three measures of meal, is much more extensive in its effects than notorious in its appearances. For, not to speak of the many dispersed believers unknown to one another, whom God reserves to himself, like the seven thousand in the days of the prophet Elijah, it has been frequently noticed that persons, who, during a season of health and worldly enjoyment "neglect the great salvation," have, at last, found it to be the only cordial under the evils of life and the fear of death, when every other has lost its effect. Besides, that notable instance of mercy selected by Infinite Wisdom to be exhibited at the memorable hour when the ransom was paid for many, even the mercy shewn to the thief upon the cross, pointed at by the ancient prophets as characteristic of the mercy shewn to all the redeemed, and in the gospel history closely related along with the Saviour's death, with a view to be read together with it in all ages:—this, I say, would appear to intimate a large distribution of mercy to many in the last extremity—to many in the most wretched and desperate circumstances—to many whose hope of retrieving the errors of an ill-spent life, is, by every circumstance of their situation utterly cut off, and whose only resource is, therefore, the mercy of the Most High, revealed in Christ Jesus—thus verifying that notable saying, "Many who are last shall be first."

We know, too, that there is a glorious period in reserve for the church of Christ, when "the kingdoms of this world shall become our Lord's and his Christ," when the standard of the cross shall be erected in every land, and the Redeemer be known from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof—and the whole earth be filled with his glory. We need not fear, therefore, being solitary inhabitants of the mansions of bliss: God has not built so splendid a temple to be the only blank in his crowded creation. Though we and all around us should make light of that voice which invites us to enter in, still the marriage-supper of the Lamb will be abundantly furnished with guests. Let us,

III. Consider what is here said of this worshipping assembly, and contrast their present with their former condition. The view of this immense multitude, thus engaged, we may naturally suppose would excite in the prophet some emotions of joyful surprise, which was probably perceived by one of the elders, and drew from him the enquiry, in ver. 13, "*What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?*" John does not presume to say what he thought of them—whether they were men or angels: nor to offer any opinion whence they came: but modestly refers it to his instructor to inform him.

"And he said unto me, *These are they which came out of great tribulation; and they have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb—therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple,*" ver. 14. This naturally leads us to think of the former state and condition of these now happy beings.—*They were of earthly origin*: they were natives of an apostate world, and, not like the angels, born in celestial mansions. The powers of their nature were once far less exalted than those of their fellow-worshippers, mentioned in ver. 11, "the angels which stood round about the throne," and they were altogether incapable of engaging in many of their services. Their spirits had been united to a frail body, a body of humiliation, taken from the dust of the earth, and rapidly tending to dust again. They were of the fallen race of Adam, and consequently their condition was a *sinful* one. While on earth they had all been sharers of the common lot of humanity—not only exposed to weariness, hunger, pain, and anguish, but there was not one among them who had not been a transgressor from the womb; and into this alone can we resolve the afflicted state out of which they had lately come—for sin is the cause of all the calamities of human life, all the misery that man is heir unto in this mortal state, and even death itself. It is the recollection of what they once were—guilty, polluted, and defiled by sin, that now makes their gratitude so fervent, and their song so loud. It is this which draws from them so exalted a hymn of praise, that

the angels cannot reach its strains, and are compelled to wonder at its sweetness. But their former state was an *afflicted* as well as a sinful one. They came out of "great tribulation:" this had been the lot of them collectively; but many of them had come out of a state of peculiar distress and suffering. "They had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings: yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, were sawn asunder, were slain with a sword. They wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented." All of them were in some degree men of sorrow; they were as well acquainted with poverty and want, anxiety and care, as any of us now are; their houses of mourning were as frequent and gloomy, and their graves as dreary and cold. And it was the same with their spiritual troubles—

"They wrestled hard, as we do now,  
With sins, and doubts, and fears."

They felt, at times, the same painful and suspicious fears that we now feel; they were assaulted by the same temptations; stricken by the same arrows; and forced to struggle with the same enemies. Not a single sorrow, temporal or spiritual, can ever enter our hearts and assail us, which has not been a thousand times felt, in all its bitterness, by these rejoicing inhabitants of the heavenly world.—Such, then, was the original condition of these worshippers—it was an earthly, a sinful, and a suffering one. Let us now look at *their present condition*.

But here our knowledge fails us; we all know what it is to be sinful and afflicted creatures upon earth, but we do not know what it is to be holy and rejoicing beings before the throne of God and the Lamb in heaven. The figure under which this happy place is represented to us in this vision, is that of a temple crowded with worshippers, and resounding with praises. In this far distant world, we can neither see all the glories of the place, nor enter into the full meaning of its services. Some particulars, however, of the present condition of "the saints in light," are given us by the prophet, in this vision, and it may cheer our hearts, in this the house of our pilgrimage, to meditate a little upon them.

It is represented as a state of *peace* and *rest*; a state of exemption from sorrow, pain, and suffering. They are *come out* of their tribulation; they have passed through it, and left it all behind. Their wearisome pilgrimage is brought to an everlasting end. They have exchanged an earth of labour and misery, for a heaven of peace and rest. The billows of adversity which once filled their souls with fear, still swell and rage, but they are all rolling far beneath them, and can never again toss them with their waves.

We think ourselves privileged to be kept for a single day exempt from anxiety and sorrow; but many of these worshippers have not shed a single tear, nor heaved a sigh for ages—nor ever will again. It is for us, their successors in the race of faith and patience, to maintain the conflict with these things—they have done with them for ever.

Their state is also a state of *purity*. “*They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*” Without this, they never could have gained admittance into the heavenly temple, for nothing that defiles has ever entered there—

“Those holy gates for ever bar,  
Pollution, sin, and shame.”

The purification of these once polluted worshippers was strikingly typified under the law, by the laver of brass, which, by divine appointment, was placed first in the tabernacle, and afterwards in Solomon’s temple, for the use of Aaron and his sons, who were to minister before the Lord in holy things. You will find the account of it in Exod. xxx. 18-22, “Thou shalt make a laver of brass, and put water therein—for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat, when they go into the tabernacle of the congregation; they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar, to minister to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord; so they shall wash their hands and their feet that they die not.” All this was typical of the blood of Christ, which is “a fountain opened to the house of David, and inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness,” Zech. xiii. 1. The garments of these worshippers in the courts above, were once as mean and polluted as ours now are, and neither men nor angels could cleanse them. That blessing they obtained through faith in the blood of the Lamb. That blood was shed by covenant for the remission of the sins of many—it is blood of infinite value, for it is the “precious blood of Christ,” God’s own Son, a person of infinite dignity and worth; and guilty rebels obtain an interest in it, in no other way than by crediting the divine report concerning it. Believing in it, as the ransom price of man’s redemption, or that whereby the church was purchased, they were justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses, or any obedience of their own—and hence the apostle says to the Corinthians, who had received the gospel—“but ye are washed, (that is, from your sins in the blood of Christ)—ye are sanctified—ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God,” 1 Cor. vi. 11. Hence the song of the redeemed, “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father to him be

glory and dominion, for ever and ever, Amen." The blessing of justification, however, or the full, free, and everlasting remission of their sins, which they enjoyed through faith in Christ's blood, all-important as that blessing is, and certainly none of Adam's posterity without it can be happy for eternity—that was not the only privilege which these pardoned rebels partook of. While on earth, they had peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoiced in hope of the glory of God; but at death their happy spirits were received into everlasting habitations. The great Shepherd, who laid down his life for them, and redeemed them to God by his blood, conducted them safely through the valley of the shadow of death, and has collected them around his throne, that where he is, there they may be also—having suffered with him here, they are now made sharers of his bliss. And this leads us to think of—

IV. *The employment* in which the prophet beheld them engaged. "*They are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple,*" ver. 15. It is plain from these words that heaven, though a place of rest, is not a scene of inactivity. It is a temple, in the service of which, all the redeemed company are constantly and diligently employed, and that in sweet communion with the holy angels; for it is a delightful consideration, that Christ by his death hath not only broken down the middle wall of partition which formerly separated Jews and Gentiles, reconciling both unto God in one body by the cross, and thereby slaying the existing enmity between them; making in himself of the twain one new man, so making peace; but he has also reconciled things in heaven as well as things on earth, for he has brought the whole redeemed company into a state of perfect reconciliation and cordial harmony with the holy angels, so that we see them all uniting in the worship of the heavenly temple, as the servants of one common lord and master; from whose creating hand and infinite goodness their common blessedness springs.

"*And all the angels stood round about the throne, and the elders, and the four living creatures, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen; blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen,*" ver. 12. Much has been written and spoken concerning the nature of that worship which is offered to the Lord in heaven, the habitation of his holiness, and many speculations indulged as to how far, and in what respects it may be thought to differ in its nature from the worship of the church on earth. On this subject it is much easier to ask questions than to answer them; much easier to speculate than to prove. It is certain that the saints in glory may have faculties and powers communicated to them, of which we have

not, in our present state, the slightest conception ; and they may employ these powers in acts of worship with which we are altogether unacquainted ; nevertheless, so far as our limited understandings enable us to comprehend the descriptions given us of their services, we can perceive nothing in them of a nature essentially different from our own. There are, indeed, parts of our present worship, which may have no place in the worship of the heavenly sanctuary. Prayer seems to be principally designed for our present state of infirmity and want. It is true that we shall be dependent creatures even in heaven, and as much indebted to the Divine goodness for the blessings of every moment, as we are on earth ; but then we know that even here the rich bounty of our God can anticipate our wants ; and he can surely fill the hearts of his servants with happiness hereafter, without keeping them continually as suppliants at his footstool. Prayer is not the only means which he can employ to keep us mindful of our dependance and meanness. Those who are admitted to stand before his throne, and contemplate the majesty and greatness of him that sitteth thereon, are compelled to see that no flesh can glory in his presence, and that the station which becomes the highest of his creatures is the dust.

But though we admit the probability that the *nature* of the worship of the saints in light, and of those on earth who worship the Father in spirit and in truth, be substantially the same ; there is no doubt a wide difference in the *manner* in which this worship is offered in these two worlds ; a difference so great, that our most elevated acts of devotion here, I suspect, will bear but a faint resemblance to that of the heavenly courts. The same dispositions and affections may, in both places, be brought into exercise, but then these dispositions are freed in the one from all those counteracting feelings which are constantly felt in the other. Now to instance in a few particulars.

We learn from the words before us, that the worship of heaven is *constant* and *uninterrupted*. "They serve him day and night in his temple," ver. 15. We, in our present state are incapable of this continual worship. Our feeble bodies and jaded spirits require us to give several hours every night to sleep, and it is only a small part of the day, even of the Sabbath, that we can appropriate to the immediate service of God. It is not so with worshippers in the courts above ; they who worship there need no repose. There is no weariness to put a stop to the service, nor any cares and anxieties to distract and pollute it. If we, brethren, are ever through rich grace permitted to join that glorious assembly, all beyond the grave will be one never-ending Sabbath, and we shall always be in a worshipping frame, nor will there be any saying of that Sabbath, "What a weariness it is, when will it be over !"



Further, we may observe of the worship of the heavenly state, that it will be *pure, fervent, and delightful*. All who are engaged in it are holy, spiritual worshippers. Countless as their number is, there is not among them one mere formalist, one self-deceiver, one hypocritical professor. There is no coldness of feeling, no deadness of love, no languishing of affection, no languid devotion, no distress of soul; all is fervour and zeal, spirit and life. Is there not something very pleasing in the *union* that prevails among the worshippers in the heavenly temple? It is said, ver. 9, that "this innumerable multitude were of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues;" and yet they constitute but one body; they worship in the same temple, and are all engaged in the same work; the same spirit animates every worshipper, and the same song is heard from every mouth. I shall only further remark that,

The worship of the heavenly sanctuary is characterized by *humility*. In the midst of all their glory, the general assembly appear there in the character of creatures, and sinful creatures too. We see no presumption or pride in their worship, no unholy familiarity. The dignity to which they are raised, has not made them unmindful of the greatness of the Almighty, nor of that state of meanness and sin, from which he has rescued them. They "fall down before the throne," while worshipping him that sitteth thereon, and "cast down their crowns at his footstool." We hear nothing from them of their own patience and labours, their sufferings and martyrdoms; these things are all forgotten, and nothing seems to live in their remembrance, but their former misery and sin, and the grace that rescued them from impending destruction. They cry with a loud voice, "*Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb,*" ver. 10. Direct your attention, now for a moment, to

V. The *joy and triumph* of these heavenly worshippers. You find them described in ver. 9, as "*clothed in white robes,*" and as having "*palms in their hands.*" We have formerly seen, that *white* or shining *garments*, are emblematical of a state of purity, and also of dignity and honour;<sup>a</sup> but these had "*palms in their hands.*" Among the nations of antiquity, the palm-tree was an emblem of victory; and hence its branches were used for the purpose of adorning triumphal processions. The general, whose victories the triumph was designed to celebrate, carried a small branch of it in his hand, and was thus recognized as a conqueror. There is, indeed, an allusion to something of this kind in *Levit. xxiii. 40*, which may probably be referred to in what is said of these heavenly worshippers, and consequently should not be over-

<sup>a</sup> See Lecture xi., p. 129.

looked by us. The particular thing in view is "the feast of Tabernacles;" which you know was held annually among the Jews to commemorate the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, or what we call "harvest home." With them it lasted seven days, or rather eight, for it commenced with one Sabbath, and concluded with another; but thus ran the divine injunction respecting it: "Ye shall take you on the first day, the boughs of goodly trees, *branches of palm trees*, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days." That the "palms," which these heavenly worshippers held in their hands were emblems of joy and victory, I think cannot be doubted; they had been engaged in a warfare while on earth, and they had obtained a glorious victory; the days of their warfare were over; they overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of his testimony; and they now appear crowned as victors, clothed in white raiment, and palms in their hands. They are brought before the throne of God, into his immediate presence; they are admitted to the enjoyment of communion with him; and "*he that sitteth upon the throne dwells among them*," ver. 15. They have an intimate, enlarged, and continual intercourse with him, so that they are permitted to converse with Jehovah as a man talketh with his friend. He is the "portion of their souls," they are made heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus, of all the happiness which the fountain of felicity can communicate.

VI. Lastly, think for a moment of the *permanence* of their bliss. "*They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them and shall lead them to living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes*," ver. 16, 17. This indicates the rich provision that is made to supply all the wants of the redeemed company. The inhabitants of heaven are, in one sense, just as needy as all the dwellers upon earth. The highest archangel that treads its courts, is as dependent upon the Almighty as the meanest insect that crawls our earth. All created beings are, in this respect on an equality. They who are before the throne of God are indeed said "to hunger no more, neither thirst any more;" but then it is plain from the following verse, that they are possessed of immortal spirits, which have powers, and capacities, and desires that require to be gratified; why otherwise does the Lamb *feed them*, and lead them to *living fountains of water*? They are indeed strangers to that hunger which arises from want, and which implies some uneasy or painful sensation, but they are not strangers to that hungering and thirsting after God, which arises from love to him, and delight

in him, and that implies the most earnest desire for the enjoyment of his life-giving favour.

Their happiness consists in having all their spiritual desires kept in continual exercise, and in having them fully gratified. They still thirst after the water of life, and it is supplied to them out of those rivers of pleasure which are at God's right hand. They still hunger for spiritual food, and their table is spread with provisions gathered "from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." The happiness which results from this provision made for their souls, is uninterrupted and unmixed: nothing can enter their habitation to disturb or mar it. "*The sun shall not light upon them, nor any heat;*" and "*God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*" They shall have an eternity of joy, without one moment of sorrow; an immortality of bliss without one moment's pain. And to crown the whole, their state of bliss shall know no end: they are not supplied out of a cistern which may be broken or exhausted, but from a fountain which can never fail. "*The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water.*" Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. Millions of years shall roll away, but they will be still resting from their labours; still growing in blessedness and glory.

In concluding the present lecture, allow me to offer one or two remarks by way of practical inference. There is one reflection which must immediately force itself upon our notice, and it is this: that "no man can be happy in heaven, who has not first learned to delight in the worship of God in his earthly courts." From the whole of this apocalyptic vision, it plainly appears, that the happiness of the saints in light consists very much in this worship, and in the spiritual privilege connected with it. If, then, we have no relish for these things; if the service of God be a wearisomeness to us, and the blessedness resulting from it, without power to delight us; from what unknown source do we expect to derive that fulness of joy which we hope for in heaven? Of what river of pleasure do we expect to drink? There are no sensual delights to be found within its courts. The heaven of the Bible is not a Mahommedan paradise: it is a Christian temple, and all the joys it has to communicate must be found in its pure and spiritual services; in holding communion with God, and the enjoyment of his favour.

We may infer, also, from the employment and privileges of the worshippers in the heavenly sanctuary, the great importance and blessedness connected with the worship of God here on earth. This worship is not merely a duty which the Christian is commanded to perform; it is a privilege which it is permitted him to enjoy. The saints of old evidently viewed the subject in this

light; how else can you account for such language as the following, which we find upon record: "My soul thirsteth for God; for the living God; when shall I come and appear before him?" Ps. xlii. 2. "I will go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy," Ps. xliii. 4. "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary," Ps. lxiii. 1, 2. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God—a day in thy courts is better than a thousand; I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness," Ps. lxxxiv. 1, 10. "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 the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple," Ps. xxvii. 4. This was the experience of the saints of old, under a much darker dispensation than that with which we are privileged. Let each one now present examine himself by this standard, and see how far his Christian profession corresponds with the authorized standard of divine revelation.

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"WHAT happy men, or angels these,  
 "That all their robes are spotless white;  
 "Whence did this glorious troop arrive  
 "At the pure realms of heavenly light!"

From torturing racks, and burning fires,  
 And seas of their own blood they came:  
 But nobler blood has wash'd their robes,  
 Flowing from Christ, the dying Lamb.

Now they approach th' Almighty's throne  
 With loud hosannahs, night and day!  
 Sweet anthems to the great Three-One,  
 Measure their bless'd eternity.

No more shall hunger pain their souls;  
 He bids their parching thirst begone,  
 And spreads the shadow of his wings,  
 To screen them from the scorching sun.

The Lamb that sits amidst the throne,  
 Shall shed around his heavenly beams;  
 There shall they feast on his rich love,  
 And drink full joys from living streams.

Thus shall their mighty bliss renew,  
 Through the vast round of endless years;  
 And the kind hand of sovereign grace  
 Heals all their wounds, and wipes their tears.

## LECTURE XXI.

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AND when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. 3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. 5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. 6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound. Rev. viii. 1-6.

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### SEVENTH SEAL.

IN prosecuting this course of lectures on the Apocalypse, we are now brought, in the regular order of events, to notice the opening of the seventh seal, which is not only the last, but on many accounts the most considerable among them, including as it does the entire period of the trumpets and vials, and for the unloosing of which, the six preceding seals paved the way. It is introduced in a very unusual and striking manner. Upon the opening of each of the former seals, a significant action had *immediately* commenced. Under the first four of them, voices issuing from those who surrounded the throne of God and the Lamb, were heard, inviting the prophet to "come and see." With the fifth seal, the voices of the martyrs were heard to issue from under the altar, earnestly enquiring "how long," it would yet be, ere God should avenge their blood on those that dwell on the earth? The opening of the sixth seal had been instantly followed by a representation of action the most tremendous, accompanied and explained by voices the most expressive and affecting that language could utter. But upon the opening of this seventh and last seal, no voice is heard; no representation immediately ensues. An awful silence suspends the gratification of curiosity; and, after a solemn pause, preparation is made for a new kind of exhibition; the seven angels come forth.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> We have something not very unlike this expressive silence, in Ps. lxxv. 1. "Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion," or as the marginal reading has it,

“*And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour; and I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets,*” ver. 1, 2. I believe it is usual with commentators to explain the “silence in heaven,” here spoken of, as having an allusion to a custom which is said to have prevailed among the Jews in the temple worship, that of joining their *silent* prayers to the offering of the incense. But there is this objection to their interpretation, that, in the present instance, the silence takes place, not during, but *before* the time of incense; before the angel takes his station at the altar, ver. 3. And there is an intervening action between the silence and the offering of incense, namely, the procession of the seven angels, each of whom is presented with his trumpet. This silence, therefore, seems to have been exhibited for another purpose than that which is here supposed. To ascertain something of its import, we must look at the time when it takes place. It comes after the persecuted state of the church from the heathenish power of the Roman empire; which had just passed away by the sixth seal; and it comes like a calm after a storm. It appears to indicate that a short space of time would intervene between the downfall of Paganism, and the sounding of the seven trumpets. It also serves to disunite the succeeding scene from that which had gone before; and so it is preparatory to a new chain of prophecy. The connexion which had hitherto united the seals is broken, the seventh stands apart, as it were; and then produces a new method of representation, and a new series of events, to which the silence in heaven and the offering of incense are preparatory.

But here an enquiry will naturally suggest itself to a reflecting mind: “What event, what state of things on earth, can we point to as corresponding with this half-hour’s silence?” In reply to this, I would observe, that silence here seems expressively to denote a forbearing of action; a solemn pause in the bustle of human affairs; and some explain it of the liberty of conscience that was allowed by Constantine throughout the empire, and the short interval of rest which the church enjoyed after the end of the heathenish persecution, and before professed Christians began

“*praise is silent for thee,*” that is, in silent expectation. For understanding which we must conceive, that the Old Testament church professes to be waiting for the first coming of the Messiah, the consolation of Israel, Luke ii. 25, 38, and the desire of all nations, Hag. ii. 7; an event which should fill their hearts with gratitude and joy, and their tongues with praise. This praise is beautifully represented as *waiting* for him *in silence*, and ready to burst forth on his approach; all their instruments are, as it were, prepared, and they are just waiting to strike up their songs of joy, and sound his praise on every string, as soon as he should appear.

to tyrannize over one another. After a period of about three hundred years almost incessant persecution—which is the space of time occupied by the first six seals—the church certainly enjoyed a season of rest ; forfeitures, fines, imprisonments, and all the various modes of persecution were laid aside ; and this outward tranquillity, together with the withholding of the Spirit's influences, as mentioned in a former lecture, served to prepare the christian ministers and their flocks for what followed. But, further,

As the opening of the seventh seal was to disclose the ruinous effects that should be produced by the tempest of the four winds, ch. vii. 1, the silence here mentioned may be in allusion to the sullen and portentous calm which usually precedes the bursting of a storm ; or, perhaps to the mute anxiety of a multitude of people, when they are waiting the disclosure of deeply-interesting and affecting scenes. The leading events in providence, from the period of the downfall of Paganism in the empire, to the final consummation of all things, were now to be disclosed ; events of the most portentous kind, as affecting the church of Christ, were to be revealed : and the inhabitants of heaven are symbolically represented as waiting in a state of silent and anxious expectation, till the full disclosure should be made. So long as the four angels continued to hold the winds, all the inhabitants of heaven continue to look on in a state of silent expectation ; they seem to apprehend that the storm was ready to burst forth, and in fearful expectation, as it were, of seeing the barriers every moment give way, there was not so much as a single whisper among them. During this expressive silence, the prophet beholds *seven angels* standing before Jehovah's throne, and to them were delivered *seven trumpets*.

Trumpets, we all know, were in use among the Israelites for various purposes, of which we have a particular account, Numb. x. They were used for the assembling of the people, ver. 2, 3 ; sometimes for summoning the princes or heads of tribes in distinction from the people in general, ver. 4 ; sometimes, to express joy and exultation on solemn festivals, ver. 10 ; at others, they were a signal when the camp was to move, or the host to go forth to battle, ver. 5 ; on this last mentioned occasion, the trumpets were to sound *an alarm*, after a manner not used on other occasions. They were used to denote the invasion of their country by an enemy ; and hence the prophet Amos says, " Shall the trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid ?" Amos iii. 6. And of this latter kind we may account the seven trumpets delivered to these seven angels. They are not the trumpets of the new moons and feast days ; there is no joy and festivity in them ; they are not for the quiet and peaceful calling of the assembly ; they are *trumpets of woe*, and sound an alarm of war,

as may be seen from ver. 13. The object of the whole seven is one and the same, and that is to announce to the church of Christ, the invasions of its enemies; and hence they are so many signals of the approach of its antichristian foes; a succession of extraordinary occurrences taking place on the earth, all tending to one point, and the whole issuing eventually in placing Antichrist, the Man of Sin, upon his throne, as will be seen when we come to consider the sounding of them in successive detail. The seven angels, then, are so many ministers of God's providence; they stand in the Divine presence; in a state of readiness to be employed on any branch of service that he may see meet to require of them. While they are in this attentive attitude, each with his trumpet in his hand, and waiting the divine command, it is said,

*“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 the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne,”* ver. 3. I cannot think there is any reasonable ground for doubting that the angel spoken of in this third verse is the Son of God, the uncreated angel of the Covenant, the apostle and high priest of our profession, though the fact is controverted by some able writers. For, who but the one intercessor of the christian church, could offer the prayers of all the saints, with much incense, upon the golden altar before the throne? He alone knows the groans of the hearts of his people, and their secret desires; and he alone can present them with acceptance before the mercy seat. He is here represented in his priestly character, discharging that branch of his office which relates to the work of intercession. The hieroglyphical figures are selected from the typical representations of it under the law, and are fitted to impress our minds, both with the truth of his priestly office, and the acceptable manner in which it is discharged.

There were two altars belonging to the temple-worship; one for sacrifice, called the altar of burnt-offering; and the other for the purpose of burning incense, called “the golden altar before the throne.” You have this subject explained in Exod. ch. xxix. and xxx. The censer was a vessel in which live coals were put for burning incense, and its use on the day of the yearly atonement is thus described: “And he,” the high priest, “shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil: and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not,” Lev. xvi. 12, 13. When the prophet first noticed this ministering angel, he was



standing beside the altar of burnt-offering, where the officiating high-priest was to take his first station, because the fire that was to consume the incense was to be taken off the altar of burnt-offering, on which the sacrifice was consumed. In fact, such was the connection between the altar of burnt-offering, and the altar of incense, that the rites of the latter never could be administered with acceptance, unless the incense was kindled by the sacred flame of the former. The mystical design of all this was to illustrate to us the connection that subsists between the sacrifice of Christ and his intercession. The Redeemer's intercession is founded upon his sacrifice; and it is upon this ground that the Father hears him always. The prayers of all the saints find acceptance and an answer only through his intercession; and here they are answered by terrible things in righteousness. The much incense which he offers along with the prayers of his people, and which is represented as covering the ark and mercy-seat, is nothing but his own intercession. This gives a continual sweet savour unto God from his oblation, and renders acceptable all the worship of the church, in their approaches unto him. All the Old Testament saints prayed for the first coming of Christ; the accomplishment of the promises which God had made unto the fathers by the prophets; and these things were answered by terrible things in righteousness upon the Jewish nation, Ps. lxxv. 5. In like manner the prayers of all the New Testament saints have a special relation to the interests of his kingdom, that he will grant success to his own most righteous and holy cause in the world, and maintain it against the rage and malice of its adversaries. And so the design of this appearance of the church's high priest is to give the saints an assurance, that whatever judgments afflict the earth as the consequence of opening this seventh seal, and the sounding of the seven trumpets; yet there was nothing in it but the answer of their united prayers, and that all should issue in a glorious result at the last. Pagan Rome was overthrown in answer to the prayers of the souls under the altar, and Papal Rome should fall in like manner.

*“And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand,”* ver. 4. To come up before God, is a figurative expression, denoting the acceptance of that which is presented. Thus, it is said of Cornelius, the centurion, “Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God,” Acts x. 4, which is afterwards explained, ver. 31, of his prayers being heard, and his alms being had in remembrance in the sight of God. It may justly excite one's surprise, that any professed christian should be found denying the doctrine of Christ's intercession in behalf of his people; yet such we have certainly known. The ground on

which they oppose it is that they consider it as militating against the perfection of his sacrifice, or oblation; for, say they, if his sacrifice be perfect—if it have satisfied all the demands of law and justice in the behalf of his redeemed people, and if Jehovah remains eternally well-pleased in his one offering, whereby he is said to have perfected for ever them that are sanctified—whence can arise the necessity of his continual intercession? One would naturally expect that it would be quite sufficient to answer this objection, to quote the words of the apostle Paul, Heb. vii. 25, “Wherefore he is able to save to the very uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to *make intercession for them.*” His intercession in heaven, certainly, presupposes his death on earth as a sacrifice for sin—his resurrection from the dead, and his entering as High Priest into the heavenly sanctuary—into the immediate presence of God, and there presenting it to him as an atonement, Heb. ix. 12-24. All this was typified by the peculiar service of the high priest under the law, on the day of the yearly atonement, when he entered within the veil with the blood of the slain animals, and there presented it, and sprinkled it on and before the mercy-seat, Lev. xvi. with Heb. ix. 7. Jesus, the great high priest of the christian church, has, at once, effectually and for ever satisfied divine justice by making a complete atonement for sin, so that there remains no necessity for repeating his offering; but then his priestly service did not end here. He is constituted a priest for ever, to manage all the concerns of his people in the way of intercession on their behalf; which intercession is founded on the merit or worth of that one offering by which he obtained eternal redemption for us; and it has for its object the actual application of the benefits of that redemption to all for whom he died. Though his intercession is not that which satisfies the justice of God, it is, nevertheless, a real, eminent, and continual declaration, that satisfaction is already made, for it is a pleading on that ground. Next to his sacrifice itself, what could give a more striking impression of Jehovah’s hatred of sin, than such a holy constitution, that none of the blessings of God’s covenant are bestowed on sinners, but through the actual and continued interposition of Him who made atonement for their sins? His continual intercession, in connection with his oblation on which it is founded, is the support of the soul against the fears of former guilt, or the imperfection of present duties; it is the ground and medium of the believer’s access to God—his encouragement to draw near unto the Father of our spirits with full assurance of faith, and in joyful hope of being heard and accepted. In looking up to the throne of God, to view it as a throne of grace, a mercy seat, where we have such a great, a merciful, a compassionate high-priest, ever-living, and continually ministering

for us in the heavenly sanctuary, and where his efficacious blood is constantly speaking and pleading for the communication of all the blessings which he hath procured for sinners: what an encouragement does this afford in our approaches to God, and what an enlivening influence must the faith of it have upon our whole worship! In short, the continued intercession of Christ is wisely adapted to the continual need which his people have of pardoning mercy and grace to help, and so for maintaining a friendly intercourse between heaven and earth throughout every age of the church, during its militant state in this world. By his entering heaven with the blood of his own sacrifice, and by his continual intercession on that ground for his people, Christ has opened heaven to their prayers and their worship in this present life, and to their persons in the life to come. Let us, then, stand firm in the belief of his intercession.

“*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 thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake,*” ver. 5. A question has been raised upon this verse, namely, What was it that the angel cast into the earth? Our translators have inserted the pronoun *it*: cast *it* to the earth—from which it would seem natural to infer, that they understood, and intended we should understand, the censer. This construction, however, is not warranted by the original. But if the censer were not cast into or upon the earth, the fire with which it was filled must have been. You see he had offered the incense upon the golden altar, according to ver. 3, and no sooner had he done so, than a cloud instantaneously issues, as it were, from his hand, which is very significantly expressed in ver. 4, “*And the smoke of the incense, which came with, or accompanied the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.*” Thus, having presented to the Eternal Majesty the supplications of his praying people on earth, perfumed with the incense of his own merits, which alone could gain them acceptance; he again fills the censer with fire taken from off the altar, and casts the fire to the earth—an expressive symbolical action denoting that terrible judgments were about to be inflicted on the Roman empire; here, as in general, throughout the book of the Apocalypse, termed “the earth.” Fire cast into the earth by an angel, must necessarily kindle a conflagration—a striking and significant intimation, in the present instance, of the dreadful events that were about to commence, as soon as the first angel should sound his trumpet. And no sooner is this fire cast into, or upon the earth, than lo! “*there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake.*” ver. 5.

The mention of these things naturally reminds us of the appearance on Mount Sinai, when “the Lord descended upon it

in fire, amid thunders, and lightnings, and a thick cloud, and the voice of the trumpet, waxing louder and louder, so that the whole mount quaked greatly, and all the people in the camp of Israel trembled," Exod. xix. 16-18. Figure to yourselves, the seven angels, in this vision, each with his trumpet in his hand, all prepared to sound at the divine intimation, and then call to mind the words of the Psalmist. Ps. lxxviii. 17. "The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy mount," and you will see a great similitude in the two cases. We heard of an "earthquake" before under the sixth seal, which seemed to denote that great change in the state of affairs that took place when Paganism fell, and the heathenish power of the Roman empire passed away, or ceased to exist. An *earthquake*, you will recollect, is the usual symbol of a revolution, or such an overturning in the state of affairs as should introduce a new order of things. Here, we find another earthquake takes place at the opening of this seventh seal, and by the blowing of the first of the seven trumpets. As the former earthquake denoted the mighty change which took place at the downfall of Paganism, so this second earthquake portends a notable change on the face of the Christian profession, and of the Roman empire too, when that empire got on the form of christianity, instead of its pagan dress. "And woe to the inhabitants of the western Roman empire," says a late writer, "whenever the third angel shall put the trumpet to his mouth; farewell to the glory of proud and luxurious Rome, and to the people that dwelt at ease in her palaces and towers!" But these terrible things in righteousness wherewith the Lord answered the prayers of his church, form the burden of the first four trumpets—on which we must not attempt to enter in the present stage of this lecture. We are brought to the crisis when

*"The seven angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound,"* ver. 6; which we may consider as terminating the period of the seals, and introducing that of the trumpets. And here let us pause a moment. In pursuing his journey through a varied and extensive country, the traveller arrives occasionally, at certain turns, or elevations of the road, where he involuntarily pauses to look back on the scenes he has left, or forward on those he is about to traverse. Similar inducements to suspend our steps, and take a view of our past experience and present prospects, occur in the journey of human life. Thus, let us here pause for the present, and review the period that we have passed over, in this course of lectures;—let us recapitulate some of the principal things that have come under our consideration, and examine the ground on which we now stand, taking, at the same time, a prospective glance of the remainder of our journey, or the subjects on a consideration of which we are about to enter.

I begin by reminding you, in the first place, that the period of time occupied by the opening of the seven seals is but of short duration, when compared with that of the seven trumpets. The opening of the first seal, as you may recollect, commenced with the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world, by the preaching of his apostles on the day of Pentecost; and the sounding of the first trumpet may be considered as taking place about the year 395, when the short space of silence, which took place in heaven, may be said to have ended. According to this computation, you perceive that the entire period of the seals occupies only the first four centuries, and scarcely that. But the period of the seven trumpets, which arises out of the seventh seal, extends to the length of 1260 years, for that is uniformly spoken of as the duration of Antichrist's reign. And, be it further observed, that, as the seven trumpets arise out of the opening or unloosing of the seventh seal, so, when the last of the seven trumpets is sounded, seven angels receive seven vials, to be poured out in succession, which are termed "seven golden vials full of the wrath of God," ch. xv. 1, 6.—"these are the seven last plagues," and when we come to consider the subject in its regular order, you will find a remarkable correspondence between the trumpets and the vials: for, as the former are so many steps lifting Antichrist to his throne, so the latter are so many plagues inflicted on him, by means of which his consumption and total destruction eventually take place.

Let us next take a review of the state of the christian church during the period of the opening of the seven seals. The *first seal* presented us with a view of the triumphs of the Redeemer, by means of the preaching of the doctrine of the cross. Then, indeed, did Christianity "look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners," Cant. vi. 10. Grand in the purity and sublimity of its doctrines—in its precepts, its promises, and in its motives; it commended itself to the consciences of men as of heavenly origin, as a "kingdom not of this world," as being not of a secular nature, either to be propagated or defended by an arm of flesh, or to have its laws enforced by human sanctions, or any such temporal punishments as merely human authority could inflict. Visiting the earth in the quality of a stranger from above, who had come for the benefit of men, and having no other errand than to distribute the bounty of heaven among the indigent, all the favour she solicited from the governments of this world was that of mere toleration, or simple protection to her friends. The weapons of her warfare, it is true, were mighty, but then, they were not of a carnal nature; she disdained the power of the sword, or the aid of the civil magistrate—they were mighty *through God*, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down lofty reasonings, and every high thought

that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Yet, moderate, and even reasonable as her claims were, and benevolent as was her object in visiting the earth, we rarely find them conceded in any age or country during the period of the seals: on the contrary, we see her friends everywhere the subject of persecution. In this respect, their lot pretty much resembled that of its divine Founder.

The opening of the *second seal* led us to contemplate the enemies of Christianity, the unbelieving Jews and the idolatrous Pagans—though both alike hostile to her, and equally desirous of extirpating her from the earth, yet animated with the most deadly hatred to each other, and instigated by the Prince of darkness, the god of this world, to murder one another. This is a subject too painful to dwell upon; and I dismiss it to remind you of the opening of

The *third seal*, which presented us with another view of the opposition that was raised against this celestial visitant—not by destroying the lives of its friends, but by corrupting the doctrine of the gospel from its simplicity, imposing the yoke of human traditions on the necks of the disciples, and so estranging them in heart and affection from that one husband to whom the church was espoused. It was under this seal that the mystery of iniquity began, more especially to work, and pave the way for the coming of Antichrist.

The *fourth seal* grew naturally out of the state of things which was introduced by the third—a state of spiritual death, accompanied by a prevailing apostacy from the christian profession ensued, occasioned by the severe persecutions which Christians were called to undergo from the intolerant heathen magistrates.

At the opening of the *fifth seal*, the voice of the martyrs issues from under the altar, enquiring how long it would yet be ere “the Lord, holy and true, should rise up in defence of his persecuted cause, and avenge their blood on those that dwell upon the earth; in answer to which they are given to understand, that the iniquity of *pagan Rome* was not yet full—another persecution was about to come upon the church from the same quarter; they must, therefore, wait for a short space of time, “until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that were to be killed as they had been, should be fulfilled,” and then, their prayer should be answered. This accordingly takes place under

The *sixth seal*, when the persecuting pagan government is overthrown in the empire, and Constantine, the first of the christian emperors, succeeds to the head of affairs. And thus did the system of Paganism, or the heathen world, come to an end in the Roman empire; an event which is represented to us in

language evidently typical of the end of all things—the dissolution of universal nature; “the kings of the earth, and the potentates, and the grandees, and chief captains, and mighty men, hiding themselves in the dens and rocks of the mountains, and invoking the latter to fall upon them, and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?” Rev. vi. 12-17.

These are the subjects which have come under our consideration in the preceding part of this course of lectures, and the whole is introductory to the period of the trumpets, on which we are about to enter, if the Lord permit. At present, I only add, that all the subjects that have hitherto engaged our attention, will be found to centre in one point, namely, the kingdom of Christ: that kingdom which the God of heaven was to set up, according to Daniel, a kingdom which should never be moved—which should break in pieces all the kingdoms of the earth, and stand for ever. The seat of this kingdom, the throne of its monarch is in heaven. There Jesus has taken his seat at the right hand of the majesty on high. All the power of this kingdom is vested in *his* hands, and exercised by himself. He sends the rod of his strength out of Zion, and makes a willing people in the day of his power. When he left the world, and issued his commission to his servants to set up his kingdom on earth, he encouraged them by a promise that he would “be with them alway, even unto the end of the world.” And opposed as his cause and kingdom were, during the period of the opening of the seven seals, may I not appeal to every one of you, what power short of Omnipotence itself, could have supported it against the rage and malice of its adversaries? But we have seen him make good his ancient promise to his church. “No weapon formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn: this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.” As to the appearance of this kingdom in the world, whether we consider it in reference to the conflict it has to sustain from external persecution or from internal corruption, to both of which it is exposed, Christ is said to rule in the midst of his enemies, and he will continue to do so, till all his people, in conformity to him, who was made perfect through sufferings, are rendered meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

## LECTURE XXII.

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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 were burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.—Rev. viii. 7.

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### THE FIRST TRUMPET.

OUR last lecture terminated with an account of the seven angels, who had received the seven trumpets, preparing themselves to sound; and the verse now read presents to our notice the consequences produced upon the earth by the blowing of the first trumpet. Before we proceed, however, to consider the import of it, I must detain you while I offer a few preliminary remarks, which I trust will be found of use in enabling us to explore our way through a subject, which I dare say you will all acknowledge to be of considerable difficulty. The prophetic history of the first four trumpets is remarkably concise; you perceive that it is dispatched in a few verses, and those contain but few images, which renders it the more difficult for us to ascertain with certainty the information intended to be communicated to the church by them. You will have observed, that these first four trumpets stand conspicuously distinguished from the fifth, sixth, and seventh; like the first four vials, they appear to have a general character; they are much akin in their style and arrangement; while the last three are evidently associated together in a single class, as introducing three eminent woes, ver. 13. Having premised these few hints, allow me now to submit an extract from a late able writer on the Apocalypse, from which you will at once be convinced of the necessity of our proceeding with caution in the interpretation of these four trumpets.

“Commentators,” says he, “are almost universally agreed, that the four first trumpets relate to the downfall of the Roman power in the West; and I think them perfectly right in their *general* opinion relative to the first, and second, and third, though I conceive them to have erred in their application of the fourth. Yet, while all are agreed that the downfall of the Roman power in the West, is at least the most prominent subject of the prophecy, it is remarkable, that scarcely any two expositors concur as to the division of that subject among the several trumpets which are to



relate to it. The *general* result brought out is, indeed, the subversion of the western empire; but the *particular* steps whereby this result is arrived at, are as multifarious and discordant, as can well be imagined. So curious a circumstance, the opprobrium, as it may well be deemed, of the Apocalyptic interpretation, may naturally lead us to suspect, either that the true key to the proper *distinct* application of the four first trumpets has never yet been found, or if found, that it has never yet been satisfactorily used.”<sup>a</sup>

Nothing can be more true; nothing more pertinent and just, than many of these remarks, and I could not express my own mind upon the subject in more appropriate terms than is done in the latter part of this quotation. I will confess that while examining the different authors who have written upon these first four trumpets, and comparing them one with another, I found myself not a little perplexed, and had almost made up my mind to follow the example of Mr. Fuller, namely, to class the four first trumpets under one common head; resolve the whole into one subject, and dismiss it in one single lecture. And yet to this mode of proceeding with a subject, which I was confident was one of high import, and that merited a different treatment at the hands of a lecturer, I felt a strong repugnance—I was dissatisfied with myself—I paused, pondered, and prayed over it. In this state of perplexity and hesitation as to what I should do with it, the thought occurred to me, “May not the main difficulty here arise from the circumstance, that all these learned men are in one common error as respects the application or interpretation of these first four trumpets? It is very manifest that they all concur in resolving them into the subversion of the western Roman empire, and the destruction of the Imperial form of government, which was occasioned by the irruption of the Goths and Vandals. Now, although the fact is unquestionable, that this event did take place about that time, and the empire became divided, or partitioned into ten distinct kingdoms, agreeable to Daniel’s prophecy, ch. vii. 23, 24; yet, is it not manifestly unreasonable to suppose, that this one event should be the subject of four distinct trumpets? Is such an hypothesis sanctioned by the wise, and beautiful, and orderly arrangement of the Apocalypse? I merely mention these things as my apology for presuming to dissent from the commonly received interpretation of these first four trumpets, and proposing for your consideration a different view of the subject, to which we shall now proceed.

If you take the trouble to look back to the beginning of ch. vii. you will find four angels are represented as standing on

<sup>a</sup> Faber’s Sacred Calendar of Prophecy, vol. ii., b. iv., ch. 6.

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 ; and in ver. 3, they are commanded “ not to injure the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, until the servants of God were sealed in their foreheads.” That sealing had taken place ; after which the prophet was favoured with a vision of the saints and martyrs in the heavenly state ; and now those same four angels (the restraint being taken off,) appear again sounding the first four trumpets, inflicting that injury upon the earth, against which the true servants of God were secured by being sealed. If you ask me how it is proved that these four trumpet-bearing angels are proved to be the same who were stationed at the four corners of the earth holding the four winds of the earth, ch. vii. 1, I answer, that it is proved by the identity of the task assigned to each. For instance, if you carefully note what is said to follow on the sounding of these first four trumpets, you will find that the evils inflicted as a consequence fall upon the earth, ver. 7, and the sea, ver. 8, and the trees, ver. 7, but the office of the four angels, ch. vii. 1, 3, was the very same, though they were restrained from carrying it into effect for a time. The sounding of the first trumpet, therefore, brings forth that evil which comes to its height by the sounding of the fifth angel, as mentioned in ch. ix. 4, and the account of which runs thus : “ And it was commanded them that they should not hurt *the grass*, more properly the *herbage*,<sup>b</sup> of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.”

But this brings us to the main difficulty which we have to contend with ; what are we to understand by the trees and the vegetation which are said to be burnt up by the hail and the fire that were cast upon the earth, when the first angel sounded his trumpet ?

I lately introduced to your notice a quotation from Mr. Faber, in which he approves of the interpretation commonly given of the first three trumpets, but finds fault with all the attempts of all his predecessors to explain the hieroglyphical imagery, or rather their interpretation of the fourth. But though he demurs to the interpretation that has been offered by others, in some lesser points, he unfortunately proceeds upon the principle common to them all, which is to apply the whole four to the *political* state of the Roman empire, in which I humbly presume to differ from both him and them. I have again and again reminded you in the course of these lectures, and I repeat it, because you ought never to lose sight of the fact, that the *primary object* of the Holy Spirit throughout the Book of the Revelation is to develope

<sup>b</sup> See *Dr. Campbell*, on Matt. vi. 30.

the events of the kingdom of Christ, which is a kingdom *not* of this world ; and not to obtrude upon our notice the rise and fall of empires any farther than these are needful to illustrate the affairs of the former. We should never lose sight of the fact, that “ *the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy,*” it is the main object, end, and scope of all that the prophets have written. It is, therefore, in the christian profession, and the things by which that is affected, that I am disposed to look for the import of the symbols here used, namely, the grass and the trees ; and, also the hail and the fire by which they were injured. I am well aware that you have a right to call for my reasons for adopting a view of the subject so different from that which is commonly entertained, and these I shall now proceed to lay before you, with all possible brevity.

I begin, then, by remarking that the Scriptures will bear me out in considering the churches of Christ as *God’s husbandry*. The apostle Paul is my authority for this : for, addressing the church at Corinth, he expressly says, “ Ye are God’s husbandry,” 1 Cor. iii. 9. The same metaphor is used when the church is spoken of as a vineyard, Christ the vine, and his divine Father the husbandman, John xv. 1. Now as “grass and trees” are the natural product of the earth which we inhabit ; and as these only are brought forth for them by whom it is dressed, in consequence of its receiving blessing from God, Heb. vi. 7, so we may understand these figures, taken from the natural world, to represent *the primitive fruitful profession of Christianity, which depends upon the influence of the Holy Spirit*. Indeed, this way of illustrating things spiritual, by signs borrowed from things in the natural world, is so usual with the prophets, that their writings abound with it ; and for the sake of those who may not have properly attended to it, I shall give a few instances which may serve to illustrate the subject a little. The seventy-second Psalm, you know, is one entire prophecy concerning the Messiah—the extent of his kingdom—and the blessings of his reign, “ He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass : as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish : and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth,” ver. 6, 7. But look now at ver. 16, and mark well the imagery in which the nature of his kingdom, or, shall I say, its visible appearance in this world is conveyed : “ There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains ; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon ; *and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.*” You have only to strip this text of its figurative attire ; instead of the city, read Zion, the true church of God, and its application to the subject in hand is very striking.

Turn next to 2 Sam. xxiii. 4, in which again you have David’s

prophecy of the Messiah; "He shall be as the light when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as *the tender grass* springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." Suppose for rain we here substitute the influences of the Holy Spirit, and for the tender grass, the fruits of the gospel; you then have the doctrine of my text, as I understand it. But look now to Isa. xlv. 3-5, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed," (the children of Zion,) "and my blessing upon thine offspring; and *they shall spring up as among the grass, or herbage, as willows by the water courses*: one shall say I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel."<sup>c</sup> Once more, the Lord says in Hosea xiv. 5, 6, "I will be as *the dew* unto Israel; he shall *grow as the lilly*, and cast forth *his roots* as Lebanon; *his branches shall spread*, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon," &c.

These quotations will, I hope, be sufficient to satisfy you that in interpreting the "trees and the herbage," which are the products of the earth, as emblematical figures denoting the primitive fruitful profession of Christianity, we are not departing from the concurrent voice of the Old Testament prophets when using these similitudes.

Having so far established this preliminary point, let us now proceed with the subject, and try what we can make of the other parts of it, consistently with the principle just laid down, namely, that the injury done to the earth by the sounding of this first trumpet, does not refer to the subversion of the empire by the barbarous hordes who invaded it at all points, but to the hurt which was at this time inflicted on the Christian profession in general, and against which the real servants of God were sealed or secured, ch. vii.

"*The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green herbage, or vegetation, was burnt up.*" Thus we see that the earth, and that which springeth out of it, the trees and the herbage are hurt, burnt up, and in a great measure, destroyed, by *hail and fire mingled with blood*; but what is denoted by these latter symbols?

Both *hail* and *fire* are instruments of destruction in the natural world. Hail is more especially so in the eastern countries, Isa. xxviii. 2; and there are many allusions to its destructive effects not only on vegetation, but on animal life also, in the Old Testa-

<sup>c</sup> See also Isa. xxxv. 1, 2, 7; and ch. lv. 10, 13; Ps. lxxv. 9-14; and Ps. lxxvii. 6.

ment. There is a remarkable passage in Job, ch. xxxviii. 22, &c. on this subject, "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow, or hast thou seen the *treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle, and war?*" And if you would have an instance of this, you may see it exemplified in Josh. ch. x. 11, in the battle of the five kings of the Amorites, which fought against Gibeon: we there read that the Lord "discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon; and it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died; they were more which died *with hail stones*, than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword." Hail is spoken of as one of the plagues of Egypt; and in Exod. ix. 22-25, we have a remarkable account of the effect of hail and fire united, to which there is very probably an allusion in the symbolical language of this first trumpet. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt: and Moses stretched forth his rod towards heaven, and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground: and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt; so there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it, in all the land of Egypt, since it became a nation; and the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast: and *the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.*" There is such a similarity, I say, between this language and the imagery of the first trumpet, that I am inclined to consider the latter as borrowed, or adopted, from the former. But then, even admitting this to be the case, the inquiry recurs upon us, what is its application to the subject before us; what is imported by the hail and fire injuring the primitive profession of Christianity? Now, in order to explain this, we must remember that *hail* is here evidently used as a symbol of the *wrath of God*. That hail and fire, in symbolical language, denote *divine judgments* is a point on which all those who have undertaken to explain the Apocalypse appear to be agreed: and, indeed, I am at a loss to see what other interpretation *can* be put upon these figures borrowed from the natural world, different from this. But then the important inquiry is, upon whom do these judgments fall, on the sounding of this first trumpet? Upon the Roman empire—the body politic, say the commentators and expositors and other learned writers, with one voice. To this, however, I demur, and for the reasons formerly assigned; and I affirm, that these judgments fall upon the pro-

fessors of Christianity, who are symbolized by the trees and the herbage, the third part of which is destroyed. If by *hail* we here understand the wrath of God—what should hinder it from importing, the *strong delusion* which he is said to have sent on them who received not the love of the truth—a delusion which led them to believe *a lie*; according to 2 Thess. ii. 11.<sup>d</sup> And if you ask me in what that lie consisted, I am unable to give you any better answer than this, namely, that it consisted in their believing they could serve both God and mammon; that they could seek the friendship of this world, and yet keep good friends with God; or that they might be real Christians without denying themselves, taking up their cross, and following the slain Lamb. In a word, the strong delusion which now came upon the mass of nominal Christians consisted in their imagining, that the christian profession was a “broad way” in which the whole Roman empire might walk, as it had formerly done in the pagan religion, while under the heathen emperors. A more gross and palpable delusion than this, the human mind could not be the subject of; and yet it was a falsehood which fell in with the corrupt bias of the human heart, and was so palatable to flesh and blood, that it was received with avidity. How shall we account for this melancholy fact? Why, it is certain that one thing which had a powerful influence in causing this pernicious falsehood to be believed, was a carnal interpretation of many of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the kingdom of Christ, which was now adopted—a literal application was made of various passages of the Old Testament to the outward state of the New Testament church, with relation to the Roman emperor who favoured Christianity, and to the empire itself; and many *plausible reasonings* were urged on these subjects “with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.” For, Antichrist came “after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders:” so that these plausible reasonings in behalf of a national establishment of Christianity, whereby a form of godliness was drawn over the whole empire, came to be more observed, and to have more weight upon people’s minds, than the words of Christ and his apostles, and the signs or miracles wrought by them, whereby their words were fully confirmed.

<sup>d</sup> “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth (or restraineth) will let (or hinder), until he be taken out of the way; and then shall that wicked (one) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming—even Him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved: 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.” 2 Thess. ii. 7-12.

'Tis certain, that had all who made the christian profession in the days of Constantine, or even the greater part of them, held fast the form of sound words, and especially had they stood firm by the good confession which Jesus Christ witnessed before Pontius Pilate, concerning his kingdom, Christianity never could have become the established religion of the Roman empire; but unhappily, they let go that sheet-anchor of the christian profession "My kingdom is not of this world"—and the consequence was, that the vessel of the church was left to the mercy of the winds and the waves, to be tossed about according to the caprice of princes and priests just as their carnal hearts and worldly interests dictated. We, brethren, have been so much accustomed to witness national establishments of Christianity in our day, both in our own and neighbouring countries; and, moreover, we have seen the thing defended by so many, and such powerful advocates, and, I may add, by such plausible reasonings, that we are really in danger of losing sight of the enormity of the evil, and of admitting the justness of the pleas by which it is sought to be palliated. The apostle Paul was fully aware of it in his day—he beheld symptoms of its working in the churches under his own eyes: and mark, brethren, the solemn admonition which he gave to his beloved Timothy, whom he was about to leave in charge of the churches: "I give thee charge, in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords," 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14. I alluded just now, to the many *plausible reasonings* that were urged to justify this departure from Christ's good confession concerning his kingdom, and for incorporating his religion with the political constitution of the empire, as well as to the source of those reasonings, viz. a carnal interpretation of the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning Christ's kingdom, and a literal application of them to the then state of the church. These things have such an intimate connection with the subject of our present lecture, that you will pardon me in detaining you while I attempt a further illustration of it.

The advocates of a national establishment of Christianity never presumed in those days to find any authority for it in the New Testament—such an effort would have been utterly hopeless. In that part of divine revelation, the Mosaic economy and the gospel dispensation are always *contrasted*—"the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."—"Moses was faithful, or trusted, in all the house of God *as a servant*; but Christ, as *a son*, over his own house," John i. 17. Heb. iii. 5.

The christian church, founded on the sufferings, death, and resurrection of her own lawgiver, was modelled by his own wisdom, and established by his authority alone. The advocates of ecclesiastical alliances, consequently, would seek in vain for their original in the New Testament. Where then might they hope to find it? Why, though Christ and his apostles denied their suffrages, they would persuade the world that Moses was more tractable and accommodating to their views. The Jewish lawgiver; the Jewish polity; the Jewish nation were ever in their mouths, even at the point of their pens! and so it has constantly been with the advocates of national Christianity from the days of Constantine to the present time. Plausible, however, as their reasonings may appear to a superficial observer, and calculated as they undoubtedly are to *deceive* the unwary, they are bottomed upon a gross fallacy; and that fallacy consists in their supposing that there was no essential difference between the kingdom of David and the kingdom of Christ, that they were one and the same in nature, purpose, and design; and that consequently it was lawful to reason from one to the other; and model the Christian upon the plan of the Jewish church. But the fact is, they differed as widely as type and antitype; as flesh and spirit; as earthly and heavenly. The Old Testament state of things was a Theocracy, in which Jehovah, the God of Israel, acted in the capacity of a political sovereign. He took the whole Jewish nation into covenant with himself, separated them from all other people, by a system of ordinances, and a code of laws peculiar to themselves, and by means thereof, indeed, the church and state were incorporated; all of which was divinely calculated to answer the ends of their separation; to assist the faith and cherish the hope of a people, who, as the descendants of Abraham, were to give birth to the Messiah, and to live in constant expectation of that event. But when that event had taken place, the covenant on which their separation was founded, and the whole system of ordinances connected with it came to an end; it gave birth to, and introduced a new and better covenant, namely, the Christian dispensation, founded upon better promises, and as much superior to the former dispensation, as heaven is higher than the earth. There is no reasoning from one to the other, the analogy will not hold. Before the advocates of national establishments of Christianity can make good their ground, they must prove that Christian princes succeed to the throne of David; that Christian nations are not under a civil government, but are cherished, like ancient Israel, under the wings of a Theocracy; that the sceptre has not yet departed from Judah; that Christian princes are lawgivers from between his feet; in a word, that the Messiah is not yet come in the flesh! See then what *they* are doing, who are



spending their strength in supporting the alliance between Church and State; the throne and the altar; they are labouring to uphold that which Christ came to abolish; and *is there no evil, think you, in this?*

The fourth century is famous for the introduction of this "mystery of iniquity," the incorporation of Church and State, under the auspices of Constantine the Great; it gave birth to Antichrist, against which, at the sounding of the first trumpet, the *hail* of the divine indignation was cast upon the earth; it operated as a blast upon the primitive fruitful profession of Christianity, and *the third part of trees* was burnt up, and the vegetation was scorched and consumed. Let us trace the operation of this first principle a little in its baneful consequences.

Such of you as are at all acquainted with the Roman history, must know that from the earliest date of its grandeur, certain religious rites, venerated on account of their imagined antiquity, and esteemed sacred because of their pretended mysteries, were, by authority, made the incorporated religion of the Roman republic. The fabulous deities whom they and their savage ancestors had worshipped, obtained a public ratification of their fancied rights to national adoration. These rights were fenced by penal laws. It was declared criminal to acknowledge any new deity, till the senate had examined his pretensions, approved his credentials, and voted him his seat among the gods. A certain hierarchy of priests was arranged to attend in these Pagan temples, to officiate at their altars, and to render them those honours which the supreme power of the state had decreed to them. Festivals were appointed—magnificent temples erected;—in short, the whole system of Paganism was incorporated; and no sooner had the republic put off its ancient form, and submitted to the government of one individual, than the emperor became head of the church, even in its Roman Pagan state; he was supreme over all persons, and in all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil.

I have gone into this sketch, merely to give you something like the *model* which Constantine and the clergy of his day, adopted for the Christian church at this juncture; for, strange as it may appear, the system of popery, of which the foundation was now laid, was scarcely any thing else than the system of ancient Paganism revived, and remodelled under the Christian name, as the learned Dr. Middleton has demonstrated in his "Letter from Rome." I have repeatedly mentioned to you, how the mystery of iniquity was at work in the churches, even from the days of the apostles to the period of the downfall of Paganism in the empire. "False teachers, *through covetousness*, making merchandize of the souls of men," &c. 2 Pet. ii. 3. This description of men, had long beheld with lustful eyes, the distinguished honours,

the immense riches, and the unrestrained pleasures which the Pagan priests enjoyed in consequence of the heathen hierarchy. Ambition and the lust of power had been working in the breasts of many of the professed ministers of Christ, long before the celebrated triumph of the cross at the conversion of Constantine. Many a Diotrephes had risen up in the churches, "who loved to have the pre-eminence." But the day at length dawned upon them, which presented an opportunity of supplanting the heathen hierarchy; and the temptation was too great for them to permit the golden season to escape them; the objects were substantial, important, irresistible; and, as they took pleasure in unrighteousness, God in righteous sovereignty, gave them up to the lusts of their own heart, and sent them strong delusion that they should believe a lie! and this is the hail and fire mingled with blood, which he caused to be cast upon the earth at the sounding of the first trumpet, as I understand the matter.

But if the temptation was great to the covetous clergy of that day, it was not less powerful to Constantine. Ignorant as he was in a great degree, of the genius and spirit of the religion of the cross; superstitiously attached to those who had obtained the direction of his conscience; and surrounded at all times with flatterers who were filling his ears with lectures on the meritorious services he would render to God and his church, by bestowing "the spoils of the merciless Egyptians on the oppressed Israelites;" he must have been more than man, had he not fallen into the snare which was so artfully laid for secularizing Christianity. More accustomed to the din of war, than to attend to the cries which violence forces from the injured, he had neither time nor inclination to reflect, that even when he was commendably exerting his authority in protecting Christians from persecution, and Christianity from the insults of ignorance and malice, he himself would be guilty of the most flagrant violation of the laws and spirit of Christianity, as well as of common justice, were he to deprive the votaries of a false religion, of those rights to which they were entitled as subjects of the empire. A novice in Christianity, he was not aware, that while he was associating it with the political constitution of the empire, and secularizing its public teachers, he was laying a broad foundation for its sophistication and utter ruin. Could Constantine have foreseen the horrible crimes which were committed on the theatre of Europe during the middle ages; the merciless butcheries which were inflicted on the Waldenses and Albigenses, in consequence of the system of politics which he now pursued to gratify the clergy of his day, he would have shuddered at his own conduct. But Constantine was no prophet. In his circumstances he could only reason from analogy; and we can readily conceive of him reason-

ing in something like the following strain: "Did a system of impiety, superstition, and absurdity, such as the Pagan religion was, supported only by its connection with the state, not only so long triumph over the efforts of philosophy, but even resist Christianity itself; and shall not that heavenly religion, supported hitherto by nothing but its own evidence, become greatly triumphant, by possessing the throne, swaying the Imperial sceptre, and brandishing the sword of its unworthy rival?" All this reasoning would be plausible: and under the influence of such motives, we may presume Constantine to have acted in imposing Christianity upon his subjects as the religion of the empire. The event accordingly took place; and now, Christianity must change her attire that she may fill the throne of her discarded rival with becoming grace and dignity. Her ministers must raise their heads; enlarge their views; and become LORDS, not only over the heritage of their Master in heaven; but also over the dominions of their sovereign on earth. Every thing now in the kingdom of Christ is to be revolutionized; superstition opens all her paltry treasures; ignorance erects her leaden throne; the doctrines of the gospel are adulterated; the institutions of the kingdom of Christ must be modified or changed to suit the new order of things; offices hitherto unknown in the church are invented; and these are filled by ecclesiastics under characters as foreign to christian institution as are those of a magician or a soothsayer. But I must not pursue this subject further at present, though much remains to be said upon it; we may expect it often to come before us again in subsequent lectures; for we are now, as it were, only on the threshold; we are just entering upon a field which will occupy us for months. Before taking leave of the present lecture, however, I have a word or two to add, on a remarkable symbol which occurs in the account of the sounding of this first trumpet, namely, that of *fire mingled with blood*.

You are all aware that *fire* is frequently used in the New Testament to signify strife and contention; our Lord himself used it in this sense, Luke xii. 49, and in the instance before us, we can be at no loss to find its interpretation. Scarcely had the new order of things been carried into effect ere the bitter fruits of it began to manifest themselves in the jealousies and animosities that reigned among the clergy, which at length broke out into violent quarrels to the great grief of Constantine; and the scandal and disgrace of the Christian profession. By his well meant, but ill judged policy in patronizing the clergy, and endowing the churches, he had sown the seeds of contention and strife, and his own letters afford abundant proof of the dreadful extent to which these evil things prevailed in a few years. It was found necessary to draw up a confession of faith which should be subscribed

as the authorized confession of the empire, the standard of sound doctrine ; but there was no agreeing about the words in which it should be expressed. This, therefore, became a fruitful source of disputation and controversy ; and the *fire* of this contention and strife, was soon *mingled with blood*. The Christian leaders presently began to form their respective parties who were not long in persecuting each other with deadly hatred. A dispute arose respecting the doctrine of Christ's sonship ; well known under the name of the *Arian controversy*. The two leading disputants were Arius and Alexander, two of the prelates of the church of Alexandria, in Egypt, and it speedily involved all Christendom in a flame. The emperor did every thing in his power to reconcile the parties, but to no purpose. A council or synod, was convened, which goes by the name of the *Nicene council* ; from its having been held at Nice, in Bithynia, A. D. 325. It was attended by three hundred and eighteen bishops, beside a number of presbyters, deacons, acolythists and others, amounting in all to two thousand and forty-eight persons, when a summary of the orthodox faith was drawn up, and transmitted to the bishop of Rome, who convened another council at which were present two hundred and seventy-five bishops by whom it was confirmed, after more than two months discussion, to the joy of Constantine, the confusion of Arius and his party, and the triumph of his opponent. And with this began a new species of persecution—professed Christians tyrannizing over one another's consciences, and inflicting tortures and cruelties *upon each other*, equal to any thing they had ever sustained from the heathen persecutors ; and in this, all the murders that Antichrist hath committed by the power of the kings of the earth had their beginning. All this could not but affect the primitive profession of Christianity just as hail and burning fire affect the face of the earth, and the fruits thereof : yet it was not utterly destroyed ; only *the third part* of the trees were burnt up. Other judgments are to follow on the sounding of the other trumpets, which will come under our consideration in due course.

## LECTURE XXIII.

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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.—Rev. viii. 8, 9.

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### THE SECOND TRUMPET.

IT is an important rule which the apostle Paul gave the church at Corinth for the right understanding of the Scriptures, namely, to “compare spiritual things with spiritual.” Certain it is, that “Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture.” For, as the whole is given by Divine Inspiration; as it emanates from one and the same source of light and truth, the most entire and perfect harmony must prevail throughout every part; there can be no discordancy, no clashing in any of its statements; its various branches of history, prophecy, doctrine, precept, and promise must be perfectly reconcilable; and whatever of an opposite nature may at any time appear to us, must be resolved into the darkness of the human mind, and the erroneous preconceptions and prejudices which naturally attach to us all. It was a deference to this principle which led me, in interpreting the symbolic language of the *first* trumpet, to abandon the whole host of commentators and expositors; and the same motive must plead my excuse for doing so with the *second*, which I cannot but think has been as much misapprehended by them as the former. It was not without reason Mr. Towers<sup>a</sup> complained of the writers on the Apocalypse, that in their explanation of the seals and the trumpets, they had slavishly followed one another without taking the trouble to examine matters for themselves. It is only upon this principle that we can account for the fact of their grouping these first four trumpets under one common head, and applying the whole of them to one single subject, and that too of a political nature, viz. the subversion of the Western Roman Empire. This way of proceeding with the Apocalypse was a mighty convenient one to all the advocates of national establishments of Christianity; it enabled them to get rid of a most troublesome subject, to wit, the wrath of God pointed against the corrupters

<sup>a</sup> Illustrations of Prophecy.

of his gospel, and those who secularized the kingdom of his Son; the great thing evidently presented to our consideration in the sounding of the first trumpet. But though it be easy to account for the conduct of our bishops and clergy in thus warding off the consideration of a most unwelcome topic—for what true son of the church would like to find the divine judgments pointed against his own system? Yet, it is not so easy to account for the conduct of our dissenters, I refer to such men as Lowman, and Henry, and Doddridge,<sup>b</sup> Gill, and Guyse, and Fuller, adopting their view of the subject, and pacing in their steps. A regard to consistency should have led such men to a totally different line of interpretation in respect to both the seals and the trumpets, and not to give their suffrages to a mode of interpretation so obviously foreign to the scope of the Apocalypse. If we would rightly understand the first four trumpets, we must carefully consider the several notable degrees of the corruption of Christianity; the secularizing of the kingdom of Christ; the gradual change which was thereby brought upon the face of the Christian profession; and the several steps whereby Antichrist, the Man of Sin, arrived at his height from the very first beginning of his being revealed. But these are topics which unfortunately find no place in our modern treatises on the book of the Revelation; and this single consideration makes it the more important for us not to gloss it over superficially.<sup>c</sup> Keeping these things steadily in view, then, let us now proceed to a consideration of the second trumpet.

<sup>b</sup> It occurs to me on further reflection, that what I have said above does not apply to the first three of these writers; they were *Presbyterians*, and, as such, though dissenters in England, were abettors of national Christianity.

<sup>c</sup> The learned Dean Woodhouse in his Annotations on the Apocalypse, has some valuable remarks on this subject, which, for the reader's profit I will here subjoin.

“ I suppose the first four trumpets to afford a general view of the *warfare* which the Christian religion underwent upon its first establishment. Under the seals, the degeneracy of the church had been described. Under the trumpets, the attacks which she had to sustain from her Antichristian foes. The difficulty which attends the interpretation of the symbols, arises from the paucity of the matter, and the short compass in which it is expressed. The means of interpreting them which I have ventured to apply, have been derived from comparing similar passages of Scripture; and by considering that these first four trumpets must be supposed to sound the signal of the same kind of attack, and against the same object, as the last three. Now, as these three will be found to represent the invasion of the Christian church by Antichristian foes, we have reason to conclude that the preceding trumpets foretel a similar history. Some additional light has been obtained from the preparatory vision, ch. viii. 1-6, which seems to restrict the commotions under these trumpets, to *religious* causes. If religion, descending from the altar in heaven, had not mingled with the passions and projects of men, these commotions would have had no place in history. The greater part of the modern commentators, following Joseph Mede, have supposed these prophecies fulfilled in the ravages

“*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; 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.*” Here the first thing we have to do, is to ascertain the import of the various symbols that occur; for, until we

committed by the Gothic barbarians on the provinces of the *Roman empire*. But I have as yet been able to perceive no plausible reason, produced either by Mede or his followers, to shew why the prophecies of the Apocalypse in general, why the seals, or why the four first trumpets in particular, should be understood to relate to the history of the *Roman empire*. The subject of these divine visions is of superior importance: *the fates and fortunes of the Christian church*:

“*Non res Romanæ perituraque regna;*”

and the Roman empire seems to be only so far noticed in them, as it necessarily became connected with the church of Christ. The learned writer above quoted, was aware, that the fates of the Roman empire were beneath the dignity of this sacred book; for, having despatched that part of his work which he supposes to contain them, he says, “We now proceed to another, and much the most noble prophecy, because it contains the history of religion, and of the church.” Another judicious observation of the same commentator will be usefully applied to this enquiry. He observes that the trumpets should be interpreted as being *all of one kind or nature*; “to make some of them warlike invasions, and others to be heresies, is to bring things of too differing a nature under one name.” After having supposed the first four trumpets to represent warlike invasions on the Roman empire, he clearly saw that the remaining trumpets must not be interpreted as containing the history of Christian heresies; and therefore he laboured to shew that the Roman empire was the object of attack in *all* the trumpets. This labour he would perhaps have spared, if he had not already explained the first four trumpets to be so many attacks on that empire; and therefore he found himself obliged to exhibit a consistency, when he proceeded to interpret the rest.

“The irruption of the barbarous nations of the north, upon the declining empire, is of great importance in *civil history*. It occasioned a signal revolution in power and property; and produced wonderful effects on the manners, customs, and laws of Europe. But, although it took crowns from kings, and property from rich laymen, and overwhelmed multitudes in slavery, its disastrous influence was small, or of no permanency, on the Christian church. That church had already degenerated, through ignorance or corrupt worship; but it retained its property, and power, and the number of its subjects; [rather members,] nay, it greatly increased all these; for the conquering nations forsook their Pagan creed for the religion of the conquered.” p. 218-223.

From these pertinent observations, which merit the attention of every student of the Apocalypse, the reader will perhaps expect that this learned author has entered upon an historical discussion of the corruptions of Christianity which now took place, when, under the auspices of Constantine the Great, it became the established religion of the empire. But, no; his view of the matter may be gathered from his interpretation of the *third trumpet*, which is as follows: “Under this trumpet, we seem to obtain a *general* description of those corruptions, which, at the instigation of Satan, were seen to invade and subvert a great part of the Gentile Christian church, by the preaching of *splendid* heretics. Such in the earliest times, were Simon, Menander, Cerinthus,” &c. The intelligent reader will probably think that this is tything anise, mint, and cummin, but neglecting the weightier matters.

fix this with some precision, it is in vain to offer any explanation of the prophecy, or the events denoted by them. These symbols are—a great *mountain*—this *mountain burning with fire*—the *sea*, into which it is cast—waters turned to *blood*—the nature of the *death* which the living creatures that were in the sea underwent—and lastly, the *destruction* of the third part of the *ships*. When we have ascertained the meaning of these symbolical terms, the way will be prepared for an application of them; or, in other words, when we have reduced these metaphors to their intended meaning, we shall obtain a clue to the mind of the Holy Spirit in using them. I observe then, that

A *mountain*, in the language of the prophecies, signifies a *kingdom*. Thus, if you turn to Dan. ii. 35, you find “the stone that smote the image became a *great mountain*, and filled the whole earth,” and if we would know what is intended by this “*great mountain*,” we have it explained in ver. 44 of the same chapter, which reads thus: “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a *kingdom*, which shall never be destroyed; and the *kingdom* shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” In these texts, then, we find the *kingdom of Christ* predicted under the metaphor or symbol of a *great mountain*. But you will also find the Babylonian empire, that eminent seat of power and idolatry, spoken of in prophetic language as a *mountain*, a destroying mountain, which the Lord declared he would make a *burnt mountain*. “Behold, I am against thee, O *destroying mountain*; I will stretch out my hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and I will make thee a *burnt mountain*,” in other words, Thou shalt be given into the hands of the Persians, who shall totally destroy thee as an empire, Jer. li. 25. And that this is spoken of Babylon, you may see from the preceding verse, in which the Lord threatens to render to Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea, a recompence for the evil which they had done to Zion.

The next metaphor we notice, is, the *sea*. You frequently read of *waters* in this book; and the symbol is explained in ch. xvii. 15. “The *waters* which thou sawest, are peoples and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” Now we all know, that the *sea* is formed by the confluence of rivers, or the gathering together of waters. We cannot be mistaken, therefore, in interpreting the *sea*, in this passage, to denote the multitude of Christians, or, at any rate, professors of Christianity, that were in the bounds of the Roman empire.

We observe, further, that this great mountain was *burning with fire*, when it was cast into the sea. I had occasion, in the last lecture, to remind you that *fire* is the usual symbol in scripture



of *strife* and *contention*. Hence the Saviour's words, "I am come to send *fire* on the earth : and what will I if it be already *kindled*?—Suppose ye that I came to give peace on earth ? I tell you nay, but rather *division*?" Luke xii. 49-51.

Moreover, by this great mountain burning with fire, being cast into the sea, the third part of the sea *became blood*, or was corrupted, as the waters of Egypt when turned into blood, Exod. vii. 19-21 ; and the third part of living creatures that were in the sea *died* ; and the third part of *ships* were destroyed. Life and death must here be understood, not in a literal, but metaphorical sense—as importing that a third part of the professors of Christianity that were in the sea, or *empire*, had their spiritual life extinguished, and so *perished* in consequence of this burning mountain being cast into it. *Ships* are an emblem of commerce ; and, taken metaphorically, what is this commerce but communion in spiritual matters, or church privileges, and in the profession of Christianity, which was now marred and spoiled by impurity of communion, the unavoidable effect of amalgamating the church and the world ; for, when Christianity had become the established religion of the empire, multitudes found access to the former, who sought nothing but worldly privileges, and these they obtained by strife and contention.

Having thus stripped the prophecy, contained in the sounding of this second trumpet, of its symbolical dress—you may now see, brethren, what it amounts to. Here is an empire, kingdom, or state, rent with strife and division ; and in this condition it is cast as it were headlong from a precipice, among a number of people, upon whom it commits the most deadly effects, killing and wounding them, so that the third part of them die ! And thus we are brought to enquire, what kingdom it is that is here referred to—what kind of strife and contention it is that rends it, or sets it in a flame—and what are the terrible effects which result from it.

Now I think we need not go any farther than the Roman empire itself, and that even in its Christian form, prior to its subversion by the Goths and Vandals, to find this "burning mountain"—for, whether we understand the injuries referred to as being done to the mountain itself, or to the sea into which it was cast, the symbolical language will aptly apply to either. If, for instance, you apply the hurt to the empire itself, it is undeniably true, that when the power, and grandeur, and wealth of the Roman empire came into the hands of Christians, or professed Christians, there was a prodigious change in its constitution almost immediately perceptible ; and from that time it declined rapidly, until that mighty monument of imperial grandeur, which for centuries had tyrannized over almost all the then known

world, crumbled into ruins—was broken in pieces—and gave rise to the ten kingdoms, spoken of by Daniel, ch. vii. 23, 24.

But if, on the other hand, we apply the injury that resulted from the power and grandeur and wealth of the Roman empire falling into the hands of professed Christians, to the bulk of professors and their leaders, who, no doubt, expected to derive great advantages from it, we shall find abundant grounds to justify the application, as the sequel will shew. If you ask what the strife and contention, symbolized by the fire, here refers to, the answer is easy—it was a contest about who, among these professed followers of the Lamb, should possess most of the power, and wealth, and grandeur of the empire? The clergy had been long before contending about pre-eminence in the church; but now they began to contend about pre-eminence in the empire also; and divisions and squabbles about their elections to the most dignified stations amongst the people, and to the most lucrative bishopricks, came to a monstrous height, and were often attended with bloodshed and slaughter. But you will expect, on this part of the subject, something more than mere common-place declamation, to justify the view which we have taken of this second trumpet, and I shall therefore now enter into it as fully as the time allotted for the remainder of this lecture will permit.

It is scarcely necessary to apprise you, for the thing is so obvious that it must strike every reflecting mind, that, in order to accommodate Christianity to their purpose, and make it a *state religion*, it would be necessary for Constantine and his clergy to change many things that had been esteemed sacred, as instituted by the Saviour himself, and in constant use from the times of the apostles. In short, the whole order of the house of God must be remodelled to adapt it to the new state of things. The worship of the Christian church, as appointed by the Saviour himself, before he left the world, (Acts i. 3.) and as instituted by his apostles in his name, was characterized by that *divine simplicity* which corresponded with the nature of his kingdom, as of heavenly origin. There was nothing about any part of it that was calculated to strike the senses of such as came into the assemblies of the first Christians—no display—nothing to minister to the gratification of pride, vanity, and ambition. The disciples came together on the first day of the week, just as we do now, in any place that suited their convenience, to celebrate the praises of redeeming grace—to record the loving kindness of the Lord in the midst of his temple—to commemorate the dying love, and rising power of the Saviour. The first church that was set in order, was that of Jerusalem; and the sacred historian has recorded, for our instruction, the various branches of worship

which they attended to, Acts ii. 42, viz. “the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayers—praising God,” &c. The church consisted of baptized believers, ver. 41, and they continued *stedfastly* in the observance of these things, as enjoined upon them by the authority of their risen and ascended Lord, and in the view of his second coming, to perfect their salvation. But this was a constitution of things, little adapted to the objects which the emperor and his clergy had in view—and of this fact you may be abundantly satisfied, by only supposing for a moment, what absurd consequences would result from an attempt to introduce the order of worship observed among yourselves, into all the churches of this metropolis. Could any thing be imagined more ridiculous? In the short space of six months three-fourths of the clergy would be out of bread—and the fashionable places of worship, to which the butterflies resort, that they may “see and be seen,” would soon become as insignificant as your own assembly. Such a scheme could never take; and Constantine and the bishops of his day had sagacity enough to be aware of it;—*what, then, did they do?* I do not think that I shall be going out of my way, or departing from the subject of my lecture, if I attempt a short answer to that question.

One of the first objects that presents itself to our contemplation in the new order of things, is, the alteration that now took place among the ministers of religion, or, as we may say, the clergy. The only office-bearers which Christ instituted in his churches (exclusive of the apostles, and such as were assistants to them in setting up the kingdom of Christ, consequently of temporary institution) were *elders* and *deacons*, Phil. i. 1; the former to labour in the word and doctrine—rule the house of God, and administer its ordinances: and the latter “to serve tables,” as it is expressed, Acts vi. 2, that is, to look after the external or civil concerns of the body. They were all chosen by the people, who were regulated in their choice by rules and directions clearly laid down by the apostles, in their writings,<sup>d</sup> and they were invested with office by prayer, fasting, and the imposition of hands. Both elders and deacons were the *servants* of the church; and amongst both, the most perfect equality prevailed. “The kings of the Gentiles,” said the Saviour, “exercise lordship over them—but with you it shall not be so:—let him that is greatest among you be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve,” Luke xxii. 25, &c. “Be ye not called Rabbi, for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren; and call no man your father upon earth, for one is your Father, who is in heaven; neither be ye called masters—but he that is greatest among you

<sup>d</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 1-10; Tit. i. 6-9; 1 Pet. v. 1-3; Acts, ch. vi.

shall be your servant; and whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted," Matt. xxiii. 3-12. These hints are sufficient to shew us the genius and spirit of Christ's religion, who himself could say, "I am among you as one that serveth." From this simple constitution, it is certainly astonishing to consider how these *servants* of the church, came, in time, to be the *lords* of it; and not of the church only, but of the world also; and it is curious to observe the various steps by which this wonderful change took place.

I have already adverted to the perfect equality that at first prevailed among the elders, presbyters, bishops, or pastors of the primitive church; their office was all one—their labours or employment was one—for, in fact, these are only different names of one and the same thing; and, though each church had a plurality, where it could be obtained agreeable to scripture, yet there was nothing of superior or inferior among them; for, as they were all forbidden to lord it over God's heritage, so they were equally bound not to lord it over one another.

But, behold! *now* a distinction was invented between a *bishop* and an *elder* or presbyter, of which the New Testament knew nothing. According to that divine code of legislation, the office was one and the same, as I have already said, and I will lay before you the proof of it. We are told in Acts, ch. xx. that when Paul was at Miletus, he sent to Ephesus, and called the *elders*, Gr. *πρεσβυτεροι*, *presbyters*, of the church, and he thus addressed them: "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the church over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, Gr. *επισκοποι*, *bishops*, a plain proof that the apostle understood presbyters and bishops to be one and the same. So, also, when writing to Titus, ch. i. 5, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain *elders*, *πρεσβυτερους*, *presbyters*, in every city; and having adverted to their qualifications, he immediately adds, "For a *bishop*, *επισκοπον*, must be blameless," ver. 7. In like manner the apostle Peter, "The *elders*, *πρεσβυτερους*, which are among you I exhort," ch. v. 1.—"feed the flock of God which is among you, *taking the oversight thereof*, *επισκοπουντες*, discharging the office of *bishops*," ver. 2. Now the plain inference from all this is, that, according to the New Testament the office of elder, presbyter, and bishop, was originally one; and that the distinction now coined was a mere human invention.

It would be scarcely fair to quit this subject, without adding, that the innovation to which I have just referred, viz. the distinction between the bishop and the presbyter, first broached in the days of Constantine, did not pass without remonstrance from the friends of truth at that time. In particular, one *Aërius*, the elder

of a church at Sebastia, in Pontus, raised his voice against it, and contended that an elder, or presbyter, differs nothing in order and degree from a bishop.<sup>e</sup> But the voice of Ærius was drowned amid the clamour with which he was assailed by the clergy of his day. He was evidently a man of a very enlightened mind, animated by an ardent attachment to truth, and zealous for the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus. He saw in this one innovation, the foundation laid for the kingdom of the clergy—that all the subordinations of the hierarchy, the full developement of which he did not live to witness, had their foundation here; and that they who had succeeded in gaining this one point, would not be slack in building upon it that superstructure which it has fallen to our lot to witness. But I proceed:—Though bishops were originally no other than presbyters—their ordination, qualifications, and functions being in all respects the same; yet, no sooner was the distinction between them established, than the bishops began to appropriate certain functions to themselves; there were certain things in which the presbyters might not interfere, amongst which was the ordination of elders, or presbyters. But besides this, when the number of converts in any place became too great for them to assemble with convenience in one building, they erected other places of public worship: and then, instead of forming these into distinct churches, and setting them in order with their own bishops and deacons, and thus rendering them competent to manage all their own affairs, they were considered as branches of the old one; and to preserve their connection with the mother church, the ministerial duties were discharged by some of its presbyters, or by new ones ordained for that purpose. In this train matters proceeded, till at length, the mother church having sent out colonies to a greater distance, her bishop came to be a *diocesan*, whose elders and deacons presided in all the separate and dependent churches. In the fourth century the city of Rome was divided into twenty-five parishes, all forming only one church; but a priest or presbyter was appointed to each, to instruct the people, and administer the sacraments, as they called them; and it was the custom for the bishop to send a part of the consecrated bread, after the administration of the eucharist in the mother church, to each of these dependant churches. And in this way the system of *diocesan episcopacy* crept in. There were bishops in capital towns only, and all the churches within their districts were governed merely by presbyters.

I may now mention another thing which originated at this time, and which had a powerful tendency to augment the influence of the clergy, and diminish the privileges of the people; and that

was their assembling in synods, to deliberate about affairs of common concern to the whole body. This drew a broad line of distinction between the clergy and the people ; between the bishops and the presbyters ; and also among the bishops themselves. For, though at first these bishops, assembled in convocation, acknowledged themselves to be no more than deputies of the people, they soon dropped that style, and made decrees by their own authority, wholly independent of the concurrence of their respective churches, and at length claimed a power of prescribing both in matters of faith and of discipline. For the more orderly holding of these assemblies, some one bishop in a large district was employed by common consent to summon them, and to preside in them ; and this being generally the bishop of the metropolis, he was called the *metropolitan* or *archbishop* ; the term was first used by Athanasius, afterwards by Epiphanius, and from the year 430, it was common in the church. Hence, those of York and Canterbury !

When the clergy of several provinces assembled, they appointed officers with a more extensive jurisdiction, and called them *patriarchs* or *primates*. This last title was not in use until the time of Leo I. or the Great, as he is called, A.D. 460. That of patriarch was adopted at an earlier period, and came to be applied to the five principal sees, namely, Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. These patriarchs were distinguished by special rights and privileges ; they also consecrated the bishops of their respective provinces ; they assembled them yearly in council, and all important controversies were referred to their decision, especially where the bishops were concerned ; and they appointed *vicars* or deputies to act for them in the remoter provinces. Yet, according to Mosheim, there were several places, in the fifth century, which maintained their independence of these patriarchs ; and both the emperors and the general councils were obstacles in the way of their ambition.

Many of these abuses, which had been gradually creeping in, were promoted, and greatly accelerated in their progress, by the constitutions of Constantine, who was the first to assemble a general council to which all the bishops of the christian world were invited. Having made a new division of the empire for civil purposes, he adapted the external government of the church to it. When this division was completed, those who make the correspondence between the civil and ecclesiastical governments the most exact, say, that the *bishops* corresponded to those magistrates who presided over single cities ; the *metropolitan* or *archbishop*, to the pro-consuls or presidents of provinces, comprehending several cities ; the *primates*, to the emperor's vicars or lieutenants, each of whom governed in one of the thirteen great dioceses, into which the empire was divided ; and the *patriarchs* to the preto-

rian prefects, each of whom had several dioceses under them. Thus the government of the church was assimilated to the government of the state; and of which it was now converted into an engine.

And as the higher clergy rose above the inferior, so the latter were not wanting to themselves, but magnified their respective offices in proportion. In the fourth century those presbyters and deacons who filled the principal stations of those orders, obtained the high sounding titles of *arch-presbyters* and *archdeacons*, and also obtained more power than the rest of their brethren. The consequence of all these changes was, that, at the beginning of the fifth century, there did not remain so much as a shadow of the ancient constitution of the Christian church: the privileges of the presbyters and people having been usurped by the bishops, who did not fail to assume the state and dignity suited to their new distinctions. The wealth and power of the bishops of the greater sees soon became very considerable, so as to make them resemble princes. Hence the witty remark of a libertine of those days: "*Make me bishop of Rome, and I'll be a Christian too!*"

It is at first view a remarkable circumstance, that, in proportion as the clergy rose in pomp and pride and worldly grandeur, they should in much the same degree have deteriorated in learning, but such is the fact. When the emperor Constantine had appointed a council to be convened at Constantinople, the bishop of Rome, for the time being, made an apology for two bishops whom he sent thither as his legates, on account of their want of learning, saying, that to have had a *theologian*, he must have sent to England; for, at that time, there was more learning here, than in any other part of the empire. Even in the east, several bishops at the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, were unable to write their own name, so that other persons signed the decrees for them.

From this brief sketch of the changes which took place in the rank and character of Christian ministers,—the steps by which they came to be absolute and despotic, and from having no dominion over the faith of their fellow-christians, to be invested with the authority of bishops in matters of discipline and worship; I shall now proceed to offer a few remarks on the changes which at that time took place with respect to the *revenues of the church*. This will shew you by what steps the professed ministers of the gospel, came to have independent and even princely incomes, and to engross to themselves a very considerable part of the wealth, and even landed property of the empire.

In the constitution of the primitive church, the apostles ordained that on the first day of the week, every member of a Christian church should lay by him in store as the Lord had prospered him, for the support of the poor, and other necessary

uses connected with the worship of God. This was called the fellowship or collection, *κοινωνία*, Acts ii. 42, which was stately made at the time of the Lord's supper, and it was entrusted to the deacons for distribution. Till the times of Constantine, the church had no other revenues than these *voluntary alms*; but in the year 321, this emperor issued an edict, addressed to the people of Rome, by which he gave all persons the liberty of bequeathing to the churches whatever they chose to do. He also ordained that what had been taken from the churches in the persecution of Dioclesian should be restored to them, and that the estates of the martyrs who had left no heirs, should be given to the churches. This edict laid the foundation for a new order of things: for, by this means, all the churches came to have, what was called their *patrimony*; and that of Rome, in the sixth century had a very considerable one, not only in Italy, but in other countries; and to inspire a greater respect for these patrimonies, they were denominated by the names of the saints that were most respected in each particular church. Thus the territories belonging to the church of Rome were called *the patrimony of Saint Peter!*

All the temporalities of the christian societies were at first managed by the deacons, who, however, often consulted the elders respecting the distribution of the church's bounty; and, indeed, often entrusted it to the hands of the latter, to be by them dispensed as *they* might see a fit opportunity of doing it. But the bishops having encroached upon the presbyters in other things, did not neglect to avail themselves of their authority with respect to the temporalities of the church. And so great was the confidence which the primitive Christians reposed in their bishops, that they alone were allowed to superintend the distribution of the common church stock to the inferior clergy, as well as to the poor, according to the merits or occasions of each individual. But this distribution of the church stock became the occasion of great animosities and contentions between the bishops and the inferior clergy; and Father Simon, a learned catholic writer, ascribes to it most of the disorders which arose in the western church. This partition made them absolute masters of the shares respectively allotted to each, and gave them independent property; and riches and independance have never been favourable to virtue with the bulk of mankind; or indeed to the bulk of any order of men whatever.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>f</sup> "It was among the first effects of the conversion of Constantine to give not only a security, but a legal sanction to the territorial acquisitions of the church. The edict of Milan, in 313, recognizes the actual estates of ecclesiastical corporations. Another published in 321, grants to all the subjects of the empire the power of bequeathing their property to the church. His own liberality, and that of his successors, set an example which did not want imitators.



But those corruptions of the clergy which arose from the riches of the church, began to be more remarkably conspicuous, when, after the time of Constantine, the church came to be possessed of fixed and large revenues. Jerome says, that in his day the church had indeed become more rich and powerful under the Christian emperors, but it had become proportionably less virtuous; and Chrysostom says, that in his day the bishops forsook their employments in the church, to sell their corn and wine, and to look after their glebes and farms, besides spending much of their time in law-suits. Indeed, Jerome acknowledges that the clergy of his age spared neither tricks nor artifices to get the estates of private persons into their hands; and he mentions many low and sordid offices, to which priests and monks stooped, in order to ingratiate themselves with, and get possession of the estates of, old men and women who had no heirs to leave them to. The disorders of the clergy must have been enormous at this period, and their general conduct very scandalous, since the emperors were then obliged to enact many laws to restrain them in their avarice and cupidity. In the year 370, the emperor Valentinian passed a law to check the covetous career of the clergy, forbidding priests and monks to receive any thing either by way of gift or bequest from widows, virgins, or any female whatever. Twenty years afterwards he passed another law, which forbade deaconesses to bequeath their effects to the clergy or the monks, or to make the churches their heirs; but his successor revoked the edict. Of the riches of the church of Rome towards the end of the third century, we may form some idea from this circumstance, that, according to Eusebius, it then supported one thousand five hundred persons, widows, orphans, and poor; that it had forty-six priests to pay, besides the bishop and other officers.

In laying before you, my Christian brethren, this epitome of church history, you must not understand me as "travelling out of the record," as the lawyers say; it has all a bearing upon the subject of our present lecture, I mean, according to the view which I take of the import of this second trumpet. For though the facts which I have narrated, may not be thought to come entirely up to the bold and sublime imagery of the prophet, namely, that of a prodigious mountain burning with fire, rolled from a precipice

Passing rapidly from a condition of distress and persecution to the summit of prosperity, the church degenerated as rapidly from her ancient purity, and forfeited the respect of future ages in the same proportion as she acquired the blind veneration of her own. Covetousness, especially, became almost a characteristic vice. Valentinian I. in 370, prohibited the clergy from receiving the bequests of women; a modification more discreditable than any general law could have been. And several of the fathers severely reprobate the prevailing avidity of their contemporaries." *Hallam's History of the State of Europe during the middle ages.* Vol. ii., ch. vii., p. 199.

into the sea, and occasioning the destruction of a third part of the living creatures, that were in it, and also of a third part of the ships; yet I must entreat you to keep in mind, that as the whole effects which result from the sounding of the trumpet are not to be supposed to take place all at once, but as extending their ravages through the period of one thousand two hundred and sixty years, and increasing by little and little, so, in what I have submitted to you concerning the events that now took place, and in which I find the accomplishment of the prophecy, I have confined myself to a comparatively short period of time. My narrative of the state of the church, embraces only the short space of about one hundred and fifty years; but this corrupt state of things was every year progressing;§ the evils were continually accumulating, and you have only to suspend your judgment until we have advanced a little further with the subject, to be satisfied that I have not mistaken the design of the Holy Spirit in the contents of the sounding of the second trumpet. In the mean time, I wish you to keep in mind that we have on the present occasion, had under our consideration, *one of the steps that lifted Antichrist to his throne.*

§ Mr. Hallam, in his "History of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages," referring to the wealth of the church under the empire, says, "The ecclesiastical hierarchy never received any territorial endowment by law, either under the Roman empire, or the kingdoms erected upon its ruins. But the voluntary munificence of princes as well as their subjects, amply supplied the place of a more universal provision. Large private estates, or as they were termed, patrimonies, not only within their own dioceses, but sometimes in distant countries, sustained the dignity of the principal sees, and especially that of Rome. The monarchs who reigned over France, Spain, and England, set hardly any bounds to their liberality; but the churches derived their wealth from many sources. Those who entered into a monastery, threw frequently their whole estates into the common stock: and even the children of rich parents were expected to make a donation of land on assuming the cowl. Some gave their property to the church before entering on military expeditions; gifts were made by some to take effect after their lives; and bequests by many in the terrors of dissolution. The clergy failed not to inculcate upon the wealthy sinner, that no atonement could be so acceptable to heaven, as liberal presents to its earthly delegates. To die without allotting a portion of wealth to pious uses, was accounted almost like suicide; or a refusal of the last sacraments; and hence intestacies passed for a sort of fraud upon the church, which she punished by taking the administration of the deceased's effects into her own hands." Vol. ii., ch. vii., p. 201.

## LECTURE XXIV.

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AND the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters. 11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood : and the third part of the waters became wormwood ; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.—Rev. viii. 10, 11.

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### THIRD TRUMPET.

THOSE of you, my brethren and friends, who have paid any considerable degree of attention to the Apocalypse, can scarcely need to be reminded, that it is to the writings of the prophet Daniel we are directed to look, for the archetypes, or original drafts, of the *seals*, the *trumpets*, and the *vials*, which constitute the burden of the book of the Revelation. I have more than once hinted at this matter in the course of these lectures ; and the present gives me an opportunity of repeating the admonition. On a former occasion,<sup>a</sup> I drew your attention to a remarkable prediction concerning the setting up of the kingdom of Christ in the world, which is contained in the second chapter of the writings of that prophet. I must now direct your attention to ch. vii. of the same book of prophecy, in which you will find that Daniel had a vision of four great monarchies, namely, the Babylonian, the Macedonian, the Grecian, and the Roman, which were exhibited to him under the similitude of so many fierce and wild beasts, as being the great supporters of idolatry and tyranny. This memorable vision occupies the first fourteen verses of the chapter, and it seems to have perplexed the prophet exceedingly, who was anxious to understand its import, ver. 15.

It is accordingly explained to him by an angel from heaven, ver. 17, &c. “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings,” or kingdoms ; for so the fourth beast is explained, ver. 23. “The fourth beast shall be *the fourth* KINGDOM upon earth.” They are represented as rising out of the sea, when agitated by stormy winds, ver. 2, 3, intimating that they had their origin in the wars and commotions of the world. “The first of these beasts was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings ; and I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth,

<sup>a</sup> Lecture xiii. p. 154.

and made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given unto it," ver. 4. This is the empire of the Babylonians or Assyrians, and you will find the symbols here used, applied by other prophets to that power: see Jer. iv. 7, and ch. xlviii. 48; Ezek. xvii. 3, 12. The conquests of Nebuchadnezzar were remarkably rapid, which is intimated by his having "the wings of an eagle;" but these wings were plucked by Cyrus, the king of Persia, when the former was in the plenitude of his pride and power, and "a man's heart was given unto it;" importing, that they who vaunted as if they had been gods, now felt themselves to be but men, Ps. ix. 20.

"The second beast was like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between its teeth, and they said thus unto it: Arise, devour much flesh," ver. 5. This is the empire of the Medes and Persians; and it is compared to a *bear*, for its cruelty and thirst after blood; on which account it is commissioned to "devour much flesh." The prophet Isaiah, refers to this trait in the character of the Medes, ch. xiii. 18. "I will stir up the Medes, whose bows shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children." This empire is said to "raise up itself on one side," or according to the marginal reading, *raised up one dominion*. At first this empire included both the Medes and Persians; but after the conquest of Babylon, the Persians got the ascendancy over the Medes, and obtained the sole dominion, and this is intimated by its raising up itself on one side. "It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth." These were the kingdoms of Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt, which it conquered; but they were merely colonies or appendages, and not properly parts of its body.<sup>b</sup>

"The third beast was like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings like a fowl; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given unto it," ver. 6. This is the kingdom of the Grecians, founded by Philip of Macedon, and his son, Alexander the Great. And it is fitly compared to a leopard on account of the rapidity and impetuosity of its conquests; and the four wings of a fowl point out the same thing; for nothing of the kind could, in those days, be comparable to the rapid movements of the Macedonian monarch. You recollect the anecdote that is related of him, that having conquered the world, he sat down and wept that he had not another world to conquer! Its four *heads* are the four kingdoms into which this empire was divided after the death of Alexander the Great; thus, Cassander reigned over the countries of Macedonia and Greece; Lysimachus over Thrace

<sup>b</sup> Rutherford's Ancient History, vol. i. ch. 5 and 6.

and Bithynia : Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, over Egypt ; and Seleucus over Upper Asia.<sup>c</sup> And this brings us to what more immediately respects the subject of our present lecture, viz. the fourth beast, of which we have Daniel's description in ver. 7.

“ After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful, and terrible, and strong exceedingly ; and it had great iron teeth : it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet ; and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it ; *and it had ten horns.*”

We have an explanation of this fourth beast in ver. 23, where it is said, “ The fourth beast shall be *the fourth kingdom upon earth*, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms ; and it shall devour the whole earth, and tread it down, and break it in pieces.” That it is the Roman empire which is here spoken of, can admit of no reasonable doubt ; for to no other empire, kingdom, or state, will the description apply. It was the *fourth* of the great monarchies which arose in the earth ; and, in all respects, it answered to the picture here given of it. Daniel lived, you know, in the days of Nebuchadnazzar, by whom the Babylonian, the first of these four empires, was founded. That monarch, it seems, had a dream, and Daniel was called upon to interpret it, which he did, and we have the account of the whole matter in ch. ii. Having reminded the king of the great image which he had seen in his dream, and minutely described its component parts—its head of gold, its breast and arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of brass, its legs of iron, and its feet of clay, ver. 31-33 ; observe how he explains this, in ver. 37-43. The empire over which Nebuchadnazzar then reigned, was the *head* of this great image, ver. 37, 38. *After him* should arise another kingdom, inferior to the Babylonian, ver. 39, viz. that of the Medes and Persians, of which I have already spoken : and another third kingdom, which was the Macedonian or Grecian, which answered to the belly and thighs of brass of the great image, ver. 39 ; and to this was to succeed the fourth kingdom, which should be strong as iron, ver. 40. Now all this corresponds to the vision which Daniel had of the four great beasts, the account of which we have in chap. vii. ; the subject is precisely the same, though the imagery is varied. In the second chapter these four great empires are exhibited in prophecy, for the purpose of shewing that under the last of these, viz. the Roman, the God of heaven would set up the kingdom of his Son—a kingdom which should never be destroyed, —which should not be left to other people, but which should break in pieces and consume all these four great monarchies, and should stand for ever, ver. 44. But in Daniel's *second* vision,

<sup>c</sup> Dr. Gillies's History of Greece, ch. 39.

the particulars of which are contained in ch. vii. ; these four great empires are set before us under the imagery of four great beasts—the lion, the bear, and the leopard, answering to the first three, or the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, and the Grecian empires—after which arises “a fourth beast, dreadful, and terrible, and strong exceedingly,” &c. ver. 7 ; but on this occasion, the subject is introduced, not with the view of exhibiting to us the rise of the kingdom of Christ, as in ch. ii. but that of his great adversary, ANTICHRIST, and the circumstances immediately connected with that event, which circumstances now demand our particular consideration.

The points to which would I more immediately request your attention on the present occasion are, the subversion or total overthrow of the Roman empire in its imperial form of government—the means by which this was brought about, and the partition of the empire into ten distinct kingdoms, or independent states, which are denoted by the “ten horns” of the beast, comp. ver. 7 with ver. 24. When we have briefly glanced at each of these topics, we shall be better prepared for an inquiry into the import of the symbolical language under which the events pointed at by the sounding of the third trumpet, are comprised. The subject is a copious one, and it is very difficult to handle it in the compass of a single lecture ; but it forms an important link in the chain of events which conspired to elevate Antichrist to his throne : and without some attention to it, our views of the matter must be extremely defective.

If you look to the account which Daniel gives of the fourth beast, or Roman empire, ch. ii. 40, 41, you will find, that, after describing its terrible aspect, its colossal power, and prodigious extent, he expressly states, that “*the kingdom shall be divided,*” ver. 41 ; in other words, it should not maintain its imperial form, or continue as one unbroken empire beyond a certain period ; and the event corresponded with the prediction. It would be an extremely interesting topic to trace this mighty empire from its origin, when Romulus first established his rustic followers on the banks of the Tiber, where they laid the foundation of the city of Rome, and pursue the progress of the Roman arms through a period of seven hundred years, during which, they had steadily advanced to victory, and at length, in the days of Augustus Cæsar, assumed the form, the title, and the consequence of an empire—the mightiest, the most gigantic, the world had ever known : but to go into the detail of these matters would very far exceed our limits, and we must content ourselves with a few hints.

At the period of the commencement of the christian era, the Romans had subjugated to their yoke the fairest portion of the civilized world. For instance, in EUROPE, they had subdued

Spain, and Gaul, and the whole of Italy: Greece, Thrace, and Macedonia, with the provinces of Rhœtia, Noricum, Pannonia, Mœsia, and Dalmatia, which were then confounded under the general appellation of Illyricum, and were bounded and protected by the broad and rapid stream of the Danube. In ASIA, Lydia, Phrygia, and Cilicia, with the maritime countries of the Pamphilians, Lycians, and Carians, the Grecian colonies of Ionia, the opulent and extensive province of Syria, with the districts of Phœnicia and Palestine were united under the Roman yoke. And in AFRICA, her authority was acknowledged throughout the fertile regions of Lybia, Numidia, Mauritania, stretching over the countries to the verge of the ocean. Egypt, too, had consented to receive the Roman yoke; and, though the latest of her conquests, was, at the same time, the most important. In the contemplation of such extensive territories, it is no way surprising, that Rome should have overlooked the barbarous countries which were destined by the Righteous Governor of the universe to subvert her imperial grandeur, and that she should assert her dominion to the whole world. On an accurate survey, it may be concluded, that the Roman empire extended, in breadth, from the Danube to Mount Atlas—about eighteen hundred miles: and in length, from the Western Ocean to the Euphrates, above three thousand miles; and this empire has been calculated to contain a hundred and twenty millions of inhabitants.

Such was the Roman empire from the time of Augustus to that of Constantine the Great, who died in the year 337, leaving the government of this monstrous and unwieldy mass, distributed between his three sons. One of them, who was named after his father, and took the title of Constantine II. received as his portion, Spain, Gaul, and Britain. To his brother Constans were assigned, Italy, Africa, and Illyricum; whilst Constantius inherited the east, comprehending, Asia, Syria, and Egypt, with the city of Constantinople, to which his father had transferred the seat of empire, or of government. But this partition among the three brothers was of very short continuance; for in the year 340, only three years after the decease of the father, a violent quarrel arose between two of the brothers, viz. Constantine and Constans, which brought on a war between them, and that war ended in the death of Constantine II. Constans now added the dominions of the deceased prince to his own, and thereby became sole master of all the western provinces: and this will explain to you how the empire came to be divided into the Eastern and Western, in which state matters remained till the days of Theodosius, the last Roman prince who appeared in the field at the head of his armies, and whose authority was universally acknowledged throughout the whole extent of the empire. But Theo-

dosius died in the month of January, of the year 395; and if the subjects of Rome could be ignorant of the obligations that they owed to that great emperor, they were soon convinced, by woeful experience, of the loss which they sustained in his death. But here you must allow me to lay before you an extract from Mr. Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

“Theodosius died in the month of January; and before the end of the winter of the same year, the Gothic nation was in arms. The barbarian auxiliaries erected their independent standard; and boldly avowed the hostile designs, which they had long cherished in their ferocious minds. Their countrymen, who had been condemned by the last treaty, to a life of tranquillity and labour, deserted their farms at the first sound of the trumpet, and eagerly resumed the weapons which they had reluctantly laid down. The barriers of the Danube were thrown open; the savage warriors of Scythia issued from their forests; and the uncommon severity of the winter allowed the poet to remark, that they rolled their ponderous waggons over the broad and icy bank of the indignant river. Instead of being impelled by the blind and headstrong passions of their chiefs, the Goths were now directed by the bold and artful genius of Alaric. That renowned leader disdained to trample any longer on the prostrate and ruined countries of Thrace and Dacia; and he resolved to seek a plentiful harvest of fame and riches in a province which had hitherto escaped the ravages of war. The fertile fields of Phocis and Boetia were instantly covered by a deluge of barbarians, who massacred the males of an age to bear arms, and drove away the beautiful females with the spoil and cattle of the flaming villages. The travellers, who visited Greece several years afterwards, could easily discover the deep and bloody traces of the march of the Goths; and Thebes was less indebted for her perservation to the strength of her seven gates, than to the anger of Alaric who hastened to occupy the city of Athens. From the promontory of Sunium to the town of Megara, the whole territory of Attica was blasted by his baleful presence. Corinth, Argos, Sparta yielded without resistance to the arms of the Goths; and the most fortunate of the inhabitants were saved by death from beholding the slavery of their families, and the conflagration of their cities.”<sup>d</sup>

Having thus ravaged the plains of Greece, these immense hordes of barbarians next invaded Italy and the West. Under the guidance of the same powerful leader, who was now proclaimed king of the Visigoths, the irruption passed over Pannonia, Istria, and the Venetian territory, and threatened the destruction of Imperial Rome herself. This, however, was prevented for the

<sup>d</sup> History of the Decline and Fall, ch. xxx.



present, by an able general, (Stilicho,) who checked their career, and drove them out of Italy; but the storm was soon after renewed; the Gothic general again invaded Italy, and after three successive sieges, the city of Rome was sacked and pillaged by the warriors of the North,\* A.D. 404.

Two years afterwards, A.D. 406, the Germans, headed by Rhadagast, emigrated from their native land, besieged Florence, and threatened the city of Rome. Though Stilicho was again victorious, and beat them out of Italy; yet the remnant of the vanquished host was sufficient to invade and desolate the province of Gaul. "The banks of the Rhine," says Gibbon, "were crowned, like those of the Tiber, with elegant houses and well cultivated farms. This scene of peace and plenty was suddenly changed into a desert; and the prospect of the smoking ruins could alone distinguish the solitude of nature from the desolations of man. The flourishing city of Mentz was surprised and destroyed, and many thousand Christians were inhumanly massacred in the church. Worms perished after a long and obstinate siege. Strasburgh, Spire, Rheims, Tournay, Arras, Amiens, experienced the cruel oppression of the German yoke; and the consuming flames of war spread from the banks of the Rhine over the greatest part of the seventeen provinces of Gaul. That rich and extensive country, as far as the ocean, the Alps, and the Pyrennees, was delivered to the barbarians; who drove before them in a promiscuous crowd, the bishop, the senator, and the virgin, laden with the spoils of their houses and altars. Whilst the east and the west were thus harassed by Alaric and Rhadagast, the south was destined to suffer under the merciless ferocity of Genseric." In the year 409, Spain was overrun and ravaged by the Suevi, the Vandals, and the Alans, who were afterwards, in their turn, compelled to submit to the arms of the Goths. The Vandals soon afterwards invaded the African provinces; for in the year 429, they crossed the Strait of Gibraltar under the command of Genseric. Those provinces were extremely populous, and the country itself was so fruitful, that it deservedly obtained the name of the common granary of Rome and mankind. "On a sudden," says Gibbon, "the seven provinces from Tangiers to Tripoli, were overwhelmed by the invasion of the Vandals. War, in its fairest form, implies a perpetual violation of humanity and justice; and the hostilities of barbarians are inflamed by the fierce and lawless spirit which incessantly disturbs their peaceful and domestic society. The Vandals, where they found resistance, seldom gave quarter: and the deaths of their valiant countrymen were expiated by the ruin of the cities, under whose walls they

\* Gibbon's Decline and Fall, ch. xxxi.

had fallen. Careless of the distinctions of age, or sex, or rank, they employed every species of indignity and torture to force from the captives a discovery of their hidden wealth. The stern policy of Genseric justified his frequent examples of military execution: he was not always the master of his own passions, or of those of his followers; and the calamities of war were aggravated by the licentiousness of the Moors, and the fanaticism of the Donatists.”<sup>f</sup>

The next irruption of these barbarians that I shall notice, is that of the Huns or Hungarians, under their monarch Attila, who having united in his own person the two empires of Scythia and Germany, soon turned his arms against the declining power of the Romans. In the year 441, he invaded the eastern empire. “The Illyrian frontier was covered by a line of castles and fortresses; but these obstacles were instantly swept away by the inundation of the Huns. They destroyed with fire and sword the most populous cities—and the whole breadth of Europe, as it extends five hundred miles from the Euxine to the Adriatic, was at once invaded, and occupied, and desolated by the myriads of barbarians whom Attila led into the field. The armies of the eastern empire were vanquished in three successive engagements; and the progress of Attila may be traced by the fields of battle. From the Hellespont to Thermopylæ and the suburbs of Constantinople, he ravaged without resistance and without mercy, the provinces of Thrace and Macedonia. Heraclia and Adrianople might, perhaps, escape this dreadful irruption of the Huns; but words the most expressive of total extirpation and erasure, are applied to the calamities which they inflicted on seventy cities of the eastern empire.”<sup>g</sup> A pause, at length, seemed to take place; but it was a passing semblance, rather than a permanent reality. In the year 446, the emperor of Constantinople concluded an ignominious peace with Attila; but in the year 450, the restless Hunn threatened alike both the east and the west; and “mankind waited his decision,” says Gibbon, “with awful suspense.” The tempest, however, now burst over Gaul and Italy. After ravaging the former of these countries with savage barbarity, Attila turned his arms towards the seat of the Western Empire. Aquileia made a vigorous, but ineffectual resistance; and the succeeding generation could scarcely discover its ruins. The victorious barbarian pursued his march, and, as he passed, the cities of Altinum, Concordia, and Padua, were reduced to heaps of stones and ashes. The inland towns, Vicenza, Verona, and Bergamo, were exposed to the rapacious cruelty of the Huns; the rich plains of modern Lombardy were laid waste; and the ferocious Attila boasted that “the grass never grew on the spot where his horse had trod.”<sup>h</sup>

<sup>f</sup> Decline and Fall, ch. xxxiii.    <sup>g</sup> Idem, ch. xxxiv.    <sup>h</sup> Idem, ch. xxxv.

I might here take my leave of this heart-rending history, and proceed to shew its connection with the subject of my lecture, the sounding of the third trumpet; but to prevent the unpleasant necessity of our recurring to it again, I must trespass upon your patience while I pursue the narrative a little further in detail.

The elegant historian, from whom I have already made so many quotations, in describing the state of the empire from the year 440 to 455, thus proceeds:

“The loss or desolation of the provinces, from the ocean to the Alps, impaired the glory and greatness of Rome; her internal prosperity was irretrievably destroyed by the separation of Africa. The rapacious Vandals confiscated the patrimonious estates of the senators, and intercepted the regular subsidies which relieved the poverty and encouraged the idleness of the plebeians. The distress of the Romans was soon aggravated by an unexpected attack; and the province, so long cultivated for their use by industrious and obedient subjects, was armed against them by an ambitious barbarian. The Vandals and Alani or Germans, who followed the successful standard of Genseric, had acquired a rich and fertile territory, which stretched along the coast above ninety days journey from Tangier to Tripoli; but their narrow limits were pressed and confined on either side by the sandy desert and the Mediterranean. The discovery and conquest of the black nations, that might dwell beneath the torrid zone, could not tempt the rational ambition of Genseric; but he cast his eye towards the sea; he resolved to create a naval power; and his bold resolution was executed with steady and active perseverance. The woods of Mount Atlas afforded an inexhaustible nursery of timber; his new subjects were skilled in the arts of navigation and ship-building; he animated his daring Vandals to embrace a mode of warfare, which would render every maritime country accessible to their arms. The Moors and Africans were allured by the hopes of plunder; and after an interval of six centuries, the fleets of Carthage again claimed the empire of the Mediterranean. The kingdom of Italy, a name to which the Western empire was gradually reduced, was afflicted by the incessant depredations of the Vandal pirates. In the spring of each year, they equipped a formidable navy in the port of Carthage; and Genseric himself, though in a very advanced age, still commanded in person the most important expeditions. His designs were concealed with impenetrable secrecy, till the moment that he hoisted sail. When he was asked by his pilot what course he should steer, “Leave the determination to the winds,” replied the barbarian, with pious arrogance; “they will transport us to the guilty coast, whose inhabitants have provoked the Divine justice. In this way the Vandals repeatedly visited the coasts of Spain,

Liguria, Tuscany, Campania, Lucania, Apulia, Calabria, Venetia, Dalmatia, Epirus, Greece, and Sicily. They were tempted to subdue the island of Sardinia, so advantageously placed in the centre of the Mediterranean; and their arms spread desolation and terror, from the columns of Hercules to the mouth of the Nile.<sup>1</sup>

But while the Vandals of Southern Africa thus harassed both the east and the west, their fury descended with peculiar violence upon Italy, the now feeble representative of the Western empire. In the year 455, Genseric sailed from the port of Carthage, and suddenly landed at the mouth of the Tiber. Rome, once the queen of nations and the mistress of the world, was unable to resist the arms of a barbarian chief. During fourteen days and nights, the "eternal city" was given up to the ferocity of the Vandals, and to the licentiousness of the Moors; and by these reckless corsairs of Africa, it was plundered of all that yet remained to it, from former conquerors, of public or private wealth; of sacred or profane treasure. Having thus satiated at once his rapacity and his cruelty, Genseric set sail again for Africa, carrying with him immense riches and an innumerable multitude of captives, among whom were the Empress Eudoxia and her two daughters. And thus, before the conclusion of the fifth century, the mighty fabric of empire, which valour and policy had founded upon the seven hills of Rome, was finally overthrown, in all the west of Europe, by the barbarous nations from the north, whose martial energy, and whose numbers were irresistible. A race of men formerly unknown or despised, had not only dismembered that proud sovereignty, but permanently settled themselves in its fairest provinces, and imposed their yoke upon the ancient possessors. The Vandals were masters of Africa; the Suevi held part of Spain; the Visigoths possessed the remainder with a large portion of Gaul; the Burgundians occupied the provinces watered by the Rhine and the Soane; the Ostrogoths almost all Italy; the Saxons took possession of the Roman provinces in South Britain; and the Huns of Pannonia. New governments, laws, languages; new manners, customs, dresses; new names of men and of countries, prevailed; and an almost total change took place in the state of Europe. Let us now return to the subject of our lecture, and examine whether there can be any reference to the state of things which I have laid before you, in the sounding of the third trumpet.

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

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon's Decline and Fall, ch. xxxvi.

*the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became Wormwood, and many men died of the waters, because they were bitter.*" This trumpet, we see, inflicts its injuries on the *rivers* and *fountains* of waters, just as the former trumpet did hurt to the *sea*, ver. 8, 9. Now, according to the view that was taken in our last lecture of the term *waters*, as symbolizing a multitude of people, ch. xvii. 15, and the *sea* as denoting the multitude of professors of Christianity within the bounds of the Roman empire; the "rivers and fountains of waters," must signify particular *provinces* and *nations*, such as Africa, Gaul, Spain, Britain, &c. lying at a distance from the seat of government, but by conquest incorporated with the empire. Let us, next enquire, what is intended by this extraordinary *star*, the name of which is called "*Wormwood*."

A *STAR*, in the language of prophecy, is the symbol of a rising kingdom. Thus you will find it used in Balaam's parable, Numb. xxiv. 17. "There shall come a *star* out of Jacob, and a *sceptre* shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Seth." We cannot doubt that this was a prediction of the kingdom of the Messiah; but I merely refer to it at present in proof of the symbolical use of the *star*. And in connection with it, we may also consider what was said by the wise men from the east, Matt. ii. 2. "Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his *star in the east*, and are come to worship." But further, this star is said to "*burn as a lamp*;" which appears to denote the success and prosperity of the kingdom or power symbolized by the star. It is in this way that the prophet Isaiah uses the metaphor of a lamp, ch. lxii. 1. "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest; until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." Here is the metaphor of the star [or kingdom of the Messiah,] burning as a lamp; and you may find the very same imagery adopted, ch. lx. 1, 2, 3. But the star, in my text, is said to *fall from heaven*; an expression which sometimes denotes the utter fall and ruin of a kingdom or state, as when it is said of the king of Babylon, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art *thou* cut down to the ground, that didst weaken the nations!" Isa. xiv. 12. Now we cannot understand the expression in our text, in this sense; because that would be altogether incompatible with the idea of its prosperity and success, which is intimated by its burning as a lamp. I rather understand the expression "falling from heaven," to denote the removal of this rising kingdom or power, from its native seat and habitation; and so coming suddenly, surprisingly, and, in such a manner as that it cannot be well told how, or from whence it

came. So unlooked for, so wholly unexpected was its advent that it would seem, to use a common expression, as if it had dropped down from the clouds! And now, you see, it only remains for us to enquire into the import of the name of this star, "it is called *Wormwood*." This is not an unusual metaphor, in the prophetic writings, and consequently cannot be difficult to decypher. Jeremiah has it more than once: thus in ch. ix. 15, "Behold, I will feed this people with *wormwood*, and give them water of gall to drink;" in the next verse it is added, "I will send a sword after them till I have consumed them." See also, ch. xxiii. 15, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts concerning the prophets: Behold, I will feed them with *wormwood*, and make them drink the water of gall, for, from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land." In these places the metaphorical use of the term *wormwood* is too obvious to require illustration. It denotes a threatening that the Lord would embitter and poison, as it were, all their domestic comforts, so that they should have no enjoyment of life. Now let us transfer this idea to the subject in hand. This mischievous power, denoted by the term "*wormwood*," falls upon the provinces and kingdoms of the Western empire, like a comet, emitting war, pestilence, and horrible devastation as it advances; and now see if you can find nothing in the history of that period, as submitted to you in the former part of this lecture, that bears any analogy to it. Call to your recollection, the numerous incursions of these savage tribes and roving barbarians into the various provinces of the empire, fighting their way sword in hand, and taking possession of the countries and the property of the inhabitants, wherever they came; and every where mingling themselves with the subjects of the empire, so that "the third part of the waters," that is, of the population, "became wormwood, and many died of the waters, because they were made bitter;" review the whole at your leisure in all its bearings, and I think you will admit that we have not missed the key to the interpretation of the sounding of the third trumpet. I close with a short paragraph from *Dr. Robertson's History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles the Fifth*:

"If a man were called to fix upon a period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was the most calamitous and afflicted, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Theodosius the Great, to the establishment of the Lombards in Italy;" a period of one hundred and seventy-six years, viz. from A.D. 395 to 571. "The contemporary authors, who beheld that scene of desolation, labour, and are at a loss for expressions to describe the horror of it. '*The scourge of God*,' '*the destroyer of nations*,' are the dreadful epithets by which they distinguish the most noted of the bar-

barous leaders; and they compare the ruin which they had brought on the world to the havock occasioned by earthquakes, conflagrations, or deluges, the most formidable and fatal calamities which the imagination of man can conceive."<sup>k</sup> If this do not intrepert to us the import of the falling of the star "wormwood," I know no events in history which can do it!

And now in taking leave of the subject, I cannot persuade myself to dismiss it without a reflection or two, which must suggest themselves to most of you, on a review of what has been said. For a state of society so replete with calamity as was that which we have been considering, there must have been some provocation. The Righteous Governor of the universe, does not willingly afflict, nor grieve the children of men. But where shall we look for an apparently adequate cause? Is it unreasonable to hint, that it may be found in the conduct of the ruling powers of that eventful period, in adulterating the gospel, and secularizing the kingdom of the Son of God? "In these judgments upon the empire," says Mr. Fuller, "we perceive the Divine displeasure for its having corrupted the christian religion, and transformed it into an engine of state. The wars of the Assyrians and Babylonians were the scourges of God on those who had corrupted the true religion; and such were those of the Goths and Vandals, and the Huns on the christian governments of the fourth and fifth centuries." No doubt, when Constantine and his clergy had succeeded in moulding the Christian profession after their own fashion, and accommodating it to their own worldly lusts and inclinations, they blessed themselves in their happy success. But the sequel made the fact abundantly apparent, that "there is a God that judgeth in the earth;" and that he was still saying by his dispensations in providence, as he formerly said to Israel of old, "Shall not my soul be avenged of such a people as this?" It is very true that the great bulk of professed Christians have in all ages treated this corruption of the primitive church order and discipline as a venial offence; but the inhabitants of the Roman empire did not find it so in their day; and it will be wise in us to take the admonition of the apostle: "Let us hold fast the grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire."

<sup>k</sup> History of Charles V., vol. i. sect. i.

## LECTURE XXV.

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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. 13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound.—Rev. viii. 12, 13.

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### THE FOURTH TRUMPET.

IN attempting to illustrate to you, in our last lecture, the events that transpired consequent on the blowing of the *third* trumpet, I was led to present you with a brief account of the irruption of the Goths and Vandals, and various other tribes of barbarians, into the provinces of the Western Roman empire during the fifth century, and also the miseries that they inflicted on the wretched inhabitants of those countries. This disastrous state of things appears to me to be very aptly symbolized by the falling of the star “wormwood,” upon the “third part of the *rivers and fountains of waters*,” that is, upon the third part of the *population* of the provinces of the empire ; and these barbarians taking up their abode in the countries which they overran and conquered, is significantly described as converting the third part of the waters into wormwood, in other words, assimilating the state of society to their own characters, manners, and habits, and issuing in the destruction of the third part of the inhabitants. The sounding of the *fourth* trumpet, which is the subject of the present lecture, will necessarily lead us to consider some of the consequences that resulted from the unhappy state of things which I then detailed to you, and which had its beginning by the former trumpet. The symbolical imagery of this fourth trumpet is concise, but it appears to me sufficiently definite to prevent our going much astray in interpreting it. The whole is comprised in what may be termed an eclipse of the heavenly bodies.

“*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.*” There is great grandeur and sublimity in this language, let us enquire into its import. In entering upon the subject before us, the first thing we have to do is to ascertain the



meaning of the symbols here employed ; the *sun*, the *moon*, the *stars*;—what we are to understand by their being *smitten*;—and the kind of *darkness* that ensued. When we have settled this point, the way will be cleared for attempting a short illustration of the subject. Now to trace these symbols to their origin we cannot do better than turn to the account which Moses gives us of the ends for which the lights of heaven were created. You have it in Gen. i. 16. “ God made two great lights ; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night ; he made the stars also.” Thus it is from the use of the sun, moon, and stars in the world of nature, that they came to be adopted as symbols to denote *rule* and *government* in civil society or the body politic. Sir Isaac Newton has some remarks on this particular subject which are worth transcribing, and I shall make no apology for laying them before you.

“ The figurative language of the prophets,” says he, “ is taken from the analogy between the world natural, and an empire or kingdom considered as a world politic. Accordingly, the whole world natural, consisting of heaven and earth, signifies the whole world politic, consisting of thrones and people, or so much of it as is considered in prophecy ; and the things in that world signify the analogous things in this. For the heavens and the things therein signify thrones and dignities, and those who enjoy them ; and the earth with things thereon, the inferior people ; and the lowest parts of the earth, called *hades* or *hell*, the lowest or most miserable part of them. Great earthquakes, and the shaking of heaven and earth are put for the shaking of kingdoms, so as to distract and overthrow them ; the creating a new heaven and earth, and the passing away of an old one, or the beginning and end of a world, for the rise and ruin of a body politic signified thereby. The sun is put for the whole species and race of kings, in the kingdoms of the world politic ; the moon for the body of the common people, considered as the king’s wife ; the stars for subordinate princes and great men ; or for bishops and rulers of the people of God, when the sun is Christ ; the setting of the sun, moon, and stars, darkening the sun, turning the moon into blood, and falling of the stars, denote the ceasing of a kingdom.”<sup>a</sup>

These, brethren, are just and pertinent observations on the subject ; and if you could commit them to memory, so as to avail yourselves of them in the reading of the Old Testament prophecies, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, &c., you would find them of unspeakable use in throwing light upon many parts of their writings, which, for want of this key, now appear exceed-

<sup>a</sup> Sir Isaac Newton’s Observations on the Prophecies, part i., ch. ii.

ingly obscure. Let us, however, avail ourselves of it, in the present instance, in decyphering the hieroglyphical language of this fourth trumpet, and see what it will lead us to.

The Roman empire, as you already know, comprised a considerable number of kingdoms and states, but all of them tributary to Rome, and united under one head, viz. the emperor. They had different forms of government existing among them when the countries were invaded by the hordes of barbarians who issued like so many swarms of bees from their hives in Germany and the northern parts of Europe, and migrating towards the south and west, took forcible possession of the provinces, planted themselves among the natives, overturned the established order of things which they every where met with, and founded kingdoms of their own, the rule and government of which they committed to the hands of their chiefs or leaders. By this means, that system of evil which was begun by the third trumpet, was continued by the fourth, namely, the undermining of the government of the empire, and weakening the power of the emperors at its head, which was wholly taken away by this fourth trumpet; and consequently all the kings, princes, potentates, &c., who hitherto had had dominion in the empire, under its imperial head, received, as it were, their death blow from the power of the marauders. And this is what I understand to be imported by "the third part of the sun being 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 and the day shone not for a third part, and the night likewise." There are many passages in the writings of the Old Testament prophets in which similar imagery is found, and where the interpretation of it cannot be doubted, and consequently they will afford us a clue on the present occasion. Thus for instance, in Isa. ch. xiii. the prophet is foretelling the destruction of Babylon by the arms of Cyrus, king of Persia. In the former part of the chapter, ver. 4, 5, he speaks as if he saw the Persians advancing into the country, prepared to execute the Divine indignation upon its guilty inhabitants. He then proceeds to describe the dreadful consequences of this visitation, the consternation that must seize those that are the objects of it, and under a variety of images, corresponding with those used by the prophet in describing the effects of the sounding of this fourth trumpet, he thus paints the dreadful destruction of the inhabitants of Babylon, ver. 10, 16. "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.—I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger." See also Ezek. ch. xxxii. where the Lord is threatening to execute his

judgments on the king of Egypt. He says, "When I shall extinguish thee, I will cover the heaven 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 thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord," ver. 7, 8. Look at Joel, ch. ii. where Jehovah is threatening to make the land of Judah desolate for the sins of its inhabitants: "The earth shall quake before them, the heavens shall tremble; the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining," ver. 10. Quotations of this kind might be greatly multiplied, but these are sufficient for my purpose; they are quite parallel to the language of this fourth trumpet, which strikingly describes the state of anarchy and confusion that was introduced into the provinces of the Roman empire, by these Gothic invaders taking up their settlement among the inhabitants, overturning the established governments, which is symbolized by the smiting of the third part of the sun, moon, and stars, so that they shone not for the third part of the day, and the night likewise.

It is, perhaps, not easy for us, my brethren, whose country, at least in our day, has been happily exempt from the miseries of war; from the still greater calamity of being invaded by hostile armies laying it waste with fire, and sword, and pillage; and above all from this being effected by hordes of ferocious barbarians who after conquering it by their arms, seized upon its territory as their own property; I say, it is not easy for us to realize that terrible state of affairs which the inhabitants of the empire were subjected to, by the invasion of the Goths and Vandals, and especially by their remaining in the different countries, subverting all the constituted authorities, overturning the established order of things, and revolutionizing every thing. Something of this subject, indeed, we might have learned by observation and experience, had our lot been cast in the times of the civil wars, which at one period of our history so dreadfully scourged the land of our nativity; but even this would have afforded us only a very inadequate picture of the miseries that were entailed upon the inhabitants of the empire at the period we are speaking of; the parallel fails in many essential particulars which my time does not admit of now instancing; perhaps a better parallel would have been found in the state and condition of the inhabitants of Germany during the late sanguinary war; when year after year their unhappy country was overrun by hostile armies, devastating their fruitful plains; destroying the labour of the husbandman; laying siege to their finest cities; seizing, and plundering, and carrying away whatever the country afforded of valuable: when monarchs were deposed at pleasure, and foreigners placed in their seats at the will of a despot; when any thing like a stable government, to protect the lives and pro-

perty of its inhabitants, which, indeed, is one of the greatest earthly blessings that any country can enjoy, was unknown during a whole generation; this would probably have afforded a better parallel to the case in hand; and yet even this would have fallen far short of representing the original; because, truly great as were the hardships and the sufferings to which the inhabitants of that devoted country were for years exposed, families survived to see an end of them, and to recover in some degree their possessions and lands; but it was not so with the inhabitants of the provinces that were invaded and conquered by the barbarians, to whom reference is now made. This dreadful state of anarchy and confusion, of wailing, and lamentation, and woe, which is symbolized by the *darkness* that ensued on the smiting of the heavenly bodies, continued for more than a century and a half, and terminated in the complete subjugation of the inhabitants, and their being dispossessed of their rightful property by those merciless invaders, who, after subjecting the whole population to their yoke, ruled over them with savage tyranny. In the last lecture I introduced several quotations from Mr. Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman empire*, illustrative of the incursions of the Goths and Vandals into the empire. Treating, as that history expressly does, of the particular subjects which constitute the burden of the third, and all the following trumpets, and replete as his pages are with curious and interesting facts; and moreover, coming as they do from the pen of an infidel who had nothing less in his view than to furnish evidence to the truth of prophecy, you must pardon me in trespassing upon you with an occasional extract in addition to those already given, as we proceed with this course of lectures.

“Odoacer was the first barbarian who reigned in Italy, over a people who had once asserted their just superiority above the rest of mankind. The disgrace of the Romans still excites our respectful compassion, and we fondly sympathise with the imaginary grief and indignation of their degenerate posterity. But the calamities of Italy had gradually subdued the proud consciousness of freedom and glory. In the age of Roman virtue, the provinces were subject to the arms, and the citizens to the laws of the republic; till those laws were subverted by civil discord, and both the city and the provinces became the servile property of a tyrant. The forms of the constitution, which alleviated or disguised their abject slavery, were abolished by time and violence; the Italians alternately lamented the presence or the absence of the sovereigns, whom they detested or despised; and the succession of five centuries inflicted the various evils of military licence, capricious despotism, and elaborate oppression. During the same period, the barbarians had emerged from obscurity and contempt, and the warriors of Germany and Scythia were introduced into

the provinces, as the servants, the allies, and at length the masters, of the Romans, whom they insulted or protected. The hatred of the people was suppressed by fear; they respected the spirit and splendour of the martial chiefs, who were invested with the honours of the empire; and the fate of Rome had long depended on the sword of those formidable strangers.

“Notwithstanding the prudence and success of Odoacer, the kingdom exhibited the sad prospect of misery and desolation. Since the age of Tiberius, the decay of agriculture had been felt in Italy; and it was a just subject of complaint, that the life of the Roman people depended on the accidents of the winds and waves. In the division and decline of the empire, the tributary harvests of Egypt and Africa were withdrawn; the numbers of the inhabitants continually diminished with the means of subsistence; and the country was exhausted by the irretrievable losses of war, famine, and pestilence. St. Ambrose has deplored the ruin of a populous district, which had been once adorned with the flourishing cities of Bologna, Modena, Rhegium, and Placentia. Pope Gelasius was a subject of Odoacer, and he affirms, with strong exaggeration, that in *Æmilia*, Tuscany, and the adjacent provinces, the human species was almost extirpated. The plebeians of Rome, who were fed by the hand of their master, perished or disappeared, as soon as his liberality was suppressed; the decline of the arts reduced the industrious mechanic to idleness and want; and the senators, who might support with patience the ruin of their country, bewailed their private loss of wealth and luxury. One third of those ample estates, to which the ruin of Italy is originally imputed, was extorted for the use of the conquerors. Injuries were aggravated by insults; the sense of actual sufferings was embittered by the fear of more dreadful evils; and as new lands were allotted to new swarms of barbarians, each senator was apprehensive lest the arbitrary surveyors should approach his favourite villa, or his most profitable farm. The least unfortunate were those who submitted without a murmur to the power which it was impossible to resist. Since they desired to live, they owed some gratitude to the tyrant who had spared their lives; and since he was absolute master of their fortunes, the portion which he left must be accepted as his pure and voluntary gift.”<sup>d</sup>

Such is the picture drawn of the state of Italy, at this particular epoch, by this able and impartial historian; and I submit to your consideration how far it justifies the language of prophecy comprised in the verses first read, and as now interpreted. We proceed with the subject.

<sup>d</sup> History of the Decline and Fall, ch. xxxvi.

About the year 475, the imperial sceptre was swayed by a prince who bore the names of Romulus Augustus. In the short space of twenty years, viz., since the death of Valentinian, nine emperors had successively disappeared. The present monarch, whose father's name was Orestes, was a youth, recommended, says Gibbon, only by his beauty; and would be the least entitled to the notice of posterity, if his reign, which was marked by the extinction of the Roman empire in the west, did not leave a memorable era in the history of mankind. "The son of Orestes," says the historian, "assumed and disgraced the names of Romulus Augustus; but the first was corrupted into Momyllus, by the Greeks; and the second has been changed by the Latins into the contemptible diminutive Augustulus. The life of this inoffensive youth was spared by the generous clemency of Odoacer," a barbarian chief who had led a wandering life among the savage tribes of Noricum, with a mind and a fortune suited to the most desperate adventures, and who at this time marched into Italy at the head of an army of confederates. "Odoacer was every where received with military acclamations, and they saluted him with the title of king, which he received, but, for prudential reasons, he waved the purple and diadem. The office of emperor, he considered to be both useless and expensive, and he consequently resolved to abolish it; and such is the weight of antique prejudice, that it required some boldness and penetration to discover the extreme facility of the enterprise. The unfortunate Augustulus was made the instrument of his own disgrace; he signified his resignation to the senate; and that assembly in their last act of obedience to a Roman prince, still affected the spirit of freedom, and the forms of the constitution. Odoacer dismissed him, with his whole family, from the imperial palace, fixed his annual allowance at six thousand pieces of gold, and assigned the castle of Lucullus, in Campania, for the place of his exile or retirement;" and here we have the extinction of the Roman empire in the west, in the year 476, of the christian era. As this is an event of considerable importance in the prophecies concerning the Christian church; as it is pointed to in the book of Daniel; and as some of the calculations both in that book, and also in the Apocalypse are supposed by some to date their commencement from it; there seems a propriety in our making a momentary pause, and looking around us before we proceed.

1. If we turn to the book of Daniel, ch. vii., we find the Roman empire, which at the time of his writing had no existence, foretold under the image of a monstrous wild beast, "dreadful, and terrible, and strong exceedingly; having great iron teeth; devouring and breaking in pieces, and stamping the residue with its feet; differing from the three empires that had preceded it, in

this, among other things, that *it had ten horns*, ver. 7. And when the prophet asked an explanation of these ten horns, ver. 19, he is told that this fourth beast signified the fourth kingdom, or empire which should arise upon the earth, answering to the Roman empire, and that "*the ten horns out of this kingdom, were ten kings that should arise*," ver. 24. As we shall find much said about these ten kings in that part of the Apocalypse which we have yet to go over; it may be useful for us in this place to enquire who or what they are, and where we are to look for them.

It is certain that there have been different accounts given of the ten kingdoms which were predicted to arise out of ruins of the Roman Western empire; and this has been occasioned by those who have written upon the subject, taking different dates, or founding their report on what was the actual state of things at different periods; for we must all be aware that there is a material difference between taking our estimate from the time of those Gothic tribes first breaking in upon the several provinces of the empire, and while they were roaming up and down in it, harassing the people and the government, before they got full power in it as kings, and had put down the seventh head, or imperial form of government; and forming our report from that period when something like an established and settled state of things took place among them. And to this chiefly is the discrepancy owing that you will find among those who have written on the subject. The learned Joseph Mede has given us, what he calls a "*Type of the rending of the empire, or Roman dominion, in the year of Christ 456, and so forward*." Sir Isaac Newton, in his *Observations on Daniel*, has given us another, differing in some respects; and I have examined at least half a dozen more; but though shades of difference may be found among them, they appear to me of trifling consequence, and scarcely deserving the pains of reconciling. The following list will be found sufficiently authenticated to serve our purpose:

1. Odoacer, who put a final end to the Western empire, A.D. 476, reigned as king in Rome and Italy, during the seventeen succeeding years. At that time, however, he was attacked by the Ostrogoths, (*i. e.* the *Eastern Goths*,) under Theodoric, who overthrew his kingdom, and planted that of the Ostrogoths in Italy; this is one of the ten kings.
2. The Visigoths, (*i. e.* the *Western Goths*,) under Alaric, established their kingdom in Spain and part of Gaul.
3. The Vandals, under Genseric, settled in Africa.
4. The Hunns, established in Hungary, a kingdom well known.

5. The Burgundians occupied the countries which we now call Switzerland, Piedmont, and the Grisons.
6. The kingdom of the Franks was founded under Childeric, A.D. 482, in ancient Gaul, now called France.
7. The Suevi took possession of a part of Spain, which country for many centuries was divided into two kingdoms.
8. The Saxons invaded Great Britain, and settled here; but of this kingdom it is needless to add anything in the way of explanation.
9. The kingdom of the Greeks, at Ravenna, commonly called the Exarchate of Ravenna, deputed by the Greek emperors, was another.
10. The Lombards in Lombardy; these were a people originally from Pannonia, who subdued the northern part of Italy, which has since retained their name. The residence of their kings was in Pavia.

This is the best account that I am able to give you of the partition of the Roman empire into ten distinct kingdoms, which took place at the fall of that mighty and colossal fabric. We now proceed with our subject.

2. Another important circumstance which took place at the fall of the Western Roman empire, and of which there is much said in the writings of Daniel, as well as in the Apocalypse, is the rise of a little horn, which was to spring up among these ten kingdoms of which we have been speaking. You have the account of this also in Daniel, vii. 8. "I considered the [ten] horns, and, behold there came up among them *another little horn*, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and behold, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things." The subject is resumed, ver. 24. "The ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise; and *another shall rise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times, and the dividing of time.*"

Here we have a clear and striking prediction of the kingdom of Antichrist, denoted by "a little horn," or kingdom springing up among the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided. The characteristic properties of this little horn, or kingdom, will come under our consideration hereafter. What I have more particularly in view at present is to fix your attention upon *the time of its birth* or origin, and the connection which this has with the downfall of the empire. If you turn to 2 Thess. ii.



you will find the apostle Paul adverting to this prophecy of Daniel; reminding the Thessalonians of it,—that the man of sin, the son of perdition, would in due time be revealed, ver. 3; and then he describes his character and conduct in language much like what Daniel had used concerning the little horn; but he adds that, at the time of writing his epistle, there was an obstacle in the way of the manifestation or full revelation of this anti-christian power, which obstacle, let, or hindrance, would in due time be taken out of the way, and *then* that wicked one should be revealed, ver. 6, 7. If you ask what it was that constituted this impediment; what hindered the man of sin from being then revealed? the answer is, it was the existence of the imperial form of government in the empire. So long as that was maintained, antichrist could not be revealed. Here, then, we find this important event taking place; the empire is broken to pieces; ten kingdoms arise out of its ruins; and every let and hindrance removed out of the way of the rise of the little horn. And now that the subject is thus before us, let me notice one or two things that are mentioned by the prophet Daniel in connection with the rise of this little horn. The first is, that he was to arise *after* the other ten horns or kingdoms, ver. 24. The Greek term *οπισω* literally means *behind* them. So craftily did he manage matters, that they were not apprised of his existence till he had got an ascendancy over them all. Another thing is, that, as it were, to make room for him and enlarge his border, “three of the first horns or kingdoms, were to be plucked up by the roots,” ver. 8, which is afterwards explained, ver. 24, by his, “subduing three kings.” These three kingdoms were the exarchate of Ravenna; the kingdom of the Lombards; and the senate or state of Rome. The first was the capital of the Greek emperor’s dominions in Italy; but, having revolted at the instigation of the bishop of Rome, it was seized by Astolphus, king of the Lombards, who retained possession of it for a while; when a quarrel arising between him and Stephen II., then bishop of Rome, the latter applied to Pepin, king of France, for assistance, who marched an army into Italy, besieged the city of Pavia, which was the capital of Lombardy, and forced them to surrender the exarchate and other territories, all of which, at the solicitation of the pope, were given to St. Peter and his successors for ever. A.D. 755. Thus fell *one* of the three kings.

The Lombards, which was another of them, were often troublesome to the bishops of Rome. During the eighth century they invaded the states of the church, on which pope Adrian had recourse to the king of France for assistance; the latter marched an army into Lombardy, which he subdued, put an end to their kingdom, and gave a great part of their dominion to the papal

see, together with the island of Corsica, Sardinia, and the Sabine territory, in the year 774. Thus fell a *second* of these kings.

The third appears to have been a small state or dukedom, of which the city of Rome itself was the centre or capital. After the decease of Pepin and his son Charlemagne, at whose hands the church had been enriched with such liberal donations, the Romans conspired against the pope, when Louis the Pious, then king of France, marched to his aid, repressed the Romans, and, at the solicitation of pope Pascal, confirmed the donations which his father and grandfather had made to the See of Rome, with the addition of the city itself and its adjoining territories, which constituted the duchy; all of which were granted to the pope and his successors in perpetuity; and thus fell the *third* kingdom, before the little horn.

It is necessary to mention these things, because they shew you the accomplishment of Daniel's prophecy; and moreover, go to confirm the view that we take of the little horn, and of its identity with the temporal or secular power of the bishops of Rome. The Catholics, as may naturally be supposed, are extremely anxious to turn these things aside, and save their church from the opprobrium which must unavoidably result from its being identified with the little horn of Daniel; but it is important that Protestants should be well established in the grounds and reasons of their religion, so as to be proof against their jesuitical sophistry, and able to make good the accusations which we bring against them. With this object in view, let us now proceed to examine the other descriptive characters of this little horn, and we shall find that they all apply to the Papal See, and moreover, that they do *not* unite in any other power that has ever yet appeared.

This power of the papacy is described as a *little horn*, Dan. vii. 8; and beyond all doubt, the temporal possessions of the see of Rome were originally very small, when compared with those of the other ten horns. In a former lecture, I endeavoured to trace this subject from its origin, and to shew you the steps by which the bishops of Rome gradually advanced from being the servants of the church, to become its lords, and even lords and possessors of the empire.

Again, this little horn is described as *diverse*, or as being different, from the other ten horns, ver. 24; and such it certainly was, for not one of them bore any resemblance to it in its constituent principles. They were all of them purely secular; but here was a monstrous motley compound of the ecclesiastical and the civil: the professed servants of Christ converted into lords, spiritual and temporal, of which you have a faint specimen in the English bench of bishops.

Further, "*he had eyes like the eyes of a man,*" ver 8; professedly,

he was an overseer, *επισκοπος*, or bishop—not a spiritual man to watch for the good of souls, but a carnal crafty politician, looking around him for his prey, and watching every opportunity to augment his worldly power, and promote his secular interest. It is added, that,

He had “*a mouth speaking very great things*,” ver. 8, 20. This has surely been abundantly verified in the noise and bluster of the popes, in the superiority which they have assumed over crowned heads—vaunting of their infallibility and supremacy—thundering out their bulls and anathemas—excommunicating princes, and absolving subjects from their allegiance.<sup>c</sup>

Moreover, “*his look was more stout than his fellows*,” ver. 20. Allow me to illustrate this by a short extract from history. “The epoch when the spirit of papal usurpation was most strikingly displayed, was the pontificate of Innocent III. In each of the three leading objects which Rome had pursued, viz. independent sovereignty, supremacy over the christian church, and controul over the princes of the earth, it was the fortune of this pontiff to conquer. The right of trampling upon the necks of kings was now recognized among churchmen, as an inherent attribute of the papacy.” “As the sun and the moon are placed in the firmament,” says pope Innocent, “the greater as the light of the day, and the lesser of the night: thus there are two powers in the church, the pontifical, which, as having the charge of souls, is the greater;

<sup>c</sup> “By the little horn which arose among the ten, was signified the papal power, which, in the beginning, exercising itself about religious matters, was of a different nature from the ten, yet was as really a horn, or sovereign power, as any of them; the ecclesiastical authority which the popes exercised, being as absolute as that of any emperor or tyrant whatever. The foundation of the papal power was first laid by a decree of the emperors Gratian and Valentinian II. A.D. 379. In consequence of this decree, the popes enjoyed an authority over all the bishops of the West; and this authority came to be established into a regular system of government, soon after the western empire was broken into ten kingdoms, agreeably to the vision in which the little horn arose among the ten horns, Dan. vii. 8. This horn is said to be *diverse from the rest*, because it had ‘eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.’ The eyes of a man which this little horn had, signify the sagacity of the papal power, in observing the times and seasons and the dispositions of men, with a view to improve them to its own aggrandizement. The mouth of this horn which ‘spake great things against the Most High,’ ver. 25. signifies the blasphemies of the popes, who, as the apostle expresses it, ‘opposed and exalted themselves above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that as God, they sat in the temple of God, shewing themselves that they were God.’ It signifies also the excommunications which they thundered out against those who opposed their dominion, together with the lies and flatteries which they used in their negotiations: by all which, this little horn obtained from others, that dominion by which it became so great, as we shall presently see. What an exact description have we here of the origin of the papal dominion, the foundation of which was laid, not in arms and conquest, but in the deepest policy.”—*Macknight’s Truth of the Gospel History*, p. 225.

and the royal, which is the less, and to which the bodies of men only are entrusted." This pope, says the historian, was formidable beyond all his predecessors; and, perhaps, beyond all his successors; on every side the thunder of Rome broke over the heads of princes.<sup>d</sup> But to proceed—

"*And he shall speak great words against (or as) the Most High,*" ver. 25. The arrogance and blasphemy of this order of men, the pretended successors of St. Peter, is too well known to require illustration; for, who does not know that the popes of Rome have set themselves up above all laws, human and divine, assuming the title, and laying claim to the office of God's vicegerents; with the attributes of *holiness* and *infallibility*, and exacting obedience to their decrees and mandates in preference to, and open violation of reason and scripture, at once insulting man, and blaspheming God; whence the apostle describes the man of sin, the son of perdition, as "opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple, or church, of God, shewing himself that he is, or exercising that dominion and rule which belongs only to God," 2 Thess. ii. 4.

It is further said of this little horn, that "*he shall wear out the saints of the Most High,*" ver. 21, 25. On this characteristic of papal Rome, we shall often be called to pass a judgment, before we arrive at the end of the Apocalypse; and certainly nothing is easier than to fix the charge of persecution on that apostate church. Here, indeed, the papal power is pre-eminent. Certainly, no power ever outraged the interests of society, the principles of justice, and the claims of humanity, to the same extent. Never did the world behold such blasphemy, profligacy, and wantonness, as in the proceedings of this spiritual domination. Its proscriptions, massacres, and murders, by means of the inquisition, war, and all the various forms which its cruelties assumed; persecuting and destroying the faithful and true worshippers of God, who protested against her innovations, and refused to comply with the idolatrous and superstitious worship of the Romish church, fix an everlasting stigma on papal Rome.

"*And he shall think to change times and laws,*" ver. 25.—This is abundantly verified in the Romish calendar, by the appointment of fasts and feasts and festivals: by the canonization of saints, and dedicating the religious observance of days to their memory; granting pardons and dispensing indulgences for sin; imposing new dogmas of faith, modes of worship, rules of duty, and reversing, at pleasure, the laws of God and man.

"*And they (the saints) shall be given into his hand until a time,*

<sup>d</sup> Hallam's Middle Ages, Vol. ii. ch. 7.

*and times, and the dividing of time,*" ver. 25.—This is the period of the *reign*—not the whole time of his *existence*; but the term allotted this little horn during which he is to "practise," or prosper, "and prevail in making war against the saints," according to Rev. xiii. 5, where you will find this "time, and times, and the dividing of time," is expressed by the words, "forty and two months." You will find it occurring also in Dan. xii. 7, "a time, times, and a half," as the period allotted this power "to scatter the holy people." For understanding this matter, you must observe, that according to the prophetic method of computation, a *time* denotes a year; *times* two years; and *half* a time, or the *dividing* of time, half a year. You will find this explained in Numbers xiv. 34. "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, *each day for a year*, shall ye bear your iniquities, even *forty years*." The Jewish year consisted of three hundred and sixty days; consequently, three years and a half, which is the same as forty and two months, will make one thousand two hundred and sixty days, and taking each day for a year, we have the duration of Antichrist's *reign*, viz. one thousand two hundred and sixty years. But of this subject more hereafter.

We have thus gone over the prophet Daniel's description of this little horn, and shown some of the grounds at least on which we consider it to be a prophecy of papal Rome; the antichristian power that was to rise at the fall of the Western empire; the man of sin, the son of perdition. And if any should be of opinion that I have introduced into the present lecture, matters that are not immediately connected with the sounding of the fourth trumpet, I have only to request a suspension of their censure until we have an opportunity of attending to the blowing of the succeeding trumpet, the fifth; when I am much mistaken if it do not appear, that all which has been said upon the present occasion has an important bearing upon it. We return to the words first read.

"*And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound,*" ver. 13. This solemn denunciation seems to be introduced for the purpose of drawing our attention to the great importance of the events which were to happen under the last three trumpets. It serves also, as a chronological mark to shew, that these three trumpets are all posterior to the first four, not only in order but in time, and that they belong to a new series of events. The most distinguishing plagues which were to befall the church and the world are designated by them.

## LECTURE XXVI.

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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 breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron ; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. 10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails : and their power was to hurt men five months. 11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Grek tongue hath his name Apollyon. 12 One woe is past ; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.—Rev. ix. 1-12.

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### THE FIFTH TRUMPET.

THE preceding prophecies of this period, which have lately come under our consideration, have brought us, by various steps, to an entire subversion of the Roman Western empire, when the mistress of the world lost all her authority and power ; when the imperial city was no longer a seat of government, but reduced to a petty duchy ; and when out of its ruins arose the various kingdoms and states of modern Europe.

The present prophecy describes a very remarkable judgment upon the nations of the earth, which should follow in the course of divine providence ; and it is announced at the close of the preceding chapter, as a tremendous “woe that should befall the inhabitants of the earth.” Intimation is given that it should be marked by circumstances of peculiar calamity ; so terrible in their nature, and ruinous in their consequences, as could only be adequately described by supposing satan, at the head of the

powers of darkness, to have broken the prison of the bottomless pit, and come abroad into the world to spread among mankind the sorest evils that have ever afflicted them ; ignorance, error, deceit, violence, spoil, and slavery.

At the sounding of the fifth trumpet, or the first of the three woe-trumpets, a star is seen to fall, or just to complete its fall from heaven to earth. It receives a key, with which it opens the bottomless pit, or pit of the abyss. Forthwith there arises a thick smoke ; and in the midst of it, issues out a vast swarm of locusts with their leader Apollyon at their head. The commission given to these locusts is, not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but to confine their injury to those who have not the seal of God in their foreheads. As for the locusts themselves, they are like horses prepared for battle. Their crowns are crowns of gold ; their faces are as the faces of men ; they have their hair as the hair of women ; their teeth are as the teeth of lions ; their breast-plates are like breast-plates of iron ; they have the tails of scorpions, armed with deadly stings ; and the sound of their wings is as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. Such is the prophetic imagery in which this subject is presented to us ; where shall we look for its interpretation ?

There is scarcely any part of the book of the Revelation that has perplexed the commentators more than this fifth trumpet. The question which divides them is, whether does the prophecy relate to the papal apostacy, or to the Mahometan imposture ? and much the greater part of our English writers on the Apocalypse suppose it to have received its completion in the latter ; that is, in the rise and invasion of Mahomet and the Saracens. To this interpretation, however, there appear to me to be formidable objections, which I shall take leave to state before we examine it in the other point of view.

1. The prophecy is introduced by a very significant and expressive symbol, namely, that of a star having fallen from heaven to the earth ; which *they* tell us denotes the Arabian false prophet, Mahomet ; but, by no interpretation, literal or figurative, can this application of the symbol, as I think, be sustained. In what sense can that crafty enthusiast be said to have fallen from heaven ? Bred up in idolatry, and trained to mercantile pursuits, he had never professed Christianity, nor been a teacher in a Christian church ; consequently he could not be an apostate from the faith, the very thing denoted, as I conceive, by the fall of this star from heaven unto the earth. Here, then, the application fails. But,

2. The darkness occasioned by the smoke which issued out of the pit, and the locusts which came upon the earth at the sound-

ing of this fifth trumpet, are described as invading the whole Christian world; for the "sun and the air," which they invade, extend every where; no third or fourth part is mentioned as under other trumpets. But this will not apply either to the success of the arms, or to the propagation of the religion of Mahomet; for these extended only to a *part* of Christendom. If we except Spain for a season, and some islands in the Mediterranean, the nations of Europe were in general exempt from the fearful scourge. The followers of Mahomet, we know, made a grand attempt on Europe, but they were early repulsed by the arms of the king of France, A.D. 732. In this respect, again, the interpretation is defective.

3. In connection with this last remark, it is important to observe the prohibition contained in ver. 4. "It was commanded them, (the locusts,) 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." Here is a manifest allusion to the Christian profession; the sealed and the unsealed; the true servants of God, as in ch. vii. 3, and the false professors; from which I think we may fairly infer that the primary design of the prophecy refers to papal Rome, and not to the evils which came upon the world through Mahomet. I might add, that, to accommodate the symbols of this fifth trumpet to the invasions of Europe by the Saracens, the commentators have found themselves under the necessity of applying the prophetic characters sometimes in a literal, and at others in a figurative sense, which cannot be allowed; they ought all to be applied in the same sense.

4. To get rid of the difficulties which attach to the scheme of applying the prophecy of this fifth trumpet to Mahomet, some have contended that Mahomet and Antichrist are one and the same person. The Catholics, more especially, are keen upon this point, and no wonder! but the thing will not do. The characteristic features of antichrist, both in Daniel and the Apocalypse, and other parts of the New Testament, upon which we touched in our last lecture, will not at all agree to Mahomet. For instance, he is not that eighth head of the beast, described in ch. xiii., which rose up out of the sea with seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns. The seat of Mahomet was not at Rome, that city which reigned over the kings of the earth at the time that John wrote his prophecies, ch. xvii. 18, and which was built on seven hills. Mahomet did not come with signs and wonders; he pretended no miracles; he never rejected the Christian name, neither did he sit in the temple of God; he did not possess the outer court of the Lord's house; nor had he the form of godliness denying the power. And when, pray, did Mahomet



forbid to marry? did he countenance the worship of dæmons and idols of gold and silver? Assuredly not; all these are features in a widely different character, and will not apply to the Arabian prophet at all. These, then, are my reasons for not falling in with the commonly received opinion, that the sounding of the fifth trumpet is a prediction of the rise of the Mahometan imposture; in addition to which, let me add, that under the next trumpet, we shall, I hope, be able to shew that another prophecy belongs more appropriately to the Mahometans. In truth, the application of this fifth trumpet to *them* is of modern date; and though it has received the sanction of such respectable writers as Mede, and Newton, and Lowman; Scott and Faber; McLean and Fuller, I hope I may be permitted to dissent from it.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> It is indeed only an act of justice to the two last mentioned writers to say, that they both express themselves *hesitatingly* on the subject. Mr. McLean merely says, "The first woe *appears* to have been the impostor Mohammed, whose false religion is compared to thick smoke, bursting from the bottomless pit, and darkening the sun and air. The swarms of locusts issuing from that smoke, were his followers, the Arabians or Saracens, for to them the whole description fitly applies." *Apostolic Commission*, p. 323.

Mr. Fuller seems disposed to halve the matter; thus he writes: "On the most mature consideration, I concur with those expositors, who, while admitting the locusts to be Mahomet's destructive hordes of Saracens, yet understand the smoke of *popish* darkness, which was preparatory to the other, and the fallen star of the fallen bishop of Rome. If the *fourth trumpet* refer to the subversion of the imperial government under Augustulus, [but, according to him, *all the four trumpets* refer to that event!] it may be presumed that the fifth would refer to things not very distant from it; but the appearance of Mahomet was 130 years after this event, and *seems to have no immediate connection with it*. On the other hand, there is a connection between the subversion of the Imperial government, and 'the revelation of the Man of Sin.' It was the Imperial authority which 'let,' or hindered him, and which when 'taken out of the way,' made room for his appearing. Thus the eclipse under the fourth trumpet prepared the way for the darkness under the fifth. The mystery of iniquity had long been at work; but now it burst forth as the smoke of a great furnace, impeding the light of the gospel, and darkening the moral atmosphere of the Christian world.' With this also agrees the application of 'the fallen star,' to the pope or bishop of Rome. It comports with the symbolical style of the book that a prophetic person should denote, not an individual, but a succession of individuals in an official character. The bishop of Rome was once a star in the Christian firmament; but abandoning the doctrine and spirit of a Christian minister, and setting up for worldly domination, he 'fell from heaven unto the earth,' and thus became a fit agent for 'opening the bottomless pit.'" *Expos. Dis. on the Apocalypse*, p. 124, &c.

Thus, then, I have the suffrage of this judicious expositor, for applying every part of the prophecy of this fifth trumpet to papal Rome, *except the locusts*, which he, not very consistently with himself, refers to "Mahomet's destructive hordes of Saracens;" an interpretation into which it may be fairly doubted if he would have been drawn, had his reading in church history enabled him fully to appreciate the characters and exploits of the *locusts of the church of Rome*, &c.

The grounds on which I object to the commonly received interpretation of this fifth trumpet have been already given; and if it be asked what particular subject I understand this prophecy to refer to, my answer is, THE KINGDOM OF ANTICHRIST COMING IN POWER. I speak thus, in order to distinguish between that kingdom in its early state, its first rise and gradual progress; and that kingdom when advanced to maturity, and having attained the plenitude of its power. This distinction it is of importance for you to keep steadily in view, while examining the symbolical language of the prophet, in the verses read as the ground of the present lecture. The commencement of the reign of this monstrous power, we have witnessed, and traced its gradual progress under the four preceding trumpets; but we are now called to contemplate the monster as full grown. It may possibly help us a little in our conceptions of this subject, if we pause and recapitulate some principal circumstances which concurred in advancing Antichrist to his throne.

We have already seen, that one thing which was necessary to effect this, was the removal out of the way of the Christian emperors. It is unquestionably true, that "the beast," as you will henceforward find Antichrist designated throughout the book of the revelation, was born and bred under those emperors; not only brought into life, but nurtured up to man's estate under their fostering influence; but their *fall* was necessary in order to his *advancement* to the head of the empire, or mounting his throne; and this, as we saw in our last lecture, took place. But another and most important occurrence which was necessary to take place in order to raise Antichrist to his throne, was the rise of the ten kings, or kingdoms which sprung up out of the ruins of the empire; for these ten kings all concurred to give their support to Antichrist, and, indeed, without *that* he never could have attained the plenitude of power which he arrived at. This is a subject on which I have hitherto forbore to speak particularly; but it now comes fairly before us, and it will be proper for us to consider what the Scriptures say about it, and how far their testimony was borne out by facts.

The barbarous tribes that broke in upon the provinces of the Roman empire, and overthrew its government, fighting their way sword in hand, and taking forcible possession wherever they came, were all idolatrous heathens, as respected their religion; and, consequently it was quite natural to expect that they would have subverted the religious as well as civil government of the empire. That the cruelties which they exercised did cause many to apostatize from such profession as was then to be found where they came, there can be little difficulty in supposing. It is nevertheless, a most undoubted fact that all those ten kings in a

little time embraced the religion of the empire which they had subdued; *the conquerors submitted to the religion of the conquered*; which, indeed, by this time differed but little from the heathen superstition and idolatry, and this was an event which contributed wonderfully to the power of Antichrist. Mr. Hallam, adverting to this matter says, "The devotion of the conquering nations, as it was still less enlightened than that of the subjects of the empire, so was it still more munificent. They left, indeed, the worship of Hesus and Taranis in their forests; but they retained the elementary principles of that, and of all barbarous idolatry, a superstitious reverence for the priesthood, a credulity that seemed to invite imposture, and a confidence in the efficacy of gifts to expiate offences. Of this temper it is undeniable that the ministers of religion, influenced probably not so much by personal covetousness, as by zeal for the interests of their order, took advantage. Many of the peculiar and prominent characteristics in the faith and discipline of those ages appear to have been either introduced, or sedulously promoted for the purposes of sordid fraud. To those purposes conspired the veneration for relics; the worship of images; the idolatry of saints and martyrs; the religious inviolability of sanctuaries; the consecration of cemeteries; but above all, the doctrine of purgatory, and masses for the relief of the dead. A creed thus contrived, operating upon the minds of barbarians, lavish though rapacious, and devout though dissolute, naturally caused a torrent of opulence to pour into the church. Donations of land were continually made to the bishops, and in still more ample proportion to the monastic foundations."<sup>b</sup> Thus far this accurate and impartial historian, whose testimony is valuable; but to enter properly into a view of the period adverted to by the sounding of this fifth trumpet, it would be necessary to read *Mosheim's History of the Christian church*, during the sixth century. You will there find that, however much these invading powers differed among themselves in other respects, yet, eventually they ail, partly through delusion and partly from political views, agreed in one mind or judgment, "to give their power and strength to the beast," Rev. xvii. 12, 13, that is, to support the hierarchy of Rome, headed by the pope, who now made no scruple of setting up for supremacy, which he well might do, backed as he was by these ten kings. But it is time for us to consider the language of this fifth trumpet, which has so much puzzled the commentators.

"*And the fifth angel sounded,*" &c., ver. 1. In the first eleven verses of this chapter we have an enlarged description of the prevalence of Antichristianity, or of Antichrist as raised to his

<sup>b</sup> Hallam's History of the Middle Ages, vol. ii. p. 200.

throne. Under the four preceding trumpets, the subject has been gradually unfolding itself; their contents, however, are comprised in a very narrow compass, each being contained in one, or at most, in two short verses; but now the prospect enlarges into a more exact display of the warfare. Upon the blast of this fifth trumpet, which is *woeful* to the inhabitants of the earth, ch. viii. 13, a star is seen in the act of completing its fall from heaven to earth; for such, according to the critics, seems to be the sense of *πεπτωκοτα*. The descent of such a star was seen under the third trumpet, and we then witnessed what were the effects of this star upon the several provinces of the empire, when it first fell upon them. We have likewise taken notice of the consequences of it with respect to the government of the empire, and its rulers supreme and subordinate, by the fourth trumpet. And now when this fifth trumpet begins to sound, that same star gets the key of the abyss and opens it, and no sooner is it opened than there issues a smoke, whereby the sun and the air are darkened.

By the darkening of the sun and the air, some understand the extinction of the supreme government, or ruling power that was in the Roman empire; or, which is the same thing, that fall of the seventh head of the beast, which was not yet come when John wrote, namely, the Christian emperors; and which succeeded the sixth, or Rome pagan, which ruled when the prophet had this vision. This seventh head, or the empire in its Christianized state, was to continue a short space, and then give way to the eighth head, or "to the beast that was, and is not, and yet is, who ascendeth out of the bottomless pit," ch. xvii. 8, 10, 11. John saw in vision the seventh head, viz., Rome Christian, wounded to death, ch. xiii. 1, 3; but this "deadly wound was healed," when Antichrist, the Man of Sin, and son of perdition, got seated in the throne of Constantine and his successors, and had all their power and influence transferred into his hands, and then John beheld "all the world wondering after the beast." This is that ANTICHRIST to whom the ten kings gave their power; and here his kingdom is described as arising out of the bottomless pit, under the emblem of crowned locusts coming out of the smoke of the pit, whereby the sun and the air had been darkened.

Others, however, think that the darkening of the sun and the air, by means of the smoke of the pit, out of which came the crowned locusts, denotes that obscurity, or eclipse of the glory of the kingdom of Christ, and his government of his willing people, or those who are subjected by his power to his own authority in his word, which must now, of course, quite disappear among all the professors of Christianity that were to worship the beast or Antichrist. This, I say, is the view which some take

of it, but the two views are quite consistent with each other, and I do not see why both may not be included. But now comes the main difficulty in the present lecture; what are we to understand by these crowned locusts, what can they be intended to denote? A learned writer belonging to the church of England,<sup>a</sup> who has ably refuted the common notion that the fallen star is Mahomet, and the locusts the Saracens, has laboured hard to convince us that the fallen star is the devil or satan, the chief of the fallen angels, and that the swarm of locusts which issued out of the bottomless pit, darkening the sun and the air, are the *heretics* which corrupted the gospel, and produced schisms in the church during the period in question, particularly the Gnostics and the Nicolaitans. I cheerfully acknowledge my obligations to this able writer for having so successfully exposed the fallacy of making Mahomet the fallen star, and his armies the crowned locusts. In this part of the subject I think he is triumphant; and I fully concur with him in opinion, that the Christian profession was greatly marred for several centuries by false teachers bringing in damnable heresies even denying the Lord that bought them; but I object to his making the star which fell from heaven to the earth to be satan, and that for a very important reason; because, throughout the whole of the Apocalypse I find this same fallen star, &c. spoken of as a *beast* ascending out of the bottomless pit, ch. xi. 7, and ch. xvii. 8, and this same beast is spoken of as the eighth head of the Roman empire, ver. 11, after which beast all the world wondered, ch. xiii. 3; and every where is this beast clearly and unequivocally distinguished from satan, or the dragon, through acting under his influence. Not to be tedious, I will adduce one proof. In ch. xix. 19, 20, we thus read, "And I saw the *beast*, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army, and the *beast was taken*, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles, &c., these were both cast *alive into a lake of fire*, burning with brimstone," &c., which consummates their ruin. And now look to ch. xx. 1-3, where you will find an angel comes down from heaven, lays hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and satan, whom he binds for a thousand years, &c. And all this is *after* the beast or Antichrist is destroyed; this fallen star, therefore, cannot be satan.

Neither can I acquiesce in the interpretation which this learned author has given of the crowned locusts; for though I think him much nearer the truth than those writers are who contend that they symbolize the Saracens, yet I think he has taken far too contracted a view of the matter. Heretics are unquestionably to

<sup>a</sup> Dean Woodhouse on the Apocalypse, p. 228, &c.

be deprecated, as is every corruption of the heavenly religion of the Son of God; but the greatest heretics that the Christian world ever knew, have been the clergy of the church of Rome with the popes at their head; and the vilest corruption of Christianity that ever appeared, is to be found in that sink of iniquity, "the holy, Roman, apostolic church," as she is pleased to call herself. The learned author to whom I refer, therefore, would have done well, when describing to us the smoke that issued out of the bottomless pit, and the locusts which came out of the smoke, to have stretched his canvas, and taken a more enlarged view of things. Had he told us that the crowned locusts issuing out of the pit, denoted the kingdom of the clergy, supported by the power of the ten kings, I could have more readily concurred with him. And this view of the matter he would assuredly have taken had he understood the nature of Christ's kingdom, so as to contrast it with the kingdoms of this world, and all national establishments of Christianity, and with that of the church of Rome in particular. But in that case, and especially had he perceived the glory of this kingdom so as to love it, he would no longer have continued *Archdeacon* of Salop, or *Dean* of Lichfield and Coventry; but would have become "a companion with others in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." We now return to the locusts.

1. In the subject before us, the opening of the abyss, the smoke which issued out of it, darkening the sun and the air; with the locusts that accompany it, we have presented to our view that awful state of evil things, which commenced with the sounding of the first trumpet, and against which the servants of God were sealed; it is now presented as having attained its height. To have a proper view of this matter, it will be necessary to look back to the beginning of ch. vii. 1-3, "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 winds should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. 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. Saying, hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." See also ch. viii. 7, "The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up;" and ch. ix. 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." This serves to shew us the connection which the affairs of this fifth trumpet have, with the preceding.

2. In examining the application of the imagery of this fifth trumpet, and as a clue to its interpretation, it may be useful to turn your attention to the vials, of the pouring out of which we have an account in ch. xvi. Observe how the first six vials answer to these first six trumpets; and mark in particular how the fifth vial, which is the counterpart of this fifth trumpet, is poured out upon the seat of the beast, ver. 10, and fills his kingdom with darkness; from which I infer, that this fifth trumpet, to which that vial is opposed, sets the beast upon his throne, and brings his kingdom in the power of it. Here is another collateral proof that this trumpet does not relate to Mahomet and the Saracens, but to Antichrist and the kingdom of the clergy.

Having premised these things, let us now attend to the symbolical language in which this subject is delivered to us. The clergy of papal Rome, as having subjugated the broken empire to their authority and influence, by the power of the ten kings which arose out of its ruins, I here understand to be represented by locusts, having on their heads as it were crowns of gold. This emblematical description is borrowed from the prophet Nahum. If you turn to ch. iii., you will find him predicting the fall of the Assyrian empire, (probably a type of Antichrist,) and in ver. 17, he thus proceeds: "Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the grasshoppers, (or, as some translate the words, thy *princes like the locust of locusts,*) encamping in the hedges in the cold day, (or day of cold,) when the sun ariseth, they flee away, and the place is not known where they are."

Locusts are described by profane as well as sacred, by ancient as well as modern authors, as committing the most extraordinary depredations in eastern countries; the horror of which is represented as beginning with a deprivation of light. "They darken the sun," says Pliny, in his Natural History, xi. 29. Another writer speaking of a swarm of locusts, says, "At that time Syria suffered from a scarcity of food, of cattle of all kinds, and of corn, occasioned by a multitude of locusts, so great, as had never before been seen in the memory of man; which, like a dense cloud, flying about in mid-day, and *obscuring the light,* devoured the products of the fields on every side," *Thuanus*. But for a description of the locust, and its destructive character, you may consult the prophet Joel, where you have an account of the desolation brought upon the land of Israel, by locusts and similar creatures; and, indeed, it is from thence that the imagery is taken, whereby to describe the kingdom of the clergy, and the injury done by them to the Christian profession at the sounding of this fifth trumpet. See Joel i. 4, 6, 7, "That which the palmer-worm hath left hath the locusts eaten; and that which the locust hath left, hath the canker-worm eaten; and that which

the canker-worm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten. For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek-teeth of a great lion. He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig-tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white." Ch. ii. 1-11, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand. A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains; a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, nothing shall escape them. The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array. Before their face the people shall be much pained; all faces shall gather blackness. They shall run like mighty men: they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks. Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded. They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief. The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army; for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word; for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?" Here we have the original from which the prophet drew the hieroglyphical language of this fifth trumpet. Let us collect its leading characteristic features into one view.

*"Their shapes were like horses prepared to battle; faces as men; hair as the hair of women; teeth as of lions; breast-plates as breast-plates of iron; wings sounding as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle; and tails like scorpions, with stings in their tails; for the torment inflicted by them is as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man."* This, you will say, beggars all description; and I admit it does. It exhibits a strange composition of the greatest violence united to the most consummate deceit; of grandeur and baseness; of effeminacy and



obstinate hardness; of tenderness conjoined with fierceness and cruelty the most terrible; a monstrous motley mixture of contrary qualities! But was there ever found under the sun any thing that bore a resemblance to it; any thing of which such a monstrous composition as this could stand as the type; the symbol; the hieroglyphical representation? He that doubts it would do well to make himself acquainted with the history of popery in *general*, as given by any authentic and impartial writer; if he still persist in doubting, let him acquaint himself with the history of what *they* call "*the Holy Apostolical Court of Inquisition.*" If you ask me what this means, I answer, that it is a society established by the church of Rome, for the purpose of hunting out, and visiting with exemplary punishment, all who are found guilty of the enormous crime of *thinking differently* from what that infallible church teaches. A simple narrative of the proceedings of this court of spiritual despotism—the Inquisition—has shocked the world, and its cruelty has become proverbial. Nothing ever displayed so completely to the eyes of mankind the spirit and temper of the Papal religion. Millions of our fellow creatures have been ruined by this horrible court. Take the following as a specimen. In Spain alone there were at one period, no less than eighteen different inquisitorial courts, each having its counsellors, termed apostolical inquisitors, its secretaries, serjeants, and other officers; besides which there were 20,000 *familiars* dispersed throughout the kingdom, who acted as spies and informers, and were employed to apprehend all suspected persons, and commit them for trial, to the prisons which belong to the inquisition. By these familiars, persons were seized on bare suspicion, and in violation of all the established rules of equity, they were put to the torture, tried and condemned by the inquisitors, without being confronted, either with their accusers, or the witnesses on whose evidence they were impeached. The unhappy victims were either strangled or committed to the flames, or loaded with chains, and shut up in dungeons for life, their effects confiscated, and their families stigmatized with infamy. But exclusive of the cruel punishments inflicted by this "holy office," look at its proceedings. A disciple of Christ, whose conscience will not allow him "to bow in the house of Rimmon," is suspected of *heretical pravity*, he is apprehended by the familiars; committed to prison; and, in process of time, brought to trial. There, the artful judge, grown old in habits of subtlety, along with the sly secretary, practises his cunning, in interrogating the prisoner to fix a charge of heresy. Now he fawns, and then he frowns; now soothes, and then looks dark and angry; sometimes affects to pity and to pray; at other times, insults and bullies, and talks of racks and dungeons, flames and the damnation of hell! one

while he lays his hand upon his heart, and sheds tears; and promises and protests he desires not the death of a sinner, but would rather that he would turn and live; and all that he *can* do, he *will* do for the discharge of his imprisoned brother! Anon, he discovers himself deaf as a rock, false as the wind, and cruel as the poison of asps. This is a true picture of popery; look at it, brethren; examine narrowly its features; then compare it with the prophetic description of the crowned locusts, and see if you can trace no resemblance.<sup>d</sup> But to proceed:

<sup>d</sup> I apprehend that the principal thing intended by this motley group of incongruities, may be the blending together of *civil* and *ecclesiastical* power in the antichristian kingdom, an heterogeneous mixture of things *secular* or temporal, with things professedly *spiritual*, together with the manner of exercising these contrary qualities by the supporters of that kingdom. Here, for instance, is a system which professes itself to be the religion of Christ; a kingdom not of this world; the constituent principles of which are "righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Spirit." The religion of Jesus enjoins conformity to this present evil world, in all its leading lusts, maxims, and pursuits. It calls for the mortification of sin, and the pursuit of universal holiness; the exercise of self-denial, meekness, patience, the forgiveness of injuries, humility, love, and every fruit of the Spirit. And in all these things, the ministers of this kingdom are required to set an example to their respective flocks of "whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, of every thing that is virtuous and praise worthy," Phil. iv. 8; 1 Tim. iv. 12. But what has been the general and prevailing character of the clergy of the church of Rome? Their portrait has been drawn by the pen of inspiration, 2 Tim. iii. 2-5. Have they not been "lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof." Look on this picture and on that; mark the contrast; and you will find the *hieroglyphic* of the latter in the crowned locusts of the *fifth trumpet*!

For the characteristic properties of the *locust* and *scorpion*, see the APPENDIX to this lecture, p. 328. In this place I only add, that the more closely we consider these insects as symbols of the clergy of the antichristian kingdom, the more shall we be struck with its aptness. In the locust we have an insect which can *either crawl or fly*, as its necessities may require; an insect remarkable for its voraciousness and destructive propensities; yet this crawling insect comes forth with a *golden crown upon its head*: a fit representation of a worm of the dust, inflated with pride, and arrogating to itself divine honours! But these crowned locusts are also invested with powers deadly as those of the scorpion; shaped like horses prepared to battle; faces like men; and hair like women; teeth like the teeth of lions; and breast-plates of iron: the sound of their wings as the sound of chariots of many horses rushing to battle, and tails like scorpions with stings." What a heterogeneous mixture of discordant properties; a compound of things terrifying and alluring, of deceit and violence, delusion and persecuting worldly power, hardness and softness, beauty and honour, deformity and baseness! Such a monstrous compound never had its prototype or *fac-simile*, but in the priesthood of the Catholic church, where, however, it is found to perfection! Let us hear "one of themselves," a prophet of their own, who cannot reasonably be suspected of misrepresenting them. Thus writes the great St. Bernard, who lived about the year 1145.

These locusts are threatened as a *woe* that should befall the inhabitants of the earth ; and the great evil which comes by them must be the same from which the servants of God are preserved by being sealed, ch. vii. 3, 4 ; and what can this dreadful calamity be, but eternal destruction coming upon men who have nevertheless some form of Christianity. It deserves your notice that these locusts inflict their injury, not by divesting those who are subject to them, of all profession of Christianity ; they do not kill them as is done to those under the sixth trumpet : it would, indeed, be a relief to those who are subject to the locusts, to be rid of all profession of Christianity, even as it would at once rid *them* of the locusts, did they really know the power of Christianity ; but with all the subtilty and spite of the scorpion, these locusts deny and endeavour to extinguish the power of Christianity, and they do it with all the violence of horses running to battle ; and with the same deceit and violence they keep men under some form of Christianity by external compulsion. And thus their torment is as the torment of a scorpion, when he strikes a man, and leaves him between life and death. By inflicting this pain, the locusts live and reign ; by this, the clergy keep the great mass of the people in a state of perpetual dependance upon themselves ; and thus they obtain their wealth and grandeur. If you doubt the correctness of these observations, acquaint yourselves, I pray you, with the existing state of things in the catholic church ; see the influence which the priests maintain over the minds of their poor, blinded devotees ; the state of horrid slavery in which the latter are kept to their religious guides, and the use which the clergy dexterously make of it ; and judge for yourselves whether it would not be a wonderful relief to millions of these unhappy beings, to be convinced that the whole system of popery, with which they are so miserably entangled and enslaved was all a delusion, a falsehood ; that it issued originally out of the bottomless pit, and that it conducts to the same infernal regions.

These locusts have a king over them, whose name is *Abaddon*, in the Hebrew ; and *Apollyon* in the Greek, ver. 11. And if you look forward to ch. xiii. 4, you will find this king of the locusts spoken of as “the dragon which gave power to the beast.” His name signifies the *destroyer*, and it seems here to be opposed to the name *Jesus*, which denotes a *Saviour*, even as this kingdom is opposed to the kingdom of Christ. The contrast between these two kingdoms will often present itself to our view,

“I am a liar, if I have not seen an abbot having above sixty horses in his train ! When ye saw them riding, ye might say ; ‘These are not fathers of monasteries, but lords of castles ; not shepherds of souls but princes of provinces !’ Oh ! vanity of vanities ! the walls of churches are glorious, while the poor are starving.”

as we proceed with this course of Lectures, and you will find that contrast to be striking; for, not only are the names and titles of the respective sovereigns of these two kingdoms opposed to one another, as the *Destroyer* and the *Saviour*, but, the more you study this subject, the more convinced you will be, "that never were two systems more diametrically opposed in their spirit, their maxims, and their effects, than primitive Christianity, and the religion of modern Rome; nor do heaven and hell, Christ and Belial, present to our view a more glaring contrast."<sup>e</sup>

I cannot put an end to the present lecture, without offering a reflection or two on the matters that have come under our consideration.

The rise and reign of Antichrist, or the power of the clergy over the empire, is pointed out in the book of the Revelation, as a signal instance of the holy, wise, and all-powerful providence of God. Thus, in ch. xvii. 17, we read, "God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." He hath the hearts of all men in his hands, and turns them as the rivers of water; and no event can happen without his permission. But this same event is also represented as a thing that took place, by the remarkable working of Satan. The smoke and the locusts ascend out of the bottomless pit, and have Abaddon, the angel of

<sup>e</sup> Of these locusts it is said, that they *torment men, and have power to hurt them five months*, ver. 5. Naturalists inform us, that this is the time of the continuance of locusts, when they fall on a country to waste the fruits; and some think, that in this allusion to the time of the continuance of locusts, it may only be intended that this evil must have its course like the locusts, and that, however long it continue, it will come to its appointed end. According to the prophetic way of counting, that is, each day for a year, five months make one-hundred-and-fifty years, which is only a short portion of the term of Antichrist's reign; but it is about the space of time that elapsed between the fall of the Western Roman empire, and the rise of the Mahometan imposture; and so the five months may denote the time from the fifth trumpet's beginning to blow, to the first rise of that evil which came to its height by the sixth trumpet; during which period Antichrist was settling himself upon his throne; and so the first woe is said to be passed, i. e. come to its height, and fully established.

"As this is the period," viz. five prophetic months, or one-hundred-and-fifty years," during which the locusts are permitted to be a woe to Christendom, it must, of course, be calculated from the time when they emerged out of the smoke that arose from the pit of the abyss. But their emergence occurred in the year 612. From this year, therefore, the period must be calculated. If, then, we reckon one-hundred-and-fifty years from the year 612, we shall be brought to the year 762, as the close of the first great woe." *Faber's Sacred Calendar of Prophecy*, vol. ii. p. 410.

The intelligent reader will perceive that Mr. Faber's application of the period of one-hundred-and-fifty years, differs from that which I have suggested in the foregoing part of this note; but it is added in this place, that he may be enabled to exercise his own judgment in the matter.

that pit, for their king. Hence, we find it said, ch. xiii. 2, 4, "The dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority—and they worshipped the dragon, which gave power unto the beast." So also we find the apostle Paul, 2 Thess. ii. 9—12, speaking of both the working of Satan, and of the work of the holy providence of God, in the coming of the Man of sin. It was, indeed, exceedingly unaccountable, according to human calculation, that the clergy should rise to reign, or mount to sovereign power, by the fall of the Christian emperors who first raised them; and that they should obtain possession of *their* kingdom, by means of those Gothic tribes, who, on their first invading the provinces of the empire, were heathen idolaters. But, that is not the only thing at which we marvel; we see numerous hordes of barbarians under their respective leaders, tearing the empire in pieces—those leaders entirely independent of each other—nay, even engaged in bloody wars against one another; and, at first, divided about the profession of Christianity—yet, at last, all agreeing to give their power to the clergy, making the broken empire subject to the latter, and ultimately consenting in one mind, opinion, or judgment, so as to produce a uniformity of religious profession throughout the ten kingdoms. All this is inscrutable to us short-sighted mortals, as, indeed, are the reasons which induced a holy and wise God to permit this monstrous adulteration of the pure and heavenly religion of his beloved Son. In contemplating these mysteries of his providence, we wonder and adore! Let us, however, rest in this, that HE has wise reasons for permitting it, even as he had for permitting the introduction of sin into our world; and that, though clouds and darkness are round about him, justice and judgment are the basis of his throne. He makes the wrath of man to praise him—overrules the free volitions of intelligent agents, and will eventually make all subservient to the manifestation of his own glory, and the happiness of his chosen.

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God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants his footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines,  
Of never-failing skill,  
He treasures up his bright designs,  
And works his sovereign will.

His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flow'r.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan his work in vain;  
God is his own interpreter,  
And he will make it plain.

## APPENDIX

TO LECTURE XXVI.

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The following account of the *migratory Locust*, and *Scorpion*, is extracted from Bingley's Animal Biography, vol. iv. pp. 56-61.

SYRIA, Egypt, Persia, and almost all the south of Asia, are subject to a calamity as dreadful as volcanoes and earthquakes are to other countries, in being ravaged by those clouds of locusts, so often mentioned by travellers. The quantity of these insects is incredible to all who have not themselves witnessed their astonishing numbers: the whole earth is covered with them, for the space of several leagues. The noise they make in browsing on the trees and herbage, may be heard at a great distance, and somewhat resembles that of an army foraging in secret. The Tartars themselves are a less destructive enemy than these animals. One would imagine, wherever they have been seen, that fire had followed their progress. Wherever their myriads spread, the verdure of the country disappears, as if a curtain had been removed: trees and plants are stripped of their leaves, and are reduced to their naked boughs and stems; so that the dreary image of winter succeeds, almost in an instant, to the rich scenery of the spring. When these clouds of locusts take their flight, the heavens may sometimes literally be said to be obscured by them. Happily, this calamity is not frequently repeated; for it is the inevitable forerunner of famine. The inhabitants of Syria have remarked, that locusts are always increased by too mild winters, and that they constantly come from the desert of Arabia. From this observation it is easy to conceive, that, the cold not having been rigorous enough to destroy their eggs, they multiply suddenly; and, the herbage failing them in the immense plains of the desert, innumerable legions issue forth. When they make their first appearance on the frontiers of the cultivated country, the inhabitants attempt to drive them off, by raising large clouds of smoke; but frequently their herbs and wet straw fail them. They then dig trenches where numbers of the insects are buried: but the most efficacious destroyers are the south and south-easterly winds, and the locust-eating thrushes. These birds follow them in numerous flocks, like starlings, and not only greedily devour them, but kill as many as they can: accordingly they are much respected by the peasants, and nobody is allowed to shoot them. As to the southerly and south-easterly winds, they drive with violence these clouds of locusts over the Mediterranean, where such quantities of them are sometimes drowned, that, when their bodies are thrown on the shore, they infect the air for several days, even to a great distance.

The annals of most hot countries are filled with accounts of the devastations occasioned by locusts. These insects, however, seldom now visit Europe in such swarms as formerly: yet, in the warmer parts of this continent they are still formidable. Those that have, at uncertain intervals, visited Europe, within the memory of man, are supposed to have come from Africa. Some have, at different times, been seen in Britain, and great mischiefs have been apprehended from them; but, happily for us, the coldness of our climate, and the humidity of our soil, are each unfavourable to their production: they, therefore, all perish, without leaving a young generation to succeed them.

Locusts, when they take flight, seem at a distance like a dark cloud, which, as it approaches, almost excludes the light of day. It often happens that the husbandman sees them pass over without doing him any injury; but in this case they only proceed to settle on some less fortunate country. Wherever they alight, they make dreadful havoc among the vegetation. In the tropical climates, their presence is not attended with such destructive consequences as in the southern parts of Europe; for in those the vegetative power is so strong and active, that an interval of only a few days will sometimes repair all the damage; but in Europe their ravages cannot be obliterated until the succeeding year. In their long flights to this part of the world, from the extent of their journey, they are also nearly famished, and therefore are more voracious, wherever they happen to alight.

We are told, that nearly as much damage is occasioned by what they touch, as by what they devour. Their bite is thought to contaminate the plants, and either to destroy or greatly to weaken their vegetation. To use the expression of the husbandman, "They burn wherever they touch," and in some countries they leave the marks of their devastation for three or four years afterwards. When dead, they infect the air in such a manner, that the stench is frequently insupportable. Orosius tells us, that in the year of the world 3800, Africa was infested with a multitude of locusts. After having eaten up every thing that was green, they flew off, and were drowned in the sea; where they caused such a stench, as could not have been equalled by the putrefying carcases of a hundred thousand men.

In the year 1650, a cloud of locusts was seen to enter Russia in three different places; and thence they spread themselves over Poland and Lithuania, in such astonishing multitudes, that the air was darkened, and the earth covered with their numbers. In some places they were seen lying dead, heaped upon each other to the height of four feet; in others they covered the surface of the ground like a black cloth: the trees bent with their weight; and the damage that the country sustained from them, exceeded computation.

In Barbary their numbers are often formidable; and Dr. Shaw, in 1724, was a witness of their devastations there. Their first appearance was about the end of March, when the wind had been southerly for some time. In the beginning of April their numbers were so increased, that, in the heat of the day large swarms appeared like clouds, and darkened the sun. In the middle of May they began to disappear,

retiring into the plains to deposit their eggs. In June the young brood came forth, forming many compact bodies, several hundred yards square; which, afterwards marching forward, climbed the trees, walls, and houses, devouring every vegetable that was in their way. The inhabitants, in order to stop their progress, formed trenches all over their fields and gardens, which they filled with water. Some placed large quantities of heath, stubble, and other combustible matter, in rows, and set them on fire at the approach of the locusts. This, however, was to no purpose; for the trenches were quickly filled up, and the fires put out, by the immense swarms that succeeded each other.

A day or two after one of these swarms was in motion, others that were just hatched, came to glean after them, gnawing off the young branches, and the very bark of the trees. Having lived near a month in this manner, they attained their full growth, and threw off their larva-state by casting their skins. To prepare themselves for this change, they fixed their hinder parts to some bush or twig, or corner of a stone; when, immediately, by an undulating motion, their heads would first appear, and soon afterwards the rest of their bodies. The whole transformation was performed in seven or eight minutes; after which they remained for a little while in a weak state; but, as soon as the sun and air had hardened their wings, and dried up the moisture that remained after casting their sloughs, they returned to their former greediness, with an addition both of strength and agility. But they did not long continue in this state before they were entirely dispersed. After laying their eggs, they directed their course northward, and probably perished in the sea.

Of the innumerable multitudes that infested the interior parts of Southern Africa, in the year 1797, scarcely any adequate conception can be formed. Mr. Barrow says, that in the part of the country where he then was, the whole surface of an area of nearly two thousand square miles, might literally be said to be covered with them. The water of a wide river was scarcely visible, on account of the dead carcases that floated on the surface, drowned in the attempt to come at the reeds that grew in it. They had devoured every blade of grass, and every green herb, except the reeds.

When the locusts attack a field of corn just come into ear, this gentleman says, that they first mount to the summit, and pick out every grain, before they touch the leaves and stem. They seem to be constantly in motion, and always to have some object in view. When the larva (for these are much more voracious than the perfect insects) are on a march during the day, it is utterly impossible to turn the direction of the troop, which is generally with the wind. Towards the setting of the sun the march is discontinued, when the troop divides into companies that surround the small shrubs or tufts of grass, or ant-hills, and in such thick patches, that they appear like so many swarms of bees; and in this manner they rest till day-light. At these times it is, that the farmers have any chance of destroying them: they sometimes drive among them a flock of two or three thousand sheep: and, by the restlessness of these, immense numbers are trampled to death.



The same author, describing the scorpion, tells us that "Scorpions may be considered as the most malignant and poisonous of all known insects. Their poison is emitted through three very small holes in the sting, one on each side of the tip, and the other in the upper part. They have each eight legs, besides two claws, not unlike those of a crab. They have also eight eyes, three of which are placed on each side of the thorax, and two in the middle. On the anterior part of the head, they have two short claw-like feelers; and on the under side, between the breast and the abdomen, are two instruments, that have some resemblance to a comb. The tail is long, jointed, and terminated by a sharp, crooked sting, from which is emitted a pungent liquid, not dangerous, except in very hot climates. In shape it has a distinct resemblance to the lobster, but infinitely more ugly. The head appears as it were jointed to the breast; and the mouth is furnished with two jaws, the under one of which is divided into two, and the parts notched into each other, and answer the purpose of teeth, in breaking the food. On each side of the head there is a four-jointed arm, terminated by a claw, somewhat like that of the lobster. The belly is divided into seven segments, from the lowest of which the tail commences: this, in the common scorpion, is armed with a hard, pointed, and crooked sting, the poison of which is very powerful.

In some parts of Italy and France these animals are among the greatest pests that can plague mankind; but in those countries of the east, where they grow to a foot in length, there is no removing a piece of furniture without danger of being stung by them. There, we are told, they are nearly as large as small lobsters.

Many experiments have been made, to ascertain the strength of their poison; and, in warm climates, it has uniformly been found fatal to small animals. To man the wound is extremely painful. The place becomes inflamed, and the surrounding parts often turn livid, and require to be carefully dressed in order to prevent mortification.

This creature, which is but too common about old houses, and in dry or decayed walls, in all hot countries, is extremely bold and watchful. At the approach of an enemy, it seldom exhibits any signs of fear, but, with its tail erect, and sting in readiness, as if fully confident in the force of its poison, it waits the attack with courage and intrepidity, and seldom desists till either it is itself killed, or its foe is put to flight."

## LECTURE XXVII.

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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 breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone. 18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. 19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails; for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. 20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. 21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornications, nor of their thefts.—Rev. ix. 13-21.

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### SIXTH TRUMPET.

IN our last lecture, which was on the fifth trumpet, some reasons were assigned to show that the prophecy therein contained, could not be intended to represent the devastations which the followers of Mahomet inflicted on Christendom; to which that prophecy is now almost universally applied; but to Antichrist, or the kingdom of the clergy, which had now attained its plenitude of power, through the influence of the ten kings that sprang out of the ruins of the Roman western empire. It was also intimated that the subject of the Mahometan devastations seemed rather to be prefigured under the sixth trumpet, which now offers itself to our consideration. And it is a fact not undeserving of your notice, because it serves to corroborate the correctness of the view which we have taken of the former trumpet; that the commentators who interpret the symbol of the *crowned locusts* of the Saracens, who made irruptions into the empire, almost universally apply this sixth trumpet to the devastations of the Turks and Tartars, who were also Mahometans; and thus they resolve the two trumpets into

the same woe, in express violation of prophetic authority, which announces them as two distinct woes. “*One woe is past, and behold there come two woes more hereafter,*” ver. 12. Indeed, the application of the prophecy of this sixth trumpet to some of the Mahometan irruptions, is so obvious, that it is admitted by Michaelis, who, dissatisfied with most other interpretations of the Apocalypse, has observed, that “this prophecy may very well be applied to the irruptions of the Saracens, the Turks, and the Tartars.”<sup>a</sup>

As we appear, therefore, to proceed upon almost unquestionable grounds, in our application of the prophecy of this sixth trumpet, I shall not waste your time in any laboured justification of a principle which is not disputed, but proceed to illustrate the subject, by presenting you with a sketch of the rise of the Mahometan imposture; the genius and spirit of that religion, with the inroads which the propagators of it made on the Roman empire, in its anti-christian state; and this will prepare us for entering with more effect upon an enquiry into the symbolical language in which the prophecy is delivered.

Mahomet arose, when the clergy of the catholic church were well settled on their thrones, in the beginning of the seventh century. One of the best accounts that we have of him, is to be found in his Life written by Prideaux, who speaking of him and of the Saracens, the first propagators of his religion, says, “From very mean beginnings, he arose to that height as to make one of the greatest revolutions that ever happened in the world, which immediately gave birth to an empire, which, in eighty years, extended its dominion over more kingdoms and countries than ever the Romans could do in eight hundred; and, although it did not maintain its full strength and reign above three hundred years, yet out of its ashes arose many other kingdoms and empires, of which there are three at this day; the largest and most powerful on the face of the earth, viz., the empire of Turkey, the empire of Persia, and the Mogul empire in India, which God hath permitted of his all-wise Providence, still to continue for a scourge unto us Christians, who, having received so holy and so excellent a religion, through his mercy to us in Christ Jesus the Lord, will not yet conform ourselves to live worthy of it.”

I do not stop to comment upon this pious reflection of the learned historian, further than to remark, that there is great truth and propriety in his resolving this dreadful scourge into the displeasure of heaven against those, who had so grossly abused their high privileges, by secularizing the kingdom of Christ, and, as he expresses it, “Living unworthy of their religion;”

<sup>a</sup> Introduction to the New Testament, ch. 23. sect. 7.

for, severe as the reflection may to some appear, it is abundantly borne out by ver. 20 and 21, of the chapter before us. But to have a proper view of the matter, it may be useful for us to consider, the miserable and distracted state of what passed under the name of the Christian church, at the time Mahomet arose to inflict the divine indignation upon it.

If in surveying the history of the sixth and seventh centuries, we call to remembrance that purity of doctrine, that simplicity of manners, that spirit of meekness, and universal benevolence, which marked the character of the Christian in the apostolic age; the dreadful reverse which now appeared, when Antichrist got seated on his throne, may well strike us with astonishment. Divided into numberless parties on account of distinctions the most absurd, contending with each other from perverseness, and persecuting each other with rancour; corrupt in opinion, and degenerate in practice; the leading ecclesiastics and their flocks at this unhappy period, seem to have retained little more than the name and external profession of their religion. Of a Christian church, in the scriptural sense of the term, not a vestige remained among them. The most unchristian principles and opinions were universally predominant; ignorance amidst the most favourable opportunities of knowledge; vice amidst the noblest encouragements to virtue; a pretended zeal for truth mixed with the wildest extravagancies of error; an implacable spirit of discord about opinions, which none could settle; and a dissoluteness of manners wholly incompatible with the Christian character, now universally prevailed.

Historians have exhibited to us the most melancholy picture of the universal darkness and ignorance, which at the beginning of the seventh century had overspread all ranks of men; even the clergy scarcely afforded an exception to this general description. Among the bishops, the grand instructors and defenders of the established order of things, few could be found possessed of knowledge and abilities sufficient to compose the discourses, however mean and incoherent, which their office sometimes obliged them to deliver to the people. The greater part of those among the monastic orders, whom the voice of an illiterate age had dignified with the character of learning, lavished their time and talents in studying the fabulous legends of pretended saints and martyrs; or in composing histories equally fabulous, rather than in the cultivation of true science, or the diffusion of useful knowledge. Of the writings which throw a feeble glimmering over the darkness of this unhappy period, the far greater part was controversial. In the few which have remained to the present times, it is easy to trace the melancholy decline of piety, as well as of literature. That natural and beautiful simplicity which is

the striking characteristic of the writings of the apostolic age, and of the first defenders of Christianity, was now succeeded by the coarse and confused jargon of the schools; by the loud and fierce clamours of personal invectives; and by all the disingenuous arts of sophistry which industriously perplexed truth, and of bigotry which perversely opposed it. And while ignorance was thus extending her dominion over Christendom, superstition her genuine offspring followed close behind. The progress of corruption is rapid and unbounded. When once the professors of Christianity had departed from that purity of worship, and that simplicity of faith, which Christ and his apostles had taught, and impiously dared to erect a superstructure of wood, hay, and stubble, upon the firm and solid foundation of the gospel, it was impossible to fix any limits to the growing corruption. One abuse was daily added to another; and the introduction of one superstitious rite served only to pave the way for a thousand others, more false and more pernicious, which followed in its train. An extravagant veneration for departed saints and martyrs; the idolatrous worship of images and relics; and lastly, the doctrine of purgatory, or of a fire destined to purify the soul after death from the pollutions it had contracted in the body; these opinions which are still held sacred and essential by the church of Rome, were the successive progeny of the ignorance and superstition of these ages. In fact, the very essence of Christianity was lost under a load of idle and superstitious ceremonies which were daily multiplied without bounds, and the unmeaning pomp of a gaudy and ostentatious worship was substituted in the room of the simple, yet nobler oblation of the heart. But the increasing wealth of the clergy, gradually introduced among them all that train of vices and follies which affluence and prosperity naturally bring with them. Their luxury, pride, and ambition, knew no bounds. Hence the turbulent and shameless contentions of the bishops concerning the extent and authority of their sees. Hence the frequent and almost perpetual struggles between the bishops of Rome and Constantinople, the two grand rulers of the church, to the irreparable injury and disgrace of Christianity. But on this prolific subject, I must not now enlarge: let us glance at the rise of the prophet of Arabia, and the complexion of his religion.

Mahomet was born in the year 571 or 2, at the city of Mecca, in Arabia. Of his infancy, childhood, and youth, we know scarcely any thing, for we must not receive as history the fabulous stories which were invented by his followers, and are lavishly recorded by the Arabian authors. His father, Abdallah, died while he was an infant, and at the early age of six, he lost his mother, Amena, also. The helpless orphan was now committed to the

care of an uncle, who treated him with kindness, and gave him a scanty education. Being destined by his uncle to the profession of a merchant, his education is said to have been wholly of a commercial cast; and at thirteen years of age he is said to have made a voyage to Syria, in the caravan of his uncle; and some years afterwards, he performed the same journey in the capacity of factor to a widow, whose name was Cadijah, into whose service he had entered, and whose goods he conveyed to the fairs of Bozra and Damascus. He acquitted himself so well in the discharge of the duties of this station, that at the age of five and twenty, his mistress rewarded his diligence and fidelity by giving him her hand in marriage. She was fifteen years older than him, being then forty; but they appear to have lived happily together for four-and-twenty years, when Cadijah died at the age of sixty-four, having enjoyed the undivided affection of her husband, in a country where polygamy was allowed.

Until he had arrived at the age of forty, there was nothing particularly remarkable in the life of Mahomet. His marriage had raised him to an equality with the first citizens of Mecca, gave an importance to his opinions, and contributed to draw attention to his new religion, when he began to propagating it. Having acquired a competency by his mercantile pursuits, his mind seems to have been suddenly turned towards religious meditation; and the result was an opinion exceedingly unfavourable to the religion of his countrymen. We are told that he retired to a cave in Mount Hara, near Mecca, where, as he assured his first disciple, his own wife, he regularly received the visits of the angel Gabriel. But these pretended visits do not seem to have been followed by any results worthy of so splendid a messenger! The information which Mahomet affirmed he had derived from his celestial visitant, might, as far as regarded its utility, have been obtained through the instrumentality of a much more humble personage. The following, however, is the substance of it.

On the night of the 23rd of the month Ramadan, a night so important, that in the *Koran* it is dignified with the appellation of Al Kadr, or the night of the *divine decree*, the *Koran* first descended from the seventh to the lowest heaven; and at a distance from the pious Mahomet, appeared the brilliant form of the messenger of God, the angel Gabriel, who came to communicate the happy tidings. The light issuing from his body was too bright for the mortal eyes of the prophet; he fainted, and not till the angelic visitant had assumed a human form, could he venture to approach or look on him. The angel then cried aloud, "Oh! Mahomet, thou art the apostle of God, and I am the angel Gabriel. Read," continued the angel. The illiterate prophet declared that he was unable to read. "Read," Gabriel again

exclaimed, "read in the name of the Lord, who hath created all things; who hath created man of congealed blood; who hath taught the use of the pen; who teacheth man that which he knoweth not." The prophet now read the joyful and mysterious tidings respecting his ministry on earth, or the commission he had received; when the angel having accomplished his mission, slowly and majestically ascending into heaven, gradually disappeared from his wondering gaze.

Such is the marvellous account which Mahomet gave of his commission to propagate a new religion in the world. The communication was first made to his wife, who believed or *affected* to believe the sacred fable. The next on the list of true believers was Zeid, the prophet's servant, and Ali, the son of his uncle Abu Taleb. After these followed a most important convert, of the name of Abubeker, a powerful citizen of Mecca, by whose influence a number of persons possessing great authority were induced in time to range themselves under the prophet's standard, and to profess the religion of Islam. Three years, however, were spent in the arduous task of converting six of these men: but they were afterwards his chief companions, and with a few others were the only proselytes to the new religion before it became publicly known.

Hitherto the mission of Mahomet had been in secret, but the time was now arrived, at which, as he said, the Lord had commanded him to make it known. With this object in view, he convened a large number of his kindred to a feast; forty of whom assembled around his hospitable board. A proper opportunity having presented itself, Mahomet arose and thus addressed his wondering kinsmen: "I know no man in the whole peninsula of the Arabs, who can propose to his relations any thing more excellent than what I now do to you. God Almighty hath commanded me to call you unto him; who, therefore, among you will be my vizir, or assistant, and become my brother and vice-regent?" General astonishment kept the assembly silent; none offered to accept the proffered office, till the impetuous Ali, his own nephew, burst forth, and declared that he would be the brother and assistant of the prophet. "I," said he, "O prophet of God, will be thy vizir; I, myself, will beat out the teeth, pull out the eyes, rip open the bellies, and cut off the legs of all those who shall dare to oppose thee;" a happy method truly of propagating a new religion! Mahomet, however, caught the young proselyte in his arms, exclaiming: "this is my brother, my deputy, my successor; shew yourself obedient unto him." The assembly broke up in confusion, testifying their mirth and astonishment by bursts of laughter.

No way discouraged, however, by the failure of this his first

public attempt, Mahomet now began to preach openly before the people. He explained to them that he was commissioned by the Almighty to be his prophet on earth, to assert the unity of the Divine being, to denounce the worship of images, to recall the people to the true and only religion, to announce the tidings of paradise to the believing, and to threaten the deaf and unbelieving, with the terrible vengeance of the Lord. The fable at first met with no very favourable reception; its extravagance and absurdity were a little too glaring to be immediately acquiesced in. It was not until Abubeker had taken a decided part, and declared his complete and implicit reliance in the truth of the Koran, and the divine mission of the prophet, that the imposture began to take. But his votaries now came first to distrust their own understandings, and then to credit the astounding assertions of the holy man. Their credulity was quickened, no doubt, by his furious denunciations of eternal torments against all who dared to disbelieve the sublime and miraculous adventure; terror was the result of these denunciations, proclaimed as they were with vehemence and unblushing effrontery and belief naturally followed in the train of terror. And thus the extravagant lie, which at first threatened the rising religion with early destruction, served, by a fortuitous concurrence of circumstances to contribute materially to its success. The apostle who was at first derided, came at length to be feared. The people flocked to hear his doctrines; and as they retired wondering and believing, general consternation reigned among the principal inhabitants of Mecca. Alarmed at his growing influence, the magistrates, not very wisely, attempted to check the evil by punishing the offender. For some time, however, "the apostle of God," as he called himself, found an asylum from these hostile attacks under the roof of his rich uncle, Abu Taleb, and the alarm and hatred of the nobles only served to increase the fame and importance of Mahomet. Persecution has always been found favourable to any cause; and in the present instance, it gave the impostor strength, by bringing him prominently before the public. While Abu Taleb lived, he defended his nephew against the designs of his enemies; but at the end of the seventh year of his mission, death deprived him of both his uncle and his wife Cadijah; and in his affliction he termed this fatal year, the year of mourning.

The unprotected prophet was now completely exposed to the attacks of his enemies. His only safety was in flight; and had not the city of Medina been friendly to his cause, the religion of Islam would have been crushed in the bud. But the fame of Mahomet had extended far beyond the walls of his native town. Distance, by shrouding him in mystery, increased his influence. While he was scorned and derided at Mecca, he was worshipped



at Medina. A secret deputation from this latter city, waited on the apostle, and an alliance was entered into, "during two secret and nocturnal interviews, on a hill, in the suburbs of Mecca." Seventy-three men and two women, having become his disciples, now met the prophet, and proffered him their assistance. "What recompence," said they, "have we to expect, should we fall in your defence?" "PARADISE," exclaimed Mahomet, with unhesitating confidence; on which they pledged themselves to fidelity and allegiance.

Such, and so unpromising, was the commencement of a religion which at this day is professed by a hundred and forty millions of our fellow creatures, or about one-sixth of the whole population of the globe. It is a curious subject, to trace its history, and mark its progress in the world; but, to give you even an outline of this would greatly exceed the limits of this lecture. Its origin, extension, and effects were the subject of prophecy five hundred years before Mahomet was born, and were pointed at, in the sounding of this sixth trumpet as a tremendous woe, or dreadful judgment to be inflicted upon the inhabitants of the earth. The importance which is consequently attached to it, must plead my excuse for here dwelling a little upon it.<sup>b</sup>

Mahomet, from a fugitive, became a monarch. Mecca, the place of his nativity rejected his mission, expelled him from its gates, and sought his life; but he was received at Medina where he found himself at the head of an army devoted to his person, obsequious to his will, and implicit believers in his apostolic mission. His first act at Medina was to erect a temple in which he might celebrate the offices of his religion; and he now, in his own person, combined both the temporal and spiritual power; he was general of his army, judge of his people, and the religious pastor of his flock. And so intense was the devotion of his followers,

<sup>b</sup> "I never wondered," says an able writer on the Evidence of Christianity, "that the attempts of Mahomet to establish his religion, were crowned with success. When I peruse the Koran, and examine the materials of which it is composed; when I observe how much the work is indebted to the Jewish and Christian revelations; when I survey the particular part which Mahomet or his agents supplied; when I see with how much art the whole is accommodated to the opinions and habits of Jews, Christians, and Pagans; when I consider what indulgences it grants, and what future scenes it unfolds; when I advert to the peculiar circumstances of the times in which its author formed the vast design of assuming the royal and prophetic character; and, more than all, when I contemplate the reformer at the head of a conquering army,—the Koran in one hand, and in the other a sword; I cannot be surprised at the civil and religious revolution which has immortalized his name. With his advantages how could he fail of success? Every thing favoured the enterprise: the nations beheld a military apostle; and they who were unconvinced by his arguments, trembled at his sword." *Clarke's Answer to the Question, "Why are you a Christian?"*

that the deputy of the city of Mecca beheld with astonishment the blind and devoted veneration that was paid him. From this time he was the martial apostle, propagating his religion by means of the sword. "O true believers," I give you a specimen of the language in which he addressed his followers: "take your necessary precaution against your enemies, and either go forth to war in separate parties, or go forth all together in a body. Let them, therefore, fight for the religion of God, who part with the present life in exchange for that which is to come; for whosoever fighteth for the religion of God, whether he be slain or victorious, we will surely give him great reward."—"And when the month wherein ye are not allowed to attack the unbelievers, shall be passed, kill the idolaters, wheresoever ye shall find them, and take them prisoners, and besiege them, and lay wait for them in every convenient place." The commands of the prophet were obeyed to the very letter; and to the spirit of martial energy that he infused into it, during the lifetime of the prophet, and during the first ages of its existence, is the prevalence of the Mahometan religion to be attributed. It is as essentially a military system, as any thing could possibly make it. "The people of Arabia," says Mr. Hallam, "a race of strong passions and of sanguinary temper, enured to habits of pillage and murder, found in the law of their native prophet, not merely a license, but a command to desolate the world, and the promise of all that their glowing imaginations could anticipate of paradise annexed to all in which they most delighted upon earth." The words of Ali, the early and illustrious disciple of Mahomet, which, I formerly quoted to you, are, as it were, "a text upon which the commentary expands into the whole history of the Saracens. They contain the vital essence of his religion; implicit faith and ferocious energy. Death, slavery, tribute to unbelievers, were the glad tidings of the Arabian prophet."

Mahomet who entered upon his apostolic career in the year 612, died in 632, at which time his sovereignty, temporal and religious, embraced and was limited by the Arabian peninsula. But the Roman and Persian empires—or to speak more correctly, the countries which formerly constituted those empires, were contemplated by the ambitious fanatics of his creed as their quarry. Accordingly, in the very first year of Mahomet's successor, Abubeker, each of those mighty empires was invaded. That of Persia opposed but a short resistance; a few victories—a few sieges, carried the Arabian arms from the Tigris to the Oxus, the boundaries of the Persian empire. Seven years of active and unceasing warfare sufficed to subjugate the rich province of Syria, including Palestine or the Holy Land, though defended by numerous armies and fortified cities, A. D. 632-639, and the Caliph Omar

had scarcely returned thanks for the accomplishment of this conquest, when Amron, his lieutenant, announced to him the entire reduction of Egypt. After some interval, the Saracens won their way along the coast of Africa, as far as the pillars of Hercules, and a third province was irretrievably torn from the Greek empire. Those western conquests introduced them to fresh enemies, and ushered in more splendid successes. Encouraged by the disunion of the Visigoths, and invited by treachery, they now passed over into Spain, and within about two years the name of Mahomet was invoked under the Pyrenees.<sup>c</sup> Such was the rapidity with which the arms of the Caliphs overran province after province, and conquered kingdom after kingdom: and thus in less than a century do we behold their empire rootedly fixed over a great part of the eastern world, and even extended so far as to threaten Europe with the same intolerable bondage. And as religion was the cause and the object of all their conquests, and as the battles which they fought were, according to their conceptions, the battles of the Lord, the propagation of their faith naturally kept pace with the extension of their empire. Thus you have, in the events now narrated, the import of the sounding of the *sixth trumpet*—or the commencement of the second of these three woes, mentioned ch. viii. 13. and ix. 12. We shall now proceed to a more particular examination of the language in which the prophecy is conveyed.

That this woe is intended against the anti-christian world, is manifest, I conceive, from ver. 20, 21, before us, which reads thus—

*“And the rest of men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, or demons, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk; neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornications, nor of their thefts.”* This appears to me to fix the application of the prophecy to the seat of the beast, the anti-christian kingdom. There, and no where else do we find the evils alluded to in these verses—the worshipping of demons, under the name of angels and saints—the worshipping of idols, of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, &c. ; but with what propriety this may be imputed to them, will appear from the account which I gave you in the former part of this lecture, of the state of the Catholic church at this period. The symbols here used, viz., fire, and smoke and brimstone, evidently point out a state of deadly error and delusion—a grand imposture, propagated and maintained by the greatest violence, and most formidable warlike power. It is most significantly denoted by the term “*plagues*” inflicted on these impure worshippers—a third part of whom, are

<sup>c</sup> Hallam, vol. ii. p. 167.

killed by them—and, notwithstanding this, “the rest of the men which were not killed, repented not of their wickedness.”

There are two or three remarks which I have to offer in this place, before we proceed to an examination of the symbols of this trumpet.

1. This second woe differs from the first, an account of which we have in the preceding part of the chapter, in this respect, that by means of the first, men were not killed—that is, they were not divested of all profession of Christianity, ver. 5. ; they were held in a state between life and death, tormented by the locusts and scorpions; but by this second woe, the third part of men are killed, or, in other words, the third part of the world called Christian, was divested of their profession of Christianity. You may see how this part of the prophecy, received its fulfilment, by the conquest which the Saracens, the followers of Mahomet made of that part of the empire, which was in Africa, and in Asia, to the river Euphrates, the boundary of the empire on the east; and though there have been, and still are professors of Christianity in those parts, and beyond them, yet, the apostacy from the very Christian name, caused by the Mahometan successes, of which I have already given you some account in this lecture, may very well be reckoned to have taken off a third part of them that went under the Christian name.

2. Another observation which I have to offer in this place, respects the commencement of this woe, or the time of its beginning to take effect, which I think is to be distinguished from the loosing of the four angels, mentioned ver. 14, 15. This loosing of the four angels does not seem to be the beginning of the woe which comes by the sixth trumpet; but, rather the time when it came to its height. For, it is not represented as falling out upon the first sounding of the trumpet, but as a subsequent occurrence. For instance, “*the sixth angel sounded,*”—and with this, commences the woe—the rise of the Mahometan imposture—and the propagation of his religion throughout the Arabian peninsula. After the angel had sounded, the prophet hears a voice proceeding from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God, thus addressing the angel, “*Loose the four angels that are bound.*” The woe had begun before, at the blowing of the trumpet, but it had been restrained again; and the angel that blew the trumpet is commanded to take off the restraint, and give it liberty to exert itself in four distinct powers. Perhaps my meaning will be more intelligible to you, if I say, that the conquests made by the followers of Mahomet, as already mentioned, though included in this woe trumpet, and forming a part of it, all took place prior to the loosing of the four angels, which are described as having been bound in the river Euphrates. The angels had been in a state of

preparation for an appointed time, "*An hour, and a day, and a month, and a year,*" in order to slay the third part of men ; but they are held in a state of restraint, until the voice from the throne of God commands the angel to take off the restraint—" *Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.*" ver. 14.

I do not know whether it be necessary to say anything respecting *the river Euphrates*, in which these four angels are said to be bound. I presume we all know, that this celebrated river divided the ancient Babylonian empire from Syria ; that the famous city of Babylon was built upon it—in fact, it ran through the city ; and so, in the Old Testament, when the king of Egypt is said to make war against the Assyrian monarch, it is expressed by his making "war upon the Euphrates," which is only saying in other words, he should go up against the city of Babylon. Upon this celebrated river, the Euphrates, at the time this prophecy was delivered, stood the ruins of Babylon—and the country surrounding, was still called Babylon. When, therefore, angels are figuratively said to be *bound in*, and *loosed* from the river Euphrates, it probably denotes, that four great powers professing the Mahometan religion, probably having their residence beyond that river, should invade the countries lying on this side of it, and professing Christianity, inflicting deadly plagues on them.

" *And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand ; and I heard the number of them ; and thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and of brimstone ; and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions, and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone.*" On this I remark, that the four angels who are described as bound in the regions bordering on the river Euphrates, are probably four contemporary sultanies or dynasties, into which the Turkish empire was divided towards the close of the eleventh century ; viz., Persia, Kerman, Syria, and Rhoum. According to Mr. Mills, in his history of Mohammedism,<sup>4</sup> the greatness and unity of the Turkish empire, expired in the person of Malek Shah. On his death, in the year 1092, that vast fabric fell to the ground ; and after a series of civil wars, *four dynasties*, contemporary and not successive were formed ; viz., that of *Persia* at large ; that of *Kerman*, which was a province of Persia ; that of a large portion of *Syria*, including Aleppo and Damascus ; and that of *Rhoum*, or Asia Minor.

These four dynasties, we are told, were long restrained from extending their conquests beyond the countries bordering on the Euphrates, partly by the quadruple division of their own once

<sup>4</sup> Page 233-261.

united empire, partly by the revolutions of Asia, and partly in consequence of the crusades, which at this time took place for the recovery of the Holy Land. But, after the Latins had abandoned Syria and Egypt, towards the close of the thirteenth century, the four angels on the river Euphrates were forthwith loosed, in the persons of their existing representatives; and the object of their liberation was duly accomplished. In the year 1453, they took Constantinople, and subverted the Roman empire of the east—which was probably the special end and design for which the four angels were unloosed. And now let us mark the prophetic description of this plague.

The Turkish armies consist almost, if not altogether of cavalry—and here this cavalry is represented as consisting of *myriads upon myriads*; and Gibbon tells us, that “Their cavalry was proudly computed by millions.” The heads of the horses are compared to the heads of lions—thus indicating their great strength and fierceness; and the riders are depicted as wearing breast-plates of fire, and of jacinth, and of brimstone—and “Out of their mouths issued *fire, and smoke, and brimstone.*” ver. 17.

It appears to me a most whimsical conceit, which some persons have got hold of, when they explain this “Fire, and smoke, and brimstone:” of the use of gunpowder, which was invented about this period. To conceive of gunpowder as issuing “*Out of the mouths*” of the horsemen and destroying the third part of men, is beyond my comprehension; and yet it is adopted even by Mr. Fuller, p. 136; as well as by bishop Newton, Mr. Faber, and many others. I humbly conceive that it was not by means of gunpowder, or the Turkish artillery, that the third part of the professors of Christianity in those countries became spiritually dead; but by their reception of the creed of Mahomet, the principles of the Koran—a system of the most deadly error, delusion, and imposture, thrust upon them with the greatest violence, and most formidable warlike power—all which is most significantly *symbolized*, by “Fire, and smoke, and brimstone.”

“*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.*” ver. 19. There seems to be an obscure allusion here to the origin and source of the Mahometan imposture, namely, that old serpent, the devil and satan, who beguiled Eve through his subtlety. These horsemen are symbolically represented as partaking of his nature and properties. They did mischief in various ways, and in opposite directions; they had power both in their mouths and in their tails: they had heads to preach, and tails wherewith to sting to death. Their argument indeed was a very short one; but it was one forced with all the eloquence of the sword; “Receive Mahomet as the apostle of God, and conform to his religion, or

death is your portion." The prophet Isaiah has something not very unlike the verse before us, in ch. ix. 15, 16. "The ancient and honourable, he is the head ; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail ; for the leaders of this people cause them to err, and they that are led of them are destroyed."

"*And the rest of the men which were not killed of those plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should worship devils, and idols of gold, of silver, of brass, and not stone, and of wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk, neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornications, nor of their thefts.*" ver. 20, 21. Of the idolatry that prevailed in the apostate Christian church at this period, I have already given you some account, and shall now only add a remark or two on the other crimes with which that impure society here stands charged—murders—sorceries—fornications—and thefts.

The *murders* here mentioned, probably refer to the wars which the clergy excited, for the support of their authority—the religious wars—the crusades, for the recovery of the Holy Land from the Turks, and especially their delivering over heretics and schismatics, to the secular arm to be punished—the persecutions of the Waldenses, Albigenses, Wickliffites, Bohemians, &c. all which was downright murder, in the sight of Him who came not to destroy men's lives, but to save.

Nor of their *sorceries* : the coming of the man of sin was after the working of Satan, with signs and lying wonders ; and, as we are told in a subsequent chapter, "Those that dwell on the earth were deceived by the signs which the beast got power to do." In fact, the clergy of the Romish church, proceeded so far in many instances, as to come in collision with the power of darkness, until all the old sorceries of the heathens or pagans were practised again in the anti-christian world, under a mask of religion.

Nor of their *fornications* : this *may* refer to their "Forbidding to marry ;" and enjoining a state of celibacy on the clergy—a prolific source of fornication, taking the term literally. But most probably that which is here pointed at, is the fornication which Antichrist committed with the kings of the earth ; for this fornication stands distinguished from the worship of images, and saints, and angels—and it is committed with the kings of the earth by her that pretends to be the spouse of Christ, and who takes them in his place.

Nor of their *thefts* : all the merchandize of Babylon, all the artifices and means which the clergy had of enriching themselves, and all the worldly gains that accrued to them, from their blind, deluded, and superstitious followers, and by the power of

the kings of the earth, were, in the sight of God, no better than downright thefts.

Such are the crimes which lay at the door of this apostate church, and for the punishment of which, the Mahometan delusion was permitted, and the Ottoman armies let loose upon the empire. Nevertheless, in all these things they persevered, under the second woe; and when it was come to its height—when the four angels were let loose, slaying the third part of them, the rest, instead of repenting, and turning from these abominations, abounded in them more and more. Thus it was that the mystery of iniquity grew and accumulated—“Evil men and seducers waxed worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.”

I cannot better close this lecture, than by recalling to your recollection the comparison once drawn between the two systems of religion—that of Mahomet and of Jesus of Nazareth, with the character of their respective founders; the passage is familiar to most of you, but it will bear repeating.

“Go to your natural religion: lay before her Mahomet and his disciples arrayed in armour and in blood, riding in triumph over the spoils of thousands and tens of thousands, who fell by his victorious sword; shew her the cities which he set in flames, the countries which he ravaged and destroyed, and the miserable distress of all the inhabitants of the earth. When she has viewed him on this score, carry her into his retirements; shew her the prophet’s chamber, his concubines and wives: let her see his adultery, and hear him allege revelation, and his Divine commission, to justify his lust and his oppression. When she is tired with this prospect, then shew her the blessed Jesus, humble and meek, doing good to all the sons of men, patiently instructing both the ignorant and the perverse. Let her see him in his most retired privacies: let her follow him to the Mount, and hear his devotions and supplications to God. Carry her to his table, to view his poor fare, and hear his heavenly discourse. Let her see him injured but not provoked; let her attend him to the tribunal, and consider the patience with which he endured the scoffs and reproaches of his enemies. Lead her to his cross, and let her view him in the agony of death, and hear his last prayer for his persecutors:—‘*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*’

“When natural religion has viewed both, ask, Which is the prophet of God? But, her answer we have already had, when she saw part of this scene through the eyes of the centurion who attended at the cross; by him she spake, and said, ‘*Truly this man was the Son of God!*’”<sup>e</sup>

<sup>e</sup> Bishop Sherlock’s Discourses at the Temple Church, vol. i. Dis. 9.



## APPENDIX

TO LECTURE XXVII.

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HAVING said but little in the course of my lecture on the peculiar tenets, the laws, rites, ceremonies, &c. of the Mahometan religion—a detailed account of which would have greatly exceeded the limits of a lecture—a summary is here subjoined for the use of such readers as have not access to other sources of information. In my History of the Christian Church, vol. i. pp. 403-415, the reader may find the subject treated somewhat more circumstantially than in this APPENDIX.

THE KORAN must be considered as the code of laws, religion, and morality, which Mahomet, in his character as legislator, promulgated to the people of Arabia. It contains almost every thing he left behind him in the shape of precept and instruction; and such as it is, was supposed by him, and is still thought by his followers, to comprise all the information that is requisite for the happiness of mankind. “It must be remarked, that, as the Alcoran is among the Mussulmans the only book of law, it consequently comprehends all their civil, and, to speak according to our own phraseology, all their canon law. And as it comprehends also the truths which they ought to believe, it follows, that a doctor in the law is, according to them, a doctor in theology, and that the two professions of law and theology are amongst them inseparable.

“This law, upon which is founded all the theology and all the jurisprudence of the Mussulmans, is then comprised in the Koran, in the same manner that the law of the Jews is comprised in the Five Books of Moses.”<sup>a</sup>

When Mahomet first laid claim to divine inspiration, he cunningly contrived to obtain, in reality, the power of making laws. In name, indeed, he was but the instrument by which the divine decrees were made known to the world. He informed his followers, and they believed him, that in the seventh heaven there had been from everlasting a large table, called the *preserved table*, on which were recorded the commands of the Almighty. From this table a copy had been taken, and conveyed by the angel Gabriel to the lowest heaven, on the night of the *divine decree*. From this copy, as Mahomet’s necessities required, fragments were conveyed by inspiration to the prophet, and by him were announced to his followers. As might have been expected, they were connected intimately with Mahomet’s immediate interests;

<sup>a</sup> D’Herbelot, Bib. Orient. mot Fek.

were composed for the momentary service; they assumed no regular form; and possessed few of the requisites to a complete and accurate body of laws. These fragments, as we have before stated, were, by the succeeding caliphs, collected into one volume, in the form of the present Koran.

The whole is divided into one hundred and fourteen portions, which may properly be termed *chapters*; and these again into smaller divisions, which may, with equal propriety, be called *verses*.

There is not the slightest approximation to any thing like design or method in either the larger or smaller divisions. Neither the time at which they were revealed, nor the matter they contain, was the rule by which they were arranged; they were, in fact, thrown together without order or meaning. The divisions of the chapters are also equally faulty. One verse has seldom any connexion with the preceding; and the same subject is, in no case, continued for a dozen verses in succession: each one appears an isolated precept or exclamation; the tendency of which it is difficult, the pertinence impossible, to discover.

The first nine titles will convey to the reader a fair conception of the skill in arrangement and nomenclature manifested by the prophet's followers.

1. The Preface. 2. The Cow. 3. The Family of Iram. 4. Women. 5. Table. 6. Cattle. 7. Al Araf. 8. The Spoils. 9. The Declaration of Immunity.

The language of the book, if we may judge by the translations we possess, is by no means superior to its arrangement. The Arabians themselves declare it to be beyond competition. Nothing inferior to the divinity, say they, could have composed such magnificent sentences. Mahomet himself was so convinced of the beauty of his style, that he boldly advanced its perfection as the most striking proof of the authenticity of his mission. "The Koranists, or persons attached to the Koran, find nothing eloquent or excellent out of the Book. They assert that Lebid, one of the most famous poets of the Arabs, became a convert upon the reading of three or four verses of the second chapter, which he believed inimitable in their style. These Koranists are great enemies to the philosophers, particularly to metaphysicians and schoolmen. They condemn both Averroës and Avicenna, the two greatest ornaments of Moslemism; and also Plato and Aristotle."<sup>b</sup> We suspect, however, that the Arabians are as ignorant of style as of method. Rhapsody is in no place less desirable than in a body of laws. The expression of a law should be precise, clear, complete, and brief. It would be difficult to discover any of these qualities in any portion of the Koran. To an Arabian ear the language may probably possess beauties that none but an Arabian can feel. But these delicate graces of style, though, in poetry, of infinite importance, are of secondary, perhaps, no importance whatever in a book of laws. It is more than probable, also, that even these graces are exaggerated, and that fashion makes an Arabian pretend to feel beauties which, in reality, he never discovered.

<sup>b</sup> D'Herbelot, mot Alcoran, p. 81.

The religion of Mahomet, as contra-distinguished from that of his countrymen, was marked by three peculiarities: the first was, that he established the worship of a single God; the next, that he set himself up for his inspired minister; the third, that he commanded his followers to propagate their belief by the sword. The first of these, viewed in conjunction with his other doctrines, was little more than a nominal improvement, the two last evidently mischievous.

Mahomet, in circumscribing the number of the Arabian gods, altered not their character. He left them as he found them—easily irritated, with difficulty appeased; revengeful and capricious; to be propitiated rather by ceremonies than by virtuous actions; more interested by the proper cut of a votary's nails, or in the regular prostrations of his body, than in the happiness he enjoyed himself, or in the conduct he pursued towards others. There were seven things in which the faithful Mussulman was to believe; four things which he was to perform, only one of which was connected with the temporal welfare of himself or his fellows.

1. He was to believe in Mahomet's God. 2. In Mahomet as his prophet. 3. In his angels; 4. In his scriptures; 5. In his prophets; 6. In the resurrection and day of judgment; 7. In God's absolute decree and predetermination of good and evil.

His imposed performances were—1. Prayer, under which were comprehended the washings and purifications: 2. Alms; 3. Fastings; and, 4. Pilgrimages to Mecca.<sup>c</sup>

Throughout the Koran, the greatest possible stress is laid upon the necessity of a belief in Mahomet's pretended mission; all other virtues are useless if this single point of the prophet's divine appointment be not steadily fixed in the mind, and constantly present to the imagination of the aspirant to everlasting life. But while belief in the pretended prophet is thus exalted to the highest point the imagination can conceive, the really useful qualities are placed low down in the scale of importance. The consequence is that the votary is careless of his conduct so long as he is fortunate enough to preserve a belief of the proper description. The faithful, that is the believing, Mussulman is in no doubt concerning his reception into the heavenly regions, if, while in the minor consideration of virtuous conduct, he might be wanting, he should have strictly followed the ceremonious observances of his religion, and firmly believed in the impostures of his prophet.

From the list of actions we have given, as necessary to a perfect Mussulman, it is obvious, that Mahomet established a scale of meritorious acts, in which idle, ridiculous, useless, and sometimes mischievous observances occupy the chief place, while all really useful actions are passed over as unimportant. We need no further proof of the low character both of his religion and his morality.

One mischievous portion of his religion must not be forgotten, viz., the command to propagate it by force. If there be one means more effectual than another of keeping men in perpetual ignorance, and con-

<sup>c</sup> Sale, Pre. Disc. sec. 4, p. 93.

sequent misery, it is to make truth and justice always the portion of the strongest. If, to the settlement of contending opinions, force alone be necessary, it is evident that the correctness of either is a matter of no moment. Consequently, to discover whether an opinion be founded in truth will never be the aim of the disputant. The measurement of his own and his adversary's powers, is the circumstance that will concern him; he will be careless concerning the propriety of his belief, so long as his arm is the stronger, and hatred the most violent will arise in his mind against all who do not agree with him, inasmuch as non-accordance with his opinion implies a contempt of his power. He will learn to attach to words and symbols immeasurable importance, for they will be all that he can understand. His mind will be shut against conviction; and turned with implacable animosity against every one who hoists not his standard, or who is not attached to his formula. Every bad passion will be generated in his mind; irascible, impatient of contradiction, and revengeful, he will be ignorant himself, and determined to keep others so; will resist every improvement, as an attack upon his creed, and invariably weigh every man's worth, not by his actions, but by the words of his belief.

The Arabians, before the appearance of Mahomet, were a tolerant people. They forced none to believe as they believed: but lived in harmony and friendship with persons of every persuasion. In the retired cities of Arabia, the Christian, the Jew, and the Pagan, all found a refuge; and not till the persecuting spirit of Islam was established, were they disturbed in their hitherto peaceful abode. Arabia, however, became, through Mahomet, divided against itself; and to the many already existing causes of dispute were added the direful animosities of religion.

Nothing but the prejudices of education could make a reasonable man look upon the Koran as a book of jurisprudence capable of conveying instruction to any but a nation of savages. Deficient in form; deficient in clearness; incomplete; it possesses not one single requisite to a body of law. In the midst of a vast farrago of nonsense, hidden amidst unmeaning explanations, and dark, mysterious prophecies, there sometimes appears a command respecting the distribution of property, or the punishment of offenders. But no explanations are given—no regular description of the means by which property may be acquired; no enumeration of those by which the rights to it may be lost, is even attempted. One advantage, and one alone, he may be supposed to have originated,—his were *written* decrees; it was a commencement for a body of laws, though a rude and imperfect one. This benefit, however, is more than counterbalanced by the evil of their being irrevocable. What the ignorant barbarian instituted, succeeding generations have been obliged to retain. No matter how absurd, how injurious the decree, religion commands the faithful Moslem to abide by it. The Almighty was its author, and he is all-wise; and, moreover, is as wise at one time as another. How, then, shall we pretend to amend the divine ordination, or fancy that he himself need amend it? The conclusion is irresistible, provided the premises be allowed. The

nations who have assumed the Moslem faith have consequently remained, and, while professing it, will remain, barbarians.

Even from this hasty and imperfect review of Mahomet's actions as a legislator, the reader will be able to form a tolerably correct estimate of his public character. That he was a barbarian, unskilled in the sciences of which he professed himself the inspired teacher, and deserving a very small portion of applause, as having advanced the civilization of his people beyond the point at which he found it, is abundantly manifest: that he was superior to the age in which he lived may be believed from the success of his imposture. Among a people so rude as the Arabs, however, a very slight superiority was sufficient to render him thus successful. His talents contributed to his own fortune, not to his nation's improvement; he was skilled in whatever was necessary for his personal aggrandisement; in whatever was useful to others he was miserably deficient.

Mahomet was a murderer and an impostor. He prompted and approved of the assassination of Sophyan and Caab. It must, however, be recollected that, among the barbarous Arabians, the same carefulness of life was not inculcated as among a civilized people; and the prophet, in getting rid of his enemies, did not outrage the feelings of his friends or his enemies. We cannot, indeed, but detest the morality of a people who tolerated such conduct, and also hold in exceedingly low estimation the civilization of him, who, pretending to improve that morality, upheld and practised the very worst portion of its tenets.

That Mahomet was an impostor cannot be doubted. In the early part of his public life he might have fancied himself somewhat peculiarly gifted; but that his self-delusion should have continued to the later years of his life, to such an extent as to acquit him of fraud, is utterly impossible. His story of the heavenly journey was a fiction, which nothing but absolute madness could have permitted him to believe. Moreover, the constant visits of the angel Gabriel, precisely at the critical moment when his aid was needed, are sufficient evidence of a perfect absence of all self-delusion. But, being an impostor, did he employ the power he acquired to the advantage of his people or to his own aggrandisement? He exalted himself to a throne, and, possibly, when his own interests were not concerned, did, as far as his abilities enabled him, further the welfare of his people. He was not cruel, nor sanguinary: his conquests were generally speaking marked by no butchery; nor was his government a tyrannical one. In his private life he was mild and gentle; affectionate to his friends and his wives; and just and honourable in his dealings. As a private man, among his own people, he was esteemed virtuous and beneficent. For the most part he wanted rather the knowledge than the will to be an estimable citizen, as well as a beneficent legislator. His vices were the vices of his age; and, as he was little superior in knowledge to the men by whom he was surrounded, it is not wonderful that he did not greatly surpass them in virtue.

## LECTURE XXVIII.

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AND I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud : and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire ; 2 And he had in his hand a little book open : and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, 3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth : and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. 4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write : and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. 5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, 6 And 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. 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.—Rev. ch. x.

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### THE LITTLE BOOK.

BEFORE we enter upon a consideration of the things contained in this chapter—a chapter which, for sublimity and grandeur, stands unrivalled in all the compositions of man that have come down to us, whether of ancient or modern times, it will be proper that we pause and review the ground whereon we now stand, and I may add, take a glance of the prospect before us.

If you look back to ch. viii. 13, you will find three grand woes, or so many distinct periods of successful attack upon the christian profession, announced. The first, which we understand to refer to the placing of Antichrist upon his throne, or the establishment of the kingdom of the clergy, takes place immediately on the sounding of the fifth trumpet, and is afterwards described as past, ch. ix. 12. The second woe follows, commencing with the sounding of the sixth trumpet, and in this

we have a prophecy of the rise of the Mahometan imposture, with the terrible calamities which should come upon the nations professing Christianity by means of the Saracens, the Turks, and the Ottomans. But this second woe, though it begins like the first, with an hostile invasion, does not end as the first did; for, this sixth trumpet takes up much more time than any of the foregoing; in fact, it comprehends all the time from one hundred and fifty years after the fifth trumpet began, or from the seventh century to the sixteenth, when the seventh trumpet began to be sounded: then, and not till then, it is declared to be gone, or past, ch. xi. 14. The prophecy had now begun to appear as drawing to its close; the seventh and last trumpet was expected. But a new and enlarging scene opens upon us under the sixth trumpet, and before the second woe terminates. The famous period of forty-two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days, computing each day for a year, now presents itself to view. The usurped dominion of the Mahometans, disclosed in the sixth trumpet, is continued throughout; but there is another antichristian usurpation which belongs to the same period, and which is to be produced as cotemporary with it; and this subject, which for conciseness we shall denominate *the reign of Antichrist*, occupies no less than ten chapters. Before we enter upon a consideration of it, a survey of the outlines of these chapters may be useful in clearing away some difficulties.

The *tenth* chapter, the subject of the present lecture, is wholly introductory to what follows. Chapter xi. presents us with a general representation of this "mystery of iniquity," this antichristian and persecuting power, with the state of the real followers of Christ under it during the one thousand two hundred and sixty years. Chapter xii. goes over the same ground, giving a second, and chapters xiii. and xiv. a third general representation of it during the same period; so that the same subject comes over and over, and over again under different views, and with some enlargements. The fifteenth and sixteenth chapters give a more particular account of that part of the subject which commences at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and contains a subdivision of that trumpet into *seven vials*, the pouring out of which brings us down to the millennium; for you will find that the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth chapters are all occupied with what, in modern phraseology, we should term *notes of illustration*, furnishing a more enlarged and circumstantial account of various particulars which had, in the preceding chapters, but incidentally been mentioned—in consequence of which, they are, as it were, resumed and further considered. Thus I have given you a kind of syllabus, or epitome, of a vast subject which lies before us, occupying ten chapters in succession, namely, beginning with the

tenth, and ending with the nineteenth. We now return to a consideration of the chapter before us.

“*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: and he had in his right hand a little book open,*” ver. 1, 2. We have here an entire new vision with which the prophet was favoured; and it was introductory to a further revelation, which was made to him concerning the state of the Christian church, during the reign of Antichrist. The object which now attracted his notice, was that of a mighty angel descending from heaven, clothed, or wrapt about with a cloud, an emblem of great power and majesty, having his head encircled with “a rainbow,” the symbol of peace, intimating, that while the cloud concealed his designs, and the hiding of his power, his church might rest assured, that whatever evils were permitted in order to try her faith and constancy, she should not be overwhelmed as with a deluge. The appearance of this mighty angel was the most glorious that can be conceived, for his *face* shone with a lustre resplendent as the sun shining in its effulgence, and his *feet* with a brightness as if they had been a flame or pillars of fire, significantly intimating, that the Redeemer’s kingdom was in no way tarnished, nor his glory diminished by all the corruptions which have been introduced into it under his name. Whether this mighty angel were the Son of God himself, as I think the grandeur and magnificence of the imagery, as well as other circumstances, would lead us to conclude; or, as some affirm, one of the highest order of created intelligences, we need not be very solicitous to determine. He is described as “*coming down from heaven,*” thereby denoting a change of scene. The former was laid in heaven, but the scene of this vision is laid on the earth; and as the prophet saw him *descending from heaven*, it necessarily supposes, that he himself was on the earth at the time when he was favoured with this manifestation.

While the effulgent glory of this celestial messenger filled the prophet with admiration, his attention was attracted by the appearance of a little book which he held in his hand; “*He had in his hand a little book open,*” or unfolded and unsealed. Here, again, we are at a *moot point*, a disputable case, namely, what are we to understand by this “*little book!*” Ingenuity has given rise to various interpretations of this matter, with the particulars of which it is useless to trouble you. According to Mr. Faber,<sup>a</sup> this little book, which contains a prophetic account of the papal tyranny and usurpation (or the reign of Antichrist) during the entire period of 1260 years, and under all the three woe-trumpets,

<sup>a</sup> Sacred Calendar of Prophecy, Vol. iii. p. 4-7.



forms a sort of *episode* to his general series of predictions ; and this episode he terms *a little book*, appending it as a codicil to his greater book of the Apocalypse. The little book now before us, the contents of which will be found in the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters of the Revelation, naturally divides itself into five sections ; and these five sections, in point of chronology, all run parallel to each other, relating severally, though with some variety of circumstances, to the same period and to the same events ; so as to form jointly a complete history of the papal apostacy, and of the principal actors and sufferers in it.

1. The first section of the little book gives an account of the treading under foot of the holy city, by the apostate church, during the space of forty-two prophetic months—the measuring of certain faithful worshippers within the temple—the prophesying of two witnesses in sackcloth, during the same period of one thousand two hundred and sixty years—the slaughter of these two witnesses, by the beast which arose out of the bottomless pit—their lying dead during three prophetic days and a half—their revival at the end of that period—their ascent into heaven in a cloud—an earthquake, which overthrows the tenth part of the great city, which terminates the second woe: it finally announces the sounding of the seventh trumpet, which introduces the third woe, and brings us down to the end of the one thousand two hundred and sixty years. All these interesting topics are touched upon in ch. xi.

2. The second section of the little book opens to us the whole mystery of iniquity ; so far as its original mover is concerned. It carries back our views to the period of the Pagan Roman empire, which is represented under the emblem of “a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads,” and who is called “the devil and Satan,” because Satan acted in and by that power, even as he did in the serpent which beguiled Eve ; and it traces his diabolical conduct in persecuting the church, and driving the woman into the wilderness. This is the substance of the twelfth chapter.

3. The third section of the little book contains a most pointed description of Antichrist, under the symbol of a wild beast emerging *from the sea*, or rather, the bottomless pit, having seven heads and ten horns—the very heads and horns which the dragon, or Satan, induces him to use against the woman mentioned in the preceding section, ch. xiii. 1-10.

4. The fourth section of this little book, represents to us another beast, arising *out of the earth*, having two horns like a lamb, but speaking like a dragon, and exercising all the power of the first beast, ch. xiii. 11, 12. For understanding this, we must observe that the secular and ecclesiastical powers of Antichrist are

represented by *two beasts*, because the subject could not be so well done by one, both of which are mentioned in this thirteenth chapter, ver. 1 and 11; and the second of these beasts is the same with "the mother of harlots," or false church, and also the same with "the false prophet that works miracles" in the presence of the beast; compare ch. xiii. 12, 13, with ch. xix. 20. The last of these two beasts is said to exercise all the power of the first, causing the whole earth to worship his colleague and supporter.

5. The fifth section of this little book describes the real state of the true church of Christ, the one hundred and forty-four thousand that were sealed, during the reign of Antichrist, ch. xiv. While pursuing this topic, it predicts the ultimate universal preaching of the everlasting gospel; and it divides those successive troubles, which take place at the time of the end, or during the pouring out of the seventh vial into two grand classes, the harvest and vintage of God's wrath, figures expressive of very dreadful judgments; though as some think, the harvest answers to the fifth vial, and the vintage to the seventh.

So much for the contents of the little book here seen in the hand of the mighty angel who descended from heaven; and these hints you will find of use to you in studying this part of the Apocalypse. We shall now proceed.

"*And he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, and cried with a loud voice as when a lion roareth; and when he had cried seven thunders uttered their voices,*" ver. 23. The world which we inhabit consists of the sea and the dry land or earth; and in the scene which now presented itself to the prophet's view, the heavens, which contain Jehovah's throne, with his altar and ministering spirits, were above him; the earth is beneath, not suspended like an orb or globe, but extended in a plain, and containing the divisions of land and water, or earth and sea. The angel descends from heaven above and takes his station on the earth, placing one foot on the sea, and the other on the dry land. It has been remarked as a thing worthy of notice, that this heavenly messenger should place the *right*, or principal foot upon the sea, and the *left* upon the earth; and Sir Isaac Newton has observed upon it, that, by the earth the Jews understood the great continent of all Asia and Africa, to which they had access by land; and by the isles of the sea they understood, the places to which they sailed by water, or the several parts of Europe; and hence in this prophecy, according to him, the earth and sea are put for the nations of the Greek and Roman empires; thus intimating that the prophecies which he was about to reveal, would relate to both the Eastern and Western empires. Others, however, understand the import to be, that the contents of this little book would relate to the greater part of the inhabitants of

the world ; but, in an especial manner, to the inhabitants of the Western empire. The entire series of prophecies contained in the sealed book, ch. v. 1, is delivered under seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials ; but here we have a particular prophecy, or, perhaps, seven distinct prophecies uttered by seven voices loud as thunder, awful and terrible as that of the lion-like voice of the angel which introduces them. But whatever information the prophet might derive from this divine communication, he is forbidden to disclose it. For, says the writer of the Apocalypse :

“ *When the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write : and I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not,*” ver. 4. I think we may reasonably conclude from what is here said, that John himself was made acquainted with certain events of great importance relating to the kingdom of Christ, pertaining also to this seal and trumpet, which things he was forbidden to disclose. What these events were, it is certainly very difficult, or rather impossible for us to ascertain, and *may be* very presumptuous in us to inquire. Let us reverence the silence of scripture, and not curiously pry into those things which the Father hath kept in his own hands, seeking to be wise above what is written. “ Secret things belong unto the Lord our God,” whose glory it is to conceal a matter, Prov. xxv. 2. There *may* have been many wise reasons for revealing these seven thunders to the prophet, and yet concealing them from the church of Christ in general.

“ *And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, 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 ; the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer,*” ver. 5, 6. This, if I mistake not, is the passage which made such an early impression upon the poetical mind of that ornament of our country, Sir William Jones, and which, as Lord Teignmouth informs us in his life of that distinguished man, he, “ at a period of mature judgment, considered to be equal in sublimity to any in the inspired writings, and far superior to any that could be produced from mere human compositions.” It has, indeed, been admired by persons of the most refined taste and genius. “ Observe,” says the late Mr. Hervey, in his Meditations, “ the *aspect* of this august personage ; all the brightness of the sun shines in his countenance ; and all the rage of fire burns in his feet. See his *apparel* ; the clouds compose his robe, and the drapery of the sky floats upon his shoulders ; the rainbow forms his diadem, and “ that which compasseth the heaven with a glorious circle,” is the ornament of his head. Behold his *attitude* ; one foot stands on the ocean, the other rests on the land. The wide extended earth, and the world of waters, serve as pedestals for those mighty

columns. Consider the *action*; his hand is lifted up to the height of the stars; he speaks, and the regions of the firmament echo with the mighty accents, as the midnight desert resounds with the lion's roar. The artillery of the skies is discharged at the signal; a peal of seven-fold thunders spreads the alarm, and prepares the universe to receive his orders. To finish all, and give the highest grandeur, as well as the utmost solemnity to the representation, "He swears by him that liveth for ever and ever"

"*That there should be time no longer; but that in the days 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,*" ver. 7. We are now brought to that part of the chapter under consideration, which has given most occasion to the critical skill of commentators and expositors; and it is, confessedly, not a little obscure and difficult. That the expression, "there shall be time no longer," cannot, in this place, be understood to import that the end of all things was then at hand, and the judgment of the world immediately to take place, is too obvious to need refutation. The seventh trumpet was still to sound; and under that trumpet seven vials were to be poured out: and when the last of them had been poured out, the saints were to reign upon this earth for a thousand years, and all *within the limits of time*. We must, therefore, dismiss that idea wholly from our minds, and seek for some other meaning of the words. Several writers, among whom are Daubuz, Lowman, and others, have translated the words of the original, thus, "the time should not be as yet;" but it is doubtful if the Greek will bear that version. Dr. Gill says, and we must respect the Doctor's learning, whatever may be thought of his theology, the words will bear to be rendered, "*that there should be delay no longer,*" which accords with the translation of Brightman, a writer on the Revelation, whose opinion is always treated with great deference and respect by the learned Vitranga. "I translate the word  $\chi\rho\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu$ ," says he, "by *delay of time*, for so the word doth sometimes signify, viz. protracting, or long continuance of time." And so he gives the meaning in this way: "A very little time is now remaining, until the finishing of the mystery which God hath declared unto his servants by the prophets." And this is Dr. Doddridge's view; for, in a note on the place, he says, "the word  $\chi\rho\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu$  sometimes signifies *delay* as well as *time*, and according to the former version, the meaning is, that there should be no *delay* of the destruction of the church's enemies, and of its prosperous and glorious condition. "The mystery of God," says the learned Dr. Lightfoot, "is his gathering in of his elect, and hitherto there had been great hinderance by heathen Rome, by heresies, papacy, and Turcism (Mahometanism;) but at last Christ swears, that there should be "no more delay:" the word  $\chi\rho\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu\nu$  must be taken so here: and not unconsonant to the signi-

fication of the word, and very consonant to the context, and to the place whence this verse is taken, viz. Dan. xii. 7, where the angel is brought in swearing, as here, that the trouble of Antiochus and his persecution and hinderance, should be so long, and there should be no delay farther; but there should be a restoring. That place laid to this, and Antiochus looked upon as a figure of Antichrist, the construction of this place is easy.”<sup>b</sup> “The whole passage taken together,” says the learned Dean Woodhouse, in his Annotations on the Apocalypse,<sup>c</sup> has a plain reference to *happy times*, which are expected with the seventh trumpet, and which have been promised with glad tidings under the gospel. These times are mentioned as ‘the times of refreshing,’ and ‘times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began,’” Acts iii. 19, 20. He adds, and, as I think, very properly, “that some light may be thrown upon the passage, by considering what ‘the mystery of God’ here denotes; and with this view we may compare it with the ‘*mystery of iniquity*,’ 2 Thess. ii. 7, which the context shews to be the triumphant working of Satan, or the reign of Antichrist. And, therefore, ‘*the mystery of God*’ appears to be, that which arrives also under the seventh trumpet, “the triumphant reign of godliness;” the establishment of the kingdom of Christ upon the ruins of the man of sin.

This, then, appears to me to be the meaning of the text. Under this sixth trumpet, which, as already remarked, comprises nearly the entire term of 1260 years, Antichrist reigned lord paramount; the outer court of the Lord’s house is trodden under foot, and not measured, because it is given to the nations. The Lord’s two witnesses were in all that time still bearing their testimony against the transgressions of the law of the Lord’s house, and tormenting the nations with their testimony: until at length they are killed by the beast, when their testimony was perfected, or fully brought forth; and, at the end of this sixth trumpet, we have their resurrection and exaltation, in allusion to the resurrection and exaltation of our Lord, as you will find when we arrive at the next chapter, viz. ch. xi. 11-13. But during this long and dreary season, when darkness sat enthroned over all the world; while the professed followers of Christ were worshipping their images and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood, as completely as ever their predecessors in the heathen empire did before them; indulging in their murders, their sorceries, their fornications, and their thefts, as we saw in our last lecture; I say, during this protracted interval, the condition of the real people of God must have

<sup>b</sup> Lightfoot’s Works, 8vo. Edition, 1822, Vol. iii. p. 342.

<sup>c</sup> Page 280.

been inconceivably trying; their faith and patience must necessarily have been put to the severest test; and the supposition is very natural that they would be inquiring, "How long shall this deplorable state of matters continue; when will the Lord take unto him his great power and reign?" Such I take to be the anxious moment when this mighty angel comes down from heaven, having in his hand a little book open, and to console the hearts and strengthen the faith and patience of the persecuted disciples, he lifts up his hand to heaven, and swears by the eternal Jehovah, that there shall be no longer any delay; no procrastination; but that, in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be completed; and thereby should his faithfulness, in all the declarations he had made to his servants the prophets, be vindicated.

"*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. 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. 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 up, my belly was bitter,'*" ver. 8-10.—I hope that none of my friends will mistake this for the language of literal history; or, suppose, that the holy prophet actually received a book and ate it up, or swallowed it. The whole of what is recorded in this chapter takes place *in vision*; and the terms in which the things are conveyed to us, are the highly figurative or symbolical language of prophecy. Let us endeavour to ascertain its meaning. The prophet was lately addressed by a voice from heaven, ver. 4; and he is now again accosted by the same speaker, and directed as in the words just read, to "Go and take the little book out of the hand of the angel." It has been contended by some, that this little book was the remainder of the book of seven seals, ch. v. 1, or so much of it as, at this time, was unfulfilled, comprising the seventh trumpet and the seven vials. But I think we have strong presumptive evidence here, that, though like a supplementary work or appendix, the little book might be closely connected with some other volume, it could not be the same; but one distinct from the book with seven seals. This presumption is founded upon the particularity of the description; it is again called a little book; this little book is said to be open; and we are also told, that it was in the hand of the angel. Had it been the remainder of the sealed book, this particularity of description would have been unnecessary; because the prophet would not have been in danger of falling into a mistake respecting it; but if it were a separate

work, and held in the hand of the angel, along with the remainder of the book with seven seals, this minuteness of description was necessary, in order that the prophet might distinguish one from the other. And now let us see what followed.

Obedient to this new order from the throne, "I went unto the angel," says the prophet, "and said unto him, Give me the little book." The request was no sooner preferred, than it was complied with: "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." To eat up a book is a highly poetical expression for receiving its contents into the mind, and digesting them, so as to make one's self perfectly acquainted with the whole. This mode of speech is common among ourselves; and the speaker, for one, can testify, that he has, in the course of a long life, *devoured* many a new volume, and done it *voraciously!* But as there is in the prophet's language an evident allusion to some passages in the writings of the Old Testament, it may be useful to turn to them. Thus, then, for instance, we read,

In Jer. xv. 16, "Thy words were found, and I did *eat them*, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." See also Ezek. iii. 1-3, "Moreover, he said unto me, Son of Man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee: then did I eat it, and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness." I need not stop to point out to you the correspondency between this language and that we have under consideration; it is so obvious, that every one must perceive it at the first glance. And it is in a similar style that we find our Lord, in John, ch. vi. speaking of himself as "the bread of life;" and of his disciples "eating his flesh, and drinking his blood," which they can do in no other way than by receiving his doctrine as the life of their souls, and by faith, feeding upon his sacrifice. These hints may suffice to shew us what we are to understand by the prophet's taking the little book, and eating it up—the meaning, when stript of its symbolical attire, is, that he made himself thoroughly acquainted with its contents—and now observe the effects that this communication produced upon him.

"*It was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter,*" ver. 10. Thus he experienced all those opposite effects of which the angel had apprised him; the sweetest cordial could not have been more agreeable to his taste, than some things in this book were to his mind—while others produced the opposite feeling, of the greatest bitterness and pain. "To gratify curiosity," as one well observes, "with what is con-

tained in the womb of time, has its delights ; but so many bitter things are found written therein, that, we must confess, it is by a *kind* dispensation of Providence, man is ignorant of futurity." "The same desire of understanding the future destinies of the church, which made the prophet weep when no one was found worthy to open the sealed book, must make him rejoice when an *open* book was put into his hand, with a direction to eat it ; but when he came to digest it, and to perceive the corruptions and persecutions which should prevail, and for so long a period retard the progress of the gospel, it could not but be grievous unto him."<sup>d</sup>

"*And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings,*" ver. 11. There is a diversity of opinions among the writers on the Apocalypse, respecting the precise import of the words, "*thou must prophesy again,*" &c. I will lay before you a few of those that are best entitled to notice, that you may form your own judgment on the matter ; and conclude with merely hinting at my own :

Thus *Dr. Doddridge* expounds them : "Thou hast not yet despatched the whole of thy work, in what thou hast already registered of these visions of the Lord ; but *thou must again prophesy to many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.* The oracles thou hast yet to deliver, shall be propagated through many countries—translated into a variety of languages—and perused by persons of various ranks and conditions, and some of them the most eminent and conspicuous ; but fear not to deliver them, being assured that he, by whom they are inspired, will take care they shall be punctually fulfilled.

*Matthew Henry* : "The apostle is made to know, that this book of prophecy, which he had now taken in, [or *eaten*] was not given him merely to gratify his own curiosity, or to affect him with pleasure or pain, but to be communicated by him to the world : here his prophetic commission seems to be renewed, and he is ordered to prepare for another embassy, to convey those declarations of the mind and will of God, which are of great importance to all the world, and to the highest and greatest men in the world, and such should be recorded and read in many languages. Such, indeed, is the case ; we have them in our own tongue, and are thereby laid under an obligation to attend to them, humbly enquiring into their meaning, and firmly to believe that every thing shall have its accomplishment in the proper time ; and when the prophecies are fulfilled, the sense and truth of them will appear, and the omniscience, power, and faithfulness of the great God will be adored."

*Thomas Scott* : "By publishing the contents of this little book,

<sup>d</sup> Fuller, *in loco*.



and the rest of the predictions which he was about to receive, he has indeed prophesied 'before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings,' and does so to this very day, in all the languages into which the Scriptures have been, or shall be translated, and in all the countries in which they are circulated." To these I shall merely add, a short remark of

*Andrew Fuller*: "To teach him that what he had now seen and done, was designed only as a general impression, preparatory to what should follow, he is given to understand, that he must go over the ground *again*, writing prophecies which respect many 'peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.'" To these various opinions, I merely add one remark of my own :

The holy apostles, you know, preached the gospel, at the beginning, to all nations, with the gift of tongues, and in this way made known the whole counsel of God, which was communicated to them by the Spirit of inspiration, the Lord confirming their testimony with signs following. But in this last verse of the chapter there seems to be conveyed an intimation of the publishing of the gospel *a second time* among the nations, by, or in consequence of the translation of the Scriptures into their respective languages. In this way they began to preach or prophesy *again* by means of their writings; and this was a preparation for the seventh trumpet, the sounding of which takes place on the Scriptures beginning to operate once more upon the minds of men, after they had been subdued by the beast, or antichristian power, as we shall find in the ensuing chapter.

We have thus gone over this interesting chapter, in a cursory manner; because, however worthy of our serious and devout consideration, abstractedly considered, yet, as it is brought in here merely as *introductory* to several of the following chapters, and having more of a doctrinal than a prophetic character, I have said the less upon it; my design in these Lectures being chiefly to illustrate the prophetic parts of the Apocalypse.

## LECTURE XXIX.

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AND there was given me a reed like unto a rod : and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. 2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not ; for it is given unto the Gentiles : and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. 3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth. 4 These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. 5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies : and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. 6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy ; and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. 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. 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. 13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand : and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. 14 The second woe is past ; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.—Rev. xi. 1-14.

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### PROPHESYING OF THE TWO WITNESSES.

THE chapter which now presents itself in course for our consideration, contains the *first general description* of the state of the christian profession under the reign of Antichrist, during the twelve hundred and sixty years that were allotted him to “practise and prosper or prevail.” It is replete with subjects of the most interesting kind ; and did it comport with the plan and design of this course of lectures, every verse in the chapter might furnish the groundwork of a distinct lecture. We must, however, waive such prolixity, and content ourselves with a more general survey of the numerous topics which it embraces.

Towards the close of the preceding chapter, we find the prophet receiving a little book out of the hand of the mighty angel which came down from heaven ; on which he is told that he must " prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." He then goes on to inform us of what followed :

" *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 ; 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,*" ver. 1, 2. This is the first branch of the commission with which the prophet is now entrusted ; and the particular object of it is, to institute an enquiry into the existing state of the public worship of God. The language in which he is addressed and his work pointed out, is evidently borrowed from the Mosaic economy ; the metaphors, the figures, the symbols are all Jewish ; the temple, the altar, the worshippers, the outer-court, the Gentiles, the holy city or Jerusalem, all naturally direct our views backwards to the existing state of things under the former dispensation, the old covenant, which was typical of the kingdom of Christ, the New Testament church, wherein the true Israel of God, " worship the Father in Spirit and in truth." A measuring instrument is placed in the hands of the prophet, which he terms " a reed like unto a rod," and with this he is commanded to " measure the temple of God, and the altar, and those who worship therein." There is here an evident allusion to some passages in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, to which it will be proper to refer. The first is Ezek. xi. 1-3, " Moreover the Spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of the Lord's house, which looketh eastward : and behold at the door of the gate five-and-twenty men ; among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people. Then said he unto me, Son of man, these are the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city. Which say, It is not near ; let us build houses : this city is the caldron, and we be the flesh." For understanding this, you must observe that Ezekiel was among the captives in Babylon, when, at the time here specified, he was favoured with a memorable vision, the particulars of which he relates. The holy city, Jerusalem, then lay in ruins, it was desolate and deserted ; an affecting sight to the prophet. In this vision, he was brought, or fancied himself brought, into the land of Israel, and set upon a very high mountain, such as Carmel, or Tabor, or Hermon, from whence, like Moses from the top of Pisgah, he looks down upon the site whereon their beautiful city and temple formerly stood ; and lo ! a man with a line and a measuring reed stands in the

gate of the city, and proceeds to take the dimensions of the Lord's house, with the greatest exactness; and eventually the prophet is given to understand, that though it now lies in ruins, and is trodden under foot of the Gentiles, it should, nevertheless; be rebuilt, resume its former splendour, and become the residence of the God of Israel.

Again, in Zech. ii. 1-5, the very same subject is presented in vision to the view of that prophet: "I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said, to measure Jerusalem," &c., which though now lying in ruins, "should be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein; for I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her."

Now to strip this subject of its mystical dress, and enter into its import and meaning, you must observe that under this sixth trumpet, the state of the christian church in regard to its order and worship, bore a striking analogy to that of Jerusalem and the temple during the period that the Jews were captives in Babylon. Christianity having become the religion of the state, abounded with converts; but so little resemblance did these bear to the true Israel of God, that the temple and worship of the most High were profaned, and consequently disallowed by the king of Zion. In measuring the temple of God, or in other words, in instituting an enquiry into what professed to be the christian church at this period, comparing it with the unerring rule of the word of God, which is intimated by the *rod* that was given into the prophet's hand, he is instructed to omit altogether the court which is without the temple, for *that* was given unto the Gentiles, the papal community, whose religion was little, if any, better than that of the heathens of old, and to whom it was now given to tread the holy city under foot forty-two months.

As the subject is thus fairly brought before us, I cannot but think it would be wrong to neglect the opportunity which it presents of reminding you, my brethren, of an important lesson which it holds out to us all, namely, not to make light of the instituted order of the house of God. An attentive observer of what is going forwards in the religious world, even in our own day, cannot fail to perceive, that many professors of religion, act, in the things of God, as if there were no standard by which they were to be regulated; and even zealous and popular leaders in religion are to be found, stigmatizing a conscientious adherence to the pattern of the first churches, with the opprobrious epithets of bigotry and sectarianism. According to them, the constitution, order, and worship of the christian church, were left to be moulded and fashioned conformable to the dictates of human prudence,

and as the fancies of men might judge fit and decent, to give splendour or solemnity to the ordinances of religion. This is precisely the principle upon which Constantine and his clergy proceeded in remodelling the church in *their* day; it was also taken up and adopted by the ten kings who divided the empire between them at its fall; and you may see what, in a few centuries it brought the christian profession to—it was nothing less than the “treading under foot of the holy city.” But, ask yourselves, I beseech you, is it reasonable to suppose for a moment, that the principality, of which Christ himself is the head and king; a constitution of things in which the strictest and most perfect order might be expected, would be left to be cast into any form, which the folly or caprice of mortals might think best? Such a supposition is inconsistent with his known character, as the God of order in all churches of the saints; his unremitted attention to their interests, and his jealousy of the honour of his prerogatives as their alone law-giver, sovereign, and judge. All that pertains to the constitution and order, the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of his churches in this world, is to be found in the New Testament; and by this standard, and this alone, the whole is to be regulated: “To the law and to the testimony, then, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” But to return to the words of my text.

The prophet, we see, is called to measure only “the inner temple, and the altar, and them that worship therein,” that is, the real and true church of God; those that worship him in spirit and in truth, drawing near to God in the heavenly sanctuary, through the veil of the Redeemer’s flesh. This could not be profaned by Antichrist; and the holy prophet is forbidden to measure the outer court, and the holy city, because, whatever their pretensions might be, they did not answer to the word or doctrine of the apostles; neither were they capable of undergoing the trial of God’s word, which is the only rule for measuring the temple. The external profession of Christianity was so corrupt, that it could not be measured by the rule of the word of God: in fact it was such a profanation of the Christian profession, as could only be compared to the profanation of the Jewish temple by Antiochus Epiphanes of old; a profanation so gross, that the Jews, who adhered to the law of God, could not worship in it till it was cleansed; for, there is an evident reference here to what is said by the prophet Daniel, ch. xi. of that profanation as a type of the papal apostacy.<sup>a</sup>

The time allotted for this awful state of things, is *forty and two months*, or three years and a half; of both which numbers you

<sup>a</sup> See Prideaux’s Connection, part ii. book iii.

find frequent mention in the prophecy of Daniel, and the book of the Revelation. It is that period of time, during which the beast makes war against the followers of the Lamb, after his deadly wound was healed, ch. xiii. 3-5; it is also the time of the woman's flight into the wilderness, and her being nourished there, ch. xii. 14; it is moreover the same with "a time, times, and the dividing of time," mentioned by Daniel, ch. vii. 25, and ch. xii. 7. And this is also the same number with one thousand two hundred and sixty days, wherein the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, taking each day for a year, according to Ezek. iv. 6. But the precise year when this memorable period commences, and when it terminates is a point on which I have nothing to say. Let us proceed.

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand, two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth: these are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth," ver. 3, 4. There has been no little contention among those who have undertaken to illustrate the Apocalypse, on the question "What are we to understand by the *two witnesses*, to whom power was given to prophesy one thousand two hundred and threescore days?" but I do not think it would contribute much to your edification, to have the various opinions detailed in this place. Some late writers ridicule the idea which makes them to denote the Old Testament and the New, and term it an "antiquated notion;"<sup>b</sup> and yet I am disposed to abide by it, until I am presented with one that is better established. That the Old Testament and the New, testified of Christ and his kingdom in opposition to Antichrist and *his* kingdom, will be denied by no one who understands the subject. And it is remarkable that they who contend for these witnesses being a succession of men, testifying in the several ages against the corruptions which Antichrist had introduced, find themselves compelled to acknowledge, that these individuals or churches, witnessed for Christ and his cause, by bringing forwards the testimony of the Old and New Testament Scriptures against him. It would not, therefore, seem very difficult to reconcile these contending parties. But, to proceed:

The two witnesses are said to be "the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth." Mr. Fuller has observed upon this, that "the olive-trees and the candlestick mentioned, Zech. iv. 2, 3, to which there is here a manifest reference, were not the same. The former supplied the latter, or the two sides of the bowl of it with oil. The candlestick seems to have signified the church, and the olive-trees the prophets of God who were with the builders,

<sup>b</sup> Hutcheson's Guide, p. 98.

helping them in rebuilding the house of God at Jerusalem, Ezra v. 2. Corresponding with this, the olive-trees, of John are faithful ministers, and the candlesticks Christian churches. The same prophesying which bears witness against the corruptions of Antichrist, supplies the friends of Christ with fresh oil, and enables them to shine as lights in the world. Both the olive-trees and the candlesticks, in different ways, are witnesses to the truth." This distinction between "faithful ministers" and "christian churches," appears to me objectionable; and in place of the former, I prefer reading "the two covenants, testaments, or dispensations."

The Lord calls them his two witnesses: and so we find Jesus Christ, in the days of his public ministry, appealing to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, as testifying of him, John v. 39; "Search the Scriptures, for *they testify of me.*" And when his apostles foretel the corruptions of christianity, they call Christians to attend to the Old Testament Scriptures, together with those of the New, which they preached; and they warn them to keep close to these as the great mean of preserving them from that corruption, 2 Tim. iii.; 2 Thess. ii. 15; 2 Pet. iii. 2; 1 John iv. 6. To which I may further add, that the Book of the Revelation invariably describes the true church by the testimony of the Scriptures which they believe, obey, and suffer for. See ch. vi. 9, xii. 1, xiii. 10, xiv. 12, xviii. 20, and xxi. 14.

The conclusion, then, to which I think we are brought by these miscellaneous observations is this; that by the two witnesses we are to understand, *primarily*, the Old and New Testament; but that nevertheless, these books prophesied by means of a succession of men and churches, who were raised up from time to time to bring forth the doctrine of the Scriptures in opposition to the corruptions of Antichrist. These witnesses are said to prophesy *in sackcloth*. Such a garb very aptly represents their condition during the entire reign of the man of sin, namely, one thousand two hundred and sixty years. Sackcloth is the scriptural emblem of sorrow and affliction; and to prophesy in sackcloth imports, that they should maintain their testimony against all the abominations of Antichrist, in a mourning dejected state. These witnesses prophesied among the nations which trode the holy city under foot; and, however base and mournful their appearance was in that state of prevailing degeneracy and corruption, yet they still had some place among the nations, and testified to them, "Holding forth the word of life, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation," until they were killed by the beast, who could not withstand or repel their testimony against him, and, consequently, had no other way of venting his malignant spleen, but by putting them to death.

“*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,*” ver. 5. This language appears to be borrowed from Jer. v. 14: “*Wherefore, thus saith the Lord God of hosts, because ye speak this word, behold I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.*” The words seem to import, that these two witnesses, by bringing forth the testimony of God contained in the holy Scriptures, should denounce the predicted vengeance of the Almighty upon the irreclaimable adherents of the antichristian apostacy; even as the words of the Lord, in the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah, devoured the apostate house of Israel, by announcing their desolation through the arms of the Romans, who destroyed their city and temple.

“*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,*” ver. 6. We have in this verse an allusion to the conduct of Moses and Aaron in Egypt; to that of Elijah during the apostacy of the ten tribes; and to Zerubbabel and Joshua, about the end of the captivity. Their shutting heaven, that it rain not during the days of their prophecy, contains an evident reference to the circumstance of there being no rain upon the land of Canaan during the space of three years and a half, in consequence of the prayer of Elijah, 1 Kings xvii. 1; James v. 17, and the application of that event to the case in hand, appears to denote the withholding of the dew of heaven, the influence of the word and Spirit of God upon the apostate inhabitants of the Roman world: and so also, their power of turning the waters to blood, and smiting the earth with divers plagues, in allusion to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, indicates the denunciation of divine judgment on the apostate church, in consequence of their hardening their hearts, and slighting the admonitions of God’s two mystical witnesses. In short, from the reference that is here made to Moses and Aaron, to Elijah and Elisha, to Zerubbabel and Joshua, and to our Lord’s ministry on earth; we may see that the antichristian apostacy during which these two witnesses prophesied in sackcloth, was typified by the Egyptian bondage; by the apostacy of the ten tribes, &c. particularly in the time of Jezebel; by the Babylonish captivity, and by the Jews in the days of our Lord’s ministry, and their joining with the Roman governor to crucify him.

“*And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them, and overcome them, and kill them, 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,*” ver. 7, 8.



We have already seen that the time allotted for these two witnesses testify against the abominations of Antichrist is 1260 years; on the completing of which, they were to be overcome and killed by the beast; that is, their testimony was to be silenced for a time. During this interval, their dead bodies are exposed in the street of the great city, namely, the antichristian church, which for filthiness, is compared to Sodom; for tyranny and oppression, to Egypt; and for persecution, cruelty, and bloodshed, to Jerusalem, which killed the prophets, and crucified the Son of God himself. In the killing of the witnesses, Antichrist is represented in his tyrannical persecuting power as a beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit; but as this is more fully set forth in the thirteenth and seventeenth chapters, I reserve any remarks which I have to offer on the subject, till we arrive thither.

*“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; 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 dwell on the earth,”* ver. 9, 10. We have already seen that the state of Christ’s people, the members of his church, in the days of the prophesying of these witnesses, resembled that of Israel in Egypt, and the seven thousand that did not bow the knee to Baal in the time of Jezebel; also, that of the captive Jews, while their temple and the walls of their city lay in ruins; it was, moreover, like the state of things in the days of our Lord’s ministry among the Jews; nay, it is even compared to the condition of Lot in Sodom; for, the city wherein the witnesses lay dead, is *“spiritually,”* that is, mystically called Sodom and Egypt, as well as Jerusalem, where also our Lord was crucified; it is, in fact, the *antitype* of all these places. And hence we see, that among the members of the true church in that state, there was little of the visible church order, instituted for them by Christ. The outer-court of the Lord’s house was then trodden under foot of the nations. Nothing remained to them but the Holy Scriptures, which in this sad state of things were preserved to them by the wonderful providence of God, and these were all the while receiving a circumstantial fulfilment. During this dismal period, however, a continued opposition was kept up by means of scripture light, to various parts of the antichristian corruption; until at length the scripture testimony against the whole of it was brought forth by the churches of the Waldenses and Albigenses; by the Wickliffites in England, and the brethren of Bohemia—Huss, and Jerome, with their followers; and then the beast made war upon the witnesses. The testimony which these latter, who had been endued with power from on high, were enabled to bear against

Antichrist, had been a source of incessant torment to him and his adherents; and it at last became intolerable to that degree that they could endure it no longer, and so "they overcame them, and put them to death."

But here an inquiry naturally presents itself, By what means did the worshippers of the beast succeed in obtaining this victory, and putting these witnesses to death? You will, perhaps, reply, in answer to this, that it was done by persecuting the friends of truth, and ridding the world of them by the power of the sword. That they did so is a melancholy fact; but I doubt if that be the thing here intended. I rather think it was done by means of their traditions, their general councils, and above all, by their exalting the authority of the church above that of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. It is certain that they were long in bringing matters to this pass; but it is the point at which they ultimately arrived; and until it was attained, the testimony of these witnesses was a source of continual torment to them. The language of the antichristian world to these witnesses, we may suppose to have been like that of the wicked king Abab to Elijah, "*Art thou he that troubleth Israel?*" But when they had once brought the authority of these two witnesses into subjection to the authority of a general council, the representative of the Catholic church militant, and extirpated all profession of subjection to the authority of these witnesses; then, and not till then, was their victory over them complete. And this seems to be the killing of the witnesses, whose dead bodies were cast out in an ignominious manner, in the street of the great city.

And now the people of the nations rejoiced in the victory which they had obtained over the witnesses that had tormented them—yet the bodies of those witnesses, we find, were not buried out of sight, altogether—in other words, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were still acknowledged in words, though they were placed in a state of subjection to the authority of the church. Their enemies would not suffer them to be buried, but they lay dead in the street of the great city, or antichristian kingdom—in a contemptible condition, trodden under foot, exposed indeed to view, but without spirit and life; deprived of their sense and meaning, and without power to operate on the minds of the people of the nations. And in this state they are represented as lying three days and a half.

*"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; 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,"* ver. 11, 12.

Here there is a further reference to the time of our Lord's minis-

try on the earth, in the church of the Jews. For the death of the witnesses, and their resurrection, bear a manifest allusion to the Saviour's death and resurrection—and the bodies of the witnesses are said to *lie dead in the street of the great city, where our Lord was crucified*. During the reign of Antichrist, the Scriptures were exposed to the nations in an unknown tongue; and with regard to the few who understood that tongue, the words of God, or the bodies of the witnesses, were held in subjection to the authority of the church. Thus they lay dead a short space, till the Spirit of life entered into them, which was the case when their authority and testimony began to be acknowledged, and insisted on, in opposition to the authority of the church. Such, in an especial manner, was the case when Luther, Zuinglius, and Calvin brought them into public view, and pleaded their authority above that of all human testimony, and even against the pretended authority of the church of Rome. And in this way the Scriptures began to be laid open in their true import and meaning, and were no more as dead bodies, without life; but they began to operate again, and that powerfully, on the minds of the people of the nations, and then they were exalted to their due rank in the Divine economy, in consequence of the Spirit of life entering into them by being translated into the languages of the nations. I would further add on this subject, that in the exaltation of the witnesses, mentioned in ver. 12, where they are described as “ascending up to heaven in a cloud,” there is an allusion to our Lord's ascension into heaven, Acts i. 9; the import of which I understand to be, that these witnesses were now placed above the reach of the antichristian power, so that they could not be again overcome and killed.

Before we dismiss this part of our subject, however, I have an additional remark or two to offer; and I think they will not be found irrelevant to the subject before us;—the first respects the prohibition of the church of Rome to allow the reading of the Scriptures to the common people—and the other respects the invention of the art of printing, which at this time took place: the former I consider as contributing to the killing of the witnesses; and the latter to their resurrection from the dead, and their ascension to heaven, as here figuratively expressed.

At the end of the twelfth century, and beginning of the thirteenth, the Papal chair was filled by Innocent III., one of the most renowned pontiffs upon record. “Young, noble, and intrepid,” says Mr. Hallam, “he united, with the accustomed spirit of ecclesiastical usurpation, which no one had ever carried to so high a point, the more worldly ambition of consolidating a separate principality for the Holy See in the centre of Italy.” From one of the letters of this Pope, which are still extant, we learn,

that his holiness had been informed by the bishop of Mentz, as he states to the clergy of the diocese, that no small multitude of laymen and women, having procured a translation of the Gospels, the Epistles of Paul, the Psalms, Job, and other books of scripture to be made for them into French, were in the habit of meeting in secret conventicles to hear them read, and to preach to each other, avoiding the company of those who do not join in their devotion; and having been reprimanded for this by some of their parish priests, they withstood them, alleging reasons from the Scriptures, why they should not be so forbidden. Some of them, too, went so far as to deride the ignorance of their [legally appointed] ministers, maintaining, that their own books taught them more than they could learn from the pulpit, and to express it better. Now observe, I beseech you, what his holiness is pleased to enjoin and direct, on this contumacious line of conduct: "Although the desire of reading the Scriptures" says he, "is rather praiseworthy than reprehensible;" (a mighty concession, truly!) "yet they are to be blamed for frequenting secret assemblies, for usurping the office of preaching, deriding their own ministers, and scorning the company of such as do not concur in their novelties." He presses the bishop and chapter, therefore, to discover the author of this translation, which could not have been made without a knowledge of letters, (a rare thing in those days) and what were his intentions, and what degree of orthodoxy and *respect for the holy See*, those who used it possessed!

I lay before you this little abstract of church history, brethren, in order to enable you to appreciate the state of matters, in regard to the reading of the holy Scriptures, at the period referred to under the sixth trumpet, or while the second woe was pouring out—and from what has been said you will see, that though these two witnesses might not be said to be then actually *killed*, their lives were hunted after by their enemies; and it was not long before they accomplished their desire: the diffusion of heretical opinions, in consequence of the spirit of free inquiry that had gone abroad, rendered it expedient to secure the orthodox faith (as the clergy of those times termed it) from lawless interpretation. And accordingly the council of Toulouse, in 1229, prohibited the laity from possessing the Scriptures, and this precaution was frequently repeated on subsequent occasions.<sup>c</sup> Thus the witnesses were effectually silenced, to the inexpressible joy of those who dwelt upon the earth, who got rid of their *tormenting* testimony; and now "they rejoiced over them, and made merry, sending gifts," or congratulating one another upon the happy event. Such was the deplorable state of affairs for two centuries at least, when an

<sup>c</sup> Hallam's Middle Ages, vol. i. p. 360; and vol. iii. pp. 472-474.

event took place in the inscrutable providence of God, which spread consternation and dismay throughout "the great city," or antichristian kingdom, and which you will see is intimated, ver. 11, where it is said, that "*great fear fell upon all them which saw them,*" the witnesses, standing on their feet again. This was the invention of printing—the most important discovery, probably, that ever took place among mankind. By multiplying copies of the Bible, it rendered it accessible to all classes of the community—this treasury of saving knowledge was read and explored—information was circulated with a rapidity, of which in ancient times there is no example—and the darkness which for ages had enveloped Europe, began gradually to disperse as the light of truth shed his cheering beams upon the nations. Like the water we drink, or the air we breathe, the use of printing is so constant, that it requires an effort to recollect what the state of the world was before its introduction, and how great our obligations are to the bounty of heaven, which has conferred it upon us. Its invention produced in the moral condition of mankind a change as remarkable as the invention of fire-arms did in war; and though the most silent, it was one of the most active and energetic agents in that great moral revolution which at this time began to work its way in every part of Europe.

One of the first-fruits of the art of printing, was an edition of the Vulgate, commonly called the Mazarine Bible; it was printed between the years 1450, and 1455. In 1457, an edition of the book of Psalms appeared—and a second soon followed. In 1462, the whole Bible was reprinted—all of which proceeded from the presses of Fust and his associates at Mentz. From the years 1470 to 1480, a number of editions were published in various parts of Europe; and now the sun began to ascend above the horizon, though countries remotely situated did not immediately catch his beams. Can you be surprised, that the advocates of a system which is founded on ignorance, should express their alarm at seeing knowledge thus diffused? The faculty of Theology at Paris declared, before the assembled parliament, that religion, (meaning the religion of Popery) was undone, if the study of Greek and Hebrew was allowed! But hear the sage observations of Conrad, the monk of Heresbach, addressed to his auditory, about the time of the Reformation:—"They have invented a new language," said he, "which they call Greek. You must be carefully on your guard against it. It is the mother of all heresy. I observe in the hands of many persons, a book written in that language, which they call the New Testament; it is a book full of daggers and poison. As to the Hebrew, my dear brethren, it is certain that those who learn it, instantaneously become Jews." These hints may suffice for shewing you what is meant by the

“great fear which fell upon them that saw the witnesses standing on their feet again.”

“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,” ver. 13. Commentators and expositors are far from being agreed respecting the “tenth part of the city,” which is said to have fallen at this time. Mr. Faber, who appears to me to have gone wonderfully astray on the subject of the two witnesses, interprets it of the Revolution in England, in 1688, and he can tell us the very month of the year when these witnesses ascended to heaven, viz. June, 1690 !!<sup>d</sup> Mr. Fuller, on

<sup>d</sup> As I find Mr. Faber has been at the pains of *schooling* me for my perverseness, because I will not admit, that the re-entrance of an *armed banditti* into the vallies of Piedmont, in the year 1688, answers to the resurrection of these two witnesses, Rev. xi. 11; I avail myself of this opportunity to tender a word in reply. I shall first quote his words, and then remark upon them.

“It may not be improper to mention, that Mr. Jones, in strange opposition to all evidence, asserts, that the proper expelled Vaudois never returned to their country, and consequently, that the persons now denominated *Vaudois* have no connection with those who were driven out of their native seats in the year 1686. Any one who peruses Arnaud’s *Glorious Recovery*, will immediately, in every page, perceive the utter futility of such an assertion. Certain French Protestants did, indeed, return *with* them; but as Arnaud distinctly informs us, these were only six companies out of nineteen. The remaining thirteen were composed of those identical Vaudois who had been expelled. But on this point, it were superfluous to expatiate; the matter has been completely settled in Mr. Acland’s Postscript.”—*Sacred Calendar of Prophecy*, vol. iii. p. 97, 98, note.

If, indeed, the matter be, as Mr. Faber affirms it is, *completely settled* in Mr. Acland’s Postscript, any attempt to disturb it must be highly censurable; but as this is only the opinion of Mr. Faber, and as I do not think him *quite* infallible, I hope for his forgiveness while I shew cause to the contrary. Soon after Mr. Acland’s splendid volume, entitled, “The Glorious Recovery by the Vaudois, of their Vallies, &c.” made its appearance, I gave a review of that publication, connected with some others on the same subject, in the *New Baptist Miscellany and Particular Baptist Magazine*, for 1827, for the months of *October* and *November*, in which I took notice of every thing that Mr. Acland had said concerning me, and the matter in dispute between us, and gave such a refutation of his charges, as would seem to have “completely settled the matter” the other way! And I took care that Mr. Acland, Mr. Sims, and Mr. Gilly should all be in possession of my defence, for *I sent copies of the Magazine to each of them*: but, though nearly two years have now elapsed, I am not aware of a single line that has been written by any of them on the points in dispute, since that time. Had Mr. Faber been apprized of this fact, I may presume, from his well known character, that he would hardly have expressed himself in the unqualified terms he has done in the above extract. Perhaps he will do me the favour of reading the two articles of Review in the *Baptist Miscellany*, vol. i. pp. 386-392, and pp. 431-438, and thereby save me the necessity of repeating, in this place, what I have there written; for, until something further be advanced on the other side, I must be permitted to think, that Mr. Hugh Dyke Acland has received his *quietus*!

the contrary, “knows of no event that seems to correspond so well with the prophecy, as *the late revolution in France*,”—an opinion in which he finds himself backed by some of the ablest expositors, among whom are Goodwin, Vitranga, and Gill. I have considered with some attention, what has been advanced by these respectable authorities, but remain decidedly of opinion, that it refers to the taking of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. That the Greek church and kingdom formed one of the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided at its fall, cannot be denied; and though it had been some way divided from the Papacy, yet there was not enough in that division to prevent its being regarded as a tenth part of the great city, or kingdom of the beast, so that I consider the tenth part of the city to have fallen when Constantinople, the seat of the Greek empire, was destroyed by the arms of Mahomet II. at which time the Turkish power came to its height. This was a memorable event in various points of view, and such as well assorts with the figurative language of prophecy here used to describe it. Speaking of the gradual advances which were made towards the attainment of this object,

But a word concerning Mr. Faber! For this gentleman I do certainly entertain a high degree of respect; such as his learning, talents, and character, justly entitle him to. I have read his “Sacred Calendar of Prophecy”—the only one of his numerous publications which has fallen in my way—and it has been with mingled sensations of pleasure and regret. Upon the book of the Apocalypse he has bestowed great labour and unwearied attention. That his volumes contain many valuable observations on the structure and “framework” of this series of New Testament prophecies, will be denied by no ingenious mind. But, like Calvin and Whitby, bishops Newton and Hurd, Messrs. Woodhouse, Scott, and others, he labours under a *radical defect*, which must ever disqualify those who are the unhappy subjects of it from doing justice to the undertaking, namely, producing a scriptural illustration of the Apocalypse. To qualify him for this, he must go back to his A, B, C, of Christianity; he must give up with *national* establishments of Christianity—with the church of England, or the kirk of Scotland—and he must take his standing upon Christ’s good confession concerning his kingdom, John xviii. 36. This is the polar star that must guide him in navigating the “mystical sea,” and he is no longer secure than while he keeps that in view, and shapes his course by it. At present, his pages appear to me to exhibit a motley mixture of truth and error—of false premises and wrong conclusions—yet it is impossible to withhold from his labours the tribute of admiration at his *ingenious* theories, his *elaborated* argumentation, and his *specious*, but mistaken demonstrations. He is, perhaps, too old to change, and he has persevered so long in his present course, that to relinquish it and return to first principles would be making sacrifices for which he is not prepared. This, however, is *his* concern, not mine; but he would do well to remember, that all national establishments of Christianity are *Antichristian*—that they are all doomed to destruction—and that the day is fast hastening on, when their total overthrow will take place, and

—“Like the baseless fabric of a vision,  
Leave not a wreck behind.” Rev. xviii. 21.

by the Turks during a period of thirty years, Mr. Hallam thus writes:—

“In the present day we anticipate, with an assurance that none can deem extravagant, the approaching subversion of the Ottoman power; but the signs of internal weakness have not yet been confirmed by the dismemberment of provinces; and the arch of dominion, that has long since seemed nodding to its fall, and totters at every blast of the north (Russia) still rests upon the land-mark of ancient conquest, and spans the ample regions from Bagdad to Belgrade. Far different were the events that preceded the dissolution of the Greek empire. Every province was in turn, subdued; every city opened her gates to the conqueror; the limbs were lopped off one by one; but the pulse still beat at the heart, and the majesty of the Roman name was ultimately confined to the walls of Constantinople. Before Mahomet II. planted his cannon against them, he had completed every smaller conquest, and deprived the expiring empire of every hope of succour or delay. It was necessary that Constantinople should fall; but the magnanimous resignation of her emperor [Constantine Paleologus] bestows an honour upon her fall, which her prosperity seldom earned. The long deferred, but inevitable moment arrived; and the last of the Cæsars folded round him the imperial mantle, and remembered the name which he represented in the dignity of heroic death. It is thus, that the intellectual principle, when enfeebled by disease or age, is said to rally its energies in the presence of death, and to pour the radiance of unclouded reason around the last struggles of dissolution. Though the fate of Constantinople had been protracted beyond all reasonable expectation, the actual intelligence operated like that of sudden calamity. *A sentiment of consternation, perhaps of self-reproach, thrilled to the heart of Christendom.*”<sup>c</sup> But I must bring this lecture to a conclusion, which I shall do by briefly remarking, that the fall of the kingdom of the Greeks, gave occasion to the translating and publishing of the Scriptures in the languages of the nations of Europe, through the knowledge of the original languages which was brought into the West by those who fled from Constantinople and the Greek provinces to escape the Turkish yoke. And thus we may perceive the connection that exists between the exaltation of the witnesses and the work of the sixth trumpet, with the fall of the tenth part of the city—a connection which is entirely broken by interpreting it of either the English or French Revolutions.

<sup>c</sup> Hallam's Middle Ages, vol. ii. p. 193, &c. The siege, assault, and final conquest of Constantinople by the Turks, with the consternation of Europe, occasioned by that memorable event, are detailed by Mr. Gibbon, in his *Decline and Fall*, ch. lxxviii. at considerable length, and with more than his ordinary splendour of diction.



## LECTURE XXX.

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THE second woe is past ; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. 15 And the seventh angel sounded ; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. 16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, 17. Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come ; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. 18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great ; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. 19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament : and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.—Rev. xi. 14-19.

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### THE SEVENTH TRUMPET.

THE sounding of the seventh trumpet had been spoken of ch. x. 7. in terms that were well adapted to render it an object of expectation and intense interest to the church of God. For, it was to bring on that important period when “the mystery of God” should be finished ; and the declarations which, from time to time, he had made to his servants the prophets, should receive their accomplishment. Accordingly, the verses now read in your hearing, will lead us to a somewhat more particular consideration of this interesting topic than we have yet been called to engage in. The contents of this trumpet are more momentous than any that have preceded it, whether we consider its relation to the enemies of the church, or to the church itself. In fact, it comprehends a summary anticipation of all that should take place from the period of the first blowing of it, unto the end of time, the particulars of which are afterwards amplified and enlarged upon. It wears a two-fold aspect ;—towards Antichrist and his supporters, it is a *woe-trumpet*, the signal of impending vengeance, and of utter ruin to their cause ; for it includes the seven successive vials of divine wrath, which gradually consume the man of sin, and eventually destroy every power that is found opposing the kingdom of Christ. Towards the church, however, it is a kind of *jubilee-trumpet*, announcing the year of her enlargement and deliverance from captivity. Immediately, therefore, as the sound of the trumpet is heard, heavenly voices hail the auspicious moment, and announce the triumphant reign of God and his Christ. The twenty-four

elders join the heavenly chorus, anticipating the joyful event, even before it is disclosed in prophetic vision.

“*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 his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.*” The subject thus introduced, will lead us to turn our attention to the prophecies of Daniel, where we shall find some truly grand and sublime predictions concerning the kingdom of Christ, which have an evident connection with the subject before us, and, consequently, must be embodied with it. Some notice, indeed, has been already taken of the prophet Daniel’s prediction of the *setting up* of the Messiah’s kingdom in the world, in a previous lecture;<sup>a</sup> but on a subject so interesting to us all as this is, a little repetition, should it occur, will be easily excused; and, for the sake of perspicuity, we shall take it up from the beginning.

In the writings of that prophet, as formerly mentioned, there are two prophetic representations of four successive monarchies, or universal kingdoms, viz. the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman, of each of which the succeeding histories of the world furnish us with a copious account; the particulars of which I speak, will be found in the *second* and *seventh* chapters of Daniel. In connection with these four empires, the kingdom of the Messiah is thus foretold:

“*And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever,*” Dan. ii. 44. The precise time of setting up this kingdom, is fixed by this same prophet, ch. ix. 24-27, when he makes it to be four hundred and ninety years from the giving forth of the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem, which brings it down to the fourth monarchy; or during the existence of the *Roman* empire. *Then* it was that the God of heaven *set up* the Messiah’s kingdom, “as he had spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” This kingdom was proclaimed *at hand* during Christ’s personal ministry upon earth, but it was not actually set up till after his death and resurrection, when he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High. *Then* the heathen was given him for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession, Ps. ii. 8; and *THEN* “*there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve*

<sup>a</sup> See Lecture xiii. p. 154, &c.

him," Dan. vii. 14; and this kingdom was extended and propagated by means of the preaching of the everlasting gospel among all nations for the obedience of faith, Mark xvi. 15; Rom. xvi. 25, 26.

*This kingdom, thus set up, is the ONLY kingdom that Christ will have in this world, or upon the stage of this earth.* It has, indeed, undergone various changes of situation in this world, and, in general, those have been of an afflicting and distressing kind. In its beginning it was small and almost imperceptible, like a grain of mustard seed, or a little leaven, Matt. xiii. 31, 33. "It came not with observation," or worldly shew, Luke xvii. 20. It was propagated by mean and unlikely instruments; and, on account of its weak and mean appearance, it is compared to "a bruised reed and smoking flax," Matt. xii. 20. It was opposed and persecuted first by the unbelieving Jews; then by the heathen Roman emperors; and, lastly, by Antichrist, or the man of sin, that worst of all its enemies. But it overcame all these oppositions by faith and patience; "the bruised reed hath never been broken, nor the smoking flax quenched," and we are assured "the gates of hell shall never prevail against it," Matt. xvi. 18. These afflictive and disastrous events were foretold by Christ and his apostles; and the book we have now under consideration, the Apocalypse, particularly sets them forth, in a train of prophetic visions; and a great part of the New Testament is taken up in forewarning the people of God of these things, and in fortifying and comforting their minds, under such circumstances, with the prospect of future glory. All these things have come under our review in the course of these lectures, and they are here recapitulated solely for the sake of refreshing your memories with them, as preparatory to the subject before us.

But the view that we have now taken of the kingdom of Christ in its weak and infantile state, is not the only one that is given of it in the Holy Scriptures. For we are expressly told that "*it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever,*" Dan. ii. 44. Moreover it is said, that "*the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and shall possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever, and ever,*" ch. vii. 18. The prophet having made this declaration, then goes on to foretel the rise of Antichrist under the emblem of a little horn, who should make war with the saints and prevail against them, "*Until the Ancient of Days should come, and judgment be given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom,*" ver. 21, 22. The subject is resumed a few verses onwards in the same chapter, ver. 25, 26, and then we are told that, "*The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions*

*shall serve and obey him,*" ver. 27. and then shall the saints reign with Christ upon the earth a thousand years, Rev. v. 10; ch. xx. 4. This is the very same kingdom that was set up by the God of heaven, when he raised his Son Jesus from the dead, and exalted him to his own right hand in the heavens; and it is essentially of the same nature, though now more widely extended, and under happier circumstances; and this is the interesting subject that is presented to our consideration, as having its commencement at the sounding of the seventh trumpet; "The kingdoms of this world are become the sovereignty of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." Now, all these passages of scripture taken collectively, declare, in the clearest terms, the extent and perpetuity of the Messiah's reign, and the universal subjection of all the nations of this world, to the Lord Jesus Christ.

As this is a subject of more than ordinary interest to us all, I shall take leave to dwell upon it a little, and examine it in some of its principal bearings. It may, perhaps, receive illustration, and contribute to our mutual edification, if we take a review of the general doctrine of the Scriptures respecting the character and kingdom of the Messiah, the promises made to him by his divine Father; examine how far these promises have hitherto been fulfilled, and notice some of the events which must take place in order to their *full* accomplishment.

Be it observed, then, that the supreme government of the universe belongs to Jesus Christ, *by right of nature*, as Lord of all, for he is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 2, 3. But, though he was "God over all, and blessed for evermore"—though he was "in the beginning *with* God, and *was* God"—though all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing brought into existence, John i. 1-3; yet we know, that he made himself of no reputation, laid aside, for a little while, the form and majesty of the Godhead, and, to fulfil the office of a Saviour, condescended to act as the servant of his heavenly Father, whose will, in the salvation of guilty rebels, he came to obey. Thus he was made, for a little time, lower than the angels, for the suffering of death; but having put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, as the reward of his deep humiliation and unparalleled self-abasement, all authority and power were committed into his hands, both in heaven and on earth—he was constituted heir of all things—and universal nature placed beneath his feet. "There was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him." "The heathen was given him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." It was promised him that "all the ends of the world should remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations should worship

before him—for the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the Governor among the nations," Ps. xxii. 27, &c. He was to have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth—they that dwell in the wilderness should bow before him, and his enemies lick the dust—his name should endure for ever—it should be continued as long as the sun—men should be blessed in him—all nations should call him blessed," Ps. lxxii. "The government (of the universe) was to be upon his shoulder—and his name was to be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Father of the future age, the Prince of peace: of the increase of his government and peace, there should be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it, with judgment and with justice, from henceforth, even for ever," Isa. ix. 6, 7. This is a specimen, or sample, of the promises that were made to the Messiah; and we have many instances upon record of the confidence which he reposed in them during his state of humiliation in this world. "All things," says he, "are delivered unto me of my Father."—"The Father loveth the Son, and giveth all things into his hands."—"All power in heaven and on earth is given unto me." And upon the expression ALL THINGS, we find the apostle Paul thus commenting, "For in that he put *all things* in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him," Heb. ii. 8. In *heaven* his throne is placed, at the right hand of the Majesty on high; and all the angels of God are commanded to worship him. The spirits of just men made perfect, in heaven, are all his subjects, and the purchase of his blood; for, he is Lord both of the dead and living, Rom. xiv. 9. On *earth* all nations are included in the grant made to him, and are his right; for the Father hath given to his Son, as begotten from the dead, the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; and those who will not kiss the Son, and be subject to the sceptre of his grace, he will rule with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel, Ps. ii.; for all nations shall serve him, Ps. lxxii. 11; Dan. vii. 14. But it may be asked, Has any part of these promises been yet fulfilled to our Redeemer? *Undoubtedly there has*; they began to receive their accomplishment in the days of his apostles. Let us take a cursory review of the subject, and see what has been done, and what yet remains to be accomplished of them.

When the Lord Jesus Christ had risen from the dead, and all power and authority were given unto him, he commissioned his apostles to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; and being by the right hand of God exalted, he shed forth the Holy Spirit upon them, furnishing them with extraordinary gifts, and miraculous powers, to qualify them for the arduous undertaking which he had committed unto their hands, and to

gain credit to their doctrine as a revelation from God. They accordingly went forth everywhere, publishing the gospel of the kingdom, both to Jews and Gentiles; and in about thirty years, it came into all the then known world—for “their sound, it is said, went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world,” Rom. x. 18. This universal publication of the gospel was also attended with extraordinary success. Many thousands of the Jews were converted to the faith of Christ, Acts xxi. 20, and vast numbers of heathens everywhere turned from idols to serve the living and true God. But, though the converts were in one point of view numerous, yet, when compared with the great mass of mankind, who still remained in infidelity, they were but a handful. Paul represents the Jewish converts of his time, as only a *remnant* in comparison of the body of that nation—and he speaks of the *fulness* both of Jews and Gentiles, as about to come in at a future time, Rom. ch. xi. During the first three hundred years, a considerable progress was made in the promulgation of the gospel, yet it was very far from being universally received—the disciples of the Saviour were persecuted from age to age, by the heathen magistrates, until the time of Constantine and his successors, when Paganism fell, and the empire became Christianized; but what was the consequence of this? Antichrist arose; the Man of Sin was brought forth, and grew apace; and, in due time the mystery of iniquity was revealed, and all the world “wondered after the beast.” We have had occasion to review this sad subject in some of our late lectures; and have seen, that, during a period of one thousand two hundred and sixty years, the long reign of this antichristian power—the outer court of the Lord’s house was not measured, but given to the Gentiles, who trode the holy city under foot; God’s two witnesses prophesied in sackcloth, and the true church was hid in the wilderness, Rev. xi. 2, 3; ch. xii. 14.

And this is the state of matters in relation to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, at the blowing of the seventh trumpet. On this occasion the heavenly chorus strikes up; the four-and-twenty elders, who sit before God on their seats, fall upon their faces, and worship God, saying, “We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, who art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.” Now the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms or possessions of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. For the consummation of this grand event, the Lord Jesus, in his compendium of prayer, taught his disciples to petition their heavenly Father, as constantly and fervently as they asked their daily bread. The six preceding trumpets had exalted the enemies of Christ’s kingdom, but this trumpet destroys them, and exalts

the kingdom of Christ and his servants who had hitherto been in a state of depression. It is, however, an interesting object of consideration, and fairly within the limits of inquiry—what changes in the present state of the world must ensue—what events transpire—what revolutions take place, before this consummation, so devoutly to be wished, can be fully realized. And on this subject I presume we may, without transgressing the bounds which revelation has prescribed to our inquiries, mention four grand and leading events, as yet in the womb of time, but all of which will meet their accomplishment under this seventh trumpet; these are:—the consumption of Antichrist, the Man of Sin—the destruction of the Mahometan delusion and imposture—the conversion and calling-in of the Jews to the kingdom of Christ—and the utter abolition of all Pagan idolatry and superstition. I do not understand any, or all of these signal occurrences as constituting the millennium period, or thousand years' reign of Christ and his saints on earth; but regard them all as preparatory to it, or as events which will transpire under the seventh trumpet, and usher in that blissful period. I shall now offer a remark or two on each of them.

1. In order to make way for the full establishment of the kingdom of Christ in the world, it is abundantly evident from various parts of the holy Scriptures, that the power of Antichrist will be destroyed. This is declared by the prophet Daniel, ch. vii. 26, "*But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.*" And with this agrees the testimony of the apostle Paul, 2 Thess. ii. 8, "And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." His consumption is represented as gradually effected by seven successive vials of the wrath of heaven poured out upon him, Rev. ch. xvi.; and his destruction is described, ch. xix. 19-21. Various means are used in Divine Providence, in order to bring down this inimical power, such as, "the Spirit of the Lord's mouth," which I understand to be the clear preaching of the everlasting gospel, denoted, ch. xiv. 6, by an angel flying through the midst of heaven, and proclaiming the glad tidings to them that dwell on the earth—to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. But connected with this, and contributing much to the destruction of Antichrist, is the ten kings who had formerly given their power and strength to the beast, now withdrawing their support, and leaving the whore desolate and naked, Rev. xvii. 16. It is also *probable* that Christ will employ the sword for the destruction of Antichrist, for we read of his "treading the wine-press of the fierceness, and wrath of Almighty God," &c. &c.,

Rev. xix. 15-21, even as he did when he came to destroy Jerusalem, Luke xx. 16.

2. Another thing that seems to be clearly implied "in the kingdoms of this world becoming the sovereignty of our Lord and his Christ," is the "putting down of all rule, authority, and power," or the abolishing and removing out of the way, the tyrannical, oppressive, and persecuting civil governments in the kingdoms of this world, 1 Cor. xv. 24; and in this I particularly include the systems of Mahometanism, or the Turkish governments, which are singularly despotic and arbitrary. We read in the prophecies of Daniel, that the stone which was cut out of the mountain without hands, or the kingdom which the God of heaven was to set up, should *break in pieces and consume all the kingdoms of the earth*, ch. ii. 34, 35, 44, and ch. vii. 11, 12. At the opening of the sixth seal, Rev. vi. 12, &c., we had the destruction of the heathen Roman empire; and the Antichristian and Mahometan powers which came to their height under the fifth and sixth trumpets, ch. ix., are destroyed by the vials under the *seventh*, before us; and along with them all the kingdoms and civil governments that were deluded by, and supported them, Rev. xvi. 14-21, with ch. xix. 19-21. All that civil rule, authority, and power which is instigated by avarice, pride, and ambition; and conducted by systematic craft, oppression, injustice, and cruelty; which has often converted the stage of this world into a slaughter-house, and deluged the earth with human blood, must be put down, when Christ shall take to him his great power and reign; for *then* he will "*destroy them that destroy the earth*," as it is expressed in the passage under consideration, ver. 18. All these governments being totally inconsistent with the reign of the saints, and the peace and happiness attendant upon it will be put down, when the kingdoms of this world become our Lord's and his Christ's; and so we find all such rule and authority represented, as an enemy which will be subdued and put under the Redeemer's feet, 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25.

3. The conversion of the Jews, God's ancient people, is an event which I think we may reasonably anticipate, under the sounding of the seventh trumpet. But as this is a controverted point by some, and as others graft upon it what I think unauthorized speculations, it will be necessary for us to dwell a little particularly upon it in this place.

It has been denied by some, that we have any ground from scripture to expect a remarkable conversion of the Jews in the latter days of the gospel dispensation; and they have laboured to turn off the force of what the apostle Paul says on this subject, in Rom. ch. xi. It is contended,<sup>b</sup> that the whole design of the apos-

<sup>b</sup> Works of Mr. John Glas, vol. iii. p. 192, and vol. v. p. 68, &c.



tle in that chapter, was to provoke his countrymen, the Jews, to jealousy, that thereby he might be the happy instrument of saving some of them, ver. 14; and, also, to repress the boasting of the engrafted Gentiles over them, ver. 17-25. That to accomplish these objects, he sets forth *the advantages* which the Jews, the natural branches who were rejected, had beyond the Gentiles, the wild olives who were engrafted; *the glory* that might appear in grafting *them* in again who were rejected, no less than in their rejection; the *power* of Him who had cast off the natural branches to graft them in again, and who had displayed his sovereignty in grafting in the wild olive branches; with his *severity* to the natural branches that believed not, and which would be not diminished towards the Gentiles whom he had engrafted, if they continued not in the faith. So far, indeed, they give us a perfectly fair representation of the apostle's argument; but then, it is contended that in all this discourse the apostle nowhere affirms that the Jews *shall be* grafted in again; but only, that this is *more likely* than that the Gentiles should have been grafted in, and that God was *able to do it*, IF they abide not still in unbelief, ver. 23, which they tell us is no more a positive assertion, or affirmation, than what Christ affirms of John when he says, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me," John xxi. 22, 23. And that, as to the words, "And so all Israel shall be saved," &c. ver. 26, 27, they do not mean the literal, but the mystical Israel, as appears, say they, from the foregoing verse, where the word *mystery* is used to shew that he is speaking only of the spiritual Israel of all nations.

Such is the view which some able writers have given us of the scope of this remarkable chapter; and thus they discard the notion of a future calling-in of God's ancient people Israel, holding it up as a popular error. But we must not yield the point to them so easily, nor allow them to carry it by mere dint of authority; for, it is clear beyond all reasonable dispute, that through the whole of the eleventh chapter to the Romans, the apostle uses the word *Israel* in its proper and literal sense, denoting thereby the natural posterity of Jacob; for he distinguishes them from the converted Gentiles who were grafted in, and calls them *the natural branches*, ver. 17-25. He also distinguishes them from the Jewish converts of his time, whom he terms *the remnant* according to the election of grace, ver. 5, by describing them as the Israel who had *not obtained*, the rest who were *blinded*, had *stumbled*, *fallen*, were *cast away* and *broken off*, ver. 7, 11, 12, 15, 17. It is manifest, therefore, that by the term *Israel*, the apostle does not mean the Gentiles at all; nor even the believing Jews who were converted in the apostolic age; but simply the natural descendants of Abraham, the great bulk of the Jewish nation who were, and still unhappily are, in unbelief.

Of the people thus distinguished, both from believing Jews and Gentiles, he affirms that they shall yet be converted to the faith, and reinstated in the privileges of God's covenanted people; not, indeed, that generation of them, nor many succeeding ones, but their posterity in the latter days, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be come in, ver. 25; and this is the *mystery* which he would have the Romans not ignorant of, lest they should be wise in their own conceits. "Have they stumbled," viz., at the doctrine of the cross, "that they should fall," finally and irrecoverably? *Farbe it*; this took place in the adorable providence of God, whose design in permitting it was, that through their fall, salvation might come unto the Gentiles, and that this again might provoke them to jealousy or emulation, ver. 11. And he then goes on to argue, that if their fall and diminishing were the riches of the Gentiles; and the casting of them away was the reconciling of the world, their fulness must be much more so, and the reception of them into the kingdom of Christ, could be nothing less than life from the dead, ver. 12, 15. Moreover, he argues, that if the Gentiles "were grafted, contrary to nature, into a good olive-tree, how much more shall these which be the natural branches be grafted into their own olive-tree," ver. 24. True, he says, "they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again." But this does not import any doubt of the event; it only shews that they must be grafted in *by faith*, even as the Gentiles are; and this being the gift of God, his *ability* is mentioned to shew that he will accomplish this great work in due time, however unlikely present appearances are; (see a similar expression, Rom. iv. 21, and ch. xiv. 4.) That he speaks of this event as certain will further appear if we consider, that he declares the present blindness and future conversion of that people, to be the *mystery*, or hidden sense of prophecies concerning them, of which he cites two from Isaiah. The first is from ch. lix. 20, and the latter from ch. xxvii. 9, &c. "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits,) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins," ver. 25-27, in other words, this is included in my covenant-engagements towards the house of Israel. Many other prophecies might be quoted to the same purpose; such as, Isa. xi. 11, 12; ch. xxvii. 12, 13; Ezek. xxxix. 25, 28, &c.; Hos. iii. 4, 5; Amos ix. 14.

In short, the apostle affirms positively, that Israel, who have now not believed, shall as certainly obtain mercy, as the Gentiles have obtained it through their unbelief. His own words are:

“For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy; for God hath concluded all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all,” ver. 30-32. Having said this, the apostle concludes with expressing his admiration of the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, and of his unsearchable judgments and mysterious proceedings in the whole of this affair, ver. 33-36.

4. As to the *time* when this great event shall take place, the apostle says, “that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, *until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in,*” ver. 25, which directs our attention to another most interesting occurrence that is to be looked for at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ. But as there have been disputes concerning “the times of the Gentiles,” and “the fulness of the Gentiles,” it is proper that we should notice them in this place. Some understand it to mean till the full number of the Gentiles, whom the Lord shall call by his grace, be completed; but this certainly is a mistake, and flatly contradicts what the apostle had said, ver. 11, 13, 15, where he declares that at the conversion of the Jews, there shall be a greater conversion of the Gentiles than had taken place at their rejection; that their *fulness* shall be much more the riches or abundance of the Gentiles, than their fall was; and that the receiving of them, shall be to the world like life from the dead. The *fulness of the Gentiles*, therefore, must be taken in the same sense with the *fulness* of the Jews, ver. 12, and as the *fulness* of the Jews denotes a copious conversion of them to the Christian faith, in distinction from the small remnant who believed in the apostles’ days; so, the *fulness of the Gentiles coming in*, must import a more full and universal conversion of the Gentiles, throughout all nations of the world, than has ever yet taken place; when, according to ancient prophecy, “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him;” when, “All kings shall fall down before him, and all nations serve him;” when Jesus shall “Take to him his great power and reign.” Ps. xxii. 27, 28. Ps. lxxii. 11. Dan. vii. 14. For though it be true, that there was a rapid and extensive spread of the gospel, in the days of the apostles; yet, it was very far from realizing in their full import, the promises made by the divine Father to the Son of his love, that, “The heathen should be given him for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession.” Ps. ii. Take a view of the present state of the world, after a lapse of eighteen hundred years, and what is its present actual state? If you divide the known regions of the globe into thirty

equal parts, what is the result? Why, according to the most accurate computation, the part that is occupied by professed Christians of all denominations, Protestants and Catholics, is only as five; the Mahometans as six; and the worshippers of dumb idols, as nineteen! *Nineteen out of thirty!* So that the *fulness of the nations* has not yet come into any profession of Christianity, far less into the scriptural profession of it; and the Jews are still continuing in blindness, with the veil upon their hearts unto this day. But under this seventh trumpet and last vial, when Anti-christ, that great stumbling-block shall be destroyed, and Satan bound, then the Gospel shall be more universally spread throughout the world than it has ever hitherto been; so that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," Isa. xi. 9; Hab. ii. 14,—then, "from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, the name of the Lord shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto his name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith Jehovah," Mal. i. 11. Then shall the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, according to the Saviour's own prediction, Luke xxi. 24, and their *fulness* come in, or *enter*, εἰσελθῆν. Then shall the veil be taken away from God's ancient people, the Jews, and their heart turn to the Lord, 2 Cor. iii. 15, 16. They shall then acknowledge their own Messiah, whom their fathers crucified, and shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," Mat. xxiii. 39. "They shall look upon him whom they have pierced," not with derision and contempt, as their fathers did when he hung upon the cross, but under the influence of the Spirit of grace and supplication, "they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born," Zech. xii. 10, a state of mind expressive of the deepest sorrow and regret, and the most unfeigned repentance for the guilt of their fathers, in rejecting and killing that JUST ONE, the Prince of life, and for their own infidelity, inveterate obstinacy, and rebellion against him in their successive generations ever since. "Then shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days," Hos. iii. 5. Then shall the Lord recover them again from their long captivity and out-cast state, according to Isa. xi. 11, 12; Ezek. xxxix. 25, 28, 29; Amos, ix. 14; not by collecting them together again as a nation of this world, in the land of Palestine, as some persons fondly dream,<sup>c</sup> but by incorporating them with the believing Gentiles, as the citizens of Zion, just as he did in the

<sup>c</sup> On this subject it was my intention to offer some remarks in the way of refutation; but an able article which is to be found in the *ELECTIC REVIEW*, for *March*, 1820, (*Third Series*, No. 3) has saved me the trouble and necessity

apostolic age, "making of twain one new man, so making peace; reconciling both into one body by means of the doctrine of the cross,

of doing so. It is with much pleasure that I refer the reader to it, and that I tender my unfeigned thanks to the Reviewer, for his very masterly confutation of this and some other popular opinions of the present day. The article is of considerable length, extending to thirty-two pages, and well deserves to be given to the public in a detached form. But, for the sake of such of the readers of these Lectures as may not have ready access to the Review, I shall produce a short extract. The writer of the critique has been remarking, that though, politically considered, he sees nothing improbable in the event of the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, yet, it may be no more the fulfilment of prophecy, than the emancipation of the Greeks or of the Irish; and it may prove a hindrance, instead of furthering their being grafted in again into the church of God. He then remarks as follows:

"A contrary result is possible. Their restoration may take place under circumstances that shall in a great measure obviate the attendant evils we have referred to; and it may be preceded by a general diffusion of knowledge among the scattered tribes, that shall render them capable of political union, and liberal institutions. It is possible, that the dry bones may thus be brought together, and clothed anew with the form of life, and the shape of a political body, before the word of God shall impart spiritual vitality to the risen nation. There is something so pleasing, so fascinating in this anticipation, that its truth is often admitted without a very close investigation of the scriptural evidence. It is possible, we say, that the Jews may be restored to their own land with very mistaken expectations, retaining still their carnal prejudices, rejecting the Son of David, who is come, and vainly looking for another; and that they may afterwards, by a fresh Pentecostal effusion, be cured of their fatal blindness, and become obedient to the faith. The question is, What are the scriptural grounds for such an expectation?"

"If their restoration to Palestine be desirable, it must be as introductory and subsidiary to such a result. We can scarcely bring ourselves to attach importance to the event in any other point of view. Whether the Jewish people should be located in Syria, in Poland, or in Barbary, in itself matters little: their being restored to the church is every thing. We wish to see them a free people, no matter under what government, or what parallel. There are waste lands enough within the limits of the Turkish empire, to receive and support them if they were thrice as numerous,—in Cyprus, and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, in Mesopotamia, and Cappadocia, and Pontus, and Cilicia, in Numidia and Mauritania; where, indeed, they are now found, as their fathers were, but every where in a state of political degradation and jeopardy. They would, however, deem nothing worthy the name of restoration, that did not reinstate them in their own land. This attachment to Palestine is unconquerable; but it partakes quite as much of superstition as of patriotism. It forms an article of popular belief, Dr. Henderson informs us, among the Polish Jews, that, die where they may, their bodies will all be raised there at the end of the world. They believe that such as die in foreign parts, are doomed to perform the *gilgul mehiloth*, or trundling passage through subterraneous caverns, till they reach the sepulchres of their fathers; on which account so many remove thither in their lifetime, or direct their remains to be forwarded by sea to be interred there, to save themselves the trouble of an underground passage. The full strength of this feeling displayed itself in the declaration made by a Turkish Jew to Mr. Wolff. 'Even,' said the Rabbi, 'if Messiah should come now, and not bring us to Palestine, we would not hear him.' Mr. Wolff's reply was a very just reproof: 'You are *carnally-minded*.'—If, however, it was, in this Rabbi, an indication (as it assuredly was) of a carnal mind, to regard the

having slain the existing enmity between them," Eph. ii. 16, 17. And when they shall thus be converted to the faith, and obtain mercy on the same footing with the Gentiles, which is what the

restoration of the Jews to Palestine as the great event to which the prophecies point, and the object for which Messiah is expected to come,—then let Mr. Wolff say, what are we to think of those Christians who take a similar view of the Old Testament prophecies, and who would encourage in the Jews this worldly-minded expectation?"

After successfully exposing the absurdity of some statements of the modern Millenarians, the writer quotes the words of the apostle Peter, Acts ii. 30-36, and adds—

"As we are not contending with persons who will question whether the apostles understood the Old Testament prophecies, we put it to the common sense and conscience of the students of prophecy, whether Christ is not here expressly affirmed to be the anointed *Lord of Israel*, in fulfilment of the promise made to David, and of David's prophecy respecting his Son and Lord. The first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews is equally decisive on this point. The promise which gladdened the heart of David was, not that Messiah should reign from Egypt to Euphrates, but that the Messiah, who was to reign at God's right hand, should be his descendant according to the flesh. That the throne of David means, in reference to Christ, a '*spiritual throne*,' is not our position. We assert, that his is a *heavenly throne*, but a dominion not less actual, personal, and in a certain sense political, than that of David was; not the less actual, because its providential administration is an object of faith, nor the less personal because 'as yet we see him not,' nor the less political because he is raised 'far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and bath all things put under his feet.'"

The Strictures of the same writer, contained in p. 213, *et seq.*, are exceedingly valuable, and well merit the attention of the student of prophecy. Let our modern Millenarians answer this article "*if they dare*."

In addition to what hath been so ably advanced by the Eclectic Reviewer, I would merely add, that I am at a loss to see upon what solid principle the sentiment which is now so peremptorily insisted on by our modern Millenarians, I mean the restoration of the Jews as a nation, to the land of Palestine, can be supported by any who admit the abrogation of the old covenant, as testified in the apostolic writings. It will not be denied that the possession of the land of Canaan by the natural posterity of Abraham, formed an integral part of that covenant; see Gen. xii. 7; ch. xiii. 15; xv. 7; xvii. 8; xxvi. 4; xxviii. 13; Deut. ix. 5, 6; and Acts vii. 5. Accordingly, so long as that covenant remained in force, Israel retained possession of the land; but when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Hebrews, that economy had "waxed old, and was ready to vanish away," Heb. viii. 13; and he invites the believing Hebrews to "go forth, unto Christ, without the camp, bearing his reproach;" for, as that covenant had now given place to a new and better one, they "had no longer any abiding city" on earth, but looked for one to come, Heb. xiii. 13, 14. In perfect conformity with all this, in a few years after Paul wrote that epistle, a final period was put to the old covenant, by means of the Roman armies, who destroyed the city and temple, put an end to the legal worship, ejected the people of that covenant from the promised land, and dispersed them among all nations, in which state they have continued for one thousand seven hundred and sixty years. Now, to me it appears, that to contend for the return of the Jews, *as a nation*, to their own land, is in effect to "build again the things that are destroyed"—it is virtually denying that the Sinai covenant has *vanished away*—it is pleading for its restoration—it is, in a word, denying that Christ is come—or, if come, it is denying that his kingdom is *not* of this world.

apostle terms the *receiving* of them, their *grafting in* again, their fulness; it will be *life from the dead* to the world, as it will be a most notable means in the hand of the Most High for a more universal spread of the apostolic gospel among the nations, and for awakening the attention of sinful mortals to it, with conviction and effect; and also for confirming, quickening, and gladdening the people of God, who have been so long expecting, waiting, and praying for this happy event. Indeed, there are many passages in the writings of the prophets, which appear to intimate that the Jews will be particularly honoured, and, as it were, take the lead in spreading the knowledge of the Lord among the nations of the world; such as Isa. lvi. 8; ch. lx. 3-12; lxi. 6-10; lxii. 2-4; lxvi. 10-15; for the Gentiles are represented as being instructed by them, honouring them, and flowing in unto them.

“*And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give rewards unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldest destroy them that destroy the earth,*” ver. 18. There are two different views taken of this verse, both of which I will mention, leaving it to you to judge between them. The first is that of Grotius, Lowman and others, who understand the words *figuratively*. By the *dead* they understand the martyrs for the cause of truth; and their being *judged*, they explain to mean a *vindication* of their cause by some signal tokens of providence in their favour. To vindicate is certainly a proper sense of judging; and they think it is more consonant to the order and intention of the prophecy, than to understand it of the general judgment, which according to the order of these prophecies, is not to take place till after the millennium period in which Satan is bound for one thousand years. But others understand the text *literally*, and as pointing to the end of all things, the final judgment, which certainly must fall under the seventh trumpet, though the woe-part of it includes the pouring out of the seven vials of the wrath of God upon the Antichristian and Mahometan powers. And certainly it is to this period, that both prophets and apostles and

As to the texts of scripture which are adduced in proof of the sentiment, I find not one of them that will stand the test of rigorous examination—I mean, when examined upon the apostolic principle of interpretation, as furnished in Acts xv. 16, 17; Gal. ch. iii. and iv., &c. &c. The “Discourse delivered before the Monthly Association of Congregational Ministers and Churches, at Paddington Chapel, on Thursday, May 8th, 1829, entitled ‘The Aspect of Prophecy respecting the present and future State of the Jews,’ so far as regards this particular tenet, is a total failure! “The aggregate testimony of prophecy” has an imposing sound: it is to be regretted that, on such an occasion, only one passage of the prophetic writings should have been referred to, and that so little to the purpose.

the Lord of both, unite to direct our views, as being the great day of the wrath of heaven; and "the time of the dead when they shall be judged." Then shall the faithful servants of God, and tried friends of the Redeemer, both great and small, be most munificently rewarded; and they who corrupted the earth shall be themselves destroyed. The anger of the nations had been great both against God and his servants, opposing him, and persecuting them with unrelenting cruelty; but now the time of his wrath is come; now the blood of the martyrs shall be avenged; now their labours and sufferings shall produce their effects; from the seed which has been sown during a succession of centuries in tears and blood, a harvest of glory to the Most High, and of joy to themselves shall spring up, while those who by persecutions, corruptions, wars, and bloodshed, have destroyed the earth, shall now be themselves destroyed.

*"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,"* ver. 19. Under the figure of opening the heavenly temple, seems to be set forth the glorious state of the church when these judgments shall be executed upon her enemies; but whether it respects the state of things on earth during the millennial period, or the ultimate glory, is a question not decided. There seems to be an allusion in the words to the temple at Jerusalem which was polluted and shut up under certain idolatrous reigns, and opened in times of reformation. Conformable to which, the Gospel-temple, or New Testament church has been treated under the reign of Antichrist, and so will the purity of its worship be restored at the appointed period, the end of the one thousand two hundred and sixty years. The ark of the covenant being seen, implies the removal of the veil of ignorance, corruption, and error which for so long a period was cast over the nations of the earth, and probably denotes the restoration of pure and primitive Christianity, such as characterized the apostolic churches. The "lightnings, voices, thunderings, earthquake, and hail," are more particularly described, ch. xvi. 18-21, at the pouring out of the seventh vial. Both refer to the same events, only this is general, and that more particular; and as there the language seems to refer to the efficacy of the gospel, and of the spiritual judgments inflicted on those who corrupt or reject it, purifying the moral atmosphere of the world, such we may understand to be its import in this place.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>d</sup> Fuller, p. 196.



## LECTURE XXXI.

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AND there appeared a great wonder in heaven ; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. 2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. 3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven ; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. 4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth : and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. 5 And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron : and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. 6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. 7 And there was war in heaven ; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon : and the dragon fought and his angels. 8 And prevailed not ; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world : he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony ; and they loved not their lives unto the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. 13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child. 14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.—Rev. ch. xii.

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### THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON.

WE are now arrived at what is generally considered to be the most difficult part of the book of the Revelation. The difficulties attending every part of it I, indeed, have felt ; but having obtained help of God, we have continued to prosecute our inquiries into

its important contents, I would willingly hope, to our mutual profit and edification. And while I would devoutly acknowledge my unfeigned gratitude to the adorable Head of the Church for the grace and strength which he hath hitherto been pleased to afford, and look up to him for a further supply of his Spirit, in the way of light, direction, power, and comfort; I would not be thought unmindful of the obligations that are due to my brethren and friends for the encouragement to persevere in the undertaking, I have derived from their constant and patient attention. It is, moreover, proper to apprize you, that if the ground we have gone over has imposed a tax upon your mental exertion, and called your patience into exercise, I cannot hold out to you the prospect of an immediate relaxation, if you would turn these studies to any profitable account. On the contrary, you will need to arm yourselves with fresh energy, and remember that it is written, "*In due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*" I question if there be any part of divine revelation that is more strongly characterized by what the apostle Paul terms, "*The wisdom of God in a mystery,*" than that part of the Apocalypse at which we are now arrived. May the Father of lights give wisdom to the speaker, and enable him so to simplify the subject as that you may hear with understanding and profit!

Before we enter upon a consideration of the chapter before us, allow me to offer an observation or two respecting the style and structure; or, as I may say, the "frame work" adopted by the inspired writer, or rather by the Holy Spirit whose amanuensis he was, and by means of which its important contents are communicated to us. Possibly, a little attention to this matter may aid us materially, and contribute to our better understanding of these heavenly mysteries.

In general, I remark then, that the whole of this twelfth chapter is constructed on the principles of *typical* reference or *analogy*; and probably we shall find a clue to guide us into the meaning of much that it contains, in what the apostle Paul says to the church at Ephesus, ch. v. 23-32. He is there treating of the subject of marriage, and he gives them to understand, that in its primary institution, it was a type, shadow, or emblem of Christ and his church; this, he tells them, ver. 32, was "*the mystery*" or hidden meaning of the whole. Now, to enter a little into this mystery, we must observe, that Adam, in whom the whole human race began, was a natural image of Christ, the Saviour of his body the church, Rom. v. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 22, 45, &c. His deep sleep, the opening of his side, and the formation of Eve from a rib taken out of his side, were fit emblems of Christ's death, of the opening of *his* side upon the cross, and of the regeneration of believers by his death. The love which Adam ex-

pressed towards Eve, and his union with her by marriage, were lively emblems of the love of Christ towards his people, the purchase of his death, and of his eternal union with them in one society, in the resurrection state. And then, with respect to Eve herself, she was formed from a rib taken out of Adam's side, and thus was she a natural image of believers, who are regenerated both in their body and mind, through the piercing of Christ's side upon the cross, whereby his death was occasioned. Thus the circumstances which accompanied the formation of Eve, being fit emblems of the formation of the church, we may suppose them to have been brought to pass to prefigure that great event; and by prefiguring it, to shew that it was decreed of God from the beginning.<sup>a</sup>

Upon a principle somewhat analogous to this, is the subject matter of this twelfth chapter constructed. It comprises the most remarkable description that is any where to be found of the true church of God, from the first to the second coming of Christ; and the whole may be regarded as an explication of the first promise, Gen. iii. 15, "*I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*" For, in the chapter before us, we have the woman and her seed with the serpent or dragon; here is, moreover, the enmity between the woman and the serpent; the sufferings of the seed of the woman, with some intimation also of the victory of the woman's seed; a subject, however, which is resumed and more fully declared in chapters xix. and xx. of this Book. But it will be proper to go a little into this subject, and endeavour a brief illustration, for the better understanding of the chapter before us.

By the woman, in that first promise, we are to understand Eve, not however considered as the mother of all that should descend from Adam by her, that is to say, the mother of all the human race, for in that capacity, she had been beguiled by the serpent, and overcome by his wiles; and thus all Adam's posterity were involved with him and her in sin and death. But, in that first promise she stands in another capacity, in opposition to the serpent, namely, as the mother of that seed which should suffer from the serpent, and by suffering, overcome him and his seed. She is to be viewed as the mother of that seed, betwixt which and the serpent's seed there was to be a continual state of enmity kept up. According to this first promise, Christ descended from Eve, a virgin, not indeed by virtue of the command given to Adam and Eve in innocence, "*Be fruitful and multiply*, but by virtue of this word, "*The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.*"

<sup>a</sup> Macknight on Eph. v. 32.

All the elect are the seed of the woman by their being Christ's, even as they are said to be Abraham's seed, by their being Christ's, Gal. ch. iii.

Moreover, Eve, in this first promise, is to be considered as a type of the church, the mother of God's children, Christ being the first-born among many brethren, the first begotten of the dead, and of all his people raised from a death in trespasses and sins, who shall also be raised from the dead at the last day, called "the remnant of her seed." And thus, as the apostle Paul expressly makes Hagar to be a type of the old covenant ratified at Sinai, and also of the Old Testament church founded on that covenant; and, moreover, as he makes Sarah a type of the New Testament church, and of the new covenant; so, in this vision which John had of the church as a woman with her seed, is the church set forth as the antitype of Eve, as she is spoken of in that promise. This, then, is the point of view in which we take up the subject before us.

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered," ver. 1, 2. For the clearer understanding of the subject before us, it is proper to apprise you, that, in this chapter, we are carried back in our views to the first setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world, or to the primitive ages of the church. A want of attention to this circumstance has occasioned great perplexity to the commentators in their attempts to explain these predictions. And no wonder, for if we do not obtain possession of the proper clue, and strictly adhere to it; if we do not abide by the internal geography and chronology of the book, imagination will rove at large, and supposed allusions to *detached events*, in different ages and places, will disjoint the interpretation, and render the whole a system of chaos and confusion. The fact is, and you would do well to attend to it, that the entire book of the Revelation divides itself into two parts; the first occupies the eleven chapters which we have gone over, and, as you have seen, it proceeds in a regular and successive series from the times of the apostles, to the final consummation of all things. Nothing can be added, but it must fall somewhere or other within the limits of this period. "This first part," says a judicious writer, "contains a regular succession of events, from the apostolic age down to the consummation of all things; the prophecy beginning with the opening of the first seal, ch. vi. 1, and ending with a summary of the events of the seventh trumpet, ch. xi. 15-19. The second part, which fills up the remainder of the book, falls within the same period, and is only an enlargement and illustration of the things contained in the

former part, particularly such as relate to the church and its enemies." The transactions of the seventh trumpet are all summed up, and comprised in a few verses; but we shall see the particulars branched out and enlarged on into as many chapters. In short, "this latter part is designed, as a supplement to the former, to complete what was deficient, to explain what was left dubious, to illustrate what was obscure;"<sup>b</sup> with a view to which the same things are represented under different forms in successive visions, and the history sometimes goes back and comes over the same ground again with additional circumstances. We now proceed—

The chapter opens with the annunciation of "a great wonder in heaven;" by which is intended a remarkable type, symbol, or figurative representation of things which occurred in the church of God. It consisted of "a woman clothed around with the sun, having the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." This woman is no other than the *true church* of God, the mother of all his children; and the description which is here given of her, serves strikingly to distinguish her from the whore, or *false church*, that commits fornication with the kings of the earth. It serves also, to distinguish the New Testament church from that of the former dispensation. The prophet beheld her "*clothed with the sun.*" She has no other covering, no other ornament but Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. With this alone, she far outshines the Babylonian whore, clothed and adorned with the ornaments she derives from the kings of the earth, with whom she commits fornication; for Christ, and he alone is the clothing, and the glory of the true church. Being thus clothed, she shines as the sun in the eyes of all that behold his glory; "The Lord is unto her an everlasting light, and her God her glory," Is. lx. 19.

Moreover, she appears with "*the moon under her feet.*" It is her honour to be raised above all the worldly rudiments of the law of Moses, which she is here represented as having under her feet: and yet, as that typical dispensation was introductory to Christianity, she stands upon them; and she treads on all the worldly glory which the false church rejoices in. The New Testament church is not a worldly society; she has this changeable world under her feet; for "whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," 1 John v. 3. But, further,

She appears with "*a crown of twelve stars upon her head.*" She is not subjected to the law of Moses, as the church under the former dispensation was; nor yet to the doctrines and command-

<sup>b</sup> Bishop Newton, Diss. xxv.

ments of men, as the false church is. She glories in none of these things; but she wears the doctrine of the twelve apostles of the Lamb as her crown. She is a queen, according to Ps. xlv. 9, adorned in gold of Ophir, her clothing is of wrought gold, and she wears a crown; but she reigns only where the pure unmixed doctrine of the twelve apostles prevails; and wherever a subjection to that appears, there she appears reigning; whereas the false church the great whore, and the harlot's reign is by the power of the kings of the earth, by whose smile or frown she lives or dies.

“*And she being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.*” This is the first thing in the history of this woman which is presented to our notice; she is travailing in hard labour to bring forth a son. It is of much consequence to us to ascertain the meaning of this emblematical language; because, according to the view that is taken of it will be the explanation that must be given of the subsequent parts of the chapter. “The woman being with child, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered,” says Mr. Fuller, “may denote, the earnest desires of the true church after the increase of believers.” This is a sound interpretation, but I doubt if it be the thing intended. “The christian religion,” says Macknight upon the place, “was now about to gain or produce disciples of great eminence;” kings and emperors were to be the trophies of the cross! This view of the matter is very corrupt. “The pregnancy and travailing pains” (of the woman) says Mr. Scott, “seem to be an emblem of the afflicted state of the church in the three first centuries; during which time, amidst many hardships and persecutions, with fervent prayers and earnest labours, she sought deliverance from her oppression, and an increase of her family, and waited the appointed term, which was to bring a happy crisis to these her sorrows.” This savours strongly of national christianity; and accordingly the fruit of this parturition turns out to be “Constantine the Great, with the christian emperors.” These instances may suffice for a specimen of what has been said and written upon this subject. My own opinion of the matter is, that “the travailing in birth, and paining to be delivered,” is to be referred to the death of Christ, and that the issue or product of this parturition was Christ himself *considered as the first-born from the dead*, in which capacity he was to “rule all nations with a rod of iron,” by which is intimated the energy and success of his administration, not that it would be bloody or tyrannical, Ps. ii. 7-9; Rev. ii. 27.

Now, to illustrate this point a little, I remark, that when we consider Christ as the first-born from the dead, and in that character representing the whole church of the redeemed, we are not to look upon him altogether abstractedly from that body of which he is the head. For, as he died to make “*of these twain*,” viz., Jews

and Gentiles, “*one new man in himself*,” so this one new man is the *man-child* which was brought forth by the labour and travail, or in other words, by the sufferings and death of Immanuel, whereby satisfaction was given to the law and justice of God ; for the church is his “*purchased possession*,” the purchase of his precious blood. And this one new man is to rule the nations as with a rod of iron ; for Christ declares, that his members are to have communion with him in this rule, ch. ii. 27. See also, Dan. vii. 27.

“*And there appeared another wonder in heaven ; and behold a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads ; and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth : and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man-child, which was to rule all nations with a rod of iron ; and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne, ver. 3-5.*” “*I consider the present vision*,” says Mr. Faber, “*as by far the most difficult in the whole Apocalypse : yet the difficulty consists, not so much in ascertaining the general import of it, as in acquiring a distinct idea of the symbols under which it is conveyed.*”<sup>c</sup> He, therefore, recommends, as the most satisfactory mode of discussion, to begin with considering the terms of the prophecy ; then, to compare the machinery of the present vision, with that of its predecessor ; and, lastly, to apply the hieroglyphical picture to corresponding events in history. Having pursued this process himself, he arrives, *after a very circuitous route*, at the following conclusions :—that the woman, in this vision, denotes the true, mystical, or faithful church of Christ ; that the man-child is *Christ mystical*, that is, Christ the head considered in his true and genuine members ; that the great red dragon or serpent, represents the evil one, “*acting through the instrumentality of the Roman empire, and particularly through the instrumentality of those ten Gothic horns which sprang up in its western division.*” With the first and second of these conclusions I agree, though dissenting in some instances, from the process by which he attains them. On the third, we differ only as to the period of the empire to which it applies ; but to particularize a little on these points :

1. The *ten horns* of this great red dragon, clearly shew him to be the same with Daniel’s fourth beast, ch. vii. 7 ; consequently, it is an emblem of the Roman empire, in some stage of its existence. The *red* or fiery colour of the dragon fitly represents the imperial purple, and the sanguinary cruelty of those who wore it. The *seven heads* are explained to be the seven hills or mounts on which

<sup>c</sup> Sacred Calendar of Prophecy, Vol. iii. p. 111.

Rome, the imperial city was built, Rev. xvii. 9; and also seven kinds of supreme magistrates which successively prevailed there, viz. kings, consuls, decemvirs, military tribunes, dictators, emperors, &c. for, as has been remarked by Mede, and Hurd, and others, the seven heads of the beast are a double type; first, signifying seven hills on which the city is placed, and then seven forms of government, to which it had been subject. Its *ten horns* signify ten kings, ver. 12, or ten independent kingdoms, into which the empire was at last broken and divided; of which ten kingdoms I have spoken in a former lecture. The seven heads of this dragon bear *seven crowns*, ver. 3; this was the case while the empire continued united; but when it was broken into ten independent kingdoms, the crowns were transferred to his horns, as you will see by looking to ch. xiii. 1.

2. The tail of this dragon is said to draw the third part of the stars of heaven in its train, and cast them to the ground; and in this there is probably an allusion to the casting of Satan and his angels out of heaven. If we understand by the *stars of heaven* the lesser states, politically considered, then the language here used must be understood to signify, that the power of the Roman empire should subdue the third part of the kingdoms of the earth. But I should rather be inclined to take "the stars of heaven" here as symbolically representing the ministers of the churches of Christ, according to Rev. i. 20, and if so, then the dragon or power of the empire drawing the third part of them in his train and casting them to the ground, must refer to the evil inflicted upon the churches at the beginning of christianity by the persecutions that came upon them prior to the times of Constantine the Great: the effects of which were a great apostacy from the christian faith, as we saw in a former lecture.

3. In opposition to the woman, or the true church, while travelling to bring forth this man-child, and to the man-child himself, we here see this great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads, standing before the woman who was ready to be delivered, for the purpose of devouring her child as soon as it was born.

By this we are to understand, Satan, that old serpent, directing the power of the Roman empire by means of the unbelieving Jews against Christ and his members, or against that "one new man," the man-child brought forth by the woman in travail, to destroy him at his first appearance in the world; in other words, to destroy Christianity in the bud, to quash the cause of Christ in its infancy. This power was not only exerted by Satan in the Jewish church against the woman and her seed; but it was also engaged in support of the idolatrous worship of paganism, which then prevailed throughout the empire, for that worship was in effect paid to Satan; and by this, christianity was opposed from the beginning.



4. It is said the woman brought forth a man-child which was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; *and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.* We must look for the import of this last symbol, in the exaltation of Christ to the Father's right hand in heaven, as the first-born from the dead; and likewise in the raising up of his people from a death in trespasses and sins, to sit together in heavenly places in him their adorable head; for he is the head of his body, the church, and the latter is his fulness. This part of our subject may, perhaps, receive illustration by adverting to what the apostle Paul writes to the Ephesians, ch. ii. where, having spoken of their state as idolatrous heathens, he thus proceeds:—"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and *raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus,*" ver. 4-6. Now, the import of this is, that by a gracious divine constitution, Christ sustained the persons of all the elect in his dying and rising again; in such a sense, that they were so comprehended in, and accounted one with him, as to have died in his death, been buried in his burial, and raised again in his resurrection; and thus when Christ was discharged from the guilt of his people, for whom he died, and was raised up from the dead to the enjoyment of eternal life and glory, then they also were quickened and raised up together with him, being included in him as their head. It is in this way that I understand the prophetic language concerning "the man-child being caught up unto God and to his throne." Thus the church became a mother, when this man-child was brought forth, and caught up to God and his throne; *now* she became "Jerusalem, which is above, and the mother of us all," Gal. iv. 2, 6, in distinction from the Old Testament church, the Jerusalem that then was, and was in bondage with her children, when the apostle wrote, ver. 28.

"*And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days,*" ver. 6. In ver. 14, of this same chapter we find another mention made of the flight of the woman from the face of the serpent, in these words: "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent;" and this circumstance has proved not a little embarrassing to the writers on the Apocalypse. Her first flight, mentioned ver. 6, is placed prior to the casting out of the great dragon, that is, previous to the fall of paganism in the Roman empire; the second is represented as taking place, after the dragon is cast out, and when

christianity had become the established religion of the empire. Various hypotheses have been adopted in order to explain this matter. Some consider the first period to be the beginning of the church's flight into the wilderness; and the last they consider to denote the completion of it. Some, who contend that the flight is but one, account for its being twice mentioned, on the principle, that the mention made of it in ver. 6, is only a *brief* notice of what is related more at large in ver. 14; and this is the solution given of it by Dr. Macknight, in his *Truth of the Gospel History*, p. 577. But not to dwell on this difficulty, I pass on to observe, that in what is here said of the flight of the woman, of the place prepared for her, of her being protected from the face of the serpent, and of her being fed and nourished, there is a plain reference to the case of the prophet Elijah, as there is also in what is said of the two witnesses, in ch. xi. 5, 6. Upon referring to the history of that prophet, you will find a two-fold flight of his into the wilderness, where he was fed in an extraordinary manner; they are both recorded in the First Book of Kings; see ch. xvii. 3, 4, and ch. xix. 1-8. Here the analogy is so obvious, that it would be a waste of time to point it out; and in this way Israel were our types. It is true that this reference to the case of Elijah, who twice fled into the wilderness, to escape the vengeance of those who sought his life, does not positively prove a two-fold flight of the christian church in the instance before us; but I think it affords probability at least, that two distinct flights of the woman are to be understood, one during the pagan state of the Roman empire, and the other during the reign of Antichrist.

The time, or duration of the woman's exile, though expressed in different terms, is the same in both cases. In ver. 6, it is said to be for "a thousand two hundred and three score days;" which, reckoning each day for a year, according to Numb. xiv. 34; Ezek. iv. 4, 6; and Dan. ix. 24-26, amounts to one thousand two hundred and sixty years. In ver. 14, the same thing is expressed by "a time, times, and half a time," which is borrowed from the prophet Daniel, ch. xii. 7; but which is equivalent to forty-two months, or three years and a half, the period during which the outer-court of the Lord's house is not measured, but given to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, Rev. xi. 2; the period during which also, power was given unto Antichrist to scatter the holy people, according to Dan. xii. 7.

As the subject is now before us, I may take the opportunity of remarking, that there are several events, of which mention is frequently made in the Apocalypse, all of which synchronate; that is, they commence their date at the same period of time, run parallel to one another, and terminate at the same point. Such are for instance—

The treading under foot of the holy city, Rev. xi. 2.

The witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, Rev. xi. 3.

The flight of the woman into the wilderness, Rev. xii. 6.

The reign of the ten horned beast, Rev. xiii. 5.

To all of which the very same number is applied ; for, the forty-two months of the beast's reign is the same with the time, times, and half a time, during which the woman is nourished in the wilderness, whither she fled from the face of the serpent ; and the one thousand two hundred and sixty years of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, is the same with the forty-two months, during which the outer court is not measured, but left out, and given to the nations who tread the holy city under foot. A familiar acquaintance with these synchronisms will be found of great use in the study of this wonderful book. Let us now proceed—

*“And there was war in heaven ; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon ; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world ; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him,”* ver. 7-9. There can be no impropriety in mentioning to you in this place, a remark which the learned dean Woodhouse has upon these verses, in his Annotations on the Apocalypse, it is as follows :

“ This passage, beginning with ver. 7. and ending with ver. 14, should be read in parenthesis. A transaction, which had happened long before the history in the present scene, but strongly connected with it, seems to be introduced. And therefore the word *ΕΥΕΥΕΤΟ* might be translated, ‘ *there had been war in heaven.*’ This parenthesis contains explanatory matter of great importance, and seems to have been exhibited in a separate scene. For, the conflict between the dragon and the woman in the wilderness is suspended while the battle in heaven is described ; and is afterwards resumed, exactly where the narration is broken off.” If this be admitted, it certainly removes the difficulty of there being a two-fold flight of the woman ; but I leave you to judge for yourselves on the point.

As to the subject matter of the vision of the war in heaven, I may say in few words, that it represents the vehement struggles which took place in the first ages of the gospel, between Christianity and the system of polytheism, or the pagan idolatry. The angels of the two contending armies denote two opposite parties in the Roman empire, at the period of time which the vision more particularly refers unto. Michael's angels are the followers of the Lamb, the friends of the gospel, who professed christianity ; the dragon's angels are the supporters of the old idolatry, who are exerting every nerve to uphold it, and to overthrow Christianity by persecuting the disciples of the Saviour. The whole imagery,

in which the subject is drest up, is astonishingly grand; and is what bishop Hurd would call "the *embroidered robe*," or robe of state, in which are enveloped certain literal matters of fact, that occurred in this present nether world. In the hieroglyphical language of prophecy, Satan and his angels are cast out of heaven, "cast out into the earth," evidently referring to their expulsion from the realms of bliss.

"*And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night: and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death; therefore, rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them; Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time,*" ver. 10-12. One of the first things that strikes the mind on reading these verses is, the deep interest which the inhabitants of heaven are represented as taking in the contest that was carried on in this world between the powers of light and darkness, truth and error, the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and the system of heathen superstition and pagan idolatry, which had so long prevailed in the empire. The subject is, in fact, the same that we had under consideration on the opening of the sixth seal, Rev. vi. 12-17,<sup>d</sup> and is only an amplification of the important events included under that seal; or, rather, it is the same subject exhibited under a different aspect. Under the former view, as you may recollect, we had "the heavens departing as a scroll, and every mountain and island moved out of their places—we had the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, &c. &c. hiding themselves in the dens and rocks of the mountains, and calling upon them to hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." All this served to give us a lively representation of the way in which the inhabitants of the earth were affected by the fall of Paganism and the triumphs of Christianity in the empire—but *now* the subject is brought under our review a second time for the purpose of shewing how the blessed inhabitants of heaven—saints and angels—were affected by it. A song of the heavenly host is introduced on this occasion, and you see the burden of it: "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom (or reign) of our God, and the power of his Christ—for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, that accused them to our God day and night." Thus we see on the one hand the interest which the saints in light feel in what befalls their "*brethren*" on earth, who are still engaged in the christian

<sup>d</sup> See Lecture xviii. p. 209.

conflict ; and, on the other, the influence and agency of Satan in conducting the warfare against them. The power that was exerted against the woman and her man-child, whether it were exerted by means of the Jews, or of the Romans, was the power of Satan, instigating both classes to persecute and destroy the saints of the Most High, while he himself acts the part of an accuser, day and night, to deprive them of the favour of God. Thus he acted towards the patriarch Job, and thus you find him acting towards Joshua, the high priest and representative of the children of Israel, Zech. iii. 1-4. But greater is He that was with the woman and her man-child, than he that was wielding the power of the Roman empire. The dragon and his angels are represented in this vision as fighting to maintain the idolatrous worship of paganism, determined to maintain and support it against the testimony of the woman's seed ; and on the other hand, Michael and his angels fight against the dragon to cast him down from that eminent station which he maintained against the woman and her man-child. The issue of the war is, that the dragon did not prevail in that situation ; he was incapable of maintaining that high station wherein he was placed against the church, but was cast down from it, which downfall took place on the demolishing of the church state and civil polity of the Jews, and in the bringing down of paganism in the Roman empire ; and this draws forth the song of praise from the redeemed. And now, in the war which had this successful and glorious issue, observe the representation that is given of the part that was acted by the saints, or members of the true church : "*They overcame him (the accuser) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony ! and they loved not their lives unto the death.*" Their victory was achieved, not by fighting, but by suffering—not by the power of the material sword, but by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ; they met the accusations of the adversary, by faith in the blood of the Lamb, and by an appeal to the truth as it is in Jesus, which was the word of their testimony ; and, patiently suffering for Christ's sake, they overcame in this terrible conflict.

But the issue of this war is not the exaltation of the woman, nor the deliverance of her seed from the opposition of the dragon. On the contrary, when he finds himself displaced from his elevated station, cast down from his eminence, and no longer worshipped by the deluded Pagans, his wrath against the woman and her seed is redoubled, and he now goes to work another way. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea," &c. &c. Now his object is to persecute the woman which brought forth the man-child.

“*And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, (of security) where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.*” ver. 14. It has been remarked by some writers, that in what is here said of the woman’s flight into the wilderness, there is an allusion to the state of Israel in the waste howling wilderness, whom the Lord says, “*he bare as on eagles’ wings.*” Exod. xix. 4, and who were sustained by him there in an extraordinary manner. But, as hath been already observed on ver. 6, it seems more likely to refer to the case of Elijah, and his being fed by ravens; or rather to his being fed with bread and water brought to him in an extraordinary manner in the wilderness, when he fled from Jezebel, 1 Kings xix. 14. Some think, that by the two wings of a great eagle which were given to the woman, that she might fly into the wilderness, is intended the power of the two christian emperors, namely, of Rome and Constantinople, between whom the empire was divided after it became christianized. For, although it be true, that these christian emperors professed to support Christianity, it is equally certain that they nourished Antichrist, the man of sin, from his birth in the days of Constantine, and fostered him till he sat down upon his throne; so, these wings served for no other purpose to the woman, than to carry her with greater speed into the wilderness. But, while the woman is thus away from the face of the serpent, she is not so far removed from his observation, but that he still pursues her with the effects of his wrath, for it is added—

“*And the serpent cast out of his mouth, water as a flood, after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood: and the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth: and the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ,*” ver. 15-17. From the period of the woman’s flight in the wilderness, or during the one thousand two hundred and sixty years of the reign of Antichrist, she no more appears openly before the face of the dragon, as at the beginning in the churches of the saints: nevertheless, the witnesses continue to prophesy in sackcloth, and the serpent sets himself utterly to swallow her up, as to any appearance of the kingdom of Christ, and the order of his house which she is capable of making even in the wilderness. And to effect her utter ruin, he casts a flood of persecution after her, hoping she might be carried away of the flood. Such was the state of matters while the witnesses were prophesying in sackcloth, until, as we have seen in a former lecture, they are at length silenced—the witnesses

are killed, and their dead bodies refused a burial. But in this diabolical attempt, the dragon does not ultimately succeed—for, it is said, *the earth helped the woman*. And I can readily conceive of two important ways whereby this was done; probably you may think of others. *First*, it was done by *the protection that was afforded* to those who constituted the remnant of the woman's seed, which kept the commandments of God, and had the faith of Jesus, during the reign of Antichrist. This was remarkably fulfilled in the case of the *Albigenses*, who inhabited the south of France, by the counts of Toulouse; and also towards the *Waldenses*, who occupied the vallies of Piedmont, by the dukes of Savoy. If the Lamb had his followers upon earth during that benighted period, which I have no doubt was the case, you will look in vain for them if not among these people. But as I have written their history at some length, in a work which is well known to most of you who are now present, I conceive it needless to enlarge upon the subject in this place. Such of you as are in possession of that publication, may find it profitable to refresh your memories by glancing it over again; you will there see how God put it into the hearts of those sovereigns to grant an asylum to his persecuted people, and shew them favour, when the dragon was casting out water, that is, a flood of persecution after them; and thus the precious seed was preserved as a sacred deposit in the earth, until the time of the Reformation; and this is one way in which *the earth helped the woman*. But I add,

*Secondly*, that another important means by which the earth helped the woman, was *the invention of the art of printing*, on which you may recollect that I made some observations in a former lecture, not long ago. The powers of the earth, taking occasion from the bringing of the Scriptures to light, found their own interest in opposing the tyrannical reign of Antichrist, and checking the progress of persecution which was carried on against the word of God. In doing this, they indeed promoted their own ends; but whatever *they* intended, it proved an important help to the woman, or true church. The remnant of her seed were enabled to "keep the commandments of God," in opposition to the commandments of men, and to "hold fast the testimony of Jesus Christ," in opposition to the testimony of men. But they are still the objects of the serpent's wrath, and they are persecuted with equal malice after the help which the woman had received from the earth. Having, however, exceeded the usual time allotted for this exercise, I now close the present lecture with remarking, by way of improvement, that the true church of Christ is to be known by these two characters, namely, by faith and obedience to the word of God—and by patient suffering for its sake. It is in this way that she is invariably distinguished throughout the

Apocalypse. The faith of the true church is opposed to the faith of Antichrist, and to faith *in* him, even as her obedience stands in opposition to any compliance with his commands. So we find it said, in this chapter, *They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony.* And again, *The remnant of her seed that keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.* So also in ch. xiv. 12, the true church is thus described, "*Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*"

But the true church is also characterised by patience in suffering for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God; or, for keeping the commandments of God after the example of the Lamb that was slain. Hence it is said, "*They loved not their lives unto the death,*" ver. 11; and in ch. xiv. it is further said of her, "*Here is the patience of the saints.*" Now, wherever the church of Christ is visible, as it was at the beginning, we may expect to find these two characteristic features, FAITH and PATIENCE; and where these are *not* found, whatever other shining qualities may be possessed, the marks of the true church, the Lamb's bride, are wanting.

Let us, my brethren, as a church, improve this subject, by examining ourselves by this criterion, "whether we be in the faith"—whether we are holding fast the testimony of God concerning his Son Jesus Christ, and are walking in the footsteps of the flock—"keeping the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus,"—not contending for worldly power or popularity; but patiently bearing the cross after the Saviour; remembering that, "if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him;" and let patience have its perfect work, that we may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing.

Now is the hour of darkness past,  
Christ has assumed his reigning power;  
Behold the great accuser cast  
Down from the skies, to rise no more.

'Twas by thy blood, Immortal Lamb,  
Thine armies trod the tempter down:  
'Twas by thy word and powerful name,  
They gain'd the battle and renown.

Rejoice, ye heavens; let every star  
Shine with new glories round the sky;  
Saints, while ye sing the heavenly war,  
Raise your Deliverer's name on high.



## LECTURE XXXII.

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AND I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads, as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast. 4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? 5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. 8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. 9 If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.—Rev. xiii. 1-10.

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### THE TEN HORNED BEAST.

THE chapter, on a consideration of which we are now about to enter, has a very close connection with the seventh chapter of the prophecies of Daniel. In fact, the subject is one and the same with both writers; and, therefore, the two chapters must be considered by us in connection. The imagery adopted by both prophets is highly-wrought and complicated; but, happily, we are furnished with a key, in ch. xvii. of the Apocalypse, which will be of great use to us in helping to unlock its mysterious import. The same subject there comes over again; on which occasion a heavenly messenger condescends to explain to the New Testament prophet, the meaning of several things which had greatly perplexed him. In going through the chapter before us, therefore, it will behove us to pay diligent attention to the explanations there afforded us.

In the preceding chapter, the inspired writer had conducted us, as it were, behind the scenes, and shown us that the entire machinery of the great apostacy, and of the tyranny of Anti-

christ was worked by the infernal serpent; and now he proceeds to bring us more closely acquainted with the characters of the external agents, through whose instigation, and by whose instrumentality, the saints of the Most High should be harassed and worn out during the twelve hundred and sixty years, the allotted period of Antichrist's reign.

“*And I stood upon the sand of the sea; and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy,*” ver. 1. The prophet introduces his subject on the present occasion by informing us, that he fancied himself stationed on the sand of the sea, when he beheld, in vision, a wild beast rising up out of the sea; that is, when divested of its symbolical drapery, he beheld an empire, kingdom, or state opposed to God and his Christ, rising up out of the wars and commotions which agitated the world; for that is the import of the *sea* and the *wild beast*, as these figures are used in prophecy, particularly in this book of the Apocalypse. He next describes its singular appearance, it had “seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the names of blasphemy.”

It appears to be so universally admitted by the writers on the Revelation, whether popish or protestant, that this wild-beast is the same with the fourth, and ten-horned beast of Daniel, ch. vii. 7, 19, 20, that there seems no room to doubt it. Daniel, indeed, makes no mention of the seven heads of the beast, he speaks of its ten horns, and of another little horn springing up amongst them; but in the passage before us, the seven heads are added to make the application clearer and more satisfactory. But the ten-horned beast of Daniel, as hath been made to appear in a former lecture, is indisputably the Roman empire; consequently, the beast which John saw rise up out of the sea; or, to drop the metaphor, the kingdom which he now saw to rise up out of the midst of nations agitated by war and revolution, must be the Roman empire likewise in some form or shape; in which of its existing states, however, we must learn from the other marks that are added.

This beast is described as having *seven heads*, which are explained, ch. xvii. 9, to be seven mountains, or so many hills on which the city of Rome stood, thereby fixing its locality; and also seven kings or forms of government, which successively prevailed there, ver. 10, viz. kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, military tribunes, triumvirs and emperors; or, as some say, emperors heathen, and emperors christian. Of these seven heads we shall have occasion to take some further notice presently.

Another singular feature pertaining to this wild beast was its having *ten horns*, under which aspect it appeared to Daniel also,

ch. vii. 7. This is explained in Rev. xvii. 12. to denote ten kings or independent kingdoms, into which the empire was ultimately broken and divided. "The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet;" that is to say, they had not sprung into existence at the time the prophet John had the vision, nor indeed did they appear for some centuries afterwards; "but they were to receive power as kings *one hour*;" that is, at the same time, that the beast should receive his power. It is added concerning these ten kings, ver. 13, "These have *one mind*," or the same will, consent, or judgment, for they all agree to "give their power and strength unto the beast." And it is added in ver. 17, "For God hath put it into their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree and give their kingdom (or power) unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled:" in plain terms, to promote a uniformity of religion, and make the nations subject to the clergy; this was the *one opinion*, *μίαν γνώμην*, or judgment in which they agreed: they became united in their implicit subjection to the Roman hierarchy. We may further remark concerning this beast, that his seven heads were successive; but his ten horns were cotemporary, compare ver. 10 and 12 of ch. xvii. In the symbol itself, John beholds all the seven heads existing together; nor was it possible, perhaps, for the hieroglyphic to be otherwise constructed; but from the verbal interpretation of it we learn, that, although the seven forms of supreme government, represented by the seven heads, were exhibited at once to the prophet's view, they did not synchronize; for, when he wrote, five of them had already fallen, one was then in actual existence, and another was still future, ch. xvii. 10. Rome had had its government of kings, of consuls, of dictators, of decemvirs, of tribunes, like France during her revolutionary period, when every half dozen years was bringing her a new constitution; that of emperors was in existence when John had the vision, and one was yet to come, and continue for a short period, ver. 10; but whether this refers to the christian emperors, which was of short duration, or to the papal administration, or to a non-descript state of things which succeeded the fall of the imperial government, does not seem very certain, though I think the first is intended.

This wild beast had upon his horns *ten crowns*. In the former chapter, ver. 3, the prophet "beheld a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns *upon his heads*." A crown is the usual symbol of rule, authority, or power; conformable to which, while the empire continued united, the crowns were upon its *heads*, or forms of government; but when it was broken into ten independent kingdoms, under which state John had this vision, the crowns are transferred to its *horns*, thereby intimating to us that the times referred to in this vision, are those

in which the western Roman empire would be overthrown, and out of it arise ten independent kingdoms; "These ten horns, having ten crowns upon them," says Whiston, "denote so many kings, or crowned heads, over so many distinct provinces or kingdoms."

"*And upon his heads the name of blasphemy.*" We have seen that the number of the heads was seven, and on each of them was inscribed the word "blasphemy;" by which is probably intimated the idolatrous character of the beast, or Roman power in its heathenish state, before it became antichristian. It is important for you to keep in mind that, in our last lecture, we had under consideration, the power of the Roman government in its heathenish or paganized state, exhibited under the symbol of "a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads," ch. xii. 3. This dragon we saw cast down from his eminence, in other words, the idolatrous worship of paganism was overthrown in the empire; and, now, this beast which John beheld rising up out of the sea, succeeds the fallen dragon. But, to enter into the hidden meaning of this, you must observe, that the whole power of the antichristian kingdom is represented to us in this thirteenth chapter, by two beasts, one of which rises out of the sea, ver. 1, and the other comes up out of the earth, ver. 11. The first of these, which is the subject of our present consideration, denotes the concurring power of the ten kings which arose in the empire, subsequent to the fall of paganism, when they agreed to "have one mind," or pledged themselves to the support of Antichrist, by maintaining a uniformity of religion throughout their ten kingdoms.

It may, perhaps, tend to throw some light upon this subject if we here call to mind what the Scriptures teach us concerning the object and design for which the ordinance of civil government was originally instituted by the Most High. A proper view of this matter is, indeed, absolutely necessary in order to our duly appreciating the demerit or evil conduct of these ten kings and their successors, in subjecting the nations to the yoke of the clergy.

I need not waste our time in proving, that civil government is an ordinance of heaven, that it is consonant to the revealed will of God, and that even in its least perfect forms, it is an invaluable blessing to the children of men. The necessity of it arises from the entrance of sin into the world; for it is this which has introduced degeneracy, discord, confusion, injustice, oppression, violence, and bloodshed among men. The experience of every age has evinced the necessity of almost every kind of restraint for maintaining any thing like peace and good order among men. Without the restraint which is imposed by civil government, what a horrid scene of injustice, oppression, and cruelty, would this

earth exhibit! But, then, the end and design of civil government is to protect the lives, liberties, and property of the subject from lawless depredation, and to punish all that work ill to their neighbour, contrary to the second table of the divine law; according to that ancient ordinance of God, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," Gen. ix. 6. Rulers, magistrates, and governors are God's ministers in that matter, to whom he commands us to be subject, and to pay tribute, Rom. xiii. But the power of these ten kings in enforcing uniformity of religion, supporting the clergy, and bringing the nations of the earth into subjection to them, was a foolish and wicked departure from the legitimate end of civil government; and here we have it presented to us under the symbol of a *beast with ten horns*; this is the antichristian power, identified with the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of it, and to which all those are subject whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life.

It is possible, however, that the explanation now given of the hieroglyphical symbol of this ten horned beast, may not be thought sufficiently definite; and a more explicit and detailed account of what I intend by it, may be desirable to some. Be it observed, then, that by the antichristian power now mentioned as constituting the *mystery*, or concealed meaning of this beast with ten horns, I would be understood to mean, *church authority supported by secular power*; than which nothing can be conceived more at variance with the description that is given of Christianity in the New Testament. Though we have had this subject before us in a former lecture,<sup>a</sup> and endeavoured to shew the *positive evil* which attaches to all national establishments of Christianity, or the introduction of the power of the civil magistrate into the kingdom of Christ, there can be no impropriety in enlarging a little upon it in this place.

The corruption of the christian religion, through the wickedness of its professors who received not the love of the truth, especially by means of their leaders, after the days of the apostles, is clearly foretold in the New Testament, 2 Thess. ii.; 1 Tim. iv.; 2 Tim. iii.; 2 Pet. ii.; 1 John iv. Even under the eye of the apostles, "The mystery of iniquity began to work;" but it proceeded by slow degrees until the fall of heathenism in the Roman empire, and till Christianity became the established religion, when "the Man of Sin" began to be revealed. Under the christian emperors, a profession of that religion was adopted fitted to a kingdom of this world, and made consistent with the pursuit of worldly honour, wealth, and pleasure, and, indeed, with all those practices without which no nation of this world can be

<sup>a</sup> Lecture xvi. p. 194.

powerful and flourishing,—a christianity consistent with all our worldly interests, and whereby we are Christians in one country, just as men are heathens and Mahometans in another. This is national Christianity, or as the apostle calls it, “A form of godliness denying the power of it,” the very opposite to that profession of the name of Christ, which was the effect of God’s *visiting the nations to take out of them a people for his name*,” Acts xv. 14. This form of Christianity, separated from the cross, and stated in opposition to the ancient work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, was the religion of the Roman empire, after the fall of the dragon, or when it had cast off its old religion. And when that empire was broken into several independent kingdoms, these, by a very mysterious providence remained united as one empire still, in that form of Christianity, and in the body of the clergy, who were the greatest gainers by it, and who carried it to perfection by the power of the ten kings which gave them their strength or ability to enforce a uniformity of religious profession throughout their respective kingdoms. This grand end was brought about by means of “*Church authority supported with secular power.*” This was to be seen in perfection in the church of Rome; there, indeed, we have “*the beast with ten horns*” exemplified; but the protestant clergy have copied after that church in this matter, to the utmost of their power, and quite as far as the nature of their cause would allow. That they are prevented by the state from proceeding further in enforcing the same uniformity that is done by the church of Rome, is a source of deep wailing and lamentation to many of them even in our own country, and in this enlightened day!<sup>b</sup>

<sup>b</sup> In proof of what is said above, and that I may not be thought to deal in false accusations, I request the reader’s attention to the following extract from a celebrated work on the Book of Common Prayer.

“Our Liturgy,” says the author, “was first established by the convocation, or provincial synods of the realm, and thereby became OBLIGATORY *in foro conscientiæ*, and was then confirmed and ratified by the supreme magistrate in Parliament, and so also became OBLIGATORY *in foro civili*. It has, therefore, all authority, both ecclesiastical and civil. As it is established by ecclesiastical authority, those who separate themselves, and set up another form of worship, are *schismatics*; and, consequently, are guilty of a *damnable sin*, which no *toleration* granted by the civil magistrate, can authorize or justify. But as it is settled by Act of Parliament, the separating from it is only an offence against the state, and, as such, may be pardoned by the state. The act of toleration, therefore, as it is called, has freed the Dissenters from being offenders against the state, notwithstanding their separation from the worship prescribed by the liturgy; but it by no means excuses, or can excuse them from the schism they have made in the church; they are still guilty of that sin, and will be so long as they separate, notwithstanding any temporal authority to indemnify them.”—*Wheatley’s Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer.*

The Dissenters may learn from this, something of their obligation to the overruling providence of God,—the state tolerates, the church does not!

“*And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority,*” ver. 2. Here is a more enlarged description of the ten-horned beast which arose out of the sea, and it is taken from Dan. vii. 2, 3. His shape is compounded of all the three beasts which had preceded him, namely, the Babylonian lion, the Medo-Persian bear, and the Macedonian leopard; intimating thereby, that the Roman empire comprehended within its utmost limits the dominions of all the three former empires. Thus the beast of the Apocalypse embodies the most terrible parts and properties of all the four beasts of Daniel; in his general shape he is like a leopard, uniting uncommon agility with ferocious strength; he has the mouth of the lion, and the paw of the bear.

“*And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.*” The word here translated *seat*, should rather have been translated *throne*, as it is by Wakefield, Doddridge, Daubuz, Woodhouse, and others. And here, by an induction of particulars, is shewn, that the great red dragon, or Rome Pagan, surrendered up to the ten-horned beast all its royalties, or the several parts of its power, including *the throne*, which is the imperial seat of power and government, with all his authority or jurisdiction over all his subjects. The terms are easily understood, and they import nothing less than that this ten-horned beast, or anti-christian power succeeded to the possession and exercise of the same dominion and rule which had formerly been vested in the dragon. The authority exercised by this beast is unjust, tyrannical, oppressive, diabolical, as we shall presently see from his making war with the saints, who refused to worship the beast and his image, and overcoming them, ver. 7.

“*And I saw one of the heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast,*” ver. 3. We have already seen that the heads of this beast were seven in number, and that they denote so many different forms of government, or civil polity, which the Roman state had passed under. Of these forms of government, five had passed away, at the time of the prophecy; the sixth, namely, that of *emperors* then was in existence, and the other was not yet come. One of these heads John beheld *as it were* wounded to death. There is a farther reference to this wound inflicted on one of the heads, in ver. 12—“whose deadly wound was healed,” and again in ver. 14, *ad fin.*—“they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.” And there is another allusion to it in ch. xvii. 8, where we read of “the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.” Now, putting all these texts together, the sum of the whole seems to be this, that the wound

which the beast received in one of his heads, which was inflicted by the sword, was so severe, that he was considered for a time to be dead, yet was he not so in reality, but merely in appearance ; for after this he revived, and lived, and reigned, to the admiration of the world ; in fact, after the healing of his deadly wound, “all the world wondered after the beast.”

The writers on this subject are not agreed as to which of the seven heads this deadly wound is to be ascribed ; and the point is of some moment to ascertain. It cannot be any one of the first five—kings, consuls, dictators, decenvirs, or tribunes—because it is expressly said in ch. xvii. 10, that these five had fallen when John wrote. The sixth, or that of the heathen emperors, was in existence when he wrote, concerning which it is said, “one is”—and the seventh “was yet to come,” and of this last it is said, “when he cometh, he must continue a short space”—which is very applicable to the christian emperors—a species of government commencing with Constantine the Great, A.D. 325, at the fall of heathenism, and continuing about one hundred and fifty years, viz. to the year A.D. 476, when the empire was broken into ten kingdoms, or separate states. I will quote to you the observations of Mr. Fuller touching this subject.

“There are two interpretations of this part of the prophecy, on which good commentators have been divided. One is, that the sword by which the beast was wounded was that of the Northern nations in the fifth century, by which Rome, under its sixth, or imperial head, was overthrown ; but by means of Popery the wound was healed, and she who had been given up for lost, became, in a new form, the mistress of the Western world. The other is, that the deadly wound was caused by Constantine, who, having in different engagements defeated his pagan colleagues, subverted the ancient religion of the empire, so that for a few years the beast was, *as it were*, dead ; but that when under the influence of corruption it again became idolatrous and persecuting, the beast revived, and the world wondered after him.—Till of late, I have preferred the first of these interpretations, but upon a closer examination of the prophecy, I am inclined to think the last to be the meaning. It does not seem likely that so extraordinary a change in the empire, and one that so deeply interested the church of God, should be overlooked, while one which was much more ordinary, and of but small account to religion, should be held up to view. It seems, also, notwithstanding the corruptions introduced under the first emperors, it were too much to suppose that the empire continued to be the *same* beast as it was in the times of Paganism, or that the difference was so small as not to require any kind of notice in the page of prophecy.”

To this last mentioned view of the subject I incline. John saw



the seventh head wounded to death, viz. the christian emperors, and when that deadly wound was healed, which healing was effected in the person of Antichrist, or when the ten kings gave their power to the beast, he beheld all the world wondering after the latter; and this is the eighth head of the beast, as you will find it expressed ch. xvii. 11; see also ver. 8, 10. And this is the very same thing which John saw at the sounding of the fifth trumpet, ch. ix. where we had a representation of the fall of the seventh head of the beast, and of the kingdom of Antichrist arising in its place, out of the bottomless pit, under the hieroglyphic of crowned locusts issuing out of the smoke of the pit, whereby the sun and the air were darkened.

“*And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?*” ver. 4. The beast, or kingdom of Antichrist, succeeds the dragon, or Rome Pagan, who, in ver. 2, is said to “give him his power, and his throne, and great authority.” Accordingly, he promotes the interests of his master, and the worship of him in the world. This beast is joined by another, mentioned in the subsequent part of this same chapter, and whose history will come under our consideration in the ensuing lecture; and by the ministry of the latter beast, not only the dragon, but the first beast also, becomes an object of worship to the inhabitants of the earth. We have some account of what pertains to the worship of the dragon, in the history of our Lord’s temptation, Matt. iv. 8, 9; “The devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.” This quite agrees with what the apostle Paul teaches on the subject, Eph. ii. 2, where he describes “the course of this world, to be subject to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience.” That the idolatrous worship of the pagan world was paid to Satan, that old serpent, the devil, who is symbolized by the dragon, is abundantly evident from various parts of the holy Scriptures; and if that be admitted, it will be found to follow, that the worship which was now transferred to the clergy of the Catholic priesthood, which is only another name for the ten-horned beast, or kingdom of Antichrist, ultimately redounded to the same infernal object. It is said of the dragon, that “he gave his power, and throne, and great authority” to the beast, and by that means rendered him an object of wonder and worship, on which a learned writer thus comments:

“*The dragon gave him his power, τῆν δύναμιν, his strength: He gave the beast his lies, his hypocrisy, his deceit, and his*

wickedness, wherein his great strength lay (see ch. xii. 9.) Wherefore, by this character, the beast is clearly pointed out as an emblem of the dominion of the christian ecclesiastics. These latter are said to receive from the dragon *his strength*, that is, his lies, his hypocrisy, his deceit, and his wickedness; for it was by these qualities alone, that the ecclesiastics acquired the government of the empire, and maintained themselves in it. *And his seat*, or throne, *θρονον*. The dragon gave to the beast his imperial throne, perhaps the city of Rome, which became the capital of the empire of the idolatrous christian ecclesiastics, as it had formerly been of the idolatrous heathen emperors. *And great authority*, *εξουσιαν μεγαλην*, absolute dominion, ver. 7, 8. The dragon is here represented as having strength, and a throne, and great authority, even after he was cast down from heaven. This is agreeable to what is said of him in the preceding chapter, where, after having fallen to the earth, he is represented as persecuting the woman, and as making war with her seed. In the exercise of this power the dragon continued till he delivered his strength, his throne, and his authority to the beast. Hence, as was said before, the actions of the dragon in this state are emblematical of the machinations of the bishops of Rome and their adherents, from the time they first began to corrupt Christianity, till the ecclesiastical became the eighth head of the government in the empire; the clergy ruling in all matters therein, civil as well as sacred, by the force of their intrigues, their lies, their excommunications, their false doctrine, and their superstitions. Moreover, as it is said, the dragon gave his strength, his throne, and his authority to the beast; this implies that the actions of the beast were of the same kind with the actions of the dragon. They both corrupted Christianity—they corrupted it in the same manner; and they both made war with the remnant of the seed of the woman, though with different success.\*

“*And they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?*” Dazzled with the lustre of the imperial throne, and the imposing rites of the pagan religion which stood connected with it, mankind in general had formerly revered the dragon in the power and the persons of the emperors, whom they had supported in their exactions and their despotism: and thus also did it happen to the ten-horned beast, who afterwards laid waste the ancient dominions of the dragon. Springing up almost imperceptibly, as Daniel’s little horn did, ch. vii. 8, amongst the ten horns, he grows by little and little, insinuating himself by flatteries, and gaining upon the ten horns by intrigue and stratagem, until he becomes possessed of the power and strength of the whole, and thus excites the

\* Macknight’s Truth of the Gospel History, p. 583.

admiration of the world, draws forth its homage, and leads mankind to exclaim, "Who is like unto the beast—who is able to make war with him?" The power and influence of the clergy became paramount—the world was absolutely enslaved by the ecclesiastics who domineered over all the potentates of the earth, and whose will was irresistible.

"*And there was given unto him a mouth, speaking great things and blasphemies: and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months: and he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven,*" ver. 5, 6. To speak blasphemously of God is to speak dishonourably of him—to speak in derogation of his divine nature, his attributes and character. And so Daniel described the little horn of his prophecy, ch. vii. 25, "He shall speak great words against the Most High." Such also was Paul's description of the man of sin, 2 Thess. ii. 4. "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God"—or acting in the capacity of Supreme!

The charge of blasphemy stands inscribed on all the heads of the beast, ver. 1, though most of them were Pagan, and consequently unacquainted with the true God. The blasphemies referred to, therefore, must consist not merely in speeches directly uttered against the Majesty of heaven, but in arrogating and assuming that which belongs exclusively to Him who is over all. Both these were indeed combined in Antichrist—"a mouth speaking great things" and a conduct, or course of action in flat opposition to the prerogatives of the Great Supreme. "Was it not speaking great things," asks a late writer on this subject, "was it not uttering blasphemies to assert the Pope's supremacy; to maintain that he could forgive sins, that he could make the body of Christ, exclude from or admit persons into the kingdom of God at his pleasure; that his canons must be observed in preference to the rules of God's word; and that such impious titles as these should be given to him, his Holiness, Infallible, the Vicar of God on earth, our Lord God the Pope? Was it not blasphemy to say that images should be worshipped? Was it not speaking "great things" to affirm that all who refused to bow the knee to these Baals, must be killed with the sword?"<sup>d</sup>

"A species of practical blasphemy," says Mr. Fuller, "seems to constitute the principle from which all persecution proceeds; for it is nothing less than usurping the throne of God in the mind of man! This principle has been common to all those pagan and papal governments which have come in contact with the church

<sup>d</sup> Hutcheson's Guide, &c. p. 106.

of God. Nay, is it not exceedingly prevalent in almost all the governments now in being? It is rare, very rare, for those who occupy the supreme place in civil affairs, to respect the claims of conscience and of God. Had these claims been properly respected, it had never entered the minds of the rulers of any nation, that all the people within certain geographical boundaries, should be *compelled* to worship God in a given way!<sup>e</sup>

The blasphemies of this beast are directed not only against the "name," but against "the tabernacle of God, and them that dwell in heaven," or his celestial attendants. The very saints and angels before the throne are by him represented as rebels against God, by receiving that homage which is due to him, and participating in their abominations. The church of God on earth, relatively considered, or as being his "tabernacle" possesses a sacred character. If any man destroy or defile it, as Antiochus Epiphanes did that of the Jews, him will God destroy. What then, must be the guilt contracted by those persecuting powers, who, under the pretext of extirpating heresy, have reproached the living God, and done every thing in their power to drive the religion of the Bible out of the world!

The period of time allotted for the continuance of the reign of this beast is "forty and two months," or one thousand two hundred and sixty days, which, taking a day for a year, is the precise period during which the two witnesses were to prophesy in sackcloth, and the woman to continue in the wilderness.

"*And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations,*" ver. 7. Here, again, we have a reference to Daniel, ch. vii. whose words are, "I beheld, and the same (little) horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them," ver. 21.; and again in ver. 25, "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand, until a time, and times, and the dividing of time." Thus, as the dragon made war with the remnant of the woman's seed, so also was the beast to do, and do it more effectually; for it is allowed him to overcome them; not so entirely, indeed, as to extirpate all the faithful followers of the Lamb—not to destroy them utterly, but to drive the true church into the wilderness—to oblige those who maintained the testimony of God and the faith of Jesus, to be silent. By a continued series of bloody persecutions, Antichrist continued to "wear out the saints of the Most High," during the long period of twelve hundred and sixty years, in all which time "power was given him over all kindreds and tongues, and nations." This is a dreadful account—

<sup>e</sup> Expository Discourses, p. 229.

but there is a saving clause in the next verse, which tends to throw a ray of light athwart the gloom, and inspire hope that the world was not totally abandoned of its Maker and supporter, and given up to the powers of darkness ; for it is added,

“ *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him (the beast) whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,*” ver. 8. The latter clause of this verse, seems to suffer from an incorrect punctuation, or arrangement, as hath been remarked by many. ’Tis certain that the Lamb of God was not actually slain “from the foundation of the world,” though he was in the divine decree or purpose. The following, however, is Gilbert Wakefield’s translation of the passage, and in a case of this kind, we can scarcely have better authority, such was his familiar acquaintance with the Greek language. “*And all the inhabitants of the earth will worship him, whose names are not written, from the foundation of the world, in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered.*” The same phrase occurs in ch. xvii. 8, with a little variation, for it reads thus—“And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world.” This, as Mr. Wakefield observes, shews what ought to be the construction of the words in the former place. The persons here excepted from the worship of the beast, and whose names are said to have been written from the beginning, in the Lamb’s book of life, are the hundred and forty-four thousand that were sealed, ch. vii. and they are mentioned again, ch. xiv. with distinguished honour, as standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, ver. 1, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads, as those that were redeemed from the earth, ver. 3 ; as virgins following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth,—first-fruits unto God and the Lamb, ver. 4 ; as being without guile and faultless before the throne of God, ver. 5. But this delightful subject will come under our review hereafter ; at present we must confine our attention to the multitude who are spoken of as worshipping the beast.

In ver. 3, of the chapter before us, it is said, “all the world *wondered after the beast,*”—when they beheld his deadly wound healed, they were filled with admiration ; but we now find their admiration changed into reverence ! for it is said, “all that dwell on the earth,” with the exception above mentioned, *worship* him. The beast had now become possessed of all the power of the ancient dragon—the ten kings had firmly united in one purpose to support him in his usurpation, and thus supported he began to utter his blasphemies against the Most High, and make war against the saints and overcome them. Behold him now vested with power over all “kindreds, and tongues, and nations,” sitting in the temple, or church of God, and shewing himself as supreme ; and not only so, but receiving the homage of all that dwell upon

the earth. If this be not Antichrist, where shall we find him, what can constitute him? Jesus Christ alone is Lord and King in *his* kingdom; but here is a monstrous power raised up in opposition to him, which receives the worship that is *his* rightful due. The consciences of men, which ought to be subject only to HIM, to whom all power is given both in heaven and on earth, are now enslaved by the clergy, whose dictates, however contrary to the Scriptures, they implicitly obey. "The kings of the earth," says Dr. Owen, "have given their power to Antichrist, endeavouring to the utmost to keep the kingdom of Christ out of the world. What, I pray you, hath been their main business, ever since the man of sin was enthroned? How have they earned the titles, "Eldest Son of the Church," "the Catholic and most Christian King," "Defender of the Faith," and the like? "Hath it not been by the blood of the saints?" No doubt, kings and crowned heads have much to answer for, in this matter; but, may we not take up the lamentation of the prophet Jeremiah, ch. v. 30, 31, and apply it to the antichristian apostacy? "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and *my people love to have it so*: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" There are few tasks more difficult than to persuade men that religion is a personal concern, and that every man must render in his individual account unto God. It has ever been a leading object with Antichrist to persuade men to give up the charge of their souls to the clergy of the church of Rome; and so easily are they imposed upon in the most momentous of all concerns, that, with the generality, it is quite sufficient to "believe as the church believes." This implicit faith, this blind submission to the dogmas and prescriptions of the priesthood, is the basis of Popery; and that point, once carried, the next was, to relinquish the Scriptures as an *unnecessary* book, not to say a dangerous one, for plain people to meddle with. It was by stratagems and artifices of this kind, that the clergy of that apostate church prevailed on multitudes of deluded mortals to relinquish all concern about the salvation of their own souls, resigning it up into *their* hands; and, having succeeded in this, it is worth a moment's consideration to mark the consequence. Laying claim to the guidance of our souls in the things of God, they next proceeded to take the charge of our lives, our liberties, our laws, and whatever concerns our well-being in this world; the surrender of which was enforced by violence, confusion, blood-shed, massacre, and murder.

It was a most important rule which our Lord gave his disciples whereby to judge of true and false religions, when he said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves: ye shall know them by

their fruits; do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" Matt. vii. 15. "Were a school to be opened," says Dr. Owen, "which pretended to an easy way of teaching all sciences, divine and human—should it pretend to have a grant that nothing should be taught or learned but *in* and *by* it alone; yet, if I saw the posts of the house hung like shambles with the limbs of slaughtered persons; if the ground about it were strewed with the bones and ashes of men burnt to death, here lying one that was strangled, there another stabbed, and a third poisoned; all for no other reason but either because they refused to submit to the teaching of that particular school, or because they would not learn things foolish and wicked—I should avoid such a school and reject its authority, as far as I were able."<sup>f</sup> To do so, indeed, appears the dictate of sound reason; yet how many thousands and even millions of our fellow creatures, are still "wondering after the beast," yea, and "worshipping" him, by surrendering their consciences to the guidance of the clergy. This is only to be accounted for upon the principle that God hath sent them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, 2 Thess. ii. 8.

"*If any man have an ear, let him hear; He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword: here is the patience and the faith of the saints,*" ver. 9, 10. Whether this ninth verse is to be understood as a call to the inhabitants of the earth to attend to the prophecy, which the preceding part of the chapter contains respecting this ten-horned beast, to indicate its great importance, and stamp it as a prophecy that demanded peculiar attention,—or whether the words are to be read in connection with the tenth verse, in which consolation is administered to those who suffer from the beast, does not appear very certain. Some understand it to be a call to men to beware how they are found worshippers of the beast; for little as they may think of it *now*, it will be found of dreadful consequence hereafter! Others connect the words with what follows, and so consider them as declaratory of the utter destruction of the beast; the power which destroyeth the saints shall itself soon be destroyed. Antichrist shall have his period, and the measure he meted to others shall be meted out to him. He who has led others into captivity, and destroyed them with the sword, is destined in due time to reap the fruit of his own doings: but this is a topic which will come more fully before us in the nineteenth chapter. Meantime, let the saints know that this is the season for the trial of their faith and patience: the one to bear up under the persecutions of their enemies, and the other to keep in view the crown of life which is promised to him that overcometh.

<sup>f</sup> The Church of Rome no safe Guide, Works, Vol. xviii. p. 604.

## LECTURE XXXIII.

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AND I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth ; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men : 14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast ; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. 15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. 16 And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads. 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast : for it is the number of a man ; and his number is six hundred threescore and six.—Rev. xiii. 11-18.

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### THE TWO HORNED BEAST.

I took occasion to mention to you in our last lecture, that the entire aggregate power of the kingdom of Antichrist, is represented to us in this chapter by two beasts, one of which rises out of the sea, as mentioned in ver. 1, and the further description of which occupies the succeeding nine verses. In the course of the lecture, I endeavoured to shew that this first wild beast, which inherited the power of the dragon, and was supported by the kings of the earth, who all agreed to maintain a uniformity of religious profession throughout their respective communities, when stripped of its prophetic dress, may be understood to denote the principle or engine of *church authority supported by secular power*, a principle in direct hostility to the whole genius and spirit of the kingdom of Christ. The verses which I have now read as the foundation of the present lecture, have a manifest reference to the same subject ; and though they exhibit it to us under a different aspect, we shall presently find, the whole terminates in one object and character ; for, at the end of the chapter, the two beasts are become one.

“ And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth ; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon,” ver. 11.



A beast, in prophetic style, is an emblem of tyrannical power; and the origin, form, qualities, and actions of this beast, prove that he is the symbol of the clergy of the church of Rome. The second beast did not arise, like the former, out of the sea; it was not gendered by the wars and commotions which distracted the empire, but it arose out of the earth. The power of the clergy was not acquired by violence; but it was formed after the slow, silent manner in which plants and trees grow; it was nourished by the earth, or common people. Moreover, this second beast had two horns like a lamb; by which is probably denoted both the secular and ecclesiastical character of the beast, or papal power. Its horns, however, were like the horns of the lamb, not made for the purpose of fighting with; the animal had about it a show of meekness and charity; nevertheless, his voice was like that of the dragon, thereby intimating that, lamb-like as he was in external appearance, under an affected show of humility and gentleness, he had all the ambition and cruelty of the heathen emperors, of which the dragon was the symbol.

“*And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him; and causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed,*” ver. 12. The power of the first beast was the power of the ten kings exercised over their subjects in the way of enforcing a uniformity of religious profession throughout their respective dominions. This power was tyrannical; for, as religion is a personal concern, and every man must give an account of himself unto God, no emperor, king, or potentate ought to meddle with the consciences of their subjects; these should be left as free as the air we breathe. There are two ways, however, in which the clergy have exercised this tyrannical power in the world. They have ruled the world by the strength and authority of the ten kings from whom they received their kingdom, enabling them to *enforce uniformity*; and this is the beast with ten horns, ver. 1, 2. But in addition to this, they have also assumed a pretended spiritual, but really tyrannical power, which they exercise in the name of Christ, over the consciences of men. And this is the beast with two horns, as a lamb, but speaking as a dragon, “*who exerciseth all the power of the first beast in his presence.*” This pretended spiritual and ecclesiastical power, or jurisdiction, is exercised by an ecclesiastical frame of government, formed after the model of the secular or civil government, by a regular subordination of church-courts, or church-officers, or both together, call it what you will; and this is the *image of the beast that has ten horns*, mentioned ver. 14, 15.

This second beast, giving life to the image of the beast that was wounded to death, appears to be the same thing with the little horn which Daniel speaks of, as coming up among the ten horns

of the fourth beast. It is an emblem of the ecclesiastical power of Antichrist. And though the clergy will have this to be something very distinct from the civil power; yet, their church government is nothing but an image of civil or secular government in the nations of this world. They have power to give life to this image of the beast, that it should both speak, and *cause* them that would not worship it to be killed, or cut off from the profession of Christianity; and this may teach us what to think of that ecclesiastical government which is conformed to the civil, and which is the image of secular power. It was in reference to this that Christ said to his disciples, "*It shall not be so among you!*" True christian liberty cannot be enjoyed, nor can Christianity be truly professed, or outwardly practised, but in that very order which is laid down for it in the New Testament; and it is this which makes us so rigidly tenacious of the precise plan of the order and government of the church which we find in the New Testament. It is identified with our christian liberty, and we cannot depart from it without doing homage to the *image of the beast*. To be reproached as schismatics, and to be stigmatized as bigots, as insufferably strict and rigid, has been the lot of the real followers of the Lamb in all ages; and though the christian profession is certainly not without its hardships and inconveniences, yet we think we ought to rejoice in the liberty to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, which we find in that order; and we sincerely pity the worshippers of the *image of the beast*, who are but poor slaves at best, and the servants of corruption in the midst of all their enjoyments and worldly ease. This is a liberty,

" Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers  
Of earth and hell confederate take away;  
A liberty which persecution, fraud,  
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind."

" *And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live,*" ver. 13, 14. In the description and character which the apostle Paul gave the Thessalonians of the antichristian apostacy, in the person of the Man of Sin, he spake of him as "coming after the working of Satan with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, &c." These *lying wonders*, I understand to be the same thing with the "*great wonders*" which are here attributed to the two-horned beast, and which are afterwards spoken of as *miracles* which he had power to perform in the presence of the ten-horned beast. Among these "*great wonders*" or false miracles, is his "*making fire to come*

down from heaven on the earth." I believe this is generally understood to refer to the power of interdict and *excommunication*, as practised by the clergy of the church of Rome; and, indeed, it appears well to answer to what is recorded of its terrible operation as an engine of clerical usurpation. "This," says Mr. Hallam, "was the main spring of the machinery that the clergy set in motion, *the lever by which they moved the world*. From the moment that these interdicts and excommunications had been tried, the powers of the earth might be said to have existed only in sufferance." In the primitive churches, excommunication was nothing more than the exercise of a right which every society claims of expelling refractory members from its body. No direct *temporal* disadvantages attended this act of discipline for several ages; but as it was the most severe of spiritual censures, and tended to exclude the object of it, not only from a participation in religious rites, but, in a considerable degree, from the intercourse of christian society, it was used sparingly, and only upon the most pressing occasions, Matt. xviii. 17; 2 Cor. v. "Gradually, however, as the church became more powerful and more imperious, excommunications were issued upon every provocation, rather as a weapon of ecclesiastical warfare, than with any regard to its original intention." "Spiritual courts were instituted in every country where popery was established; the boundary between temporal and spiritual offences grew every day less distinct; and the clergy were encouraged to fresh encroachments, as they discovered the secret of rendering them subservient to their main purpose, the establishment of their dominion over the minds and bodies of men."

The account which is given us by credible writers of the effects produced by this terrible engine of antichristian tyranny, is truly revolting. The excommunicated person was rendered incapable of being a witness, or of suing for the recovery of his property by legal process, and he might be detained in prison till he obtained absolution. These actual penalties were attended by marks of abhorrence and ignominy still more calculated to make an impression on ordinary minds. They were to be shunned like men infected with leprosy by their servants, their friends, and their families. The mere intercourse with a prescribed person incurred what was termed the *lesser excommunication*: that is, they were suspended from the sacraments, and required penitence and absolution. Every where the excommunicated were debarred of regular sepulture; that is to say, they were not allowed to be interred in consecrated ground. But as excommunication was not always efficacious, the clergy had recourse to a more comprehensive punishment. When a nobleman had the misfortune to incur the church's censure, she put a county,—and for that of a

prince, an entire kingdom, under an interdict, or suspension of religious offices. No stretch of her tyranny was, perhaps, so outrageous as this. While the interdict was in force, the churches were closed, the bells silent, the dead unburied, no rites but those of baptism and extreme unction performed. The penalty fell upon those who had neither partaken, nor could have prevented the offence; and the offence was often but a private dispute, in which the pride of a pope or bishop had been wounded. These interdicts were not unfrequently issued against whole kingdoms; but in particular districts they continually occurred.<sup>a</sup>

To what has now been said of their excommunications and interdicts, we might add the mention of various other engines of cruelty, oppression, and tyranny which were used by the clergy, and by means of which they maintained their despotic sway over mankind; such as the doctrine of purgatory, their papal bulls, and above all, the inquisition, which has destroyed its thousands and millions of our fellow-creatures.<sup>b</sup> These things are exhibited to us in the text under the symbol of *fire*, because of its destructive quality; and it is represented in figurative language as *coming down from heaven*, probably intimating, that these sentences of excommunication, oppression, and punishment emanated from the highest authority in the church, the pope and his conclave.

The power of working miracles has always been arrogantly claimed by the church of Rome; but it is a false assumption. This gift, which was important and necessary, in the days of our Lord and his apostles, for the confirmation of their doctrine, before the canon of revelation was completed, ceased with the apostolic age; and there have been no *real* miracles wrought since. The various things that have been vaunted as such by the catholic church, are mere juggling tricks and lying wonders, sufficiently plausible and specious indeed to deceive the votaries of the Man of Sin, and delude those whom God in his adorable sovereignty had given up to strong delusion, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved; but they were insufficient to deceive the elect.

To evince his devotion to the ten-horned beast, this beast with two horns, which issued from the earth, encourages the deluded people to make an image to or *for* the former, and this being done, he, after his manner, endues it with life, and speech, and

<sup>a</sup> Hallam's History of the Middle Ages, Vol. ii. p. 240.

<sup>b</sup> The reader who desires to investigate the history of these engines of anti-christian cruelty, and trace their operation in our own country, into which the Inquisition, happily, never got admission, might find his labour not ill repaid, by consulting *Neal's History of the Puritans*. Let him consult an index under the words "Spiritual Courts," "Star Chamber," &c.

great authority; but all is *deceit*; for the object is to exalt himself, and not his fellow-beast. "This making an image to the beast," says Mr. Fuller, "seems to allude to the heathen practice of making images to their deities. The latter were supposed to be invisible; and the design of making an image to any particular deity would imply a practical acknowledgement of him as *their* deity, and so give a visibility and establishment to his worship, for which purpose the same deity had images made to him in various places. To 'make an image to the beast whose deadly wound was healed,' would, therefore, be to give visibility and authority to his worship; or to require implicit obedience to *his* commands, in whose reign *paganism was revived under the name of catholic Christianity*. It is as a guarantee of this system, that the first beast is designated by the *healing of his deadly wound*, and that the second beast exerts all his influence in his favour."

"*And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast, should be killed,*" ver. 15. "*And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their hand or in their foreheads,*" ver. 16. "*That no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name,*" ver. 17. To give life to an image is to convert it into a living agent, and so this image is said to both *speak* and *act*, and act with such effect as to cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be destroyed. Now, to worship a beast is, in prophetic terms, to yield a blind deference and subjection to those things which give to it its bestial character; and, hence, to worship the image of the beast, must imply the same deference and subjection to those things which stamp the character of the picture, and render it the image of the beast. But, as this image is the hierarchy of the papal church, to worship such an image, is to live in humble subjection to the clergy of that church, to popes, cardinals, and priests, surrendering the conscience to their dictates and guidance, and putting them in the place of Christ and his word. So long as persons live in a state of peaceable subjection to *their* authority, they rarely meet with molestation on account of their peculiar opinions; let them only resign their understandings and consciences, and pay an implicit deference to the clergy, and they may, in general, do what they please; but woe to the heretic that shall once attack this image! he will soon have proof positive that the image can *speak*; he will be soon told that the head of their society carries the keys of heaven and hell upon his shoulder! He will soon hear, as with the voice of thunder, a sentence of excommunication issued against him; and

he will find, that the image can *act* too, causing as many as refuse subjection to be put to death.

There is a peculiarity in the language here used concerning the image of the beast, that demands our notice. You observe that it is not said, the image of the beast put to death as many as refused to worship it; but it *caused* them to be killed or put to death. Scarcely any other mode of expression could have been so descriptive of the deceitful and hypocritical artifice of the church of Rome, in reference to those whom she punishes for heretics, as this is. Except it be in the case of such as are condemned by the inquisition, she pretends to disclaim all power over the natural lives of men; she only pronounces, that obstinate heretics are unworthy to live; and having laid them under the severest ban of her excommunications, she delivers them over to the secular power, the civil magistrate, to inflict the punishment of death upon them; so that, as Dr. Jortin wittily remarks, the pope is the judge, and the king is the hangman! The council of Lateran issued a decree, not to put heretics to death, but to deliver them over to the secular power to be killed! And with a disgusting affectation of lamb-like meekness, as bishop Burnet observes, they are wont to beseech the civil magistrates to shew mercy to those whom they themselves have given up to be consigned to the flames! It is added, that "he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."

In ancient times, it was customary for slaves or servants to receive the mark of their master, imprinted by a hot iron, either in their right hand, or on their forehead, both as a badge of their slavery, and to shew to what master they belonged. This mark usually consisted of some hieroglyphical character, or of the name expressed either in common letters, or disguised in numerical letters, according to the taste or fancy of the owner. I believe it was the case also with regard to soldiers and their general; and that it was not unusual among idolatrous nations for devotees to have imprinted upon some part of their body the mark of any particular deity, to the worship of which they were devotedly attached. Now, it is in allusion to this ancient practice or custom, that the growing influence of this last beast is said to be such, that he could cause all ranks and degrees of men to enlist under the banners of the first; to receive, like slaves or soldiers, his mark and number, and so to be aiding and assisting in the execution of his measures. And such has actually been the conduct of the Roman hierarchy; insomuch that the common rights of men and citizens have been suspended on condition of their receiving the

mark of Antichrist, the papal badge. "If any dissent," says bishop Newton, when remarking on this prophecy, "from the stated and authorized forms of the church of Rome, they are condemned and excommunicated as heretics; in consequence of which, they are no longer suffered to buy or sell; they are interdicted from traffic and commerce, and from all the benefits of civil society. Thus, Roger Hoveden relates of William the Conqueror, that he was so dutiful to the pope, that he would not permit any one in his power to buy or sell any thing, whom he found disobedient to the apostolic see. Thus the canon of the council of Lateran under pope Alexander the third, made against the Waldenses and Albigenses, enjoins, upon pain of anathema, that no man presume to entertain or cherish them in his house or land, or to exercise traffic with them. Thus the synod of Tours, in France, under the same pope, orders, under the like intermination, that no man should presume to receive or assist them; no, not so much as to hold any communion with them in buying or selling, that, being deprived of the comfort of humanity, they may be compelled to repent of the error of their ways. And thus pope Martin the fifth, in his bull, set out after the council of Constance, commands, in like manner, that they permit not heretics to have houses in their districts, or to enter into contracts, or to carry on commerce, or to enjoy the comforts of humanity with Christians."<sup>c</sup>

This is the genuine spirit of popery, when allowed to operate free of all restraint from the civil power; and we can trace it in all its savage and malignant features in the history of our own country during the middle ages. I will give you one single instance of it as a specimen. About the middle of the twelfth century, when persecution raged dreadfully against the disciples of Christ upon the continent of Europe, a small company of the Waldenses, consisting of about thirty men and women, to avoid the malice of their implacable adversaries at home, fled from Germany in a body, and sought an asylum in this country. They took up their residence in the neighbourhood of Oxford, and speaking only the German language, they soon attracted the attention of the people of the neighbourhood, by the singularity of their religious opinions and practices. Suspected of heresy, they were all taken up and brought before a council of the clergy at Oxford. When interrogated about their religion, one of them, who appeared to be the pastor of the little flock, and whose name was Gerrard, a man of some learning, answered in their name, that they were Christians, and believed the doctrine of the apostles; but that they did not receive the tenets of the catholic church; such as purgatory, prayers for the dead, the invocation of saints, &c. &c. They were

<sup>c</sup> Bishop Newton's Diss. on the Prophecies, Diss. xxv.

instantly denounced as heretics, and delivered over to the secular power to be punished. Henry II. who at that time sat upon the British throne, at the instigation of the clergy, commanded them to be branded with a red hot iron on the forehead, then to be whipped through the streets of Oxford, and having their clothes cut short by their girdles, to be turned into the open fields, all persons being forbidden to afford them any shelter or relief under the severest penalties. This cruel sentence was executed in all its rigour; and it being the depth of winter, the whole company perished through cold and hunger. This happened in the year 1166.<sup>d</sup>

“*Here is wisdom: let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six,*” ver. 18. The phrase “*here is wisdom,*” appears to import, that what follows it, in this verse, was intended as an exercise of wisdom and sagacity; and so it is added, “*let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast;*” in other words, let him who is sagacious and competent to the task, decypher the numerical letters I am going to mention, that he may find out the number of the beast, “*for it is the number of a man,*” it is a method of signifying things usually practised among men; “*and his number is six hundred threescore and six.*”

Many and various have been the speculations, relative to the name thus darkly propounded, as Mr. Faber justly remarks, some very plausible, and others very absurd: but we shall vainly hope for success in explaining the sacred enigma, unless we attend most strictly to the terms in which it is conveyed. And, indeed, on a subject concerning which so much has been written, and which has exercised the ingenuity and wit of persons pre-eminent for learning and talents, it would be almost presumptuous in so humble an individual as myself to attempt more than a concise account of what has been said on it by others.

The earliest writer upon record, who attempted to decipher the number of the beast, was Irenæus, one of the fathers, who wrote within less than a hundred years of the revelation itself—a circumstance which gave great weight to his opinion. He does not profess to have received any tradition from the apostle John, through his master, Polycarp, who was cotemporary with both, and formed a connecting link between the two: neither does Irenæus profess to be fully satisfied with his interpretation, which is, that the letters making up the number six hundred and sixty-six, when added up together, will be found to be the Greek word *Lateinos*. Thus, for instance, L, stands for thirty; A, for one;

<sup>d</sup> Henry's Great Britain, vol. v. p. 338.



T, for three hundred ; E, for five ; I, for ten ; N, for fifty ; O, for seventy ; and S, for two hundred ; bringing out the result of six hundred and sixty-six. Now, according to this interpretation, the number of the beast points out the church of Rome as the identical beast spoken of in this chapter, for, say they, that church *Latinizes* in every thing. Its masses, prayers, hymns, litanies, canons, decretal bulls, are all conceived and expressed in Latin. The Scriptures are not allowed to be read by Papists in any other language than Latin, the council of Trent having decreed the Vulgate to be the only authentic version of the Bible, thus exalting it above the Hebrew and Greek text itself. I may add, on this subject, that the same result (six hundred and sixty-six) will be produced, if, instead of *Lateinos*, you take the words "*Latina Ecclesia*," (*the Latin church*), as Dr. Macknight has shewn in his "*Truth of the Gospel History*," p. 589, or *Ecclesia Italica*, according to others. This interpretation has consequently obtained among Protestant writers more than any other ; in fact, it is difficult to meet with an expositor or commentator who does not mention it with approbation, down from Mede and More, to Scott and Fuller. It is, however, objected to by some writers of respectability, and among others by Mr. Faber ; and as he proposes a different interpretation, it will be proper to submit to you the grounds of his objection, as well as the interpretation itself. Thus he writes :

"Much stress has often been laid upon the alleged abduction of the word *Latinus*, even by so early a writer as Irenæus ; yet, if those commentators who build upon the authority of Irenæus had troubled themselves to read the very next sentence to that in which, as a random guess, he throws out the word *Latinus*, they would have perceived, that he immediately discards it in favour of the word *Titan*, which he pronounces to be the most probable of all the names that contain the number six hundred and sixty-six ; but, respecting even this favourite word *Titan*, he declares that he will not be peremptory. As for the word *Latinus*," continues Mr. Faber, "*it cannot be the name of the beast ; for, in the first place, it is not a descriptive name of blasphemy ; and, in the second place, it does not contain the fated number, six hundred and sixty-six. That number can only be elicited, by writing it with the broad εἶ, Ἀκρεῖνος. But I much incline to believe, that no instance can be found in which it is ever thus expressed by a Greek writer.*"<sup>e</sup>

This appears to diminish the probability of the word *Lateinos* being the true interpretation ; and must so far dispose us to listen

<sup>e</sup> Faber's Sacred Calendar, Vol. III. p. 237, *note*.

to any other re-resolution of the problem that may be offered. Let us now see what Mr. Faber himself would substitute in its place.

He introduces his hypothesis by laying down four distinct articles or propositions, which are afterwards considered by him in regular order. 1. The name of the beast, he tells us, is a certain mark or stigma of character, which is figuratively said to be impressed upon him; which exhibits the component letters of his name; and by which he is emphatically distinguished. 2. The name of the beast is the name of blasphemy. 3. The name of the beast comprehends the number of the beast: and that number is declared to be six hundred and sixty-six. 4. The number of the beast, or the number six hundred and sixty-six, produced by the letters of his name, is also the number of a man. Each of these articles is subjected to his usual elaborate investigation, far too minute and tedious for me to quote entire; and I can only mention to you the result of the whole process of inductive reasoning, which is, that the name of the beast must be found in a Greek word which signifies "the blasphemer," or "the apostate." But the Greek word *Βλασφημίας*, if subjected to a mechanical process, is found to bring out the number one thousand and fifty-one, and hence it must be rejected; but the Greek word *Ἀποστάτης*, when written *Ἀποστατης*, produces, by its arithmetical letters, the exact sum of six hundred and sixty-six. And this, according to him, must be received as that blasphemous or apostatic name of the beast which forms the subject of the prophetic enigma. The name, therefore, of the man, like the names of the beast, according to this solution, is *Apostatés*, or, in English, *an apostate*; meaning, by the man, *The Man of Sin*. Having remarked, that the man spoken of in this eighteenth verse, must be some very eminent person standing in close politico-theological connection with the beast, whose number and whose name he specially participates, Mr. Faber thus concludes his long discussion.

"It is hard to discover any man, to whom this mingled character will answer with more special propriety, than the extraordinary person foretold by St. Paul, under the appellation of *the Man of Sin*. We have shewn, that the person thus designated, is the same as he who presides in the little horn, or kingdom of Daniel's fourth beast, and we shall presently shew, that under the title of *the false prophet*, he is the same also as the head of that second Apocalyptic beast, or empire, which forms the prominent subject of the next section of the little book. Hence, he is, at once, a most conspicuous character, and a person standing in the very closest politico-theological connection with the beast whose number is six hundred and sixty-six. Nor is this all: Paul connects the revelation of the "Man of Sin," with the coming

of a great *apostacy*; and, in fact, by the revelation of that lawless one, as its ostensible head, the *apostacy* in question is completed. The Man of Sin, therefore, the head of the *apostacy*, the very *dux gregis*, is of course himself pre-eminently *the apostate*. In a word, the *man*, who participates the descriptive name and number of the beast, is the Roman pontiff."

I have thus laid before you, in a compendious form, Mr. Faber's method of interpreting this difficult text, which I have been induced to do, on account of the high character which he at present sustains as a writer on the Apocalypse. There is no author of the age who has paid more attention to the subject, or written so much upon it, or whose opinion is looked up to by his cotemporaries with more deference and respect. Of his success in the present instance, let each one judge for himself. If it might be allowed me to offer an opinion on so intricate a point, it would be, that neither Mr. Faber with his *apostates*, nor the commentators with their *Lateinos*, have taken up the words of the prophet in a proper point of view; and that by a more simple process, a more probable result may be arrived at—I mean, more in harmony with the entire scope of the chapter. Let us try.

I begin by stating a fact which it is important to attend unto, viz. that when the prophet gives the number of the beast, he does not write it in words at full length, neither does he use any figures on the occasion; you will look in vain for either of these in the original. What then does he do? Why he gives us three letters of the Greek alphabet,—“his number,” or computation, says he, “is X (*chi*) ξ (*xi*) ς (*st*),” which happen to be three numeral letters, and these, when reduced to their equivalent in figures, produce the number six hundred and sixty-six. But it does not necessarily follow, that the explanation of the enigma is to be found in reducing these three letters to their numerical value; and herein, I am apt to think, consists the error into which the writers on this subject have been betrayed. It was common with the Hebrews, the Greeks, and the Romans to express their motto's by initial letters, and we often meet with the thing in our own times and country. If, for instance, you examine a piece of gold coin of the last or preceding reign, you will find the titles of the monarch, on the reverse side, expressed by their initial letters, such as, M. B. F. and H. R. F. D., &c. each of which letters stood for a word, and this the reader was left to fill up for himself. Again, were I to shew you a print of the crucifixion, on which was inscribed the letters I. H. S. and to ask you their meaning, you would say, that they were the initials of three words, viz. JESUS, HOMINUM, SALVATOR, or, “*Jesus, the Saviour of men.*” Now, what should hinder us from adopting this very same method with the three Greek letters, by means of which the

prophet, in the text before us, expresses *the name*, that is, the character of the beast, or kingdom of Antichrist? These letters are,  $\chi, \xi, \varsigma$ , which may be thus filled up—

$\chi$ ριστιανι,                       $\xi$ ενοι,                       $\varsigma$ αυρου.

In plain English, *Christians, strangers to the cross.*

I appeal to yourselves whether this be not a very proper motto for the beast and his company—a character that, in one way or other, adapts itself to them all, and *none else but them!* Examine the fact, and form your own judgment on it. Here are myriads of *professed* Christians, but they are Christians only in name. Instead of taking up the cross and following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth—instead of patiently suffering for his sake, they are worshipping the beast and his image to avoid the cross.

To corroborate the view now given of the number of the beast, it may be further observed, that in ch. vii. 4, the number of the *sealed* of the Lamb's company is expressed by three letters also, viz.  $\rho. \mu. \delta$ . And these again are the initials of three words, viz.

$\rho$ ηματος,                       $\mu$ αρτυρες,                       $\delta$ ιωκομενοι.

Or, *The persecuted witnesses of the word;*

which is the very opposite of the former class of professors, and agrees exactly with the account which the Apocalypse gives of the followers of the Lamb in opposition to the worshippers of the beast. Before I dismiss the subject, however, allow me to add, by way of meeting an objection which may be started by some against our considering these three letters to be the initials of three words, that we have something like a sanction for it, in what you will find recorded, Dan. v. 25-28. Here, you see, are three words, which stand for three sentences: MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN:—*Mene*, God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. *Tekel*, Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting. *Peres*, Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians. Now, if the all-wise God thought fit to make three words stand for three sentences, why may not the three initial letters be put for three words, especially in a motto? I cannot, for my own part, conceive of any well-founded objection to our thus considering the number of the beast, namely, as a motto *descriptive of his character*, and that of all who worship him; and whether this do not supply us with as important an interpretation as the word *Latinus*, or even Mr. Faber's *apostatés*, I leave you to judge.

But though I have submitted to you an interpretation of this enigma, differing from that of Mr. Faber and the commentators, I would not be understood as intending thereby to exclude all regard to the numerical computation of this motto—namely, six hundred and sixty-six; for I am much inclined to consider both this number, and also the number one hundred and forty-four,

contained in ch. vii. 4, and again in ch. xiv. 1, as being *mystical*, or significant; by which I mean, that they conceal a hidden meaning, independent of that which I have now mentioned. Some have considered the number six hundred and sixty-six to denote the epoch when the beast, or Antichrist, got seated on his throne; and so they commence the computation of the one thousand two hundred and sixty years of his reign from that period: an hypothesis which is not destitute of probability. But there is yet another view of the subject, which requires to be noticed; and it is that which has been propounded and illustrated by the learned Potter in a quarto volume, entitled, "*The Interpretation of the Number Six Hundred and Sixty-six*," printed at Oxford in 1642;" a work of such celebrity, that it was translated into French, Dutch, and Latin. Mr. Mede, whose judgment of it is prefixed to it, says, "It is the happiest tract that ever yet came into the world; and though at first he read the book with much prejudice, yet when he had done it, it left him possessed with as much admiration." The principle on which the author proceeds is, that this number is to be interpreted by the opposite number one hundred and forty-four, Rev. xxi. 17, as the measure of the wall of the new Jerusalem, which he shews must be understood of square measure, viz. twelve cubits high, and twelve cubits broad. In like manner, he thinks that the number six hundred and sixty-six ought to be counted by the square root of that number, which is  $25\frac{2}{3}^{\frac{1}{2}}$ . Hence he concludes, that as twelve, the square root of one hundred and forty-four, is God's number, so twenty-five is the square root of Antichrist's number; and by this enigmatical expression we are taught that Antichrist should be a political body, that would as much affect the number twenty-five, as the Lord seems, in his church, to have affected, or had recourse to the number twelve. In illustrating his position, he adduces a variety of instances, in his application of the number twenty-five to the church of Rome; such as, that when that church departed from the apostolic institution altogether, and began to be at the head of the great apostacy, Rome was divided into twenty-five parishes, and had so many places for baptism, and for receiving people into the church; and over these were twenty-five presbyters, under the bishop of Rome, who were the first cardinals, the opposites of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. It was about that time, that these leaders of the church, who led the van in the great falling away, entirely discarded the order and worship of the church instituted by the apostles, introducing, in place of it, the heathenish superstition and idolatrous rites of Paganism, with a Gentile or unrenewed people, into the Christian profession; and these are probably the five-and-twenty men that "devised

mischief, and gave wicked counsel in the church, or house of the Lord," according to Ezek. viii. 16-18, and ch. xi. 1, 2.

But, dismissing this ingenious author and his calculations which well deserve, and will amply repay the attention of the curious, I may remark, that there is so much notice taken of these numbers in the Apocalypse, that a lecturer may well be excused in dwelling a little upon the subject.

We have seen in a former lecture,<sup>f</sup> that the number of those that were *sealed*, as the servants of God, is a hundred and forty-four thousand, which number arises from twelve thousand multiplied by twelve; and that thereby is given us a description of the true church, as wholly built upon the doctrine of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; even as the church under the law sprang from the twelve patriarchs. And this number twelve is set down, Rev. ch. vii., and elsewhere, in these two letters,  $\iota \beta$ , which may stand for *ιερατευμα βασιλειων*, the *royal priesthood*. And if the number twenty-five be the root of the beast's number, according to Dr. Potter, then it might be expressed by the initial letters  $\kappa \epsilon$ , namely, *κυριότης εθνων*, the *lordship of the nations*; concerning which the Saviour thus addressed his disciples: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them; and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

It deserves our notice, that in the measuring of the temple and city, &c. in the writings of the prophet Ezekiel, we have both these numbers, twelve, and twenty-five, repeatedly mentioned. We have the number twelve, in ch. xlviii. 31-34, and this is expressly referred to in the description of the New Jerusalem, Rev. xxi. 12, 13. It is indeed true, that the number twenty-five is not to be found in the description which the book of the Revelation gives us of the New Jerusalem, and for a very obvious reason: it belongs to quite another subject. The measuring of the temple, in Ezekiel and in the Apocalypse, ch. xi., differ expressly in this, that while John is called to measure the temple, Ezek. xli. 1, and them that worship therein, to wit, the Lamb's number and the altar, which according to Ezek. xliii. 16, was twelve cubits long, and twelve broad; the court without the temple is left out, and not measured, because it is given unto the nations, who tread the holy city under foot forty-and-two months. And

<sup>f</sup> Lecture xiv. p. 228, *et seq.*

Ezekiel takes notice, and reproves this abominable transgression of the law of the house among the children of Israel, ch. xlv. 5-9, and xliii. 7-12. But the outer court, and the whole portion of ground whereon the temple and city stood, are measured in Ezekiel; and in that measuring, (which was not allowed to John, Rev. ch. xi.) we find the number twenty-five much insisted on. See Ezek. xl. 21, 25, 29, 30, 33, 36; ch. xlv. 1; and xlviii. 15, 20. Hence it would appear, that the number twenty-five is the number of the company that transgresses the law of the Lord's house and profanes the holy place, in opposition to them that worship in the inner temple, whom John is called to measure, and to whom the number twelve applies.

But, after all, the beast's number does not arise from the number twenty-five as its square root, without an additional fraction. And seeing twenty-five is the only entire number from which it can arise, it may be asked, Why is not the number of the beast said to be six hundred and twenty-five, which arises precisely from twenty-five as its square root? And why might not any other number that arises from twenty-five with a fraction, have been the number of the beast, as well as six hundred and sixty-six; or why is this fixed upon as the beast's number, rather than any other that arises from twenty-five with a fraction? To all this it may be answered—

1. Here is indeed a palpable difference between the number of Christ and that of Antichrist. The Lamb's number arises from twelve by twelve precisely, without any borrowed help. But the number of the beast does not arise from twenty-five without a borrowed fraction from another number; and this may perhaps denote the same thing that Daniel said of Antichrist, under the type of Antiochus Epiphanes, "His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power," Dan. viii. 24. For, Antichrist's number was not made up without the borrowed aid of the broken empire; it was effected through the influence of the ten kings that arose in the broken empire, giving their power to the beast. But,

2. Neither the number six hundred and twenty-five, nor any other number that arises from twenty-five with a fraction, was so capable to be expressed in a manner wherein there should be a description of the numbered company, as is the number six hundred and sixty-six. No other number could be expressed in the numeral letters  $\chi \xi \varsigma$ , which, as has been already remarked, are the initials of three words that furnish a true description of the *name* or *character* of the beast and all his followers, in opposition to the followers of the Lamb—a character that will agree to none but the beast and his followers; and, as already said, these words are  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\iota\alpha\nu\omicron\iota \xi\varepsilon\nu\omicron\iota \varsigma\alpha\upsilon\rho\upsilon$ , *Christians, strangers to the cross*. It is a description which will not apply to those who make no pro-

fession of Christianity, nor to any but Christians falsely so called. It cannot agree to those to whom the number one hundred and forty-four is applied; for these are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; "the persecuted witnesses of the word." This description of the beast and his company passing under the Christian name, is plainly contrary to all that the New Testament teaches concerning real, scriptural Christianity, and true Christians, as the reader may satisfy himself by casting an eye over the following texts: Matt. xvi. 21-26; 2 Tim. iii. 10-13; Gal. vi. 12-14; Phil. iii. 8-21; 1 Pet. iv. 1, 12, 13. And in the book of the Revelation, patience is uniformly sustained as the character of the Lamb's company: ch. vi. 9, 10; vii. 14; xii. 11, 17; xiii. 10; and xiv. 12, 13. So that, if we would make up a character of the followers of Christ, in opposition to Antichrist, collecting our materials from the New Testament and the Apocalypse, they must be those that suffer patiently for keeping the commandments of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, as set forth in the doctrine of the twelve apostles, or in the writings of the New Testament at large. How then can those who are opposed to Christ and Christianity, and *that* while sustaining the Christian name, be better described and distinguished than by these words, comprised in the motto of the character of the beast—CHRISTIANS STRANGERS TO THE CROSS?



## LECTURE XXXIV.

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AND I looked, and, lo, a lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. 4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God. 6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. 8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. 9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. 12 Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. 13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.—Rev. xiv. 1-13.

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### THE LAMB AND HIS COMPANY.

IN this chapter we have the completion of the third general view of the rise, reign, and ruin of the Man of sin, or kingdom of the clergy. In the preceding chapter we were presented with an account of its rise and reign; but nothing was said of its downfall or ruin. Neither was any particular notice taken of the state of the real followers of the Lamb, during the reign of this antichristian power, except that it was given to the latter to make war against them, and overcome them, and kill them, ver. 7, 15. But in the chapter on which we are now about to enter, and which is

evidently a continuation of the foregoing, we have that subject brought prominently forward, and a most animating description given us of the state of the church during the forty-two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty years; and that in striking contrast to the antichristian kingdom. Towards the close of the chapter, the cruel, tyrannical, and oppressive conduct of the clergy, in lording it over God's heritage, is very aptly represented in symbolical style, by their "causing all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads, and that no man might buy or sell, but such as had this mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name," ver. 16, 17. Now the scene changes, we have the counterpart of the picture.

"*And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him one hundred forty and four thousand; having his Father's name written in their foreheads,*" ver. 1. The division of the Bible into chapters and verses, is not without its use, inasmuch as it tends greatly to facilitate a reference to any particular portion of it. Yet it is not without its manifest inconveniences, by breaking the thread of the narrative or discourse which it sometimes does abruptly and improperly, and thereby occasioning an obscurity that would not otherwise be felt. Had this fourteenth chapter for instance, formed a part of the thirteenth, which it ought to have done, without any division, the reader would have entered into its import more readily, and perceived more force and propriety in its contents, than is now commonly done. The holy prophet had been presented with a vision of the antichristian apostacy, in which all was gloom and terror; two beasts of prey rise up, one out of the sea, and the other out of the earth, playing dexterously into each others hands, joining counsels, domineering with despotic sway over all Christendom during the long period of one thousand two hundred and sixty years, cursing all that dared to mutter a syllable against their tyrannical proceedings, and exercising all the power of the dragon, or the pagan Roman government; but he is now invited to contemplate the reverse of the picture. Although this monstrous power is permitted to make war upon the saints, to prevail against them, and to wear them out by a series of persecutions; nevertheless, the witnesses continue to prophesy in sackcloth, in the midst of all their tribulations; and the prophet now has a vision of them standing upon Mount Zion, with the Lamb at their head, the identical number that were formerly sealed, viz. one hundred forty and four thousand, and every one of them having the Father's name written in their foreheads. Thus they are contrasted with the antichristian party; they stand upon Mount Zion, the symbol of the church of the living God, with the Captain of salvation at their head,

acknowledging him their leader, and uniting to celebrate his praises, under whose banners they have successfully fought and overcome.

“*And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders, and no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty four thousand which were redeemed from the earth,*” ver. 2, 3. Thus, as in ch. vii. 9-17, the curtain which conceals the invisible from the visible world, is again drawn aside, and the prophet is favoured with a view of the state of things in heaven. The former vision was afforded him at the termination of the reign of Rome pagan, when the church had waded through a sea of persecutions; and he was shewn the happy condition of the martyrs who had “*come out of great tribulation, washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, wherefore they were before the throne of God, and served him day and night in his temple.*” But on the present occasion, he beholds the termination of the reign of Antichrist, or Rome papal, at the end of the one thousand two hundred and sixty years, and he finds it accompanied with the same glorious result.

On a cursory review of the prophecies concerning the extent and prevalence of the papal apostacy, contained in the preceding chapter;—when we read that “*all the world wondered after the beast,*” ver. 3.; when we read that “*power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations, that all that dwell upon the earth should worship him,*” ver. 7, 8; that he “*caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive the mark of the beast in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell save he that had the mark, the name of the beast, or the number of his name,*” ver. 16, 17: I say, when we read such astounding testimonies as these, our minds are apt to be overpowered with them, we sink under the appalling exhibition, and begin to think, as Elijah did of old, God hath scarcely a witness left him in the earth. But this is a hasty conclusion; and hence, the prophet, whose mind had been so intensely occupied throughout the last chapter in surveying the lawless sway of Antichrist during this dark and dismal night, when ignorance and superstition sat enthroned over all the earth, and the fear of God appeared to be banished from among mankind, might well express his surprise at finding a countless multitude of the faithful followers of the Lamb, denoted by the hundred and forty four thousand that were sealed at the commencement of the papal apostacy, all collected around the Lamb, in the heavenly sanc-

tuary, celebrating his praises in transporting strains, having the Father's name imprinted on their foreheads.

A question, however, will probably arise in the minds of some, "does this correspond with matter of fact? Is it true that Christ had his disciples in the world during the reign of Antichrist, and so numerous too, as to warrant the account which the prophet gives of the vision which he had of the Lamb and his company on Mount Zion, at the termination of the reign of this monstrous power? Where, in the pages of authentic history shall we trace their existence in the world?" Though I have already furnished a satisfactory answer to this question in another work, which has been some years before the public, as is well known to most of my hearers, I may be allowed to say a few words upon it in this place.

It is an indisputable fact, that the blessed God never left himself without witnesses in the world; and through the long period of one thousand two hundred and sixty years, the dark ages of popery, we can trace them in every century, and in various countries of Europe, lifting up their voice like a trumpet, and at both the hazard and expence of their lives, testifying against the abominations of the Man of sin. As early as the days of Constantine the Great, when Christianity first became the religion of the state, we find them among the Novatians, the first dissenters from the catholic church; we trace them among the Paulicians in Bulgaria, and the disciples of Claude of Turin, from the year 800; amongst the Catharists, the Picards, the Paterines in Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, from the ninth to the twelfth century; and especially among the Albigenses in the south of France, until the times of Peter Waldo, who appeared about the year 1160. The rapid increase of these witnesses to the truth, during the twelfth century, gave rise to the Inquisition; and of their numbers during that and the following century, we may form some estimate from the fact, that the inquisitors filled all the prisons of France with what they were pleased to term these *heretics*, so that they found themselves compelled to desist from apprehending more of them, till they had disposed of such as were already imprisoned. To check their growth and rid the world of such a pest, I mean such an annoyance as they were to the catholic church, Pope Innocent III published a crusade against the Albigenses, and persons from all parts of Europe flocked to his standard, being promised heaven as the recompence of their services in putting these heretics to death. Historians record, that in France alone, there perished not fewer than a million of the Albigenses, the horrible result of this crusade. A cotemporary historian (Sismondi), narrating the events of the crusades against the Albigenses during the thirteenth

century, says, " Their churches were drowned in blood, their race disappeared, their opinions ceased to influence society, hundreds of villages beheld all their inhabitants massacred with a blind fury. We cannot tell what credit to give to the numbers assigned for the armies of the crusaders, nor whether we may believe, that in the course of a single year, five hundred thousand men were poured into Languedoc. No calculation can ascertain, with any precision, the dissipation of wealth, or the destruction of human life, which were the consequences of the crusades against the Albigenses."<sup>a</sup>

These sanguinary proceedings drove the disciples Christ into the valleys of Piedmont, where the Lord provided an asylum for his two witnesses, and where they continued to prophesy in sackcloth for four hundred years, subject, no doubt, to frequent assaults and persecutions, until they also were extirpated by the armies of Louis XIV. instigated by the court of Rome. These were the Waldenses, of whom you have heard, a race of Christians who had never mingled with the worshippers of the beast and false prophet; but who stedfastly maintained their attachment to the primitive apostolic gospel, and the simplicity of christian worship, while all the world " wondered after the beast." And this may serve to shew you, in some measure, whence the Lamb's company, whom John beheld in vision, surrounding him on Mount Zion, had arrived. Look now at their employment.

Having informed us what he saw, the prophet proceeds to tell us what he heard. He listens, and his ears are accosted with the most delightful sounds of harmony, such as he had been wont to hear in the temple music, where so great a number of voices and instruments were used in celebrating the praises of Jehovah, in their most solemn acts of worship; only, the whole as far excelled what he had been accustomed to in the earthly sanctuary, as heavenly things surpass the vanities of time. The sound was as that of *many waters*, it was the sound of an immense multitude, for so the symbol of waters is explained, Rev. xvii. 15; it was like the roaring of the sea, or the rolling of thunder, yet melodious as the sound of the tuneful harp. " And they sang as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the elders;" a song peculiar to the number of the sealed, to such as were " redeemed from the earth." The language here is very similar to what we had in ch. v. when the lion of the tribe of Judah prevailed to take the book and loose the seals. On that occasion, you may remember, the four-and-twenty elders, the representatives of the whole church of the redeemed, fell prostrate

<sup>a</sup> Sismondi's History of the Crusades against the Albigenses, &c. London, 1826, p. 127, &c.

before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and they struck up "a new song," saying, "thou art worthy to take the book and loose the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Mr. Mede is at a loss to understand what this *new song* can be which is sung by the redeemed company, in ch. xiv. 3, by those who had gotten the victory over the beast and his image. "If God shall at any time make me to understand it," says he, "I will, happily, more largely explain it; for it is deeply settled in my mind, that the whole mystery of evangelical worship is in it contained." But I do not see why the good man should have found such difficulty on this point as he expresseth. A *new song* implies a new deliverance. These happy spirits are represented as having witnessed the termination of the beast's reign; the one thousand two hundred and sixty years had elapsed. "Babylon was beginning to fall;" the army of the Lamb now felt its ground, and, like Israel when they had passed through the Red Sea, they triumphed gloriously! During the reign of the beast none could learn this new song; for what had the worshippers of the beast to do with a song, the burden of which was to give glory to Christ alone, ascribing to him, "power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory, and blessing." This is a song peculiar to those whom he had redeemed from the earth by his blood. And now let us attend to the description which is further given of them.

"*These are they which are not defiled with women, for they are virgins; these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; these were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God, and to the Lamb,*" ver. 4. "*And in their mouth was found no guile: for, they are without fault before the throne of God,*" ver. 5. Here we have the Lamb's company characterized. In a former lecture,<sup>b</sup> I explained the import of the terms "fornication" and "adultery" as used in prophetic style, and also that of "woman" or "virgin" as applied to the church of God. Agreeably to which view of the matter, when the followers of the Lamb are spoken of as *virgins*, "not defiled with women," the meaning is, that they had not mingled with the apostate church in her idolatrous practices; they had not been guilty of spiritual fornication or adultery with the "mother of harlots," the crime with which the worshippers of the beast stand charged in this book. Faithful in their allegiance to the King of Zion, they had "followed the Lamb, whithersoever he went," taking his word for the sole and exclusive rule of their conduct, in whatever regarded his doctrine, worship, laws, and institutions; imitating his example in spirit, in faith, and patience. And in this way they made it mani-

<sup>b</sup> See p. 82.

fest, that they were the purchase of the Redeemer's death, consecrated to and accepted of God, as the first-fruits were under the law. Their profession was also characterized by sincerity and purity; for "in their mouth was no guile;" they did not walk in hypocrisy, nor handle the word of God deceitfully; and while the worshippers of the beast were making their religious profession subservient to their worldly interests, these were upright before God in all holy conversation and godliness. Such is the contrast between the beast, and the blasphemies of his worshippers on the one hand, and the Lamb, and the praises of his followers, on the other.

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people; saying, with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters," ver. 6. 7. The everlasting gospel was preached at the beginning, and that with great power and effect, by the apostles and their associates, with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. "The Lord gave the word, and great was the company of those that published it." This mighty work commenced on the day of Pentecost, when three thousand Jews were converted by one sermon of the apostle Peter's. The consequence of this was the setting up of the kingdom of Christ in the world. Then it was that the Captain of salvation went forth "conquering and to conquer." The book of the Acts of the Apostles, is a faithful record of the triumphs of the doctrine of the cross. The heralds of salvation went forth, testifying of the resurrection of their Lord, preaching repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and the hand and power of God accompanied the word spoken, so that multitudes believed and turned to the Lord; even "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." So rapid and universal, indeed, was the spread of the gospel at the first, that the apostle Paul declares "their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world." Of his own labours he could say, "from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." During the first three centuries, "the word of the Lord had free course, and was glorified." But Antichrist arose, the most powerful and malignant foe the gospel ever had to encounter. We have lately been called to trace something of his history; first, in corrupting the gospel, perverting the laws and ordinances, and secularizing the worship of the christian church; next, in persecuting the disciples of the Saviour, and driving the true church into the wilderness, locking up the oracles of God, and

eventually slaying the witnesses who tormented him with their testimony. But the time is now come, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, ch. vii. 26: "The judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end;" and this is the first step towards its accomplishment, the publication afresh of the everlasting gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

We cannot reasonably doubt, that the period here referred to, is that of the Reformation, which took place in the early part of the sixteenth century, when the first vial was poured out upon the kingdom of the beast; for *then* it was that the Scriptures began to be translated into the living languages, and by means of the art of printing, then lately invented, the doctrine of the cross was publicly dispersed among the nations. It is delightful to contemplate the progress that has been made since that eventful period in the dissemination of "the word of life," by means of the preaching of the everlasting gospel to them that dwell on the earth. And who that looks around him and calmly surveys the efforts that are making in our own day to evangelize the heathen lands, and spread abroad "a savour of the knowledge of Christ in every place," can help identifying these exertions with the prophetic language of our text? I am aware that there are professed Christians in the present day who treat these things with sovereign contempt, representing the missionary spirit which is now happily afloat as a fit of enthusiasm; but I am not of their mind on the subject. That all who go forth into distant lands to carry the glad tidings of peace and salvation among the benighted and idolatrous pagans, are themselves well instructed in the things of the kingdom of heaven, is more than I am prepared to affirm; but what then? They take the Bible with them, they make known its contents, and they call the attention of their fellow-mortals to its sacred declarations. By this means they spread abroad the savour of the knowledge of Christ in numerous places where, previously, our perishing fellow sinners had neither heard the name of Jesus, nor seen his glory. The light which Christianity has diffused over many a dark region, by the distribution of the Holy Scriptures, and the translating of them into the language of the nation; the astonishing effects which it has produced in the most unpromising circumstances; the powerful opposition which it has overcome; the system of aged and deep-rooted idolatry which it has overturned; the irresistible influence which it has exercised over the most powerful empires; the incalculable benefits which it has communicated to the most degraded tribes and nations, in the way of freedom, civilization, morality and piety, added to a thousand other circumstances connected with



its agency, demonstrate that the work *is of God*, and that it merits the countenance and support of all the friends of truth, of all who love the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“*And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; that great city; because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication,*” ver. 8. This is the first mention that is made of Babylon, that great city, in the Apocalypse; and, as the name frequently occurs in subsequent chapters and very much is said of it, we shall not do well to proceed, until we have ascertained the import of the term. The words, “Babylon is fallen,” are a quotation from Isa. xxi. 9, where they have a manifest reference to the renowned city of that name—the capital of the Chaldean or Assyrian empire, which was destroyed by the arms of Cyrus, king of Persia, in the days of Belshazzar, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, according to the prophecy of Daniel, ch. v. As this city had been a noted enemy of God’s ancient people, the Jews, enticing them to idolatry, and tyrannizing over them with relentless cruelty—marching their armies into the country, spoiling the inhabitants, and carrying them captive into their own territory, where they treated them as slaves—its overthrow and destruction became a leading topic in the writings of the Hebrew prophets, long before the event took place. Isaiah composed an ode upon the subject, which is contained in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of his prophecy, and which is deservedly celebrated as of “supreme and singular excellence;”—“for elegance of composition, variety of imagery, and sublimity of sentiment and diction,” says bishop Lowth, “it is one of the most beautiful examples that can be given.” The prophet Jeremiah also, in whose days the seventy years’ captivity took place, and who, in his book of Lamentations, has depicted in glowing colours the desolations of his country, has also taken up this subject, the fall of Babylon, in his fifty-first chapter, and described it very forcibly. Thus, in ver. 7, “Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord’s hand, that made all the earth drunken; the nations have drunken of her wine, therefore the nations are mad. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed: we would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed; forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country, for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies,” ver. 8, 9. The prophet goes on to declare, ver. 29, “Every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant:” ver. 37, “Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing without an inhabitant.” In the forty-seventh verse, and onwards, we have

the causes of the Lord's judgments upon her: "I will do judgment upon the *graven images* of Babylon;" which is repeated, ver. 52.

Such is the prophetic account of ancient Babylon, and these things were all fulfilled to the very letter; but what have they to do with the subject of New Testament prophecy—with the book of the Apocalypse—with the history of the Christian church? The answer is, that Babylon of old was a type of Antichrist, or the christian apostacy; in a word, Babylon now comes forward, in the apocalyptic visions, as the symbol of the papal hierarchy, "the holy, Roman, apostolical church,"—for such is the explanation given us of this matter in ch. xvii., which, as I have before mentioned to you, furnishes a key to very much of this prophetic imagery. As the *fall* of Babylon will come more fully before us when we arrive at ch. xviii., which is wholly taken up with it, I shall not enlarge upon the subject in this place. The mention of its fall, in this fourteenth chapter, is evidently *proleptical*, and introduced in order to carry on the thread of the prophecy to its final termination.

"And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, *If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name,*" ver. 9-11. I cannot forbear remarking to you, my brethren, a consideration which the bare reading of these verses is calculated to impress upon all our minds, namely, that it is no trifling concern for any of the human race to be found following in the train of the beast, or dwelling in the camp of those who worship his image, or even to receive his mark, either in the hand or forehead! Thoughtless mortals may trifle with these matters, in this the day of their merciful visitation, and say, as thousands are saying daily, "What does it matter whether we belong to the church of Rome, or to the church of England, or to the kirk of Scotland, or to any dissenting church? If we do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God, it is all that he requires of us, without perplexing ourselves about rites or ceremonies, or forms and modes of worship; these are only the anise, mint, and cummin which are tithed for the use of the priesthood!" Now, if there be any meaning in such an harangue as this, what, I ask, does it amount to? Is it not this, that all the terrible denunciations which the word of God contains against the corrupters of

the gospel, against those who secularize the kingdom of Christ, is idle rhodomontade, unworthy the attention of a man of sense? My brethren, be not deceived! God is not mocked; neither does he mock any of his creatures with idle threats. There is such a thing as the beast and his image—there is such a thing as worshipping this beast and his image—and there is such a thing as receiving their mark in the hand or forehead; and you see what is here said concerning such. Read the verses again at your leisure, in your retirement; ponder them well, and ask yourselves whether these things apply to you, for they are of extensive import; and remember that “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” “Fear God, and give glory to his name, for the hour of his judgment is come; worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters,” ver. 7. This is what the everlasting gospel calls you to; it directs you to the only acceptable way of worshipping him, namely, through a mediator, and that mediator his own Son, Christ Jesus the Lord, who is “the way, the truth, and the life, leading unto the Father.” Remember, that they who worship him acceptably, must worship him “in spirit and in truth,” for the Father seeketh such to worship him. But, to worship in spirit and in truth, is not merely to do it in sincerity and earnestness, with fervour and devotedness of heart; but it is to worship him as he has revealed himself in the person and work of his beloved Son, as the just God and the Saviour, with a conscience purified from the guilt, pollution, and love of sin, by faith in the atoning blood of Christ, and drawing near to a throne of grace with true hearts, in the full assurance of faith, Heb. x. 19-22. But all this is in flat opposition to the worship of the beast and his image, which discards the atonement and sacrifice of Christ, or virtually annuls them, and in place of his one offering, has its masses, indulgences, penances, oblations—its worship of angels, saints, and images: all the inventions of men, and an abomination to the Most High.

“Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write; Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them,” ver. 12, 13. Faith and patience are the constituent principles of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faith in the divine testimony concerning him as the true Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, the Prophet, Priest, and King of his church—as delivered up unto death for the offences, and raised again for the justification, of all who believe. And patience, in opposition to persecuting, or yielding the truth for fear of

suffering ; but steadily persevering in keeping the commandments of God. It is a patience influenced by the hope of obtaining the heavenly inheritance when Christ shall come again to perfect their salvation. Having been shewn, in the former chapter, the reign and rage of Antichrist, during his allotted time of one thousand two hundred and sixty years, the prophet is now given to understand what should be the end both of him and his adherents, ver. 9-11, and the heavenly messenger sums up his discourse by telling him, that this would be a period of time in which the patience of the saints would be remarkably tried, both in the way of enduring the tyranny and oppression of Antichrist, and also waiting for their deliverance. This trying period would call the principles of professors into exercise. Now it should be made manifest whose they were, and whom they served ; whether they kept the commands of God, and the faith of Jesus, or continued in Babylon, worshipping the beast. In the midst of the vision, the attention of the prophet is arrested by an audible voice from heaven, calling upon him to commit to writing what should be dictated to him. "I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, WRITE:" as though it had been said, 'Let this be written for the generations to come.' WRITE, not merely as all other parts of scripture are recorded, but write this expressly—let it stand conspicuously on the sacred page—let it be traced in such striking characters, that he who runs may read the consolatory truth, that the afflicted and mourning may dry up their tears : "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth ; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." These words are worthy to occupy our attention during the remainder of the present lecture. Let us consider a little the character of the persons who are here declared "blessed"—the period when this blessedness commences—and examine wherein it consists.

1. The favoured individuals here spoken of, are described, ver. 12, under the general appellation of *saints*, or holy ones, as being redeemed from among men by the blood of Christ ; separated from the world lying in the wicked one ; and consecrated as the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb, ver 4. ; they are such as are internally renewed and sanctified by the Spirit of God. They are further described as *keeping the faith of Jesus*, ver. 12, and that in opposition to apostacy, or antichristian doctrines or errors. Moreover, they *keep the commandments of God*, ver. 12, in distinction from the commandments and traditions of men. Their faith wrought by love, and produced a conscientious regard to all the commands of God their Saviour, particularly his new command of brotherly love, whereby he would have all his disciples distinguished from the world. They are described also as

*patiently suffering* for Christ's sake; "Here is the patience of the saints." In opposition to those who *propagate* their religion by the sword, or even *defend* it with carnal weapons of any kind, both of which are infallible marks of Antichrist, they patiently suffer; and thus they overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony. Christ's word is the word of his patience, ch. iii. 10. It not only holds forth his own sufferings as the object of testimony, but it subjects all who hold it firmly, to sufferings also; and so calls them to have fellowship with himself therein. The kingdom and patience of Christ go hand in hand, and are, indeed, inseparable. Lastly, the persons here declared to be *blessed*, are such as "die in the Lord;" which implies, either to die *for the Lord's sake*, as that phrase is used, Eph. vi. 1, and so it points them out as faithful unto death, and laying down their lives for the truth; or, their dying in the faith of Christ, and united to him as their Lord and Saviour, according to 1 Cor. xv. 18. 1 Thess. iv. 16.

2. Observe the period when this blessedness commences: and that is, when they die. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, *from henceforth*." They were indeed blessed in a measure before this: they enjoyed the blessedness of pardon, of peace with God, the adoption of children, and the lively hope of everlasting life; but then, this happiness was imperfect, and liable to frequent interruptions. Add to which, that it consisted principally in the faith and hope of future good things to be enjoyed after this life, and was, at most, but an earnest of them. But at death they enter upon the actual enjoyment of that blessedness, "receiving the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls," 1 Pet. i. 9. So it is said, they are happy *from henceforth*, (*μακαριοι απαρτι*) that is, from the moment of their death unto all eternity. There is no intermediate state, either of insensibility or popish purgatory, both of which are inconsistent with the immediate enjoyment of blessedness. Lazarus is, immediately on his death, conveyed to Abraham's bosom there to be comforted, Luke xvi. 22. The penitent thief is, on the very day of his crucifixion, transported with his Redeemer to paradise, ch. xxiii. 43. Paul knew, that as soon as he was absent from the body he should be present with the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 8; and therefore he desired to depart, and be with Christ, which was far better than the highest enjoyments he could have in this world, Phil. i. 23. No sooner, then, is the soul of a believer freed from its clay tenement, than it is received into the mansions of bliss, and made a partaker of eternal glory.

3. Let us consider wherein this happiness, which commences at death, may be said to consist. It is summed up in very concise terms in the verse before us—"that they may rest from their

labour." The word "*labour*" is often used by the sacred writers to denote all the trials and troubles of this mortal life. Hence we find the prophet Jeremiah complaining, "Wherefore came I forth out of the womb, to see *labour* and *sorrow*, that my days should be consumed with shame?" ch. xx. 18. And Solomon, taking a view of the affairs of human life, says, "All things are full of *labour*; man cannot utter it," Eccl. i. 8. This, indeed, is nothing but the accomplishment of the original curse pronounced upon man's first transgression, viz. that he should have toil, labour, and sorrow, until he should return unto dust, Gen. iii. 19. *Rest*, on the other hand, is a state of cessation, of quiet, of ease, and refreshment from all these toils, labours, and distresses, Isa. xiv. 3; Jer. vi. 6; Matt. xi. 28, 29; and those who die in the Lord enter into that blessed rest which remaineth for the people of God, Isa. lvii. 2; Heb. iv. 9.

They rest, for instance, from all bodily pains and afflictions. Here they experience the truth of the patriarch Job's complaint, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and *full of trouble*." They are often racked with pain and sickness, diseases and distress, which makes them go mourning all their days; but death introduces them into that place where the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick, Isa. xxxiii. 24; "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away," Rev. xxi. 4.

They rest from all grief and sorrow of mind. Though Christians have peace with God, and rejoice in hope of his glory; yet they have not, at all times in this life, perfect and uninterrupted tranquillity of mind. Various things arise both from the world without, and also from their own corruptions within, to mar their peace of mind, interrupt their quiet, and fill them with fear, sorrow, and grief. But no sooner does the soul leave this body of sin and death, and break off its connection with this world, than it leaves all its cares behind; the days of its mourning are for ever ended, Isa. lx. 20; because every cause of grief is removed, both from within, and without. The sin and wickedness of the world shall no more disturb their peaceful repose. The remains of indwelling sin in themselves, which formerly led them to exclaim with an apostle, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?" and was a constant source of grief and distress of mind to them, no longer exists; for, when they die in the Lord, they are made free from sin, that greatest of evils. They are freed from the earthly body, which was the source and seat of much sin, through its inordinate appetites and lusts. They are made perfect in holiness, which is essential to their complete happiness, and so they rest from all that labour which sin occasioned.

It is added, "*and their works do follow them.*" The works here spoken of are, no doubt, such works as were produced by faith in Christ and love to his name: the kind offices of charity, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, ministering to the necessities of saints. Read at your leisure the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, and carefully mark the process of the great day of account: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me;" for, "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Thus it is, that "God is not unrighteous, to forget their work and labour of love, which they have shewed toward his name, in that they have ministered to the saints," Heb. vi. 10; for even a cup of cold water given to a disciple, in the character of a disciple, or *because they belong to Christ*, shall not go unrewarded at the last day. Matt. x. 42.

"HEAR what the voice from heaven proclaims,  
For all the pious dead;  
Sweet is the savour of their names,  
And soft their sleeping bed.

They die in Jesus, and are blest;  
How kind their slumbers are:  
From suffering and from sins releas'd,  
And freed from every snare.

Far from this world of toil and strife,  
They're present with the Lord;  
The labours of their mortal life  
End in a large reward."

## LECTURE XXXV.

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AND I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. 16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth: and the earth was reaped. 17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire: and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. 20 And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. 2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. 3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. 4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. 5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: 6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles, 7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. 8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.—Rev. xiv. 14-20; and ch. xv.

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### THE HARVEST AND VINTAGE, ETC.

IN the preceding part of this fourteenth chapter, which we had under consideration in our last lecture, we see that the fall of Babylon is declared to be the issue of the preaching of the everlasting gospel to the nations; the happy result of making it known to every kindred, tongue, and people, ver. 6; and, upon the proclamation of the ruin of Babylon, which is thereby pointed out as devoted to destruction, with the denunciation of the divine



indignation against the worshippers of the beast and his image, and such as received his mark in their forehead or hand, we see those that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus, represented as suffering even unto death, whence they are declared BLESSED to all eternity.

In the verses now read, and which form the remainder of the chapter, there are two remarkable periods of the ruin of Babylon pointed out; the first is that of *a harvest*, wherein the Son of man appears in great glory; and this is followed by *a vintage*, wherein the wine-press of the wrath of God is trodden: events which evidently point us to a period of time that brings on the final ruin of Antichrist. And this is the subject which now presents itself for our consideration.

“*And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle: And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice, to him that sat on the cloud. Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe: And he that sat on the cloud, thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped,*” ver. 14-16. This language, as well as that which follows, in ver. 18, is evidently borrowed from the prophet Joel, ch. iii. 13, “Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; Come, get ye down, for the press is full, the vats overflow, for their wickedness is great.” There seems also to be a reference to what is spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, ch. li. 33, “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; the daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor; it is time to thresh her; yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come.” It cannot be denied that there is some little ambiguity attending the word “harvest;” for it may denote either a harvest of God’s mercy, or a harvest of his vengeance. And, accordingly, we find that some commentators have understood the harvest here mentioned in the first of these senses, supposing it to mean that general conversion of both Jews and Gentiles, which Paul speaks of as their *fulness*, and which is the theme of many ancient prophecies: while others have interpreted it in the second sense, considering it as descriptive, like the vintage, of some signal judgments to be executed on Antichrist and his followers. I certainly agree with those writers who explain the harvest as denoting a harvest, not of mercy, but of divine indignation against the worshippers of the beast and his image; it is the season of God’s judgments upon Babylon. In this harvest of mystical Babylon, Christ, the Son of man, appears with his golden crown as the king of his church, in opposition to the dominion of the man of sin. And in the season here pointed at, the time of the harvest, the nature of his kingdom must be

brought more clearly to light. It seems likely that this period answers to the pouring out of the fifth vial, ch. xvi. 10, which fills the kingdom of the beast with darkness; and if so, we have witnessed something of it in the plagues that have come upon the church of Rome, during the last half century; and some of you may live to witness more! While the authority and dominion of the beast is rapidly declining, the authority of the King of Zion, in his word, must be influencing his people to an open profession of subjection to his gospel and the laws of his kingdom. Thus, he appears with his golden crown when he fills the kingdom of the clergy with darkness; and this is, as it were, a prelude to the glorious appearance of his kingdom, as foretold by Daniel, ch. vii. 13, 14, when "all people, nations, and languages shall serve him."

When the King of Zion makes this appearance, and proceeds to the work of the harvest, he is represented as sitting upon *a cloud*, which may import that his conduct in this work of vengeance upon the enemies of his church, will not be easily comprehended, and that he will set about it in so mysterious a manner, as not to be easily perceived by the most sagacious of mortals. Even his captives, whom he brings back, will, when he turns again their captivity, be like men that dream! Yet it is a *white* cloud, enlightened with the gospel of the kingdom, and bringing peace and tranquillity to his own subjects, at the moment that he is disquieting the inhabitants of Babylon, and even making that proud city desolate. And now shall be realized what was spoken by Isaiah, the prophet, ch. xviii. 4; for when the Lord is setting about the harvest of Babylon, "he will regard his appointed dwelling-place, like a clear heat after rain, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest."<sup>a</sup> And when he is filling the anti-christian kingdom with darkness, he sits on a white cloud, for direction, protection, and refreshment to his own subjects.

The work of the King of Zion, in relation to the harvest, appears to consist in two things, *first*, the gathering together of his own people, who had been scattered in the kingdom of Antichrist. Before the final ruin of that kingdom, he will have them all gathered to him, either by death, or into the churches of the saints, in which the power of the holy people that were scattered

<sup>a</sup> The whole passage is very beautiful and striking as given by bishop Lowth.

"All ye that inhabit the world, and that dwell on the earth,  
When the standard is lifted up on the mountains, behold!  
And when the trumpet is sounded, hear!  
For thus hath Jehovah said unto me:  
I will sit still, and regard my fixed habitation:  
Like the clear heat after rain,  
Like the dewy cloud in the day of harvest." ver. 3, 4.

by Antichrist will be restored. And so, in Rev. xviii. 4, we hear a voice from heaven calling to them, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for, her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." But, *secondly*, his work, in the Babylonian harvest, is to make that proud city desolate, just as a field of corn is rendered so by reaping. This, indeed, is the main thing intended. Yet, Babylon does not become wholly desolate till the vintage takes place—it is *this* which makes it fully waste, and completes its desolation in a fearful manner.

"And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle: and another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth: for her grapes are fully ripe; and the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God; and the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even to the horses' bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs," ver. 17-20. In such sublime and terrific language is the *vintage* here described; it perfects that scene of desolation and destruction which the harvest commenced, and thus brings the fearful end of Babylon. In the end of the harvest, it was only said "*And the earth was reaped,*" ver. 16, but in the conclusion of the vintage, which is after the harvest, it is said, "And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even to the horses' bridles, by the space of a thousand six hundred furlongs." "To tread a wine-press," says bishop Hurd, "from the Jewish custom of pressing grapes, signifies destruction attended with great slaughter."<sup>b</sup> The symbolic *grapes* are described as *fully ripe*; "that is," says Vitranga, "the period of the divine forbearance had expired, and atrocities, no longer to be tolerated, had arisen to their utmost height—the measure of their crimes was filled up. Punishment, therefore, no longer could be deferred; but the destroyers of the earth were at length to be destroyed, and were, in *their* turn, to meet with their reward." To this awful period, which will be brought about by the pouring out of the seventh vial, Rev. xvi. 17, we understand that sublime passage in the writings of the prophet Isaiah *ultimately* to point, Edom being there considered as a type of Antichrist; "Who is this that cometh from Edom; with dyed garments from Bozra? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of

<sup>b</sup> Introd. Sermon, vol. ii. p. 114.

his strength? I, that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury: and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment: for, the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come; and I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth." Isa. lxiii. 1-6.

This will be the battle of Armageddon, emphatically termed "the battle of the great day of God Almighty," ch. xvi. 14-16, and it is described more particularly in ch. xix. 11-21. There, Christ is represented as coming in vengeance upon the beast and the false prophet, calling all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven to come to the supper of the great God, that they may eat the flesh of kings and captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great," ver. 17, 18. This language is of the very same import with that of the verses under consideration, and the subject is the same in both places.

The several steps of the gradual consumption of the man of sin, until he be finally destroyed, are set before us in the sixteenth chapter, under the figurative language of pouring out seven vials in succession, all of which are comprised under the seventh trumpet, and the third of the woes, ch. xi. 15-19. As these will come before us hereafter, in regular order, it would be improper to enter upon any consideration of them in this place; and we therefore proceed to

## CHAPTER XV.

*"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God,"* ver. 1. This chapter appears to be little more than a preface to that which follows, and in which we have the pouring out of the seven vials. It commences with announcing the advent of seven angels having the seven last plagues wherewith to afflict Antichrist, the man of sin, the son of perdition, and in which plagues is filled up the cup of the divine indignation. I formerly mentioned to you, that the first six vials answer to the first six trumpets; and that, as the trumpets denoted so many successive steps by which Antichrist was advanced to his throne, so the vials present us with so many distinct inflictions of the divine wrath, by means of which his power is weakened, his consumption promoted, and his total overthrow finally effected. It deserves our notice, that in the plagues contained in these vials,

there seems to be a reference to the plagues of Egypt, when the Lord was about to deliver his people from their state of bondage there, and which I may point out more particularly as they come under our consideration. At present I only remark, that I cannot agree with Mr. Fuller's note on this verse, which is as follows: "All those expositions of the vials which suppose them to have been pouring out at different periods of the one thousand two hundred and sixty years appear to me to be founded in mistake." So far, indeed, I agree with him; for, if the trumpets raise Antichrist to his throne, as I think has been made abundantly to appear; and if the vials effect his consumption, then it is plain that the pouring out of these vials could not be in progress from the beginning of the one thousand two hundred and sixty years; for that would imply that his advancement and consumption were both going on at the same instant. But what I object to is the following: "The farthest point to which we can look back for the commencement of these calamities may be found to be within the last five-and-twenty years."<sup>e</sup> This, I presume to think, is an error; but it is one into which he was betrayed by resolving the earthquake and fall of the tenth part of the city, ch. xi. 13, into the events of the late revolution in France, instead of the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, and the consequent fall of the Greek empire, A.D. 1453. Of this, however, I have spoken already in a former lecture.

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God: and they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints: Who shall not fear thee, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee: for thy judgments are made manifest." ver. 2-4. This "sea of glass," or, as some prefer rendering it, this *glassy sea*, was mentioned on a former occasion, ch. iv. 6,<sup>f</sup> when the symbol was explained as representing the atoning blood of Christ, which is a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, as well as the ransom price of human redemption. Its being mingled with fire, is by some considered as denoting both the *priestly* and *kingly* characters of Christ, answerable to the offices he sustained in the economy of redemption. Accordingly, as we are now arrived at the period of time when his vengeance begins to be poured out upon the enemies of his church, we are presented with the glassy

<sup>e</sup> Expository Discourses, &c. p. 264.

<sup>f</sup> See Lect. XI. p. 130.

sea mingled with fire: its waves flashing flame, symbolically expressive of anger and vengeance. And here we see collected, as in an appropriate situation, those who, during the reign of Antichrist, had contended for the faith once delivered to the saints,—“had kept the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus,” and, patiently suffering for his sake, had gained that victory which is only to be acquired by the blood of the Lamb. They are now in a triumphant state, for each has *his harp* in his hand; they no longer cry from under the altar for the delayed vengeance of a righteous God; the promised time is come, and the heavenly choir strikes up a new song, as Israel of old did when they had passed through the Red Sea, and gotten the victory over Pharaoh and his host. The song which the redeemed company sing is that of “Moses and the Lamb.” As the song of Moses at the Red Sea magnified the victory of Jehovah over the Egyptians, so this song will celebrate the triumphs of the Lamb and of his followers over Antichrist and his adherents. If the works of God in redeeming his people from the long-continued state of bondage to their Egyptian task-masters, were “great and marvellous,” much more so would they be in delivering his saints from the tyranny, oppression, and cruelty of “that great city which is spiritually called Egypt;” and if his “ways were just and true,” in the former instance, they would be still manifestly so in the latter. But, on this sublime song, it may be permitted us to take a closer survey of the subject, and attempt a short illustration of its component parts.

“They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.” The former was “faithful as a servant in all the house of God;” and, as a wise observer of the doings of the Lord, he no sooner saw the deliverance which he had wrought in behalf of his people at the Red Sea, than he composed an ode in commemoration of it, which we have in Exodus, ch. xv. to be sung by the chosen tribes in all ages. But, “the christian church unites the songs of Moses and the Lamb.” All that occasion of singing and triumph which is afforded to the church, is by the Lamb. He fights her battles, he conducts her march through the wilderness of this world, he works her deliverances; and, in a word, he does all things for her. If she overcome, it is through the blood of the Lamb, and the word of his testimony. The seven vials that are about to be poured out, will be seen by the enemies of the church to be the wrath of the Lamb. This song will be sung in praise of the Lamb: his love, faithfulness, justice, power and grace, manifested in the overthrow of Antichrist and the deliverance of his church from its tyrannical sway, will be seen, and admired, and praised by the whole redeemed company.

The title or inscription of the song, is followed with some

account of the burden of it; we find it to comprise various declarations recounting the Lord's wonderful doings in behalf of his church, with an ascription of praise to the object of their worship, and dwelling upon the grounds and reasons why this tribute is paid to him.

*“Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty.”* It is indeed true, that there is something great and marvellous in *all* the works of God, whether they be those of creation, providence, or redemption. The heavens present us with a magnificent display of his glorious power and greatness. The earth which we inhabit is full of the riches of his goodness: but though these conquerors are not disposed to overlook any of the operations of his Almighty hand, yet those special acts of his power and grace which are displayed in the overthrow of mystical Babylon, and the deliverance of his church from her tyrannical usurpation, appear to be principally intended by this declaration. Nor need we to wonder that this is the case. To enter into the subject, and appreciate the grounds of this song, we must call to mind what Babylon the great was, in the zenith of her glory; consider the strength of the city, and hear her exulting, as you have it in ch. xviii. 7, “I sit as a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow;” mark the impregnable walls and bulwarks of civil power and policy with which it is environed, the multitudes interested in its defence, and the duration of its existence; take into consideration, that ten kingdoms are leagued in its support; they all form, as it were, “a family compact,” and they seem determined to uphold or perish with her; think of her pride, her arrogance, her blasphemy; everywhere persecuting the followers of the Lamb, and driving the church into the wilderness; see her “living deliciously, and glorifying herself,” when lo! the sound is heard, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city;” and can you wonder that those who had been the victims of her cruelty and oppression, on witnessing the hour of her desolation arrived, should exult and sing, “Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty.” *“Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.”*

The title “King of saints” shews the connection that exists between the work of judgment in the seven last plagues, and the sufferings of the persecuted disciples, or the insults and cruelties to which the saints had been subjected from the antichristian power. As their king, he thoroughly pleads their cause, and takes vengeance on their oppressors. When he comes in judgment to dethrone the Man of Sin, and inflict exemplary punishment upon the beast and his followers, he will do nothing but what it is just and proper for him to perform, for he will only carry into execution those awful threatenings which were from the first denounced

against them. They have shed the blood of saints and martyrs, and now the hour of recompence is come.

“*Who shall not fear thee, and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy?*” ver. 4. Fear seems to be here used to denote all that reverence and worship which are due to the Most High God. This homage and respect, instead of being rendered to him, had been blasphemously transferred to the clergy, symbolized by the beast and false prophet; but they who now behold his judgments poured out upon them, will be struck with more than ordinary astonishment at the folly and infatuation of those who have been worshipping the beast and his image, and they will be led to exclaim, “Who shall not fear THEE, O Lord, and glorify thy name; for thou only art holy?” It is added,

“*For all nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest.*” This appears to be an anticipation of the millennial reign, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, when, “the judgment having sat, and they shall have taken away the dominion of the Man of sin, to consume and destroy it wholly,” “the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him,” Dan. vii. 26, 27. It is in perfect consistency with the promises made to Jesus as the reward of his sufferings; as when it is written, “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee; for the kingdom is the LORD’S, and he is the governor among the nations,” Ps. xxii. 27, 28. And, again, “He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth;” “Yea, all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him;” “His name shall endure for ever, his name shall be continued as long as the sun; men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed,” Ps. lxxii. 8, 11, 17. The Redeemer’s kingdom shall one day be universal; but it will not be until the vials of divine indignation are emptied upon the kingdom of the clergy, the apostate church of Rome. But this desirable period cannot *now* be very remote; the vials have been gradually pouring out for the last three hundred years; and in the present day we see the kingdom of the beast “full of darkness, and his supporters are gnawing their tongues for pain,” Rev. xvi. 10. In what other light can we understand such language as the following, which I extract from a letter recently issued by pope Pius VIII. addressed “to the patriarchs, primates, archbishops and bishops of the church of Rome.”

“Venerable brothers, salutation and benediction!

“Notwithstanding the consolation which your courage, vene-



rable brothers, imparts to us, we cannot help experiencing an acute feeling of sorrow on seeing, in the midst of peace, the children of the world causing in us the deepest affliction. We are speaking to you of evils which are known to you, which are committed before the eyes of every one, which cause our common tears to fall, and which, consequently, demand our common efforts to correct, to oppose, and to extirpate. We speak to you of those innumerable errors, of those false and perverse doctrines, which are attacking the catholic faith, no longer secretly and in the dark, but openly and violently. You know how culpable men have declared war against religion, by the assistance of a false philosophy, of which they declare themselves the doctors, by means of frauds, drawn up with worldly ideas. This sacred seat, this chair upon which Jesus Christ has laid the foundation of his church, is particularly subject to their attacks. We say, with tears, ‘Yea, the lions are let loose, roaring against Israel! yea, they are united against God and against Christ! yea, the impious cry aloud, destroy, destroy to the very foundation!’”<sup>c</sup>

This is a tolerably plain indication of the state of matters in that quarter, at the present moment; and it goes far to prove the truth of my assertion, that the kingdom of the beast is filled with darkness, and the clergy are gnawing their tongues with pain. But, who shall commiserate them? who shall sympathize with them? Christians dare not. On the contrary, thus runs the divine injunction: “*Rejoice over her, thou heaven; and ye holy apostles and prophets: for God hath avenged you on her,*” Rev. xviii. 20.

“*And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: and the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles: and one of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels, seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever: and the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled,*” ver. 5-8. There is in ver. 5 a manifest allusion to the Jewish tabernacle or temple, in which was the holy place, and also the holy of holies, into the latter of which the high priest alone was allowed to enter. In this most holy place were deposited the ark of the covenant, and the mercy-seat covering the ark, in which were contained the two tables of the law, which are frequently termed the testimonies of God. From this “tabernacle of testimonies,” proceeded God’s oracles; there the Most High gave answers from the mercy seat; thence he communed with his people, and heard their prayers; all which the apostle Paul tells us were “patterns of things in the heavens.” John informs us that “he saw the temple of the

<sup>c</sup> See the Encyclic Letter of his holiness, in the *World Newspaper*, August.

tabernacles of the testimony in heaven opened, and seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven last plagues," wherewith to afflict Antichrist. Now, from what is here mentioned, we seem to be taught, that in the judgments which God was now about to execute upon the kingdom of the beast, he was fulfilling the predictions and promises of his word and *covenant*, which was there continually before him, and of which he was *ever mindful*: that in this work of judgment upon Babylon, he was answering the prayers of his people, which were offered to him by their great high priest; that he was herein about to avenge the quarrel of his own Son, whose offices and authority had been usurped by Antichrist, whose name had been dishonoured, and the great designs of his death opposed; and, finally, that he was opening a wider door of liberty for his people to worship him in their assemblies upon earth, without the fear of molestation from their adversaries.

We have a description of the dress of the angels: "They were clothed in pure and white linen, and had their breasts girded with golden girdles," ver. 6. This was the attire of the high priests under the law when they went into the most holy place, to inquire of God, and came out with an answer from him; and hereby is intimated, that those angels acted in all things under the divine appointment and direction, and that they were about to prepare a sacrifice to the Lord, which is afterwards called, "*the supper of the great God*," ch. xix. 17.

"And one of the four living creatures" mentioned ch. iv. 6, "gave unto the seven angels, seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God," ver. 7. This is the artillery, by means of which Antichrist is to be brought to utter ruin; these seven angels are thus armed with the wrath of God against his enemies, and the enemies of his church. This wrath, however, is not to be poured out all at once; but it is divided into seven distinct portions, which should successively fall upon the kingdom of the clergy; and in the ensuing chapter of the Apocalypse, we have the account of the pouring out of the seven vials in succession. "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled," ver. 8.

The cloud of glory was the visible manifestation of the divine presence in both the tabernacle and temple under the law; it expressed the immediate presence of God, for protection and for judgment. The shechina, or cloud of glory, was the signal of protection at the setting up of the tabernacle, and at the dedication of the temple. But in the judgment of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, the glory of the Lord appeared to all the congregation of Israel, when the former were swallowed up by the earth, Numb. xvi. 19. In like manner, when the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron, ver. 42, and were

congregated against them, it is said, "they looked towards the tabernacle, and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared." This was regarded as the forerunner of judgment; for immediately Moses directs Aaron to "go quickly and make atonement, because wrath was gone out from the Lord, and the plague was begun," ver. 46.

And this is the case before us; the effect of the delivery of these vials is described as "filling the temple with smoke, from the glory of God, and from his power, so that no man could enter it." "This cloud," says Dr. Guyse, "appeared like a thick smoke, awfully glorious, which was a symbol of the divine vengeance, Ps. xviii. 8, as going forth from the presence of the Lord, and to be executed by the glory of his power, in the destruction of Antichrist; even as the cloud on the tabernacle was of his dreadful judgment upon Korah, and the murmuring Israelites; and as Moses could not enter into the tabernacle, nor the priests stand to minister in the temple, while the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord, Exod. xl. 35; 1 Kings viii. 11; so no one could enter into this heavenly temple to intercede for the preventing of these grievous calamities upon the beast; none were suffered to do this, that judgment might have its free course, till all the seven punishments to be inflicted by the ministry of the seven angels were fully executed in their order."

And thus, my brethren and friends, we are now arrived in this course of lectures at the pouring out of the seven vials, which contain the seven last plagues, whereby the judgments of God are inflicted upon the kingdom of the beast, or antichristian empire. This difficult subject we shall have to take up in our next lecture, should we be spared to meet again.

Bishop Newton has observed, that "the many fruitless attempts that have hitherto been made to explain the pouring out of these vials, are a proof that they cannot well be explained, the best interpreters having failed and floundered in this part more than any other." Perhaps, to act wisely, *we* ought to desist from the attempt, and not add another to the number of unsuccessful efforts. Nevertheless, as the Lord hath been graciously pleased to conduct us so far in the arduous undertaking, let us take courage, let us look up to him for light and direction; and so far as any of these vials appear to have been hitherto poured out, let us, with becoming humility and reverence, endeavour to trace the footsteps of divine providence in the fulfilment of these predictions, in the execution of his judgments in the earth.

## LECTURE XXXVI.

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AND I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. 2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. 3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea. 4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. 7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. 8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.—Rev. xvi. 1-9.

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### THE SEVEN VIALS, OR LAST PLAGUES.

WE had, in the preceding chapter, the great and solemn preparation that was made in the heavenly sanctuary, for the pouring out of the vials of the wrath of God upon mystical Babylon; and our attention is now directed to the execution of that work of judgment. I mentioned to you, in the last lecture, the difficulties which have been felt and candidly acknowledged by commentators, both as respects the explication and application of the vials. Some writers on the book of the Revelation carry the first of them far back, and make them to *end* with the preaching of the first reformers; while others date the pouring out of the first of them at the commencement of the late revolution in France. But with neither class of these writers can I agree. The æra of the vials did not commence till the seventh trumpet was sounded. This is clear from the whole frame and admirable arrangement of the Apocalypse. For, as the seven trumpets are all included under the seventh seal, so are the seven vials under the seventh trumpet. But the seventh trumpet was not sounded till the second woe was past, after the death and resurrection of the witnesses, and the fall of the tenth part of the city, Rev. xiv. 6, 7;

and if these events took place, as I have shewn in a former lecture, between the middle of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, then the æra of the vials which constitute the third woe, must have commenced about the time of the Reformation, which began A. D. 1517. At this period then we date the pouring out of the first vial.

Before we proceed to a consideration of these seven vials, it possibly may not be without its use to offer a few general observations on the subject, recapitulating some topics which have already come under our notice, and smoothing the way to others which lie before us, and will presently claim our attention.

The prominent object in this series of predictions, both of the trumpets and the vials, is that antichristian power, system, or kingdom, which was foretold in ancient prophecy, and to make its appearance in the latter days, or under the gospel dispensation, as the most formidable adversary to the cause of God and truth, that the world had ever witnessed. A variety of symbolical language is used to represent this mystery of iniquity. It is generally spoken of as *a city*, and in this view it is termed "Babylon the great," as in Rev. xiv. 8, and ch. xvi. 19; in which appellation there is a manifest reference to ancient Babylon, the noted enemy of God's ancient people Israel, into whose provinces they were carried away captive. In allusion to its corruption of the christian doctrine and practice, this antichristian power is spoken of under the similitude of an abandoned harlot, yea, the very "*mother of harlots*," with whom the kings of the earth should commit fornication, ch. xvii. 1, 2. On account of the power, the oppression, and the cruelty which it should exercise, it is exhibited under the symbol of a furious *wild beast*, a monster having seven heads, and ten horns, adding to these the qualities of *the dragon*, the utmost cruelty and ferocity. The whole collective account of this monstrous power and system, puts it beyond reasonable doubt, that the truth, substance, and reality of all this figurative language, is to be found in that adulteration of the christian faith and practice, of which symptoms began to manifest themselves even in the days and under the eyes of the apostles, and which, by progressive steps, arrived at its full height in the Romish hierarchy, when the Man of Sin was revealed, "sitting in the temple of God," and *shewing off* as God, or usurping the prerogatives of deity. The accomplishment of the various predictions concerning this antichristian power, which are to be found in the prophecies of Daniel, and in the writings of the apostle Paul, together with the application of all that is said concerning mystical Babylon in the Apocalypse, can be found only in the antichristian system which has been drawn over the nations of Europe, marked in its leading features by blasphemy, deceit, superstition, idolatry, and spiritual tyranny;

a constitution of things established in the name of Christ, whose kingdom is *not* of this world, and yet supported by the secular arm, by acts of parliament, by the sword of the civil magistrate, by worldly power and glory. And, at once, to mark its opposition to the heavenly kingdom which Christ came to promote, and which consists in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit," its character is written in blood. "I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus," Rev. xvii. 6. Now, we have only to turn our attention to the church of Rome, and the kingdoms and states in league with her, to find this system in perfection. It cannot, indeed, be restricted to that church; for, wherever the same system prevails, the system of *church government supported by secular authority*, let it pass under whatever name it may, we are bound to regard it as a branch of Antichrist, and, as such, an object of the divine indignation.

The reign and prevalence of this monstrous antichristian system is described as dreadful for its cruelty, as extensive in its range, and, with regard to its duration, as continuing forty-two prophetic months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty years. Difficulties, no doubt, there are, as I have repeatedly told you, in the way of fixing, with precision, the commencement of the reign of Antichrist; but that has nothing to do with the fact itself, namely, that mystical Babylon shall be brought to destruction; and that the divine judgments, denoted by the pouring out of seven distinct vials of the wrath of God, will continue to be inflicted until the words of this prophecy are fulfilled. We now return to the subject.

"*And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth,*" ver. 1. These *angels* are ministers of Jehovah's will in executing the divine judgments for the punishment and destruction of this iniquitous power; they are consequently said to have "the seven last plagues," in which is filled up the wrath of God, ch. xv. 1. The object that is to be promoted by the pouring out of these seven vials, appears to be one and the same, though they are represented as falling upon different parts of the seat of the beast. For, it must be observed, that as the Roman empire is represented by the system of the world, having its earth, sea, rivers, and sun, moon, and stars, &c. ch. viii. 7-13; so the kingdom of Antichrist, the city of the mystical Babylon, is also represented as having its earth, sea, rivers, &c. all which are affected by the vials in the same way that the former was by the trumpets, but only in a contrary direction; for, as the trumpets elevated the Man of Sin to his "bad eminence," so the vials bring on his decline, consumption, and utter ruin.

I may also add, that as papal Rome is compared to Babylon and Egypt, so her plagues are represented as similar to theirs, as we shall presently see.

“Go, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.” It is of some importance towards the right understanding of this mysterious book, that we have some definite notion of what is signified by the vials. They are termed “the seven last plagues,” “the wrath of God,” and “his judgments.” Now, we know that the wrath of God will not be *fully* manifested against his enemies until they have finished the time of their probation here, and are consigned to eternal perdition in a future state, “where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” But, as Antichrist is a *worldly* power; as the nations of the earth are included in this power or system; as the kings of the earth give their strength and support to Babylon, and she reigns over them; as they, having partaken of her sins, must likewise share of her plagues: so, in this view, the divine indignation, as it is directed against nations or political bodies of men, can only be seen, experienced, or felt in the temporal judgments which he executes in this life. All the calamitous events which befall the nations, and produce misery and distress, out of the ordinary course of providence, may be regarded as the ministers of the divine displeasure. The great Governor of the universe is never at a loss for means whereby to punish the guilty inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. When he determined to punish David for his sin on a certain occasion, he gave him his choice of three things, viz. famine, pestilence, and the sword, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10, &c.; and when the monarch of Israel had made his election, the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel, which destroyed seventy thousand men. These three calamities are the ordinary ministers of God’s displeasure against sinful nations. The prophet Isaiah speaks of “the indignation of the Lord as coming upon the nations, and *his fury upon all their armies*; he hath utterly destroyed them,” saith he, “he hath delivered them to the slaughter,” ch. xxxiv. 2; and the convulsions thus produced are compared to the dissolution of the heavens, ver. 4. War is a rod of the divine anger, and it is sent as a scourge to guilty nations. Many of those events which men view as glorious, and which call forth the trumpet of fame, are in themselves expressions of the wrath of God towards a guilty people. The uproar, the tumult, and confusion, the besieging and pillaging of cities, the horror and dismay which fill the hearts of the humane, with the groans of the dying, often give éclat to the warrior, and serve to blazon the conqueror’s fame; but they are among the means which the righteous Governor of the universe employs in fulfilling his purposes and executing

his denunciations towards his enemies. But not to enlarge on this topic, let us return to our text.

“*And the first went and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image,*” ver. 2. There is here a reference to the plague of the boil, inflicted upon the Egyptians, and of which we have the account, Exod. ix. 8-11. The vial is poured out *upon the earth*, which I take to denote the entire platform of the kingdom of the beast, and so it affects “the men which had the mark of the beast, and those that worshipped his image;” in other words, the whole antichristian kingdom is some way annoyed with this “noisome and grievous sore.” That there is here an allusion to the grand schism which took place in the church of Rome, when Luther and his friends broke off from her communion, I think is indisputable. “In a theological sense,” says Mr. Faber, “ill-digested and virulent humours in the body politic denote a state of irreligion and apostacy, working and fermenting throughout the frame which they afflict. The breaking out of such humours in the natural body, produces an offensive and disgusting ulcer, no longer concealed beneath the skin, but open and revealed to the eye of observation. Hence, analogically, a noisome and grievous sore in the body politic, being similarly produced by the eruption of long-fermenting virulent humours, must denote the open display of those concocted principles of irreligion which have hitherto fluctuated in an undefined and impalpable form.” It would be better expressing my own view of the matter, were I to say, that corruption had arisen to such a pitch in the church of Rome, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, that it could no longer be restrained within its natural boundaries, and like an enormous mass of peccant humours in the human body, it broke out in boils and blains, and noisome sores, as among the Egyptians of old.<sup>a</sup> This first plague upon the antichristian world answers to the first trumpet; and points at the time when some of the ten kings, influenced by a due regard to their own interest, boldly stood forward in defence of the publication of the Scriptures against the church of Rome; and when those kings who had given their power to the beast, began to withdraw their support. This broke the uniformity which had now subsisted through so many centuries, maintaining one confession, or form

<sup>a</sup> I have treated this subject, the corrupt state of the Catholic church prior to the Reformation, considerably more in detail, in my *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. I. ch. iv. sect. ii.; and Vol. II. ch. v. sect. vii., to which I refer the reader who desires further information.



of religion, and it occasioned a schism which was never healed—a malady in the body politic which proved incurable.

The first plague upon the kingdom of the clergy, followed the preaching of the everlasting gospel by Luther, and the other reformers, and was a consequent upon it, just as the plagues of Egypt commenced on Moses delivering his message to Israel and to Pharaoh, and the latter refusing to let Israel go. And with this first vial Babylon began to fall; for, from that time, the light of the gospel could never be extinguished, nor the testimony of the Lord's witnesses be again laid dead. By means of the schism which now took place, the gospel had a more free course and was glorified. "Like the confusion at Babel," says a late writer, "it broke a most cursed confederacy, and was a terrible blow to the kingdom of Antichrist. It also proved exceedingly favourable to the rights of mankind, and gave an opportunity to thousands of captives to assume their freedom. The fetters of bigotry and superstition were then in a great degree weakened, and multitudes of those who used to yield unlimited obedience to the mandates of spiritual tyrants, and, like the asinine offspring of Issachar, tamely to crouch down between their burdens, were taught to think for themselves, resist their ghostly oppressors, and act as rational beings. In short, the Reformation set the subjects of Antichrist together by the ears, and raised such commotions in his dominions as he will never be able to quell. His house has been ever since 'a house divided against itself,' and from that period we may date the beginning of its decay, which in time, will inevitably issue in its downfall."<sup>b</sup>

By the breaking of that uniformity of religious profession which was the result of the ten kings giving their power and strength to the beast, and their becoming divided about the "one opinion" or form of Christianity which they had hitherto supported and maintained, there came to be three distinct stated communions in what is called Christendom, viz. the Popish, the Lutheran, and the Zuinglian, or Calvinistic; and this is that division of the great city into three parts, which you will find mentioned in ver. 19, of this chapter. Other divisions, no doubt, have all along existed in the great city; but these are the three communions, standing in the greatest opposition to each other, so as never to be united to one another; and this is the state of things when the last of the vials is poured out, and the cities of the nations fall. This threefold partition of the great city, or Christendom, commences with the pouring out of this first vial, and it continues till the seventh, which finds it in the same condition, and then, by

<sup>b</sup> Richards's History of Antichrist, p. 4.

the greatest of all earthquakes, the cities of the nations fall, and every island is made to flee away.

Before we take our leave of this first vial, it will, perhaps, be expected that something should be said by way of specifying those kingdoms in particular, which, after giving their support to the beast, or kingdom of Antichrist, during a period of more than a thousand years, were induced at the time of the Reformation to withdraw their allegiance, and throw off the papal yoke. This, however, is rather a difficult subject to handle with precision; and that difficulty arises from two circumstances, which I will explain. The first is, that during the long period of the reign of this antichristian power, considerable changes had taken place in the political constitutions of the states of Europe, though, in some way or other, the number ten, which at the beginning leagued together to maintain this uniformity, and support the beast, continued to prevail. But another difficulty arises from this circumstance, that, as I formerly mentioned to you concerning the opening of the seals, the full effect does not instantaneously appear; for when a seal is loosed or a vial poured out, its contents are not exhausted wholly when another follows. Now to illustrate my meaning as well as I am able, and throw a little light upon the subject, we will take our own country as an instance.

We have already seen, that it was one of the ten kingdoms that entered into the confederacy to support the beast at the commencement of his reign; and this it continued to do until the pouring out of the first vial, at the period of the Reformation. When Luther rose, and began his opposition to the church of Rome, the throne of England was filled by Henry the Eighth, who was ready, not only to shed the last drop of his blood and the blood of his subjects in support of the chair of St. Peter; but, to shew his zeal in defence of what he considered so holy a cause, he buckled on his armour—I mean, he took up his pen to refute the impious attack of the monk of Saxony; and, with that object in view, published a treatise on the seven sacraments, which, though it has now fallen into oblivion, was represented by the flattery of the courtiers of his day to be a work of such wonderful science and learning, as exalted him no less above other authors in merit, than he was distinguished among them by his rank. And so delighted was the pope with this polemical performance of his dutiful son, that he was graciously pleased to confer upon him the honorary title of “Defender of the Faith;” and, strange to tell, a title which is still retained by the monarchs of this country, though the avowed enemies of those opinions, by contending for which Henry obtained it! I have merely adverted to these facts for the purpose of apprising you how this country stood affected

towards Antichrist, at the time of the pouring out of the first vial. Yet, in the reign of that monarch's son and successor, Edward VI. A. D. 1547, matters began to assume a different aspect; and though, after his short but glorious reign of five or six years, his sister Mary, of bloody memory, again threw the kingdom into the arms of Rome, Elizabeth, who succeeded her, and swayed the sceptre upwards of forty years, determined on being pope herself, and therefore she resisted the domineering influence of the court of Rome, and maintained the principles of the Reformation.

But Great Britain was not the only one of the ten kingdoms that withdrew its support from the beast. Bohemia, which gave birth to Huss and Jerome of Prague, as well as the Bohemian brethren, took the lead of our own country; and, towards the middle of the seventeenth century, we find Switzerland, the states of Holland, Sweden, Denmark, Prussia, besides a number of petty states in Germany, all in opposition to the claims of the Catholic church; some contending for the Lutheran, and others for the Calvinistic communion; and in this way, Babylon began to fall by the first vial, and from that time forward she falls more and more; nor can she ever recover her primitive strength and glory, but continues to waste, till she is utterly destroyed by the seventh vial.

“*And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea, and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea,*” ver. 3. Here is a reference to another of the plagues of Egypt, which you will find in Exod. vii. 19-21: “*And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood: And Moses and Aaron did so as the Lord commanded; and he lifted up his rod, and smote the waters that were in the river in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood: And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.*”

This second vial is poured out *upon the sea*, which, according to the explanation that is given us of that symbolic term in Rev. xvii. 1, 15, must be the great bulk or body of the worshippers of the beast—the antichristian party. This vial, we see, turns the sea into blood, and makes it as the blood of a dead man, and every living soul dies in the sea. Blood, in the language of prophecy, denotes wars, fightings, strifes of one kind or another. And here it appears to denote that prevailing state of rancour, ill-will, murmuring, and discontent that was begotten in the minds

of the generality of the antichristian party against one another, and that universal strife and contention throughout the extensive body of that people about the mark they should wear, and the form of the image they should worship, which naturally followed on the disagreement of the ruling powers concerning the form of Christianity they should support and defend. Instead of that unity and regular motion which it had before the schism took place, it has now no regular course, but, being propelled and obstructed, without any free motion or circulation, it subsides into a stagnant mass of putridity, and thus becomes like the blood of a dead man. We have not been without examples of this state of things in our own country, during the two centuries that succeeded the Reformation; and the case was much the same in other parts of Christendom. Parties jostling one another about the form of Christianity that should prevail, whether popery, episcopacy, or presbyterianism; all of them antichristian, and each hating the other with deadly rancour. Thus, while one party violently rushed one way, it was obstructed by another rushing as violently in a contrary direction, which last in its turn received similar obstruction from the former; so that, like the blood of a dead man, it could have no regular course to circulate through the whole body, but, in consequence of the obstruction of the passages, it became stagnated, part in one *cest*, part in another. The consequence is here said to be, that

“Every living soul dies in the sea,” or antichristian kingdom. This cannot be the life of Christianity which is extinguished by contention about forms; for it is not the christian, but the antichristian life, that is hurt by the pouring out of the vials; and this is a life that had been among the worshippers of the beast and his image, which is extinguished by discord among themselves: it is not the life of Christ’s people. Life imports joy, satisfaction, and pleasure, and there was much of this among the followers of Antichrist when they had silenced the testimony of the witnesses; for we read, that “they rejoiced and made merry, and sent gifts one to another,” Rev. xi. 10. But this second vial turns this sea to blood, it puts an end to this felicitous state of things; so that, in no section of Christendom, are any to be found rejoicing in the universal prevalence of any one party, but a universal grief pervades the whole, the result of disappointment and chagrin.

Life also imports union, and the power of motion. But every endeavour after the attainment of union among the three parts of the divided city, proved wholly ineffectual. There no longer remained in any one of the three parts a power of action and of motion, which could extend its influence to the whole; each distinct part of the sea, or main body of the antichristian people,

stagnated in its own vessel, as the blood of a dead man, without union, or the power of communication and of free circulation among the parts of the Catholic body; the result was, that they who struggled to establish a union among any of the parts, and to make a communication among them in any shape, became as fishes attempting to swim in a sea of stagnated blood. Thus the division of the great city, which commenced when the powers of the earth began to disagree, as we have seen was the case under the first vial, came to be established and confirmed under the second; and this could scarcely be without war or bloodshed, though that seems to be more especially pointed out under the third vial, to the consideration of which we now proceed.

“*And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood: and I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus: for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy: and I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty; true and righteous are thy judgments,*” ver. 4-7. This third vial seems to be the counterpart of the third trumpet, ch. viii. 10, and accordingly, it is poured out upon the rivers and fountains of waters. If the sea denotes the main body of the followers of Antichrist, the mass of the population, then the rivers and fountains of waters must signify particular nations, provinces, and states lying remote from the heart of the beast’s seat, or from the centre of government: such were France, Spain, and Britain. The pouring out of the third vial makes these rivers and fountains of waters to become blood. And this I understand to point to the wars and bloodsheddings within the bounds of those nations, about the particular forms of church government that should be established in each particular nation, though, doubtless, many other causes of quarrel and contention might exist. It seems strange, at first sight, that several of our latest and best writers on this book should agree in interpreting the pouring out of the first four of these vials, as all referring to the events of the French revolution. Such, for instance, is the case with Mr. Faber and Mr. Fuller. It is probably from a law of our nature, that objects which are present are made to enlarge or expand in the eye of the mind, much more than those which are absent or distant, though the latter may be of greater importance. It is only on this principle that we can account for the vast consequence which is made to attach to the French revolution by almost every modern writer on the Apocalypse; insomuch, indeed, that many of them can scarcely allow the seven last plagues to have any other object than the late proceedings in France, and the events arising out of them. That

the dreadful atrocities which have recently been perpetrated on the continent of Europe, and which the next lecture will lead us to notice more particularly; that these, I say, have a connection with the pouring out of some of these seven vials, no unprejudiced mind can doubt; but to suppose that none of these last plagues were inflicted upon Babylon, till the French revolution burst forth like a volcano, is surely a great mistake; but it is one into which the writers now referred to, have been betrayed by obvious causes. I formerly mentioned to you, that they resolve the prophecies couched under the first four trumpets into one common object, the invasion of the Roman empire by the Goths and Vandals; and this is precisely the course which they adopt with the first four vials; they can see nothing in them but the French revolution! This is taking a very contracted view of this vast subject of New Testament prophecy, and it is what I would caution you against admitting. And now that I am upon the matter, I may mention to you a very superficial and flimsy interpretation of the pouring out of this third vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, which is offered us by the learned Joseph Mede, Dr. Henry More, and others, when they tell us, that these rivers and fountains of waters denote the Jesuits and other popish emissaries; and according to them, the plague inflicted upon them was their

<sup>c</sup> In proof of what is said above concerning Mr. Faber's method of interpreting the vials, I only need to adduce the following paragraph from his *Sacred Calendar of Prophecy*, Vol. iii. p. 374.

"Thus, unless I be wholly mistaken, the three first vials respectively began to flow on the 26th of August, the 2nd of September, and the 19th of November, in the year 1792. Whence it will follow, that, although they *commenced* successively, yet the period of the one not having expired before the period of the other began, they were all three flowing *at the same time*, with portentous rapidity and effect."

Now, that Mr. Faber is *wholly mistaken* in dating the *commencement* of the pouring out of these first three vials at the periods of time mentioned by him, will, I hope, appear from the explanation and application given of them in this lecture. But independent of that, who that looks at Mr. Faber's interpretation with only two grains of reflection, can fail to hesitate at admitting its correctness? Here are three vials poured out, according to him, in less than as many months! What, were there no calamities in France prior to the 26th August, 1792? Is there no account to be made of the insurrection which led to the destruction of the Bastile, July 14, 1789? Nothing of the events of the 5th and 6th of October of the same year? Nothing of the destruction of the benefices of the clergy in the following year? Nothing in the revolt of Calvados and La Vendée in 1791, when those departments were, through the influence of fanatical priests, converted into vast slaughter houses? Nothing in the *commencement* of the war in Belgium, &c? Really, upon Mr. Faber's principle of interpretation, instead of *seven* vials, there should have been *seventy and seven*, to appropriate one to each of the monstrous atrocities of the French revolution! But of his scheme of things relating to both the trumpets and the vials, we may say, in the words of the late lord chancellor Eldon, respecting a case before him, "'Tis all wrong together."

expulsion from the different courts of Europe, and their banishment to Paraguay! Now, besides that, to explain the symbol of “rivers and fountains of waters,” as denoting a handful of mischievous priests, is a total departure from the fixed canons of interpretation, as admitted even by themselves, it is taking a very low view of the subject, and one that, in my opinion, little corresponds with the sublime language that follows :

“I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus; for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy; and I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty; true and righteous are thy judgments.” The very reading of such language as this, impresses the mind with the idea of a train of calamities coming upon the nations in the way of *retributive judgment*: “They have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.” Mr. Fuller’s note upon these verses appears to me to be much to the purpose, and I shall take leave to give it you. “The responsive language of the angels,” says he, “is exceedingly impressive. It shews in what light the persecution of the faithful is viewed in heaven. This sin involves in it such a hatred of God and his image, as would, if he were within reach, dethrone and annihilate him! Unjust war is a great sin—it is murder on an extended scale; yet it is not to be named in comparison of persecution for Christ’s sake. The one is destroying God’s natural image, but the other is aimed at his moral image. In the former ‘the potsherd striveth with the potsherds of the earth;’ but in the latter, man striveth with his Maker! This was the sin which crowned the wicked life of Herod the Tetrarch, who, to all his other crimes, ‘added this *above all*, that he shut up John in prison!’ Blood shed in persecution of the servants of God, hath a cry which must sooner or later be heard. The persecutions of former ages may be forgotten by men; but HE ‘who is, and was, and shall be,’ will not forget them. The judgments of our own times are examples of this. All Europe, previous to the Reformation, was stained with the blood of the martyrs; and since that memorable æra, France, and Germany, and Spain, and Portugal, and Italy have been deeply engaged in that impious practice. Is it surprising that all Europe in a measure, and those nations in particular which have persisted in it, should be made to drink the bloody draught? While we feel, and ought to feel for suffering humanity, it is not for us to join with the merchants of the earth in their wailings, but rather with the angels in heaven, saying, “Thou art righteous, O Lord, because thou hast judged thus!”<sup>d</sup>

<sup>d</sup> Expository Discourses, p. 277.

I shall only add to this, that whoever calmly reviews, and with a proper spirit, the civil wars that distracted our own country during nearly the whole of the seventeenth century, will find that she did not escape *scot-free*, as we say. No doubt every party thought they were contending for the true religion, and fighting for the kingdom of Christ, when by bloodshed, war, and persecution, they were seeking to establish their own form, and maintain their worldly interest, to the extirpation of all that was inconsistent with it: but nothing could be more antichristian, nothing more contrary to the spirit of Christ, and the nature of his kingdom.

“*And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given him to scorch men with fire; and men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the God of heaven, which hath power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory,*” ver. 8, 9. This fourth vial is poured out upon *the sun*, which must be the light of the antichristian world, whatever that be; and its effect is to increase the action of that luminary, so as to render its beams both scorching and insupportable; for, you see, it vents itself in blasphemy against the God of heaven. But where shall we find the import, the meaning, the true interpretation of this symbol? What is it that diffuses its radiant beams over the antichristian kingdom, and gives life, animation, and energy to the system of popery? Brethren, it is necessary that we make out this point, or we never can come at the signification of this fourth vial. This luminary cannot be the Bible; that, I was going to say, is self-evident; but, certain it is, that the kingdom of the beast was never in so flourishing a condition as when the Bible was a prohibited book, and the mass of the people were prevented access to it. That book does, indeed, speak of Antichrist and his kingdom; it foretels their rise, and reign, and prevalence; but it shews their origin to be “the bottomless pit,” uniformly states them to be in opposition to Christ and his kingdom, and declares their end to be eternal destruction. It is not, therefore, from the holy Scriptures that this system derives its rays of light. Whence then are they elicited? On a subject of this kind, I conceive it would be presumptuous in me to do more than offer hints for your consideration. Probably one, or all of the three things which I am about to mention, may be found to constitute *the sun* of the antichristian kingdom.

1. *The wisdom of man*, as it stands opposed to the wisdom of God revealed in the holy Scriptures;—the wisdom of the scribe and the disputer of this world, particularly as it appears dictating in matters of faith and duty, in opposition to “thus saith the Lord.” It was from indulging this spirit that Antichrist was hatched in the churches.

2. Connected with the foregoing, and nearly allied to it, is,



what we may call, *church policy*, or that fleshly wisdom which is called into exercise in order to the management of any national form of a church, in conformity to the course of this world, in whatever nation or country it is established; and in a consistency with the civil government, by means of which it is upheld, or seeks to support itself. All this is in flat opposition to the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus, as well as to that simplicity and godly sincerity in which the first ministers of the gospel had their conversation in the world.

3. Another thing which I would mention as essential to the antichristian system; a principle which diffuses its influence throughout every department, and without which it would instantly crumble into ruins, is, what we call, *church authority*, or the authority of any class of clergymen over the consciences of the people of any country; a power vested in them by the kings of the earth; and this, in opposition to the authority of Christ and his word, over the consciences of his willing people.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>e</sup> It would be no easy matter to find a title which in a short compass should combine the quintessence of the three ingredients above mentioned, as constituting the sun of the antichristian kingdom. Probably that which forms the title of Hooker's celebrated performance, viz. "*Ecclesiastical Polity*," would come as near to it as any other. And, indeed, the radical principles of that book will be found, when duly considered, to form the line of demarcation between the kingdom of Christ, and that of Antichrist. For instance, the principles on which that learned writer proceeds, are the following: "That though the Holy Scriptures are a perfect standard of doctrine, they are not a rule of discipline or government; nor is the practice of the apostles an invariable rule or law to the church in succeeding ages, because they acted according to the circumstances of the church in its infant and persecuted state: neither are the Scriptures a rule of human actions, so far as that whatsoever we do in matters of religion, without their express warrant, is sin; but many things are left indifferent: the church is a society like others, invested with powers to make what laws she apprehends reasonable, decent, or necessary, for her well-being and government, provided they do not interfere with, or contradict the laws and commandments of Holy Scripture: where the scripture is silent, human authority may interpose: we must then have recourse to the reason of things, and the rights of society: it follows from hence, that the church is at liberty to appoint ceremonies, and establish order within the limits above mentioned, and her authority ought to determine what is fit and convenient; all who are born within the confines of an established church, and are baptized into it, are bound to submit to its ecclesiastical laws; they may not disgrace, revile, or reject them at pleasure: the church is their mother, and has more than a maternal power over them: the positive laws of the church, not being of a moral nature, are mutable, and may be changed or reversed by the same powers that made them; but while they are in force, they are to be submitted to, under such penalties, as the church in her wisdom shall direct." See *Neal's History of the Puritans*, Vol. i. ch. viii.

In the preceding extract the reader has the substance or fundamental principles of this celebrated performance; a work which is universally regarded as the ablest defence of the church of England that ever appeared, and from which all who would be acquainted with its constitution, may see upon what

Now, these three things are nearly allied to each other; there is, I was going to say, an almost inseparable connection between them, and they serve to support and maintain one another. When, therefore, we speak of the sun, or light of the antichristian world, in opposition to the light of the kingdom of heaven, it must comprehend the three things I have now mentioned. The pouring out of the fourth vial on this sun, seems to have augmented its action or influence; but this it did to the injury of the antichristian world; for, it is added, that power was given to this sun to "scorch men with fire," and "they were scorched with great heat." To enter with effect into this subject, we would need to have some acquaintance with the numerous controversies which agitated what is called the christian church, both at home and abroad, for the space of two centuries after the Reformation, particularly on the subject of church policy, as those were managed between the catholics, on one side, and the protestants on the other. The heat and animosity engendered by these disputations, when church policy came to be opposed to church policy, grew to an enormous height, to the great vexation of every party of church politicians, and of all the people influenced by them. Ecclesiastical authority also grew more intense by opposition; while they who had been undermost, and felt the smart of it as exercised by others, when they came to get the ascendancy, and obtained the power of exercising it, were no less fervent in maintaining it in their own hands. Thus, when it circulated, and met with opposition, it was the source of no small disquiet to all the slavish subjects of church authority.<sup>f</sup>

foundation it is built. The first part of the work was published in 1597, but the whole did not appear till 1600. The only remark which I shall here offer upon it is, that it exhibits all the radical principles on which the emperor Constantine, and the clergy of his day, proceeded in laying the platform of popery, and upon which was raised that monstrous antichristian system which is denounced throughout the Apocalypse, as the object of the divine vengeance, "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS." The real difference between the church of England, and the church of Rome, making the most of it, is only that which exists in nature between the *genus* and the *species*, the mother and the daughter: they are equally antichristian in their constituent principles; and, as being parts of the mystical Babylon, are both "foredoomed."

<sup>f</sup> In the course of delivering this lecture, I adverted to the controversy that was carried on during the seventeenth century between the Jesuits and the Jansenists, both parties avowed members of the catholic church. On this subject, perhaps, the following extract from an eminent cotemporary writer, may be acceptable to the reader.

"The long and violent dispute betwixt the Jesuits and the Jansenists, had for many years tended to lessen the general consideration for the [papal] church at large, and especially for the higher orders of the clergy. In that quarrel much had taken place that was disgraceful. The mask of religion has

The miserable consequence of these divisions and disputations about church policy and church authority was, that while men were thus scorched by the intense heat of the antichristian sun, “*they blasphemed the name of God which had power over this and the foregoing plagues.*” I understand this to refer to the prevalence of deism and infidelity, which was the certain consequence of these wranglings and disputings about a matter that was entirely alien to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Men of a speculative turn, and of no religion themselves, observing that all this heat was about the christian religion and the church, and that it was the effect of bringing the Scriptures to light, and their being laid open to public view, began to reproach Christianity itself, and the Bible in which the name of God is revealed, as the cause of it. And this is the substance of the writings of Rousseau, Voltaire, D’Alembert, and others, on the continent; and those of Tindal, Morgan, and Chubb, of Woolston and Collins, of Hume, Gibbon, and Paine, in our own country; I mean, so far as their writings relate to religion.

Happy is the man who can distinguish between genuine Christianity and its corruptions; between the kingdom of the Lord and Saviour, and that of the clergy; who, receiving the Holy Scriptures as a revelation from heaven, makes them the man of his counsel and the guide of his life; who has an ear to hear, and a heart inclined to obey, what the Spirit saith unto the churches: “*Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.*”

been often used to cover more savage and extensive persecutions, but at no time did the spirit of intrigue, of personal malice, of slander and circumvention, appear more disgustingly from under the sacred disguise; and in the eyes of the thoughtless and the vulgar, the general cause of religion suffered in proportion.”—*Sir Walter Scott’s Life of Napoleon*, ch. i.

This memorable quarrel commenced about the year 1640, and was terminated only in 1705, and that in consequence of the famous bull “*Unigenitus*,” issued by pope Clement XI., in which it was declared, “*that in order to pay a proper obedience to the papal constitutions concerning the present question, it is necessary to receive them with a respectful silence.*”

## LECTURE XXXVII.

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AND the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, 11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. 12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. 17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. 18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. 19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. 20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.—Rev. xvi. 10-21.

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### THE FIFTH, SIXTH, AND SEVENTH VIALS.

THE course of lectures which we have now been prosecuting during the last nine months, has at length brought us, after tracing the series of New Testament prophecies in order, from the setting up of the kingdom of Christ in the world, through the period of the seals and the trumpets, and the pouring out of the first four vials, to the times in which our own lot is cast,—the days that are passing over us. In examining and illustrating these predictions, as they successively came before us in the pages of Revelation, we have had recourse to the only source of information and evidence that was afforded us, viz. the pen of the historian, as it has been employed in chronicling the annals of mankind. Now, however, a somewhat new order of things presents itself. The pouring out of *the fifth vial* directs our attention to events which

have mostly transpired during our own life-time ; events, with the history of which most of us are familiar ; and consequently, in adverting to them as the subject matter of this prophecy, I shall only be speaking of things most surely believed among you. The events of the sixth and seventh vials are yet in the womb of time : those vials are still to be poured out ; and were I to attempt to tell you, as our modern millennarians are now doing, *when* that shall take place, or what shall be its attendant circumstances, I conceive that I should be guilty of a conduct highly presumptuous, and such as would merit the severest reprehension. The times and the seasons are in the Lord's hands ; and it appears to me, that he has wisely cast a veil over them.<sup>a</sup>

“ *And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast ; and his kingdom was full of darkness ; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds,*” ver. 10, 11. The pouring out of this fifth vial corresponds to the sounding of the fifth trumpet, as its counterpart. Of that trumpet you have an account, ch. ix. 1-11 ; and, as we formerly saw, it predicted the kingdom of the clergy arriving at maturity, sym-

<sup>a</sup> My principal reference here was to a letter which appeared, at the moment of writing, in some of the daily journals, written by Wolff, the missionary, dated Jerusalem, “ Mount Calvary, April 20th, 1829,” addressed “ To the Church of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland.” The following is an extract from this *strange* production ; but, strange as it certainly is, it is only an echo of the multifarious extravagancies that have issued from the “ Albury school,” as must be well known to those who have perused the “ Dialogues on Prophecy,” &c. &c. After detailing the difficulties of his journey, the writer thus proceeds to narrate his proceedings at Jerusalem :

“ I proclaimed for two months to the Jews the great truth, first, that JESUS OF NAZARETH came the first time on earth, despised and rejected of men, to die for poor sinners ; and, secondly, that he will come again with glory and majesty ; and, glorious in his apparel, and travelling in the greatness of his strength, he will come the SON OF MAN, in the year 1847, in the clouds of heaven, and gather all the tribes of Israel, and govern in person as man and God in the literal city of Jerusalem, with his saints, and be adored in the temple, which will be rebuilt, and thus he shall govern a thousand years ; and I, Joseph Wolff, shall see, with my own eyes, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in their bodies, in their glorified bodies ; and I shall see thee, Elijah, and thee, Isaiah, and thee, Jeremiah, and thee, David, whose songs have guided me to JESUS OF NAZARETH. I shall see you all here at Jerusalem, where I am writing these lines.

“ These were the topics upon which I spoke, not only with Jews, but likewise with some Mussulmans.”

(Signed)

“ JOSEPH WOLFF,

“ Missionary to the Jews in Palestine and Persia.”

See the *Morning Herald*, Saturday, September 5th, 1829.

In this extract the reader has a specimen of the modesty and diffidence which characterize our modern Millennarians, to which school the writer of it belongs

bolized by swarms of crowned locusts issuing out of the smoke of the bottomless pit, possessing the power of scorpions, and darkening the sun and air. As that trumpet exhibited the kingdom of Antichrist coming in power; so the pouring out of this vial fills that kingdom with darkness, reducing "the crowned locusts" to that state of discomfiture and distress, that, as it is here significantly expressed, "they gnaw their tongues for pain, and blaspheme the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores."

When the blessed God fills the antichristian kingdom with darkness, he appears in his glory, Ps. cii. 16, as the God of the kingdom of heaven; or, which is the same thing, the heavenly kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, in opposition to the worldly kingdom of the antichristian party. Moreover, he appears as the God of heaven, vindicating the rights of his beloved Son, which had been usurped by the clergy, and establishing his kingdom on the ruins of the Man of sin, according to the prophecy of Daniel, ch. vii. 18, that "the saints shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever and ever." And the conduct of the Most High, in this respect, I mean in destroying the kingdom of Antichrist, consuming it with the Spirit of the Lord's mouth, and establishing his heavenly kingdom upon the ruins of it, rouses the indignation, excites the contempt, and draws forth the blasphemies of those who are well-affected to the kingdom of the beast; on this account they reproach and blaspheme the kingdom of heaven, just as the Jews did at its first setting up. And, may I not advert to this as one of the signs of the times that are passing over us?—When we meet with what are termed "evangelical clergymen," of the churches of England and Scotland, denouncing the dissenters as the curse of the land, anathematizing them furiously, and plainly enough shewing, that were their power equal to their inclination, they would speedily effect their extirpation;—such language and conduct, emanating from such a quarter, has a voice which cannot well be mistaken. It proves the antichristian kingdom to be full of darkness; it is the language of men "gnawing their tongues for pain;" and it is, in effect, *blaspheming the God of heaven*, who is undermining their power and consequence, and shaking all national forms of Christianity to their very centre. That man must be blind indeed who does not perceive the distress which oppresses the kingdom of the clergy at this day, on seeing persecuting principles everywhere wearing out of fashion, the world in general going into infidelity, and the kingdom of heaven, which was preached by Christ and his apostles, in opposition to that worldly kingdom which the Jews expected, once more manifesting itself, and that in opposition to church authority supported by secular power. So that Christianity daily appears more and more to be the reverse of a national religion; and the system of "eccl-

siastical polity," which has been so wonderfully admired and cried up, is every year becoming less and less efficient, and in a little time will become as obsolete as an old almanack. This galls the clergy to the heart, and they reproach the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, as it stands in opposition to their kingdom which is of this world. Yet, they repent not of their deeds, but, as far as they have power to persecute, they do it still; while the spirit of worldly ambition, and the lust of power, are as prevalent among them as ever. But, not to dwell on these generalities, we shall now descend to something like a sketch or outline of the history of this fifth plague inflicted on the kingdom of Antichrist, in consequence of the pouring out of this vial.

"The fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast," by which appears to be denoted those kingdoms on which Antichrist sat enthroned, and from which he derived his chief power, or main support. I think we need not be much at a loss to ascertain what countries these were. I mentioned, in my last lecture, several of the states of Europe which had withdrawn their support from him, in a measure, some two or three centuries ago, among which was our own country. These, therefore, can with no propriety, be reckoned the *seat*, or *throne* of the beast; but there were several of the ten kings who, at the beginning, had pledged their power and strength to the beast, which still remained faithful in their allegiance to that antichristian power; such were France, Spain, Portugal, the states of Italy, Naples, Genoa, Sardinia, Tuscany, Austria, and some of the circles of Germany; all of them countries included within the ten kingdoms into which the Roman western empire was partitioned at its fall. Here, then, we must look for the seat of the beast, and among them are the contents of this fifth vial poured out.

I must confess, that it is with some surprise I find intelligent and judicious writers on the Apocalypse speaking of this fifth vial as having begun to be poured out in their day, now nearly a hundred years ago. Upon a closer examination of their writings, however, I perceive that they had their eye, not so much upon any political occurrences, such as wars, pestilence, and famine, as upon the darkness which then filled the kingdom of the beast, and the bitter wailings of the clergy for the loss of their influence. These things, however, were only the beginnings of sorrow to them; and a short review of the transactions of the last forty years, will be sufficient to justify, or vindicate us in applying this vial to the present times.

It is a circumstance which certainly ought not to be overlooked by such as would trace the footsteps of divine Providence in the earth, or the dealings of the righteous Governor of the universe with guilty nations, that in raising Antichrist to his throne, and

ministering to his aggrandizement, the kings of France took a more active part than any, or almost all the other crowned heads of Europe. About the year 770, when Adrian I. filled the pontifical chair, the latter was greatly annoyed by the king of the Lombards; and in his extremity, as had been usual with his predecessors on similar occasions, he sent ambassadors privately to Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, who then filled the throne of France, inviting him to revenge his quarrel, and make the conquest of Italy. The French monarch received the pope's invitation with great satisfaction, put himself at the head of a large army, which he marched into Italy, and falling unexpectedly upon the Lombards, avenged the quarrel of the pope, A.D. 774. Having effected this, he repaired to Rome, where he was received by the pope in the most pompous manner, the magistrates and judges walking before him with their banners, and the clergy impiously chanting, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." This monarch reigned during the long term of five-and-forty years, in all which time he was the firm friend of the papal see, and rendered it so many and such signal services, that, to testify his gratitude, in the year 800, the pope invited him to Italy, placed an imperial crown upon his head, and pronounced him emperor of the Romans. From that memorable period to our own times, the kings of France continued to acknowledge the popes as God's vicegerents, implicitly to obey their dictates, and in all respects to conduct themselves as dutiful sons of the catholic church. The same obsequiousness was also manifested by the other monarchs. But to assist you in forming a correct estimate of the dealings of the Most High with these nations in the various events included in the pouring out of this fifth vial, it may be useful to lay before you a brief sketch of the state of religion in those countries at the period referred to, and I shall give it you in the words of a distinguished author now living, whose testimony is of the more weight, inasmuch as he himself is a worshipper of *the image* of the beast. He is treating of the causes of the late revolution in France, and thus he writes:—

"The catholic church had grown old, and, unfortunately, did not possess the means of renovating her doctrines, or improving her constitution, so as to keep pace with the enlargement of the human understanding. The lofty claims to infallibility which she had set up and maintained during the middle ages, claims she could neither renounce nor modify, now threatened, in more enlightened times, like battlements too heavy for the foundation, to be the means of ruining the edifice they were designed to defend. The church of Rome could explain nothing, soften nothing, renounce nothing, consistently with her assertion of impeccability. The whole trash which had been accumulated for ages of dark-



ness and ignorance, whether consisting of extravagant pretensions, incredible assertions, absurd doctrines which confounded the understanding, or puerile ceremonies which revolted the taste, were alike incapable of being explained away, or abandoned. Humanly speaking, it would have been advantageous, alike for the church of Rome, and for Christianity in general, that the former possessed the means of relinquishing her extravagant claims, modifying her more obnoxious doctrines, and retrenching her superstitious memorials, as increasing knowledge shewed the injustice of the one, and the absurdity of the other. But this power she dared not assume; and hence, perhaps, the great schism which divides the christian world, which might, otherwise, never have existed. At any rate, the church of Rome, retaining the spiritual empire over so large and fair a portion of the christian world, would not have been reduced to the alternative of either defending propositions, which, in the eyes of all enlightened men, are altogether untenable, or of beholding the most essential and vital doctrines of Christianity confounded with them, and the whole system exposed to the scorn of the infidel. The more enlightened, and better informed part of the French nation had fallen, very generally, into the latter extreme.

“Infidelity, in attacking the absurd claims and extravagant doctrines of the church of Rome, had artfully availed herself of those abuses as if they had been really a part of the christian religion: and they whose credulity could not digest the grossest articles of the papist creed, thought themselves entitled to conclude in general against religion itself, from the abuses engrafted upon it by ignorance and priestcraft. The same circumstances which favoured the assault, tended to weaken the defence. Embarrassed by the necessity of defending the mass of human inventions with which their church had obscured and deformed Christianity, the catholic clergy were not the best advocates, even in the best of causes; and though there were many brilliant exceptions, yet it must be owned, that a great part of the higher orders of the priesthood gave themselves little trouble about maintaining the doctrines, or extending the influence of the church, considering it only in the light of an asylum, where, under the condition of certain renunciations, they enjoyed, in indolent tranquillity, a state of ease and luxury.”

Connected with this deplorable state of things in reference to christian principles, the state of these catholic countries, and that of France in particular, had, at this time, arrived at a pitch of licentiousness, in regard to morals, which may be considered as completing the climax of national degradation. “The licentiousness which walked abroad in disgusting and undisguised nakedness,” says the writer just quoted, “was sufficient to have called

down, in the age of miracles, an immediate judgment from heaven; and crimes which the worst of the Roman emperors would have at least concealed from public view, were acted as openly as if men had no eyes, or the Most High no thunderbolts.”<sup>b</sup>

Such is the appalling picture of the state of society and manners in France, and it was much the same in the other catholic countries, as drawn by the pen of the historian, when, precisely forty years ago, the revolutionary proceedings in that unhappy country commenced. And now the principles of atheism, irreligion, and licentiousness, which had for ages been concocting, began to develope themselves in all the horrors of anarchy and confusion. It is foreign to my purpose to go into a detail of the atrocities that were perpetrated, the cruelties that were exercised, and the crimes that were committed by the Goths and Vandals, the Alarics, Attilas, and Genseric, who became the leaders in this revolution. Dr. Dwight, speaking of them, very justly observes, that “there was a grossness of immorality, a brutal atheism in the speeches and measures of the national legislature; a disregard of evidence, truth and justice, in the proceedings of its judicial tribunals; a ferocity in the conduct of its judges and juries; and a savageness in the behaviour of its executive officers, which, if reported by others, would have been considered as an outrage upon credulity itself. Happily for us, they were their own historians, and the truth of their recitals could not be questioned.”<sup>c</sup>

Foremost in the class of sufferers during this convulsion, were the clergy of the antichristian kingdom. The deranged condition of the finances of the French government, suggested the necessity of availing themselves of the immense wealth of the clergy; and the latter were called upon, in the first instance, to make sacrifices for the good of the state. This was complied with as a reasonable demand,—“*it was the day of sacrifices!*” As the difficulties of the administration increased, new sacrifices were required; and to meet those exigencies, a proposition was made to confiscate the entire property belonging to the clergy, for the benefit of the nation. It was in vain that the clergy exclaimed against such an act of rapine and extortion; they were told with insulting gravity, that the property belonging to a community was upon a different footing from that belonging to individuals, because the state might dissolve the community or body-corporate, and resume the property attached to it; and under this sophism, they assumed, for the benefit of the public, the whole right of property belonging to the church of France!

The next step in relation to the clergy was, a scheme brought

<sup>b</sup> Sir Walter Scott's Life of Napoleon, vol. i. ch. ii.

<sup>c</sup> Travels in New England, vol. iv. p. 372.

forward to provide for the public worship on the most economical plan; in other words, a constitution was framed for the clergy, *declaring them totally independent of the see of Rome*, and vesting the choice of bishops in the magistrates of the different departments; and to this constitution each priest and prelate was required to adhere by a solemn oath: and by a subsequent decree of the Assembly, any clergyman who hesitated to take the oath, forfeited his benefice. The object of this measure was, to detach them from the see of Rome; and to such of them as had any conscience of their connection with the latter, it was an oppressive measure. Their dependence on the see of Rome was a part of their creed, an article of their faith, and consequently the greater part of them refused to take it, and thousands and tens of thousands of them were eventually compelled to quit the country, and seek an asylum in England, or more distant climes. Some of them, it is true, remained; but it was to become the peculiar objects of insult and cruelty; for we are told, that during the great massacre of prisoners in Paris which took place from the second to the sixth of September, 1792, the clergy who had declined the constitutional oath, were seen confessing themselves to each other, or receiving the confessions of their lay companions in misfortune, and encouraging them to undergo the evil hour with as much calmness as possible. But on this distressing subject, so harassing to the feelings of humanity, I will not enlarge further than to lay before you a short paragraph, extracted from a late writer on the French Revolution.

“The massacre of St. Bartholemow’s day,” [Aug. 24, 1572] says he, “an event that filled all Europe with consternation, the infamy and horrors of which have been dwelt upon by so many eloquent writers of all religions, and which has held up Charles IX. to the execration of ages, dwindles into child’s play, when compared to the murderous proceedings in France during the first years of the revolution, which a certain French author calls, a *St. Bartholomew of five years!* According to Bossuet, there were about thirty thousand persons murdered throughout the whole of France on that memorable day, [others, however, state it at double that number!]. But during the late revolutionary proceedings there were more than that number murdered in the single city of Lyons and its neighbourhood; while at Nantz there were twenty-seven thousand; at Paris, one hundred-and-fifty thousand; in La Vendee, three hundred thousand. In short, it appears that there were two millions of persons murdered in France since it stiled itself a republic, viz. from 1792 to 1797; among whom are reckoned two hundred-and-fifty thousand women; two hundred-and-thirty thousand children, besides those destroyed in the womb; and *twenty-four thousand Christian* (or

catholic) *priests*.”<sup>d</sup> This is a horrible recital, but I fear it is true; and now, while ruminating upon it, can one forbear calling to mind the massacre of the Hugonots, above mentioned; the revocation of the edict of Nantz, October 22nd, 1685, which effected the ruin of all the protestant churches in France, and, after the murder of a prodigious number, compelled eight hundred thousand persons to quit the kingdom; the extirpation of the Albigenses, of whom a million, at least, are said to have fallen victims to the sword of persecution in the thirteenth century; and that of the Waldenses, by the armies of Louis XIV. in the year 1686. All these enormities were upon record, and who that takes them into his account, can forbear calling to mind what is written, “they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy,” ver. 6.

But justice to the subject now under consideration requires that we should not stop here. France was not the only country which drank of the cup of the divine indignation, in consequence of the pouring out of this fifth vial on the seat of the beast. The refusal of the pope of Rome to ratify the constitution which rendered the Gallican church independent of the Roman see, drew down upon his defenceless head the indignation of the rulers of France; and, accordingly, as soon as circumstances rendered it expedient, we find the republican armies marched into Piedmont, the once favoured asylum of the churches of the Waldenses, and avenging the quarrel of heaven for the wrongs committed on them towards the close of the seventeenth century; after this we find them deluging all the plains of Italy, overturning their governments, spoiling the countries of their choicest productions in science and art, laying their richest cities under contribution, and reducing the inhabitants to the utmost pitch of destitution and misery, and finally attacking the holy see itself; first plundering the pope and his subjects of their ill-gotten riches and wealth of every kind, and confiscating it to the use of the republic;<sup>e</sup> and to

<sup>d</sup> Gifford’s *Banditti Unmasked*, quoted by Mr. Faber, vol. iii. p. 368.

<sup>e</sup> “Twenty-one millions of francs, in actual specie, with large contributions in forage and military stores, the cession of Ancona, Bologna, and Ferrara, not forgetting one hundred of the finest pictures, statues, and similar objects of art, to be selected according to the choice of the committee of artists who attended the French army, were the price of a respite which was not of long duration.”

A few years subsequent to the infliction of this enormous impost, “though the pope had submitted passively to every demand which had been made by the French ambassador, however inconsistent with the treaty of Tolentino, the Directory, with the usual policy of their nation, privately encouraged a party at Rome which desired a revolution. These conspirators arose in arms, and, when dispersed by the guards, fled towards the hotel of Joseph Bonaparte, then the ambassador of the French to the pope. In the scuffle which ensued, the ambassador was insulted, his life endangered, and General Duphet actually

crown the whole, he is at length taken prisoner by the armies of France (1809), and brought in a state of captivity to Avignon, where he is held in *durance vile*, till liberated by the fall of his oppressors. That events of this kind should fill the kingdom of the clergy with darkness, and make them gnaw their tongues for pain, and even blaspheme the God of heaven, who by his inscrutable dealings in providence was thus undermining their kingdom, and tumbling all their pride and consequence into the mire, can surely surprise no one. But in this way is the word of prophecy fulfilled, and the truth and faithfulness of God vindicated.

Before we take our leave of this part of our subject, let me remind you of another important fact, namely, that there is no one part of the seat or throne of the beast, no section of the kingdom of Antichrist that can be said to have escaped the effects of the pouring out of this fifth vial. It is true, that we have only glanced at the state of France, Savoy, and Italy; but call to your recollection the war in the Netherlands, in Germany, Austria, Prussia, Russia, Spain and Portugal, not one of which countries escaped the scourge of war: all were made to drink of the bitter cup of the wrath of God; though it would not appear from existing facts, that any of them laid the subject to heart, or repented of their deeds in giving their support to Antichrist in one form or other. I shall only add, that in the distress of nations and the misery that has come upon them, in the events to which I have briefly alluded, as the result of the pouring out of this fifth vial, we seem to have "the harvest," spoken of in ch. xiv. 15, 16, as formerly hinted to you.

killed by his side. This outrage of course sealed the fall of the pope, which had probably long been determined on. Expelled from his dominions, the aged Pius VI. retired to Sienna, and in place of the pontiff's government arose the shadow of a mighty name, The Roman Republic."

Some time after this, state-policy induced the first consul of France to reinstate the pope in his temporal possessions and pontifical authority. A state religion was found necessary for France, and, in this view, none seemed so eligible as that of the church of Rome. The French armies consequently evacuated the ecclesiastical states, and the catholic religion was re-established in France. This was the result of the *Concordat*, or Compact, ratified Sept. 18th, 1801, and now the world beheld the once proud see of Rome laid prostrate before the feet of Bonaparte! Every article of the treaty was an innovation on some of those rights and claims which the church of Rome had for ages asserted as the unalienable privileges of her infallible head." A puritan might have said of the power seated on the Seven Hills, "Babylon is fallen, it is fallen, that great city;" the more rigid Catholics were of the same opinion. The Concordat, they alleged, shewed rather the abasement of the Roman hierarchy than the re-erection of the Gallican church. Yet, *mirabile dictu*, we find pope Pius VII. soon afterwards taking a journey from Rome to Paris, to assist at the coronation of Napoleon, as emperor of the French, and *blessing the crown* which he was not allowed to place on the head of his dutiful son.—See *Sir Walter Scott's Life of Napoleon*.

“And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east [or rising of the sun] might be prepared.” ver. 12.<sup>f</sup> This sixth vial answers to the sixth trumpet, ch. ix. 14, &c. and has an evident reference to the Mahometan powers; and, as the blowing of the sixth trumpet raised those powers to their height, so by the pouring out of this sixth vial, these powers are weakened, diminished, broken, so as to make way for the coming of Christ, as the antitype of Cyrus, to destroy Babylon and deliver his people. I formerly mentioned to you, when considering the sixth trumpet, that Euphrates is the name of the river on which stood the proud city of Babylon, the enemy and corrupter of God’s ancient people, the Jews. Such of you as have read Rollin’s Ancient History, will remember that this renowned city was taken in consequence of a singular stratagem of Cyrus, king of Persia, who, to gain access for his army into the city, cut a canal and turned the course of the river which ran through the city, in a different direction, so that the channel was drained, the bed of the river became dry, and the army of Cyrus, during the night, when Belshazzar and his lords were holding their impious feast, marched unmolested into the city, of which they took possession, putting the king and his nobles to death; see Dan. ch. v. From this memorable occurrence, the language is borrowed by which to represent the effects of the pouring out of this sixth vial. It appears pretty evident from Isa. xlv. 28, that Cyrus, the king of the east, was a type of Christ: I mean, in his conduct in subduing Babylon, delivering the captive Jews, and building their temple. Hence we find the Lord thus speaking by the mouth of his prophet, “I am Jehovah, that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; that saith to Cyrus, he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure.” See also ch. xlv.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>f</sup> Mr. Mede thinks that the drying up of the Euphrates, “that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared,” has a reference to the return of the dispersed of Judah to their own land. Mr. Faber applies it to the return of “the long-lost ten tribes of Israel,”—*Sacred Calendar*, vol. iii. p. 402, *note*. Others, with not less apparent probability, think the allusion is to the patriarch Abraham and his family coming out of Mesopotamia at the call of God, and travelling into the promised land, Acts vii. 2, 4.

<sup>g</sup> “Cyrus, being informed that an annual festival was approaching, at which the Babylonians were accustomed to spend the whole night in rioting and drunkenness, seized the favourable opportunity to attack the city. On the approach of the appointed day, he sent a strong detachment to the head of the canal leading to the great lake, which was dry, for receiving the superfluous waters of the river (Euphrates), with orders to break down the dam between the lake and the canal, and to convert the whole current into the lake. At the same time he stationed one division of his troops at the place where the river ran into Babylon, and another where it came out; ordering them to enter the

But then, here comes in a difficulty; in considering the sounding of the sixth trumpet, the issue of which was the rise and establishment of the Mahometan powers; it was seen that the Turkish empire came at first as a scourge upon the antichristian world, ch. ix. 20; how then shall the ruin of the Mahometan powers, which appears to be denoted by the drying up of the Euphrates, and so preparing the way for the kings of the east to pass over, make way for the ruin of mystical Babylon? Now this is a difficulty that time and the providence of God alone can solve. It refers to a matter of hitherto unfulfilled prophecy, and therefore I conceive it would be presumptuous in me to attempt an explanation; the event will make it manifest, and for that let us be content to wait. That this sixth vial has *begun* to be poured out, I should think can scarcely be doubted by those who are attentive to the signs of the times. The destruction of the Turkish navy by the fleets of the three combined powers, was a blow; and when we see that followed up by the defeat of their armies, and the advance of the Russians to the walls of Constantinople, what shall we say? Every week produces fresh evidence to my mind that the time of the pouring out of this sixth vial is arrived?

“*And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet: (for they are the spirits of devils, [or rather of demons], working miracles) which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty,*” ver. 13, 14. The great day of God Almighty is evidently the same period of time as that which is referred to under the symbol of the *vintage*, ch. xiv. 18-20, which is brought about by the pouring out of the seventh vial, whereby the total destruction of Antichrist takes place. Preparatory to this tremendous day, we have here the mustering of

city by its channel, whenever they should find it fordable. Towards the evening he opened the head of the trenches on both sides of the river, above the city, to discharge the waters. By these means, and the breaking down of the great dam, the river was soon drained, so that by midnight the two bodies of troops entered the channel, the one conducted by Gobrias, the other by Gadates, Babylonian nobles, who had revolted to Cyrus. Finding the gates that separated the streets from the river left open by negligence, occasioned by the general riot, the united parties entered the city without opposition, and, surprising the guards, put them to death. Those within the palace opening the gates to know the cause of the tumult, the Persians rushed in, and attacking the king, who met them in arms, slew him with his nobles around him. Cyrus became master of Babylon, and concluded his conquests after a war of twenty-one years; during which he had subdued all the nations of the east, from the Ægean sea to the river Indus, and erected the greatest empire that had been ever known in the world.”—*Rutherford's Ancient History*, vol. i. p. 87.

the forces. Three unclean spirits like frogs are described as going forth among the nations to gather them together. The agents who collect this mighty armament, are the dragon, that is, the devil, and Antichrist in his double capacity of a beast and false prophet; and for this purpose they send forth their wicked and deceitful emissaries, termed the spirits of demons, by which may be intended the dissemination of corrupt principles in the earth, stimulating the kings and governments to unite in the common cause of tyranny, superstition, and infidelity, to oppose all reformation, and prevent the spread of the everlasting gospel. This will be the beast's last struggle for existence; and to effect it, he will *gather these forces together into a place, called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon*, i. e. the mountain of destruction, alluding to Megiddo, where Sisera and the host of Jabin were overthrown, in the days of the Judges. See Judg. v. 19.

“It seems as if a spirit of infatuation, like that in Pharaoh and his host at the Red Sea, would possess the enemies of Christ, prior to this their last overthrow. The kings of the earth are gathered together, partly by hatred of God and religion (the spirit of the dragon); partly by the desire of subjugating both to political purposes (the spirit of the beast); and partly by blind zeal and religious imposture (the spirit of the false prophet); and being assembled, will direct all their force against God and his cause. In what particular mode their hostility will be manifested, and by what means Christ will prevail against them, is too much for us to determine.”<sup>h</sup>

“Behold, I come as a thief; blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame,” ver. 15. I do not understand this to refer to Christ's *personal* appearance, but to his coming in a way of vengeance upon his enemies, and the enemies of his church; his coming for the final destruction of Antichrist, which takes place at the pouring out of the seventh vial. There are but two *personal* comings of Christ mentioned in the scripture. The first when he came *in the flesh*; the second when he comes *in his glory*, to raise the dead. Yet, in scripture style he is said *to come* when he interposes by any signal act of his administration; as, for instance, when he shed forth his Spirit upon his disciples, John xiv. 18, and when he punished the Jewish nation for their infidelity, Matt. xxiv. 27, 39, 42. So the destruction of the Man of sin is said to be *by the brightness of his coming*, 2 Thess. ii. 8. In the passage before us, you cannot but remark a singular abruptness in the prophetic pen; the subject is broken off at the close of the fourteenth verse, and resumed again

<sup>h</sup> Fuller, p. 285.



in the sixteenth, and this is done by the Saviour to give his people warning, and that with the greater effect, apprising them that he will come upon his enemies suddenly and unexpectedly: a consideration which should lead them to be in a constant state of watchfulness and preparation.

“*And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air, and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, IT IS DONE. And there were voices and thunders and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great: and the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell; and great Babylon came into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath; and every island fled away, and the mountains were not found: and there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, for the plague thereof was exceeding great;*” ver. 17-21. The seventh and last vial is poured out *into the air*, the seat of Satan’s residence; for he is emphatically termed “the prince of the power of the air,” Eph. ii. 2. And therefore it will not only complete the destruction of Antichrist, but it will shake the kingdom of Satan everywhere. Paganism, Mahometanism, apostate Judaism, and every thing which stands opposed to the truth as it is in Jesus, will now be driven out of the world. Upon the pouring out of this vial, a voice from the heavenly temple, and issuing from the throne of God and the Lamb, proclaims “IT IS DONE,” agreeably to what was before declared, ch. x. 6, 7, “that in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall sound, the mystery of God shall be finished.” This vial pours out all the wrath of God, and its effects upon his enemies will be dreadful beyond any thing that has hitherto been known upon the earth in the way of national calamity and distress. This is signified by the expressive language here used. It is accompanied with “voices, and thunders, and lightnings, a tremendous earthquake, and great hail;” referring to the terrible appearance of Jehovah on Mount Sinai, when he established the kingdom of Israel; all importing great revolutions and awful judgments. We are particularly informed, that “the great city, or kingdom of Antichrist, was divided into three parts,” alluding to the three great *national* communions, which, indeed, had existed from the time of the Reformation, as I mentioned in my last lecture, viz. the Papal, the Lutheran, and the Calvinistic; and it is added, “the cities of the nations fell,” by which I understand to be denoted the total ruin and destruction of all national churches, as well as the putting down of all worldly rule, authority, and power by which they are supported. Compare ver. 19,

20, with Dan. ii. 34, 35, and 1 Cor. xv. 24. "And great Babylon came into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the wrath of his indignation; and every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." As the judgments of God upon mystical Babylon are more particularly set forth in the eighteenth chapter of the Apocalypse, we shall not enter upon the subject in this place. What is said in ver. 21 respecting the exceeding great hail, would appear to point at the fearful wrath to come, which is denounced in scripture against all those who know not God, and who obey not the gospel of his Son, 2 Thess. i. ; and when the vengeance of God is represented as falling upon the great city divided into three parts, there seems to be a reference to Ezek. v. 11-13; "Wherefore, as I live, saith the LORD GOD; surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish *thee*; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity. A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them: then shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the Lord have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them."

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Great God! how wondrous are thy works  
Of vengeance and of grace!  
Thou king of saints, Almighty Lord,  
How just and true thy ways.

Who dares refuse to fear thy name,  
Or worship at thy throne;  
Thy judgments speak thy holiness  
Through all the nations known.

Great Babylon that rules the earth,  
Drunk with the martyrs blood,  
Her crimes shall speedily awake  
The fury of our God.

The cup of wrath is ready mix'd,  
And she must drink the dregs:  
Strong is the Lord her sovereign judge,  
And shall fulfil her plagues.

## LECTURE XXXVIII.

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AND there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: 2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. 3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: 5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. 7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. 8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not: and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition; and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. 9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom; The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. 10 And there are seven kings; five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. 11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. 12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. 13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. 14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. 15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. 16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. 17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. 18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.—  
Rev. ch. xvii.

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### MYSTICAL BABYLON, THE GREAT HARLOT.

THE pouring out of the seventh vial, with an account of which our last lecture concluded, brings down this series of New Testament

prophecies to the commencement of the millennium period, or thousand years' reign of Christ and his saints upon the earth; though this interesting subject does not come regularly under our consideration, till we arrive at ch. xx. To such of you as have not paid much attention to the scheme, order, or arrangement of the book of the Revelation, it may seem strange that three chapters should intervene, viz. xvii. xviii. and xix. between these two subjects, so closely connected as they are, and succeeding one another without any interval of space or time; but the cause of this is easily explained. If you look back to ver. 19 of the foregoing chapter, you will find it said, that at the pouring out of the seventh vial, "Great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." Now this is the text on which the prophet discourses throughout these three chapters; they are wholly taken up with an account of this "Babylon the great," her character, her crimes, and her punishments. It is true that the subject had been repeatedly touched upon before; but it is here resumed for the sake of furnishing additional information; an enlarged illustration was necessary; with a view to which the subject is exhibited under different aspects, and we are called to contemplate it in fresh lights, such as are calculated to discover to us more and more its native deformity and horror.

In the chapter before us, we have the false church, or anti-christian apostacy, represented under the emblem of a woman, just as the true church also was in ch. xii. The latter is the antitype of the Old Testament church, which was frequently represented in the writings of the prophets under the notion of a married female, who had the Lord for her husband, Jer. iii.; and the New Testament church is also frequently thus spoken of in the same scriptures, Isa. liv. The false church professes to be the spouse of Christ; but in reality she is the antitype of Babylon, which is also spoken of in the Old Testament as a woman, the "lady of kingdoms," Isa. xlvii. 1, 5, 7. This church is the head of the grand apostacy from Christ, and carries on a continual opposition to him. And with respect to all other corrupt churches to which the name of *Babylon* may be applied, according to the measure of their conformity to her, she is "BABYLON THE GREAT." If we will take *her own* account of the matter, she is the holy mother church, the mother of God's children; and upon her all other churches should depend as on the mother which gave them birth; thus passing herself off for the true spouse of the Lord Jesus Christ; but in this prophetic vision, she is declared to be "the great whore;" yea, "the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth." But we shall attend to the prophet's narration in order.

“ *And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration,*” ver. 1-6. The meaning of the word “mystery” throughout the New Testament, seems to be the hidden sense of a figure; and particularly in the book of the Revelation, as appears from ch. i. 20, and xvii. 7. According to this scriptural use of the word “mystery,” the true church of God is the mystery of many figures and figurative prophecies of the Old Testament, and particularly of ancient Zion. So also is the anti-christian church the mystery of many figures and figurative prophecies of the Old Testament; on which account she is here emphatically termed “MYSTERY.” But especially she is the mystery of all that is said in the prophecies about Babylon, and so she is called *Babylon the great*. In fact, the Old Testament Babylon was but a sorry figure of the Babylon of the Apocalypse! That renowned city of old was, indeed, remarkable for idolatry; so is there idolatry in mystical Babylon the great, ch. ix. 20; but when ancient Babylon is presented to us as a type of Antichrist, it is principally on account of the persecution of the people of God, the destruction of their temple, and holding them in a state of bondage and captivity.

This corrupt city (mystical Babylon), now exhibited in vision to the prophet, had acquired her greatness and celebrity under the character of a *harlot*; for, her powerful influence over the kings and inhabitants of the earth, is described as arising from her *fornication* with them. She is represented as beguiling them to drink of the wine of her fornication, and leading them, while in a state of intoxication, through all the impurities of her idolatry, to that extreme madness of iniquity, when she wallows in the blood of saints and martyrs. Possessing, by this influence, the riches of the kings of the earth, she appears arrayed in vestments of the utmost splendour. Purple and scarlet, which were colours

appropriate to royalty in ancient times, are employed to adorn her. She is decorated with gold and precious stones and pearls; and she takes her seat upon "many waters," which is afterwards explained to signify, that she has dominion over *many nations*, or multitudes of peoples, ver. 15. To complete the description of this unchaste woman, she holds in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication, which corresponds with what is said of ancient Babylon by the prophet Jeremiah: "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand; the nations have drunken of her wine, therefore the nations are mad," ch. li. 7.

But the woman thus gorgeously apparalleled does not come alone; she appears mounted upon a scarlet coloured beast, "full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns," which is the exact description of the beast concerning which so much is said in Rev. ch. xiii. 1. The colour of the beast, it is true, is not mentioned in that chapter; but it is here expressly said to be that of *scarlet*, significantly intimating the persecuting character, or sanguinary complexion of this monstrous antichristian power. And, finally, to complete the climax, "upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

The "name on her forehead" is considered by some, to have a reference to the practice of harlots in ancient times, who not only used to inscribe their names on their doors; but some of them even had them upon their forehead. It is expressive, not only of the general character of the antichristian church, but of her impudence, practising day by day the foulest and filthiest abominations, and yet calling herself the "holy catholic church," and denying salvation to all without her pale! The purple and scarlet, and gold and precious stones and pearls, with which the woman was arrayed, indicate the attire of an harlot of no ordinary rank. The design is to describe her as being of the world, and seeking the things of the world, or as contriving by her meretricious ornaments to dazzle the eyes of her beholders. It is by that ceremonious pomp, splendour, and will-worship, which are often pleaded for under the name of *decency*, and even deemed necessary, both to gratify the taste of the polite, and excite the admiration of the vulgar, that corrupt systems of religion make their way. The world is taken by show. The "golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication," denotes her corrupt principles and idolatrous practices, recommended by her seducing emoluments. To complete the character of this mother of harlots, she is described as making others intoxicated, and as being herself "drunken with the blood of the saints;" so that when the apostle beheld her, "he wondered with great admira-

tion," as indeed he well might. Such atrocious wickedness, such an outrage on the religion of the cross, be it committed by whom it might, was wonderful; but who would ever have imagined that this was a picture of a community that was to arise some hundred years afterwards, under the imposing appellation of "the holy Roman catholic apostolic church," in whose pale alone salvation was to be found! The christian church, or kingdom of the Redeemer, was an object ever dear to the heart of the apostle John; what then must have been his impressions on being told that it should come to this!<sup>a</sup>

This unchaste woman, or, as she is here termed without any punctilious ceremoniousness, this "*great whore*," ver. 1, is described as having "committed fornication with the kings of the earth," or, to speak more properly, the latter are said to have committed fornication with her. This is generally thought to refer to the idolatrous worship of saints and angels, with the image-worship of the Romish church; just as ancient Israel were said to play the harlot when the people fell into the practice of idolatry. But we find the fornication of the antichristian society distinguished from their worship of demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, ch. ix. 20, 21, from which I am led to think that something else is intended than simple idolatry. The fornication of the whore, the mother of harlots, is indeed idolatry; but it is idolatry of a different kind, and one that answers full as well to what the Old Testament says of Israel's fornication. The whore pretends that, as the church of ancient Israel was espoused to Jehovah, so is she to the Lord Jesus Christ; and that in virtue of such espousal, she is the mother of his seed, the children of God. Such is her arrogant pretension; but examine her conduct; bring her actions to the test of truth, and they will be found as inconsistent with it as that of the church of Israel was when she took up with others in place of her husband—the LORD who had betrothed her to himself. Hence, she is called the whore; and that in opposition to the bride, the Lamb's wife.

But it is important for us to ascertain what is particularly intended by that fornication, on account of which this great society is denominated "the whore;" and the lesser societies copying after her, are termed "harlots." To set this in a proper point of view, observe what is said in ver. 2 of this chapter: "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication; and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." Connect with this, what is written ch. xviii. 3: "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have com-

<sup>a</sup> Fuller, p. 301.

mitted fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacy." Again, ver. 9, "And the kings of the earth who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her."

From the texts now quoted, it is plain that this fornication is committed with the kings of the earth. It is in virtue of this that she sits on many waters, or rules over a vast multitude of peoples, nations, and tongues. It is in virtue of this that she is arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls; and the merchants are enriched by her. And in virtue of this, she has the power of the kings of the earth to keep the nations in subjection to her, and to shed the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus. In short, this great whore, the mother of harlots, as imperious as ever Babylon, the lady of kingdoms, was in days of yore, reigns over the kings of the earth, with whom she commits fornication, for she sitteth on the beast having ten horns, which are explained to signify ten kings, ver. 12.

Still, however, it remains to be seen in what sense she can be said to commit fornication with these rulers of the earth. And I apprehend that this can only be by virtue of such a union existing between them, or in being so joined with them, as the church of Christ ought only to be with himself, and in taking *them*, some way or other, in *his* place who is the alone head of the true church, and in giving to them what the church can lawfully give to none other than Jesus Christ. And all this must be done under a cover, as in the case of whoredom, or of a wife's treacherously departing from her husband, and admitting another in his stead. Now, as this is a subject of no inconsiderable importance in Christianity; as it is the turning point, or hinge of difference between true and false churches—Christ and Antichrist; and, moreover, as it is the great object of all the writers in defence of national establishments of religion, to obscure, mystify, and annul it; I shall, even at the risk of being thought tedious, detain you a little upon it. It is a subject on which your minds cannot be too much familiarized; it will enable you to distinguish the things that differ; and, I hope, assist you in approving the things that are excellent.

The first thing in this treacherous departure of christian teachers and their followers from the way of truth, or from Jesus Christ, as the alone husband of the true church, was their attributing the throne of David, where Christ alone has a right to sit, first to the Roman emperors, Constantine and his successors; and afterwards, when the empire was broken up, unto the ten kings. Here the great apostacy dates its origin; for now they admitted these crowned heads to usurp the place of Christ, and they were



considered as antitypes of those that sat on the throne of David ; they allowed them to act towards the church in all matters of christian worship, just as the good kings under the former dispensation did about the temple of Jerusalem. And as Jehovah separated the nation of Israel to be his own kingdom, and condescended to act in it as a political sovereign, having his earthly court of priests, judges, and magistrates, who acted as his lieutenants, punishing prophets that led men to idolatry as rebels against the king of the nation, whose government was a theocracy : so in this new order of things which arose in the days of Constantine, the kings of the nations were, in the same sense, made God's lieutenants, and put into the very same place that the Lord Jesus Christ holds in the true Israel ; to them it is allowed to do every thing in the nations which they rule, that was proper for the kings of Judah to do in God's kingdom of old ; and that it is the proper province of Christ Jesus, to do in the church, which is his kingdom. In this way, the leaders in religion *Judaized*, and converted the kingdom of Christ, which is *not* of this world, into a kingdom *of* this world.

And now mark what followed upon this first step in the christian apostasy. In the days of the apostles, while Christianity preserved its pristine purity, men were made Christians by the word and Spirit of Christ, the rod of his strength sent out of Zion, and thereby they were " taken out of the nations as a people for his name." But now, the peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues became *nominally* christian through the influence of the powers of the earth, who, discarding the old national forms of religion, established a spurious profession of Christianity in their place. These are the *many waters*, or, to speak without a figure, the multitudes of peoples and nations on which the whore sitteth ; these are they which are said to tread the holy city under foot ; a spurious brood, the offspring of the powers of the earth thus joined with the church, which hereby appears a whore taking others to beget children in the room of her husband.

This gathering in of the nations by wholesale to the church produced a wonderful change in the profession of Christianity. For, as the natural dread of a Deity makes it necessary that mankind should have some form of religion to quiet the conscience ; so the nations of this world, as such, can never be brought to submit to any form of it which is not compatible with the gratification of their worldly lusts, and the pursuit of their worldly interests ; and these things are always provided for in national establishments : whereas the primitive christian profession was a strait and narrow way, requiring a renunciation of the world, the mortification of every sinful lust, every irregular propensity,

and the cultivation of humility, self-denial, heavenly mindedness, taking up the cross daily, &c. &c. The christian profession was consequently *now* shaped into a decent conformity to the course of this world, so that men might have “a form of godliness while they denied the power of it;” a form every way consistent with the denial of the power: such is the antichristian profession, but such is not genuine Christianity.

When the nations were thus brought under a form of Christianity adapted to them, then the kings of the earth, by their power, became the supporters and defenders of that form, against all opposers. Thus the whore came to sit upon the scarlet coloured beast, adorned with all the glory of this world, instead of the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ, which he puts upon the true church; and thus she came to persecute the saints and martyrs of Jesus, whose allegiance to their rightful sovereign, manifested by their keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, is inconsistent with the national form of Christianity, of which the kings of the earth, with whom the whore commits fornication, are the defenders, even as Jesus Christ is the defender of the true church, and of the true christian profession.

We have already noticed the surprise which seized the holy apostle, on beholding a woman, something like a church, a professed spouse of Christ, yet the antitype of Babylon, sitting so adorned with worldly ornaments on a scarlet coloured beast, and drunk with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus; he is represented as wondering with great admiration. The absolute inconsistency of all this, with every apprehension which he had of a church, pretending to be the spouse of Christ, filled him with astonishment. When he saw the Roman church, which was once espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin, exhibited to his view in this terrific shape, and called “Babylon the great, the mother of harlots,” he was utterly confounded; “*he wondered with great admiration.*”

“*And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns: the beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition; and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world) when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And here is the mind which hath wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth: and there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space: and the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth; and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition,*” ver. 7-11.

Having given an account of the woman, the great whore, the mother of harlots, the angel proceeds to describe the beast which carried her. The whole description goes to prove, that by the beast here is intended the Roman empire, with its diversified forms of government. When the holy prophet had this vision, the Roman state had undergone various forms of government, whence it is spoken of as "the beast that *was*, and *is not*, and yet *is*." This, at first view, may appear to some quite paradoxical; but it admits of a very clear and intelligible explanation, whether I am able to convey it to you or not. For instance, prior to the overthrow of paganism by Constantine the Great, the Roman empire existed; it then *was*: it was that idolatrous, blasphemous, persecuting power which Daniel had foretold, and which was symbolized by the dragon. From that period, professing to become a christian government, the properties of the beast were, as one may say, laid aside; and, in reference to this state, it is said, it *was not*; it was no longer the dragon. Such was its character from the days of Constantine to the time when Antichrist ascended his throne. It might be denominated "the beast that *was*, and *is not*, or the *late* pagan, but *now* christian empire." But notwithstanding this his profession of Christianity, his origin is "the bottomless pit," and his end "perdition." He may deceive the blinded multitude with his pretences of being *not* what he once was: nevertheless, the angel informs the prophet, that he yet *is*. He had, indeed, "received a wound by a sword," which at the time was thought to be mortal, but it turned out otherwise. The corruptions of Christianity healed it, and all the properties of the beast revived in their wonted vigour.

After this general sketch, the angel proceeds to inform the prophet more particularly concerning the *seven heads* of the beast, and intimates, that in order to understand this subject, there would be scope for the exercise of "wisdom," as there was in counting the number of his name. "The seven heads," it is said, "are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth," ver. 10. This determines the seat of the beast, or antichristian apostacy, to be the city of Rome, well known as then standing upon seven hills; and to put the matter out of all doubt, it is added in ver. 18, "the woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth." In fact, as the learned bishop Hurd remarks, "if its dominion had not been mentioned, *the city on seven hills* is so characteristic of Rome, that the name itself could not have pointed it out more plainly, as must be evident to all those who recollect what the Latin writers have said on the subject. The *septem domini montes* of one poet (*Martial*, l. iv. ep. 64) is well known; and seems the abridgment of a still more famous line in another (namely, *Propertius*, l. iii. ix. 57:)

*Septem urbs alta jugis, toto quæ præsidet orbi:* to which the apostle John's idea of "a woman, seated on seven hills, and reigning over the kings of the earth," so exactly corresponds, that one sees no difference between the poet and the prophet, except that the latter personifies his idea, as the genius of the prophetic style required.<sup>b</sup> The learned prelate adds to these, the following lines from *Virgil*, (Georg. l. ii. ver. 532.)

Scilicet et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma,  
Septemque una sibi muro circum deditarces.

Thus rendered by Dryden,

Old Rome from such a race derived her birth  
(The seat of empire and the conquer'd earth),  
Which now on seven high hills triumphant reigns,  
And in that compass all the world contains.

"*And there are seven kings;*" that is, seven forms of supreme government in the city or commonwealth of Rome, had subsisted, did subsist, or would afterwards subsist. "*Five are fallen:*" these, as bishop Newton observes, are "the five forms of government antecedent to the imperial form, enumerated and distinguished as such by those who should best know, viz. the two greatest Roman historians, Livy and Tacitus;" they consisted of first, kings—second, consuls—third, decemvirs—fourth, military tribunes—fifth, dictators. These had existed, but were no more ruling with sovereign power, nor any longer the supreme government in the state, or commonwealth, having successively given place one to another. "*And one is:*" the sixth form of government was in existence at the time that John had this vision; and that was the government of the *heathen emperors*, commencing with Augustus Cæsar, forty-five years before the birth of Christ, and continuing to the days of Constantine, A.D. 325. "*And the other is not yet come:*" this refers to the emperors professing Christianity, by whom a form of the christian profession was drawn over the empire, and thereby a mighty change was produced in the state of things; so that this may well be denominated another head of the beast. It is added, "*and when he cometh he must continue a short space.*" This was the seventh head, or form of government, and it lasted only a hundred and fifty years, beginning with Constantine the Great, A.D. 325, and ending with Augustulus, A.D. 476.

At this period, as I have repeatedly mentioned in the course of these lectures, the empire was divided into ten kingdoms. "*And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth:*" in other words, "the beast of which I have been just now speaking, viz. in ver. 8, the Roman empire that was before this, and is not, it being wounded to death in the seventh head, and broken up into

<sup>b</sup> Hurd's Sermons on the Prophecies, vol. ii. p. 147.

ten separate kingdoms; it still continues to exist in that one catholic visible church, of which Rome and its bishops, to whom the ten kings gave their power and strength, is the head, and representative: "*and is of the seven,*" that is, it was nursed up by the seventh head, or christian emperors; and is, in fact, all the seven over again under another name. "*And goeth into perdition,*" ver. 11. This is only what the apostle Paul declares concerning the Man of Sin, "the son of perdition;" "the Lord shall consume him with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming," 2 Thess. ii. 8. To proceed—

"*And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet: but receive power as kings one hour with the beast,*" ver. 12. In the foregoing verses, the angel had been explaining to the apostle John, the signification of the seven heads of the beast; and now he proceeds to inform him what he was to understand by the ten horns. The latter denoted ten kings or kingdoms which were afterwards to appear, when the Roman empire should be broken to pieces. At the time of this vision, these kingdoms had not risen into existence; the kings and kingdoms were all in the womb of time. Three hundred and fifty years must revolve, and then the empire that was in existence when John wrote the book of the Revelation, should be invaded by the Goths and Vandals, who would tear it to pieces, and parcel it out into ten independent states; and *then*, in the same hour in which Antichrist received *his* power and dominion, these ten kings should also receive *theirs*. This is the meaning of the expression, "receive power as kings one hour with the beast." If by the beast we here understand the kingdom of the clergy, then these ten kings were to receive their kingdom or dominion *about the same time* that Antichrist should receive his. And this corresponds with the prophecy of Daniel, ch. vii. 7, 8, 24: "The ten horns (out of this fourth kingdom) are ten kings that shall arise, and *another shall rise after* (or behind) *them;*" thus making the rise of the "little horn," ver. 8, nearly contemporaneous with the rise of the ten kings.

"*These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast: these shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful,*" ver. 13-14. I took some notice in a former lecture (see p. 326) of the unaccountableness of the event, that these ten kings should all agree in one mind, or judgment, on the score of religion, so as to determine on maintaining a uniformity of profession throughout their respective states; and thus consent to give their power to the beast, or to support the kingdom of the clergy, as we know was the case; for popery was the established religion in all these

kingdoms, from the days of Constantine, to the times of the Reformation; but we here find it foretold, that such should be the case; "these have one mind, and shall give their power and strength to the beast." And we have the solution of this mysterious event in ver. 17 of this chapter; "*For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree and give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.*"

How incomprehensible, by finite minds, are the footsteps of Jehovah! Truly, is it said of  $\text{HIM}$ , that he is "infinite in counsel," "his judgments are a mighty deep," "his ways are past finding out." When the Jews, by wicked hands, took and crucified the Lord of life and glory, they did none other things than what "*his hand and council determined before to be done,*" Acts iv. 28; and yet in the whole of that atrocious affair, they acted in the most free, unconstrained, and spontaneous manner. And so also in the instance before us; in the monstrous wickedness of planning and carrying into effect the antichristian uniformity; the support of the hierarchy of the church of Rome, God is said to have "put it into their hearts to agree, and give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God" (by means of the Old Testament prophecies, and the writings of Daniel in particular) "are fulfilled." All these ten kings are represented as "making war with the Lamb;" persecuting his followers, and driving the true church into the wilderness, where she continues concealed from the face of the dragon, during the long period of one thousand two hundred and sixty years; but "the Lamb shall eventually overcome them;" for he is the blessed and only potentate, "the King of kings, and Lord of lords;" and his army is a select band, "called, and chosen, and faithful;" who, following their leader, are certain of being victorious. He has all power committed to his hands both in heaven and on earth; and the governments that make war with the Lamb, whatever be their form, the Lamb will overcome them.

"*And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues; and the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire,*" &c. ver. 15, 16. We have already seen that the mother of harlots is enabled to sit as a queen, or maintain the state of a lady, by the power of the kings of the earth, which commit fornication with her. It must therefore follow, that, in proportion as they cease to commit this fornication, and withdraw their power from her, she must become desolate and naked. So long as they agreed, under the conduct of Holy Providence, to uphold and defend that form of Christianity which is the antichristian uniformity,  $\text{\rho\omicron\tau\iota\sigma\alpha\iota\ \gamma\upsilon\omega\mu\eta\upsilon\ \mu\iota\alpha\upsilon}$ , ver. 17, and before that oneness of mind was broken, the whore sat in

state. But as soon as the kings of the earth began in any measure to disagree about that profession, or form of Christianity, which they were to maintain or defend, and to take possession of the riches of the church for themselves, then they began to make her desolate and naked. And when we take a review of the conduct of republican France, during the period of the late revolution, as exercised towards the court of Rome, as mentioned in my last lecture, do we not see something corresponding to their "eating her flesh, and burning her with fire?" What further indignities remain yet to be inflicted on her by France and other nations, when their love is turned to hatred, it is not for us to say; but surely we have seen and heard enough already, to justify the truth of prophecy! Still, however, the power of these kings will not be utterly, and in all respects, withdrawn from the beast, till the word of God be fulfilled; for even in the final overthrow of Babylon, which is to form the subject of our next lecture, we shall find them expressing their lamentations over her, in the most affecting strains; "casting dust upon their heads, and crying, weeping, and wailing: Alas! Alas! that great city."

I conclude this lecture in the words of an able writer of the present day; in which the substance of what has been said is recapitulated.

"This seventeenth chapter treats of the papal apostacy, with an explicitness that can hardly be evaded. A city is here seen which is described as reigning 'over the kings of the earth.' A beast is also introduced, having seven heads and ten horns. On this beast a woman is seated, decked with every meretricious ornament, having in her hand a cup full of abominations, and of the filthiness of that fornication into which she has beguiled the rulers of the world. Now, with respect to the city thus seen, it is certain, that to the capital of the empire, the city of Rome, and to that city only, can this description be applied. The beast is the usual emblem of a political power, and the angel distinctly interprets the ten horns upon the beast, as meaning ten kings or kingdoms: the seven heads as meaning seven mountains, and as being further typical of seven kings or governments. Here we are reminded of the beast in Daniel, which also had ten horns, which an angel also explained, and explained as having the same import. Rome also, the only city ruling the kings of the earth in the age of the apostle John, is likewise memorable in the pages of her poets and historians, as standing upon seven mountains, and as having been the seat of seven successive forms of government. The woman introduced is said to be seated upon many waters, and upon the beast. The woman is an acknowledged emblem of an ecclesiastical state, or a church; and as the woman here exhibited is an unchaste woman, she is, according to the established lan-

guage of prophecy, the symbol of a church characterized by a false and idolatrous worship. Now, the Roman empire has been broken down into ten sovereignties, as foretold by Daniel, and as here predicted anew by the apostle John. We have also witnessed the rise of that politico-ecclesiastical power, so strikingly portrayed by the Old Testament prophet, and by the apostle of the Gentiles; and we have seen that very city become its seat, to which John so explicitly refers, as the place of the woman who should become drunk with the blood of the saints. Can we be at any loss, then, in recognizing Daniel's little horn, and Paul's Man of sin, in the woman enthroned in the midst of the mystical Babylon? What ecclesiastical domination has Rome ever known, save that of the papacy? What heresy has ever so copied the trappings of the harlot, or so beguiled the rulers and the people of the earth into the practice of irreligious and idolatrous devices? The name engraven on the brow of christian Rome, as it is called, and engraven alike by history and prophecy, is 'Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and of the abominations of the earth!' <sup>d</sup>

<sup>d</sup> See *The Nature and Duration of the Papal Apostacy*; a discourse delivered at Hanover Chapel, Peckham, July 9th, 1829, before the Monthly Association of Congregational Ministers and Churches, by ROBERT VAUGHAN, p. 61-63.

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I cannot take leave of the discourse from which the above extract is made, without acknowledging the satisfaction with which I have read it. The author, though entirely unknown to me, is known to the literary world, as the biographer of Wycliffe; and the reputation which he so deservedly earned by his life of the Reformer, is no way diminished by his *Discourse on the Nature, &c. of the Papal Apostacy*. It is cheering to meet with such fellow labourers as Mr. Vaughan and Mr. Morison, in the arduous undertaking which has called forth my feeble efforts; and to their able performances I gladly direct the attention of my readers, as supplying the many deficiencies of my own pages. A writer must have much greater confidence in his own skill and judgment than falls to my lot, not to feel sensibly gratified by the development of such a similarity of views and sentiments, as exist between us on the subject of our mutual discussion.



## LECTURE XXXIX.

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AND after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. 3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. 4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. 5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. 7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. 8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. 9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, 10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. 11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: 12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, 13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. 14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! 17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, 18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! 19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. 20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. 21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that

great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. 22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsmen, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; 23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.”—Rev. ch. xviii.

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#### THE FALL OF BABYLON.

THE whole of this eighteenth chapter, with the first ten verses of the nineteenth, forms a sacred ode, much resembling that which the prophet Isaiah composed on the fall of ancient Babylon, and which we have upon record in the fourteenth chapter of his prophecy. The subject of this New Testament ode is the downfall and destruction of mystical Babylon—the antichristian apostacy, in all its ramifications; an event so fully determined in the counsels of God, and of such consequence to his glory and the interests of the Redeemer’s kingdom, that the visions and predictions concerning it are repeated. No small portion of the imagery employed by the apostle John, is obviously borrowed from the Old Testament prophets; and one reason of this may be, that there is a correspondence, or analogy, between the subjects; for that which ancient Babylon was to Zion, the papal apostacy has been to the Christian church, and the end of the one shall correspond with that of the other.

In the preceding chapter, the prophet informs us that he had, in vision, been taken apart into the wilderness, by the angel of the vials, in order that he might have a sight of the mother of harlots, the mystical Babylon, in all her pomp and pageantry, whose fall had once and again been denounced, ch. xiv. 8, and xvi. 19. The scenery is now changed: heaven is again restored to view, and the angels descend to perform the parts allotted them.

“*After these things, I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory,*” ver. 1. This angel, says one of our old commentators, “had not only light in himself to discern the truth of his own prediction, but to inform and enlighten the world about that great event; and not only light to discern it, but power to accomplish it. He publishes the fall of Babylon, as a thing already come to pass; and this he does with a mighty and powerful voice, that all might hear the cry, and perceive how well pleased this angel was to be the messenger of such tidings.”

“ *And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird ; for, all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornications, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies,*” ver. 2, 3. It is usual with the Old Testament prophets, when denouncing the utter destruction of a city, to describe the site of that city as becoming the haunt and habitation of wild beasts, and of such noxious reptiles as are commonly found in the forsaken ruins of a once populous metropolis. I will quote one or two passages as a specimen. Thus, when Isaiah is describing the destruction of ancient Babylon by the arms of the Medes and Persians, he does it in the following terms : “ *And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation ; neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there ; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there ; but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there ; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures ; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there ; and the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant places,*” Isa. xiii. 19-22. See also ch. xxxiv. 10-15. Thus also Jeremiah, ix. 11 : “ *I will make Jerusalem heaps and a den of dragons, and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant.*” In similar language, the same prophet speaks of the destruction of Babylon, ch. li. 37 : “ *Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment and an hissing without an inhabitant.*” You will easily trace the correspondence between this language and that of the angel in ver. 2 of the chapter before us ; they are of similar import, and the latter is evidently borrowed from the former.

But the cause of the judgment and fall of mystical Babylon is also declared, in ver. 3. It is because all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, &c. &c. She who, as a church of Christ, should have been “ *the pillar and ground of the truth,*” the teacher and preserver of pure and undefiled religion, had become the seducer and corrupter of the nations and their kings ; and had set the example of that insolent luxury, inciting and disposing to irreligion and every abominable practice, which it was her duty to discountenance and oppose ; “ *the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.*” She had not only forsaken the way of truth herself, and wantoned in idolatrous practices ; but, with great art and industry, she had seduced the kings of the earth into adultery, and thus corrupted the nations with her fornications.

“ And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues ; for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities,” ver. 4, 5. I think it no unfair inference from these verses, that some of the Lord’s people will be found living in communion with Babylon and her daughters ; that is, with antichristian societies, or churches unscripturally constituted, even at the period of the pouring out of the last vial. This is evidently here *supposed* to be the case ; and hence the solemn call from heaven to all such to flee out of such societies, as Lot escaped out of Sodom in days of yore. Great use was made of this call at the time of the Reformation, when thousands of the Lord’s people, who had been holding communion with the church of Rome, became obedient to it, and withdrew from all connexion with the mother of harlots. In this they assuredly did well ; they were faithful to the light which shone around them. The Reformation, so far as it proceeded, was a good work, and we cannot be sufficiently grateful to God for raising up so many eminent men to effect that blessed change. But it was not a return to first principles ; it still left the christian profession under the cognizance of the civil magistrate in every country which embraced it. The reformers laboured to expose the degeneracy of the church of Rome ; they unmasked the mother of harlots, and detected her imposture ; but instead of going back to the days of the apostles, and shewing what a christian church was according to the primitive pattern, they drew many of their maxims from the writings of the fathers, and the decrees of councils. They distinguished between what was desirable and what was attainable ; and were afraid lest, by going too far, they should spoil the whole. Instead of endeavouring to destroy prejudice by manifestation of the truth, they made truth, in some respects, bend to prejudice. Their opponents loudly demanded, ‘ Where will you stop ? ’ and they were in too great haste to answer the question, by drawing up their Confessions, which contained the *ne plus ultra* of reformation, beyond which neither they, nor any of their successors, on the plan of national establishments, have ever advanced. They, indeed, drew the attention of men to the Scriptures, while they exposed many of the abominations of the church of Rome ; but they retained the very essence of Anti-christ, by seeking and obtaining, wherever they could, a civil establishment for religion.<sup>a</sup> Our own country, at the time of the Reformation, broke off her connection with the church of Rome ; the pope ceased to be acknowledged here as head of the church ; but what then ? the honour was transferred to the reigning prince,

<sup>a</sup> Haldane’s Social Worship, ch. iv.

king or queen, who was still permitted to occupy that station in the national church, that Christ alone occupies in his own churches, which are his kingdom. Now, as all such human institutions are at variance with the nature of his kingdom, and contrary to his revealed will, they must inevitably fall in the ruin which is impending over mystical Babylon; and consequently, it is the duty of all who fear the Lord, and value their own souls, to 'Come out' from such anti-scriptural establishments, that they partake not of the sins, and receive not of the plagues which await them. "O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness," Jer. li. 13. "Go out of the midst of her, my people, and deliver every one his own soul from the fierce anger of the Lord," ver. 45.

Of the sublime composition which occupies the remainder of the chapter before us, from the beginning of the sixth verse to the end of the chapter, I dare not undertake to offer you any thing in the name of an illustration. I must be content to say of it, what bishop Lowth is pleased to say of Isaiah's ode on the fall of Babylon, ch. xiv. that "it is not for me, nor indeed for human ability, to explain these subjects with a becoming dignity."<sup>b</sup> All I can presume to undertake is, merely to notice the contents of the poem, and offer a few observations on some of its more prominent parts.

After the solemn warning given to the people of God to come out of Babylon, lest, being partakers of her sins, they receive also of her plagues, ver. 4; this second voice from heaven confirms the charges exhibited against her by the first angel, and reiterates her doom, ver. 5-8. A description is then given of her overthrow under the similitude of a city on fire; while those who have been seduced by her wiles, are filled with astonishment at beholding her fearful end, ver. 9-13. The wretched victim of all this calamity is then tauntingly addressed as having lost all that her heart had been set upon, ver. 14. Her paramours and others interested in her spiritual wares, like the craftsmen at Ephesus, are represented as making great lamentations on account of her, ver. 15-19. There is then a call upon prophets, apostles, and martyrs to exult at her fall, and rejoice over her, ver. 20. Her fall is compared to the sinking of a great millstone cast into the sea, ver. 21. Her desolations are described by the loss of all her enjoyments, ver. 22, 23. The chapter closes with a brief, but most emphatical recapitulation of the crimes of Babylon, deceiving the nations by her sorceries; and fixing attention upon her persecuting character, as that which more especially drew down upon her the judgments of heaven: "in her was found the blood

<sup>b</sup> Lectures on Hebrew Poetry, vol. i. lect. vii. *apud finem.*

of prophets, of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth," ver. 24. We shall now remark on a few of the more prominent parts of this sacred ode.

1. The first thing that claims our notice, is the complacency with which mystical Babylon is represented to sit and indulge herself, even at the moment when the vials of the divine indignation are beginning to pour out upon her devoted head, ver. 7; "She saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." The same imagery is used by the prophet Isaiah, ch. xlvi. when predicting the divine judgment on the literal Babylon. Her language was, "I shall be a lady for ever;" so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, (says the prophet), neither didst thou remember the latter end of it: therefore, hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly; that sayest in thine heart, "*I am: and none else beside me.*"—(Who but me? I have no equal!) "*I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children,*" ver. 7, 8. Such were the self-complacent strains of Babylon of old; but what said the answer of God to this? You have it in ver. 9: "These two things shall come to thee in a moment, in one day; the loss of children and widowhood! They shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments." And so it came to pass, as I have shewn in a former lecture; for, at a moment when danger was little apprehended; during a night in which the king and his nobles, and the inhabitants of the city in general, were immersed in rioting and drunkenness, the Persian army gained an easy access into the city, and sudden destruction came upon them, as fear upon a woman in travail, and they found no escape! And such, we are here taught to believe, will be the false confidence and carnal security of the dwellers in mystical Babylon, when overtaken by the vials of the divine indignation; for "her plagues shall come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God which judgeth her," ver. 7, 8.

2. Another circumstance which calls for our notice in this sublime ode, is the lamentation which is made over the fall of Babylon by the kings and grandees of the earth. In the preceding chapter, ver. 16, these kings, who had for so long a period of time, given their suffrages and ministered to the support and aggrandisement of the mother of harlots, are described as at length *hating* her; making her desolate and naked; eating her flesh, and burning her with fire. Yet in the chapter before us, they are represented as "bemoaning and lamenting," when they see the smoke of her burning. The event will, doubtless, explain this apparent contradiction, and shew the completion of both prophe-

cies. Possibly they who, from envy, and an avaricious desire of her spoils, delight to destroy Babylon, plundering the countries that were enriched by her, as was the case with republican France some thirty or forty years ago, may afterwards lament the fall of her who supported their own power. The kings or kingdoms of Europe may then be, as they now are, divided into parties. One party may, from interested considerations, hate and set themselves against her; while another party, from similar considerations, may espouse her cause, and, proving unsuccessful in the struggle to uphold her, may lament over her. In these lamentations they are joined by the "merchants," who seem to be those that had made a trade of religion; which, however it may include many among the laity, must refer more especially to the mercenary part of the clergy; such persons as the apostle Peter foretold, and who have never been wanting in the churches established by law.

3. In enumerating the articles of traffic by means of which mystical Babylon is described as making an iniquitous profit, there is something very peculiar and striking. It proceeds by a climax, or gradation from one article to another, till it rises to the bodies, and then to the souls of men. It is remarked by Lowman, that the inspired writer, in this part of the poem, borrows his imagery from Ezek. ch. xxvii. in which we have a description of the trade of ancient Tyre, and an account of its overthrow. "As the destruction of papal Rome," says he, "is here compared to the destruction of Tyre, we can easily see how proper it was to describe the sins of Rome, by figures taken from the sins of Tyre. The profit of trade created a commerce between that city, then the chief mart of the world, and all nations; so that Tyre spread her luxury and superstition far and wide, with her trade. Rome, in like manner, corrupted distant and remote nations, by rewarding her votaries with considerable wealth, encouraging their ambition and luxury; and thus, like Tyre of old, she made her corruptions general, and almost universal."<sup>c</sup> There is, indeed, one point of difference between the commerce of ancient Tyre, and that of modern Rome, which merits our notice. Tyre dealt only in the *bodies*, but papal Rome carries on a traffic "*in the souls of men.*" Can we here avoid calling to recollection the purgatory, the penances, the commutations of crime, the sale of indulgences and pardons, all articles of traffic in the corrupt papal church?

4. Terrible as are the judgments of heaven denounced upon mystical Babylon, and which are about to be accomplished by the pouring out of the seventh vial, the people of God are forbidden to join in the lamentation that will then take place.

<sup>c</sup> Lowman on the Revelation, 8vo. p. 265.

Some have indeed thought, that the language in ver. 6, 7, implies that the servants of God will be the executioners of his wrath upon this corrupt community. The language is, indeed, remarkable: "Reward her, even as she rewarded you; and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double; how much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her." But I should rather choose to interpret this phraseology, as indicative or declaratory of what will be the answer to the prayers of the people of God in the judgments inflicted on Babylon, than as an incitement to a spirit of retaliation. The visible agents employed in this work of judgment will be the governments of Christendom; to them it pertains "to *hate* the whore and *make her desolate*, and *eat her flesh*, and *burn her with fire*." There is no intimation given that the real disciples of Christ shall have any hand in this work of desolation and judgment. On the contrary, it is said, "He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword," ch. xiii. 10. In all these national commotions, the call to the people of God is, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy closet, and shut the door until the indignation be overpast," Isa. xxvi. 20.

5. Once more; we may see from this subject, that that which will excite the most pungent grief among the followers of Antichrist, will be the source of joyful exultation to the followers of the Lamb. In this respect, matters will correspond with what the Saviour said to his disciples, when he was about to leave the world, "Verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy," John xvi. 20. While the adherents of mystical Babylon are casting dust upon their heads, and exclaiming, with weeping and wailing, "Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness, for in one hour is she made desolate;" the divine mandate is, "Rejoice over her thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her," ver. 20. But this part of the subject comes before us with additional interest and effect at the beginning of the nineteenth chapter, ver. 1-10, to which we shall now proceed.

## CHAPTER XIX. 1-10.

AND after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:   2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.   3 And again they said,



Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. 4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. 5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. 6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. 7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. 10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.— Rev. xix. 1-10.

IN these verses we are shewn, as in perspective, how the mandate which issued from the eternal throne, and which is recorded ch. xviii. 20, will be obeyed, by saints and angels. Allow me to direct your attention to three particulars contained in these verses. 1. The company engaged in these triumphal acclamations of praise and thanksgiving. 2. The occasion of their joy and praise; and, 3. The matter or subject of it.

1. The company who are here represented as engaging in these triumphant acclamations, are, first, *the church in heaven*. "After these things, I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; salvation and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God," ver. 1. And this we see was agreeable to the exhortation of the angel, above referred to, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven; and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her." It is certain that the holy apostles and prophets are in heaven, among the spirits of just men made perfect, at the period here referred to, the pouring out of the seventh vial; and therefore the "much people in heaven," ver. 1, must be the general assembly and church of the first-born, who have passed through this vale of tears, and are collected around the throne of God and the Lamb. These are represented as knowing and being greatly interested in the events that are taking place upon the earth. But we find *the four-and-twenty elders*, and the *four living creatures*, that is, the emblematical representatives of the whole redeemed church, both in heaven and on earth, are engaged in this celestial anthem: "And the four-and-twenty elders, and the four living creatures, fell down and worshipped God, saying, Amen, Alleluia," ver. 4. Further, *the whole church on earth*, are called upon to join in this triumphant song of praise, and are actually represented as doing so: for it is said by the prophet, "A voice came out of the throne,

saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great: And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth," ver. 5, 6. This description must include the whole redeemed company, whether in heaven or on earth, for the command is given to all the servants of God; all that fear him, both small and great. Nor do I see how we can exempt the angels of God from bearing a part in this triumphant song, for they are certainly "the servants of God," and in ch. v. we find them joining the same company, ver. 9, 11, 13.

2. But what is the *occasion* of this universal burst of joy, which fills all heaven and earth with transporting songs of praise? It is the final destruction of Antichrist, as set forth in the preceding chapter. This great, important, and joyful event, as we have seen in this course of lectures, was represented to the apostle John, in a series of successive visions, and under a variety of significant emblems; but in the preceding chapter, this stupendous event is exhibited under the emblematical representation of the city of ancient Babylon, which fell a prey to the arms of Cyrus, and was totally destroyed; on which the kings of the earth, the merchants, and mariners, are described as standing afar off, and mournfully bewailing her utter ruin. The same thing is represented, in a subsequent part of the chapter before us, by the overthrow of the beast and false prophet, with their supporters and adherents. Nor can we reasonably wonder, that the utmost joy should be manifested on this interesting occasion. The more closely you examine the subject, the more comprehensive the view you take of it, the more reasonable must appear the ground of this universal joy and ascription of praise to the almighty Governor of the universe. Think, for instance, of the dreadful evils that have been introduced into the profession of Christianity, by this "Man of sin," this monster of deceit, superstition, idolatry, blasphemy, and tyranny! Think of the length of his reign; that for a period of no less than one thousand two hundred and sixty years, he had been usurping the throne of Christ, "sitting in the temple or church of God," and domineering as supreme; changing times and laws; setting aside the commandments of God, and substituting his own traditions in their place; and add to all this accumulated wickedness, the sanguinary complexion of his reign; the long catalogue of cruelties inflicted on the saints of the Most High, on all that refused to be obsequious to his will; persecuting the faithful followers of the Lamb, and deluging the earth with their blood: and all this enormous mass of wickedness perpetrated, *blasphemously* perpetrated in the assumed name of the meek and lowly Jesus, who came not to destroy

men's lives, but to save; pretending to be his vicar or vicerent, and acting under his authority;—I say, let us collect these facts, into one aggregate, and then it will be seen how reasonable was the joy here expressed.

3. Consider now for a moment, the subject matter of their praise and thanksgiving. *First*, they ascribe the glory of this great work of judgment unto **THE LORD THEIR GOD**. "Alleluia; salvation and glory, and honour and power, unto the Lord our God," ver. 1. They recognized the hand of the Most High throughout the whole of this affair; whatever instruments were engaged in it, they were only performing his sovereign will, and therefore they ascribe all the glory of it to God. Moreover, they praise him for his *truth* and faithfulness in fulfilling his promises and his threatenings, and also for his *righteousness* in his awful judgments upon the antichristian kingdom—the false church: "For *true* and *righteous* are his judgments, for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication; and hath avenged the blood of his servants." And, to evince the ardour of their joy and gratitude at the complete overthrow and perpetual ruin of Babylon, they repeat their hallelujahs—"And again they said, Alleluia, and her smoke rose up for ever and ever," ver. 3. And to this ascription of praise and glory to God, so just and reasonable in itself, the representatives of the whole church in heaven and on earth are described as falling down and worshipping God, giving their hearty assent, and joining in the grand chorus, "Amen, Alleluia, so be it; Praise the Lord." Immediately on this, there is a call from the throne of God, to the church on earth, to join the song: "Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great," ver. 5, on which, a vast multitude strike up their voices, and begin to praise God, saying, "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth," ver. 6. Jehovah had always been omnipotent, and had always reigned; but while his enemies were suffered to prevail on the earth, he did not *appear* to reign in that part of his empire as he now will: now his right hand and his holy arm will have gotten him the victory!

4. But this celestial anthem is not yet concluded; for thus it proceeds: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready," ver. 7. The mystical union between Christ and his church, is often adverted to by the inspired writers, and dwelt upon with apparent rapture. Thus Isaiah, ch. liv. 5, "For thy Maker is thine husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall he be called: For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth when thou

wast refused, saith thy God," ver. 6. "For as a young man marieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee," ch. lxii. 5. The harlot pretending to be that spouse, having now been convicted of fornication with the kings of the earth; having been judged and eternally discarded; the attention of saints and angels is naturally directed to that chaste and pure virgin, who is now to be presented to her Lord, 2 Cor. xi. 2. And the choral song brings her to view; arrayed, not like the mother of harlots, "in purple, and scarlet, and gold, and precious stones;" not in worldly pomp and splendour, but, "in fine linen, clean and white;" in pure, simple, resplendent garments, which are the clothing of the heavenly inhabitants; in garments "washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb," ch. vii. 13. By faith in her Redeemer she is justified, and covered with the robe of his righteousness, Rom. iii. 22; ch. x. 4; 1 Cor. vi. 11. Hence the church is thus described as exulting in her husband: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, and hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels," Isa. lxi. 10.

But what are we to understand by the marriage of the Lamb being come, and his wife making herself ready? The most prevailing opinion among commentators is, that it refers to the conversion of the Jews, which they say is at this time to take place; but why they should restrict it to that one particular event, I am at a loss to see; and I think that a less contracted view of the subject ought to be taken.

The marriage of the Lamb we here understand to refer to the happiness of the millennium period; in fact, to be the Millennium itself. Both this, and the fall of Babylon, which precedes it, are here introduced by way of anticipation; they each come into the heavenly song, previous to their being accomplished on earth. The account of the one, we have in the following part of this chapter, where the beast and the false prophet are said to be taken; and that of the other, in the first six verses of ch. xx.

It is usual with the inspired writers to express the accession of believers to Christ, at any time, by the espousal of a chaste virgin to her husband; and indeed the whole gospel dispensation is described as a marriage supper, Matt. ch. xxii. and xxv. But at this period, when Babylon falls, the Jews shall be brought into the church of Christ, with the fulness of the Gentiles, according to Romans, ch. xi.; and what an espousal and marriage-supper will that be, when Jews and Gentiles from every nation under heaven, shall be brought to believe in Jesus, and led to confess

him as the true Messiah, their Lord, their Saviour, and their King! This will indeed be as "life from the dead" to the church on earth, and to the church's husband it will be as the day of his espousals—the day of the gladness of his heart, Cant. iii. 11. "The appearance of the christian church," says Mr. Fuller, "has not been such, of late ages, as might have been expected of one that had Christ for her head. She has been not only scattered by persecution, but her beauty greatly tarnished by errors, corruptions, and divisions, so as scarcely to sustain a *visible* character; but when believers all over the world shall have purified their souls by obeying the truth; when they are, what they were in the days of Pentecost, "of one heart and of one soul," and when there is nothing but distance of situation to hinder their being united in one body; then will 'the bride have made herself ready.'"—Fuller, p. 324.

"*And he saith unto me, WRITE, Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God;*" ver. 9. With these words, this sacred ode on the fall of Babylon terminates. From the first opening of the vision, which exhibits the judgment of the great whore, an angel, one of the seven, had kindly accompanied the prophet, explaining to him the mystery of the whole of this astonishing scenery, see ch. xvii. 7. This vision now closes with the triumphal chorus in heaven: and the angel commands him to commit to writing what he had seen, that it might, in the first instance, be delivered to the seven churches in Asia, and also remain upon record through all succeeding ages, for the benefit of the church in general, and so not be sealed or suppressed with the prophecy of the seven thunders, ch. x. 4, q. d. Write it, as an affair of the greatest importance, so that it may stand conspicuous in the annals of the church, and he that runs may read it: for "the things thou hast heard are the true sayings of God," and shall all meet their accomplishment in their appointed time. And to mark the distinguishing features of that most eventful period, it is said, Write this in particular—this, in addition to all thou hast seen and heard, "Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." This will be a joyful period to the church of God; and so it is repeated, ch. xx. 6, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." But I must not anticipate a subject which is shortly to engage our attention in all its bearings.

"*And I fell at his feet to worship him: And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren*

*that have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,*" ver. 10. Affected with astonishment at what he had seen and heard, and no less with veneration and gratitude towards his heavenly conductor, John yields to the natural bent of his feelings, and falls prostrate before the angel, after the custom of the eastern nations. Some have imagined that the apostle mistook the angel for the Son of God, who had more than once appeared to him in these visions, and whom he was in the habit of worshipping. But, however that may be, the angel refuses the adoration, ranking himself only where other intimations of scripture have placed all the angelic host, "as a ministering spirit, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation," Heb. i. 14. "I am thy fellow-servant," said the celestial messenger, "and the fellow-servant of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus." *They testified of things concerning him, which were accomplished; such as his birth, his life, his sufferings and death; his resurrection, ascension, and the glory that followed. The angel revealed prophecies which were yet unfulfilled. Their work was, nevertheless, one and the same; the theme of their testimony was one—all centered in Jesus, who was the spirit, the scope, the end and design of all the prophetic dispensation: they were consequently fellow-labourers in one and the same cause. God alone is the object of worship; for to him belong all blessing and praise.*

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YE who love the cause of Zion!  
 Though despis'd of men, and few;  
 Arm'd with courage like the lion,  
 Fear not aught which men can do.  
 What though all the world oppose,  
 God is stronger than your foes.

Zion's foes may all assemble,  
 But their counsel will not stand:  
 Soon the stoutest heart will tremble,  
 When the Lord shall raise his hand.  
 Who to her would ruin bring,  
 First must conquer Zion's King.

Foes of Zion! fight no longer;  
 Here submission will be gain.  
 Zion's King than all is stronger,  
 And her cause he will maintain.  
 Yet, as friends she bids you come,  
 Kindly saying, There is room.

## LECTURE XL.

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AND I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. 17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. 19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceedeth out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.—Rev. xix. 11-21.

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### THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON.

WE are now arrived, in this course of lectures, at that signal and expected point of the prophecy, to which the preceding parts seem principally to tend, and in which they have their completion; the grand and decisive combat between the christian and antichristian powers. Here the seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials, with all their accompanying warnings, meet as in one common central point. In going over the last ten chapters of this wonderful book, we have seen and heard much of the beast, and the false prophet, and of the mischiefs and miseries which they have brought upon the earth; but this is the last account which we shall have of them. By the prophecies in these verses, they are consigned to oblivion, so that the church in after times shall know of them only as we know of Pharaoh and his host, that is, as matters of history.

The particular theme, or grand specific subject to which the verses that form the basis of this lecture refer, is, the battle of Armageddon, mentioned in ch. xvi. 14-16, where it is termed "the battle of the great day of God Almighty"—whereby is intimated to us, the vigorous opposition that would then be made by the antichristian party, against Christ and his cause; and also the signal display which shall then be given by the Captain of salvation of his almighty power, in their utter destruction and complete overthrow. The *vintage*, spoken of in ch. xiv. 18-20, is generally understood to refer to the same event; and the terms in which each of these symbolical representations is couched, or conveyed to us, are well calculated to impress upon us the idea, that the scene of desolation, of carnage, and of slaughter which will come upon the earth, at this awful crisis, will far surpass in atrocity and magnitude any thing that is hitherto recorded in the annals of mankind. That multiform monster, Antichrist, will yet try to regain his tyrannical power, and make one bold, daring, and desperate effort against the kingdom of Christ; but it will be his last attempt, his dying struggle; for then he, and all the powers which compose the body of the beast, will be totally destroyed and given to the burning flame, agreeable to the prophecy of Daniel, ch. vii. 11; and Satan, the grand deceiver, will be shut up in the bottomless pit. But, let us direct our attention to the verses first read, and mark the preparations which are made for this terrible conflict.

*"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire; and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written which no man knew but himself, and he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called the Word of God: and the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean,"* ver. 11-14. It has been remarked by some who have written on this book of prophecies, that there is a kind of climax to be noticed in this series of visions: thus, if you look back to ch. iv. 1, the holy prophet tells us, that "he looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven:" by means of which he obtained a glimpse of what was within the vail. At the resurrection of the witnesses, it is said, "the temple of God was opened in heaven, in which he saw the ark of the Testament," ch. xi. 19. But on the present occasion, when the final ruin of Babylon is about to be consummated, heaven itself is thrown open, and a grand procession comes forth, which is minutely and circumstantially described. First, a white horse presents itself to the prophet's view. It is the same white horse whom we perceived on its career of victory, at the opening of the



first seal, Rev. vi. 2, whose rider "went forth conquering and to conquer." He has been pursuing his destined course, though not always equally in sight: he now, however, appears again in more splendid array, of which we shall take notice hereafter. At present, our attention is particularly called to him that sat upon the white horse. This is none other than the "Faithful and True" witness, "the head of all principality and power," the chief of the creation of God, ch. iii. 14. Certainly we can be at no loss to ascertain who this is; the christian church again beholds her Messiah in person, leading her forces, and fighting her battles. The Captain of salvation, "as a mighty warrior, girds his sword upon his thigh, habited in glory and majesty; and in his majesty rides prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness, while his right hand teaches him terrible things," Ps. xlv. 3, 4. True and faithful to his promises, he now comes forth to vindicate the long-injured rights of his government as "King of Zion," and lion of the tribe of Judah; and while he confounds and destroys his enemies, he makes it abundantly manifest that "his judgments are righteous." In this passage he appears as a dreadful warrior; yet there is nothing in the whole description that was not long ago predicted of the Messiah in ancient prophecy. Look, for instance, at Isa. lxiii. 1-6, where we have a grand prophecy of that very event, the battle of Armageddon, which is the subject of the present lecture: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth." Some may, indeed, think that this bloody representation does not very well suit the character of "the Prince of peace;" and that the battle between him and his army on the one side, and that of the beast and his adherents on the other, is incompatible with the genius of the gospel dispensation. But it should be carefully noticed, that the war here described is of two kinds, and that the Lord Jesus sustains a two-fold character in conducting it. Under its primary aspect this war is spiritual; it is a conflict between

truth and error, between primitive christianity and papal apostacy; and this the King of Zion undertakes as the head of his body, the church. In this character, he rides upon a *white horse*, and the armies of heaven follow him *upon white horses*, ver. 14. This imagery seems to point to the vigorous efforts that the christian church will be making at the moment of Babylon's overthrow, to carry the gospel of salvation to the remotest bounds of the habitable globe. While his people are engaged in thus spreading abroad the savour of his knowledge in every place, he will give testimony to the word of his grace: a great door and effectual shall be opened, and the word of the Lord shall have free course and be glorified. All obstructing hindrances shall be removed out of the way, and Zion become a praise in all the earth. Under the second aspect, this war may be viewed as *providential*; and this he undertakes as LORD and HEIR of all things; being vested with universal power and dominion, and made "head over all things to the church." It is in this capacity that he appears "clothed with a vesture dipt in blood:" corresponding to the prophet Isaiah's description of him as coming from Edom, with *dyed garments* from Bozrah, *red in his apparel*, with *blood* sprinkled upon his raiment. But, let us attend to the prophet's further description of the Captain of salvation.

The eyes of this august personage appeared to be as bright and penetrating, awful, terrible, and burning, as a flame of fire: just as the prophet had beheld him when he first appeared in vision, in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, ch. i. 14. This description of his eyes may, probably, denote their perspicuity and penetration, or in other words, the Saviour's omniscience, whereby he is qualified to look into and discover the secret machinations, the schemes and devices of his enemies against his church and kingdom; together with the exercise of that attribute in their favour; his eyes, like a flame of fire, running to and fro on their behalf; and indicating, at the same time, the fierceness of his anger against the enemies of his people.

"On his head were many crowns," placed, probably, one over another, the symbols of his original dignity, his mediatorial authority, and his acquired dominion over both the church and the world; as the appointed heir of all things, the maker, sustainer, upholder, and governor of the universe, having "all power and authority committed into his hands, both in heaven and on earth," angels, authorities, and powers being made subject unto him. It is added, that "he had a name written, which no man knew but himself," and that name is "THE WORD OF GOD." The prophet Isaiah, speaking of him as a "a child that was to be born" unto Zion, and "a Son that was to be given her," adds, that "his name should be called WONDERFUL, COUNSEL-

LER, THE MIGHTY GOD, the Father of the future age, the Prince of peace," ch. ix. 6. Such should be the names, titles, and character of the Messiah. Here it is said, his name is called "the Word of God," as being that divine person whose office it is to reveal the mind and will of God to men. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom [or secret counsels] of the Father, he hath declared him," John i. 18. Accordingly, in the days of his public ministry, we find him saying, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him," Matt. xi. 27.

"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God; and he hath on his vesture and on his thigh, a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS," ver. 15, 16. Here, again, the imagery corresponds pretty much with what we had in ch. i. It is there said, ver. 16, that "out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." This is the word or doctrine of his kingdom, the breath of his mouth, wherewith he slays the wicked, or his enemies. The apostle Paul refers to it, in his memorable prediction concerning Antichrist, 2 Thess. ii. 8, when he says "the Lord shall consume him with *the spirit of his mouth*, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." He will send the rod of his strength out of Zion, and by the publication of the everlasting gospel, he will subdue the people under him, and rule in the midst of his enemies; while such as refuse to submit to the sceptre of his grace, he will "rule with a rod of iron," and even "dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel," Ps. ii. 9. In this way the King of Zion will conduct, as it were, a double warfare, at one and the same time, extending the boundaries of his kingdom by means of the preaching of his gospel, and in his providence, bringing down Babylon to the dust. When it is said "he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God," there is evidently an allusion to the time of the vintage, as in ch. xiv. 18-20. The vine of the earth being ripe for destruction, like grapes cast into a press, he will tread them in his anger, and trample them in his fury, as in Isa. lxiii. 3; he will crush them to death by inflicting upon them his sorest judgments, such as correspond with "the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God;" a Being, whose power is irresistible; of whom it is truly said, that "none can stand before his indignation, or abide in the fierceness of his anger," Nah. i. 6. "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." This is the very same title that was given to the Lamb,

in ch. xvii. 14, and it is here repeated with great beauty and propriety, intimating that he is, and, by his mighty and glorious achievements, he would soon prove himself to be, by way of eminence, the sovereign Lord and Ruler of all the potentates, princes, and nobles of the earth; invested with full power to govern, to influence or restrain, to save or destroy, as his wisdom may see fit. "Be wise, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him," Ps. ii.

"*And I saw an angel standing in the sun: and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together to the supper of the great God: that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great,*" ver. 17, 18. And now, the preparations being all arranged, the great and decisive contest, the battle of Armageddon, comes on. To indicate its superlative consequence, the period at which it takes place is designated "the great day of God Almighty;" "the supper of the great God." We are not without instances in our own times of dreadful scenes of carnage and slaughter, the effects of sanguinary battles that have been fought upon the continent of Europe. We have not yet forgotten that of Austerlitz, where three emperors—those of Russia, France, and Austria—at the head of two hundred thousand men, met in dreadful combat, to murder each other; and the carcasses of thousands and tens of thousands of our fellow-mortals, were left a prey to the fowls of heaven. We have not yet forgotten that of Esling, where the Austrians confessed to the loss of twenty thousand men, and that of their opponents was not less! I might remind you of that of Jena, at which the Prussians lost twenty thousand in killed and wounded, and nearly double that number of prisoners. But the time would fail me to go over the dreadful and appalling catalogue of sanguinary engagements that have taken place in our day, deluging the earth with human gore; otherwise I might recount those of Arcola, Auerstadt, Borodino, Eckmuhl, Eylau, Friedland, Marengo, of Wagram; and, especially, of Waterloo, where the loss of one hundred officers killed, and five hundred wounded, with fifteen thousand privates killed and wounded, all our own countrymen, threw the half of Great Britain into mourning! Yet, even this was a trifle, when compared with the loss of the French, on that memorable occasion! These are terrible things in righteousness, which have occurred in our day; but the strong language which is employed to represent to us the results

of the battle of Armageddon, would impress us with the idea that it will far surpass whatever has preceded it in the annals of war. I have no apprehension that it will be restricted to a single conflict, but that it will be made up of a series of battles succeeding one another; though, as the late long protracted war on the European continent was terminated by the battle of Waterloo, so in the case before us, one sanguinary contest must be final and decisive. After this, "the nations of the earth will learn war no more." Let us, however, for the present, return to the words of the prophet.

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun:" in the Greek it is, "*one angel*," which is a singular expression, occurring nowhere else, that I remember, in these prophecies; intimating that it was some one particular angel, which the writer beheld *standing in the sun*; and this again is equally novel, and entitled to our attention. The angel being stationed in the sun, is thought by some to betoken the light and knowledge which shall then beam upon mankind, particularly as relates to the dispensations of the Most High in his providential dealings on the earth, especially in the destruction of mystical Babylon. This angel issues a proclamation, inviting all the fowls of heaven to come, as it were, to a supper prepared for them, at which they were to feast upon the carcasses of all ranks and degrees of men, who should fall in this terrible contest. The language of invitation appears to be borrowed from the prophet Ezekiel, ch. xxxix. 17-21, which reads thus: "And thou, son of man, thus saith the Lord God: Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field. Assemble yourselves and come: Gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth; ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. Thus ye shall be filled at my table, with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord God."

This is strong figurative language, describing a terrible slaughter of the human race, the effects of a heavy judgment from the God of heaven, when he shall come to take vengeance upon Babylon, and punish the enemies of his people. As the prophecy is yet unfulfilled, it is quite impossible for us to answer a variety of questions that may be started, respecting the time *when*, the place *where*, and the particular *means* by which this work of remunerative justice shall be effected. There is no necessity for supposing that Christ will marshal armies of his disciples, who will have literally to fight against those of the beast, and the kings of the

earth who support him ; but, while they are following him in apreading the everlasting gospel, he, as King of kings, and Lord of lords, may work the complete overthrow of their adversaries, by placing them in collision with one another. Cast your eye for a moment on the proceedings which have taken place on the European continent during the last forty years, and mark how the powers which have been so long supporting Antichrist, have been quarrelling among themselves, and weakening one another's strength. France, and Austria, and Russia, and Prussia, and Spain, and Portugal, Naples and Sardinia, not forgetting "the chair of St. Peter," also. Now, that which we have already seen to take place we can readily conceive may take place again at the appointed time ; and, as has been well remarked, such may be the progress of things, till, like two furious beasts of prey, they effect their mutual destruction. The account itself agrees with this supposition : for, though the armies of the beast are said to have gathered together against the armies of him that sat upon the white horse, yet there is no mention of any being engaged in their overthrow but himself. He it is that "smites the nations," "treads the wine-press," and has his "vesture dipt in blood : " nay, it deserves our notice, that in the corresponding prophecy of Isaiah, ch. lxiii. he is said to have "trodden the wine-press *alone*, and of the people there were *none with him.*"

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army ; and the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone," ver. 19, 20. Here we have the issue of this tremendous battle ; this final struggle of Antichrist to maintain his usurped dominion over the bodies and consciences of men. This monstrous power, which was partly *secular*, and partly *spiritual* or ecclesiastical, represented to us sometimes under the figure of a *beast*, and at others under that of a *false prophet*, pretending to work miracles in the sight of the beast, (of which you have a more particular account in ch. xiii.), is taken, that is, overthrown. The power that had supported Antichrist during the long period of twelve hundred and sixty years, is at length subverted, overturned, annihilated ; and now the superstructure which it had upheld, the whole papal hierarchy, including all national establishments of religion, crumbles into ruins. And, to shew its utter ruin, its total and entire destruction, the hopelessness and impossibility of ever retrieving the fortunes of war, or

recovering from its forlorn circumstances so as to make head again, it is said, "the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet, and cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." In the prophecy of Daniel, it is explained in this way: "I beheld, even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame," ch. vii. 11. The very same thing was presented to us in our last lecture, as you may recollect, under the figure of that great city Babylon being totally consumed by fire, ch. xviii., and so sharing the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah of old, which, in the language of prophecy, are said "to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire," Jude, ver. 7. Even so are the beast and false prophet said to be "cast alive into a lake of fire, *burning with brimstone*;" an intense and everlasting flame, fed and maintained with the fiercest rage, that it never might be quenched, Mark ix. 43-48. It is certainly true, that neither political nor ecclesiastical bodies, as such, can be *literally* cast into a place of torment, as individual unbelievers and the finally impenitent will be hereafter; we must not, therefore, interpret the prophet's words as though there was no metaphor in them. The great thing which I understand to be intended by this bold and expressive imagery is, that the whole antichristian system, power, or party, shall be so completely cast into perdition, at the pouring out of the seventh vial, and as the issue of the battle of Armageddon, that it shall never rise any more.

I think it probable, that it is to this period the words of the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25, are to be understood as pointing; when Christ "shall put down all rule and all authority and power, for he must reign till he have put all enemies under his feet." I do not think the Scriptures warrant us to conclude, that during the thousand years' reign of Christ and his saints on earth, the inhabitants of the world will be without any civil government. Such a supposition appears to me at variance with many testimonies of holy scripture; such, for example, as Isa. lx. *throughout*, where you read of *the kings* of the earth ministering unto Zion, &c. ver. 11; and to whom it is promised, "that they who had formerly despised her, should bow themselves at the soles of her feet; that she should be called the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel." To her it is further promised, "I will make thine officers peace, and thy exactors righteousness; violence shall no more be heard in thy land; wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise," ver. 14-22; with much more to the same effect. The rule, authority, and power, therefore, which Christ will at this time put down, is all that wicked, tyrannical, oppressive civil government, which is inimical to the interests of his church and

kingdom, and an entirely new order of things shall now succeed to it.

“*And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth : and all the fowls were filled with their flesh,*” ver. 21. Mr. Lowman has a note upon this concluding verse, so much in unison with my own view of the subject, that I shall offer no apology for laying it before you. Thus he writes: “The general meaning of this strong and beautiful figure is sufficiently plain and intelligible, and sufficient to answer the design of the prophecy,—to encourage constancy, faith and patience; to give consolation and hope, under present oppression and persecution for the sake of true religion, and a good conscience. That the several particulars of this figurative description have themselves a further particular meaning, is not so plain and certain. It is, I think, a mark of right understanding in the language of prophecy, and in the design of prophecy too, to keep to what appears the design and meaning of the prophecy in general, and what the whole of it, laid together, points out to us; and not to suffer a warm imagination to mislead us from the real intention of the spirit of prophecy, by following uncertain applications of particular parts of it. Who can say, for instance, with any certainty, that the flesh to be eaten, and the birds invited to the feast, have each a particular mystical sense, or that they really mean any thing more, than to describe a great battle, defeat, and slaughter?”

“However, there are in most figurative descriptions, some particular parts of the representation, that seem, with great probability, designed to point out some chief circumstances to particular observation. Thus, in this description, the punishment of the beast and false prophet, who were taken prisoners and condemned to be burned alive, being different from the punishment of ‘the remnant, (ver. 21,) which were slain by the sword,’ seems to intimate, that the chief and principal maintainers of the apostacy, they who used all their power, and all the wicked arts of deceit, in opposition to true religion, shall be punished in proportion to their guilt, and shall suffer in a manner more terrible and exemplary than others. Burning alive is one of the most terrible executions; being cast into a lake or pit of fire, burning with brimstone, images, in the mind, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, who are recorded as examples of perpetual destruction, from which they can never possibly recover themselves.

“Thus, also, as the beast and false prophet do not mean private persons, according to this description, but the powers of bodies politic, in perpetual succession, this very naturally teaches us to consider their punishment in a double capacity: or, to use the



words of Daubuz, 'The design here is to shew us, that Christ will not only destroy at last the persons who at that time shall be in possession of what is signified by the beast and false prophet, but also utterly extirpate the succession of the tyranny and false prophecy for ever. So that the beast, and the false prophet, are persons in a double capacity; that is, persons in general, enemies to Christ, and also in possession of power which is to be extinguished with them.'—*Daubuz, on the place.* However, this I think we may take as the undoubted meaning of the prophecy in general, that *now* all the powers of the apostacy shall be destroyed, no opposition shall remain, to hinder the happy state of the church, which is to follow in the next period, and which the spirit of prophecy describes in the following chapter."<sup>a</sup>

Thus far the judicious Lowman, whose observations are well entitled to our regard; but, before taking leave of the subject, and putting an end to this lecture, I must beg to fix your attention in a particular manner on the words "*the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which proceeded out of his mouth;*" for you will find them of much consequence in settling your views of the nature of the millennial reign, which will form the basis of our next lecture.

You see it is supposed, that after the dreadful overthrow of the beast and false prophet, which shall take place at the battle of Armageddon, there will be *a remnant*, like the scattered remains of a defeated army, who shall still survive the defeat, though unable to rally and make any head against their victorious opponents. These are here said to be "slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse;" that is, the Captain of salvation, the "King of kings, and Lord of lords:" but then, you must observe, that this sword of his is not a material sword; it is one that proceeds out of his mouth, namely, *his word*, as we have formerly seen; and the meaning thereof appears to be, that, either by the preaching of his gospel, and the prevalence of his truth in the world, or by the spiritual judgments which he will inflict upon them, (probably by both,) they shall become totally disarmed of their hostility; and though they may not be converted to the faith, and brought into the kingdom of Christ; though they do not join his forces, and fight on his side, they shall be in a state of subjection during the thousand years' reign of Christ and his saints, which will then succeed; and so you find it said in ch. xx. 5, "the rest of the dead," that is, the *remnant* spoken of in this twenty-first verse, "lived not again till the thousand years were finished." And thus we are brought to that eventful period, at which the depressed and afflicted state of the church termi-

<sup>a</sup> Lowman on the Revelation, 8vo. edit. p. 288.

nates, and the happy era begins when the kingdoms of this world become our Lord's and his Christ's, and when, according to Daniel's prophecy, "the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and shall possess it for ever, even for ever and ever," Dan. vii. 18. But as this subject will come before us again, in a more direct manner, when we enter upon the next chapter, I will not further enlarge upon it here; contenting myself with having thrown out these few hints for your consideration in the meantime.

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' I lift my banner,' saith the Lord,  
 ' Where Antichrist hath stood ;  
 ' The city of my gospel foes  
 ' Shall be a field of blood.

' My heart has studied just revenge,  
 ' And now the day appears ;  
 ' The day of my redeem'd is come,  
 ' To wipe away their tears.

' Quite weary is my patience grown,  
 ' And bids my fury go ;  
 ' Swift as the light'ning it shall move,  
 ' And be as fatal too.

' I look'd for helpers, but in vain ;  
 ' Then, has my gospel none ?  
 ' Well, mine own arm has might enough  
 ' To crush my foes alone.

' Slaughter, and my devouring sword,  
 ' Shall walk the streets around ;  
 ' Babel shall reel beneath my stroke,  
 ' And stagger to the ground.'

Thy honours, O victorious King !  
 Thine own right hand shall raise ;  
 While we thy awful glories sing,  
 And our Deliverer praise.

## LECTURE XLI.

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AND I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.—Rev. xx. 1-6.

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### THE MILLENNIAL REIGN.—PART. I.

IN our last lecture we had under consideration, the battle of Armageddon, the issue of which was the taking of the beast and the false prophet, and in that the fall of Babylon the great. Our views are now directed to a most signal and extraordinary event which is to follow the decisive battle just mentioned, and that is the binding of Satan for a thousand years, during which period he is prevented from deceiving the nations. But let us attend to the prophet's account of the matter.

“*And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled, and after that he must be loosed a little season,*” ver. 1, 2, 3. It is scarcely necessary to mention, for you are all aware of the fact, that in prosecuting this course of lectures, “the dragon” has frequently been brought under our notice, as the most formidable enemy of the human race. It is a fact, however, that the name or title has sometimes occurred as an emblem of the Roman government in its heathenish, tyrannical, persecuting form,

ch. xii. 3, 4, 7, 8, and for this reason; because the pagan Roman emperors and magistrates acted under the influence, impulse, and authority of the arch-enemy of mankind, "that old serpent, the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world," and whose pleasure they accomplished in destroying the bodies and souls of men: for he was a murderer from the beginning. When paganism fell, and that tyrannical government was overturned in the empire, then the dragon is said to have transferred "his power, and throne, and great authority," to the beast and false prophet, ch. xiii.; but this beast and false prophet we have seen, in our last lecture, vanquished by the Captain of salvation, "taken and cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone," ch. xix. 20. The principal mover, however, in the confederacy which brought on that tremendous battle, "the dragon," is not there mentioned as participating in the overthrow; though his party is defeated and doomed to irretrievable destruction, he himself escapes, but it is that he might be reserved for a different fate, of which we have the particulars in the verses before us. "I saw an angel," says the prophet, "come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand, and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years," &c. &c.

Whether this angel were the Son of God himself, who "hath the keys of hades and of death," as some think, or whether it were a created angel to whom he delegated authority for the purpose, it is not easy for us to determine, nor need we be very solicitous to do so. We know that the Son of God was manifested to "destroy the works of the devil;" that by his death he vanquished "death, and him that had the power of it, that is, the devil:" that "he spoiled principalities and powers, making a shew of them openly, and triumphing over them in his cross:" to HIM, therefore, in whose hands is invested "all power and authority, both in heaven and on earth," it appertains to arrest this malignant spirit in his course, and set bounds to his operations; and this he now does either immediately by his own omnipotent arm, or by power delegated to another. He is seized, and cast into the abyss of hell, where he is shut up, and "bound for a thousand years."

I presume it is unnecessary to apprise you that this is not the language of history, but of prophecy; consequently, it is not to be interpreted *literally*, but in the same way as we have explained other prophecies of this book. The import of all this symbolical imagery appears to me to be that the dragon, that ancient foe of man, who, under the disguise of a serpent, had beguiled Eve; who had lent his throne, his authority, and his artifices to the beast and the false prophet, to mislead the nations and their

kings, is now placed under a severe restraint ; his influence upon earth is wonderfully diminished ; no longer is he permitted to deceive the nations by his lies, his stratagems, and his machinations. To describe to us the effectual nature of the restraint that will be imposed upon him during the period of a thousand years, it is compared to his being shut up as a close prisoner in a pit or dungeon under ground, in which he is securely locked up, and a seal placed upon his den.

It is worth our while to pause here for a moment or two, and indulge reflection on the wonderful change in the state of society, which, in the very nature of things, must be produced by this one event, the expulsion of the powers of darkness, the devil, and his angels, from the world in which we live. It is very true that Satan and his emissaries are to us invisible ; but the Scriptures do not leave us altogether ignorant of their agency and influence in the course of this world. You all recollect what the apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians on this subject, ch. ii. 2. He there terms him “ the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience.” To the Corinthians he calls him, “ the god of this world,” and speaks of his “ blinding the eyes of those that believe not, so as to prevent the light of the glorious gospel from shining into their hearts.” The apostle Peter says, “ he goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” Much of his agency in the affairs of this world may be gathered from the book of Job ; and also from the account which the evangelists give us of his tempting our Lord, Matt. iv. Call to your recollection his shewing the Saviour “ all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them,” with his words on that occasion : “ all this power will I give thee, and the glory of them, for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it ; if, therefore, thou wilt worship me, all shall be thine,” Luke iv. 6. But is he not, throughout the whole Scriptures, and the book of Revelation more especially, held up to us as the prime leader in all disaffection to the true God : as standing at the head of all the idolatry, superstition, profaneness, and will-worship whether in the heathen, mahometan, or antichristian worlds ? Consider what you read of him in this point of view, and then think within yourselves, what a change must be produced in the course of this world, in the state of society at large, simply as the effect of a cessation being put to his diabolical influence among mankind.

Before we proceed with the subject, however, it will be proper to take some notice of the term of years for which Satan is here said to be bound, or his power restrained. You see it is the very same period that is allotted for the reign of the saints with Christ upon the earth, *viz. a thousand years*. But then a question naturally arises, seeing that we consider these verses to be the figurative

language of prophecy; are we to take this thousand years in a literal sense, or according to the prophetic mode of computation, that is, to consider each day for a year, as in the case of the one thousand two hundred and sixty years of Antichrist's reign? This is a disputed point, and I do not undertake to decide it. If, according to some writers, you interpret the term *prophetically*, that is, a thousand years of years; then it makes the period during which Satan is bound, and the saints are to reign upon the earth, to be three hundred and sixty thousand years. Now let us for a moment take it up in this point of view, and examine how far such an idea will comport with the language of other parts of scripture, where reference is had to the time of the world's duration. For instance, we have in the writings of Moses, an exact calculation of the period that elapsed from the creation of the world to the deluge, viz. about one thousand five hundred and sixty years. We can compute, with sufficient accuracy for our purpose, the interval between the deluge and the birth of Christ, viz. about two thousand four hundred and forty years; thus making the period from the creation to the birth of Christ, four thousand years. Now, keep this in mind while you examine the language of the New Testament writers in reference to this subject. Is it not evident that the apostles considered themselves as having passed the meridian of time, and as drawing on towards the close of it? Examine the import of such texts as the following. "God hath *in these last days* spoken unto us by his Son," Heb. i. 1; "but now once *in the end of the world* hath he appeared to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself," ch. ix. 26: "The end of all things is at hand," 1 Pet. iv. 7: "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh," Jam. v. 8, 9: "He that testifieth these things saith, surely *I come quickly*," Rev. xxii. 20. Take now the amount of all these expressions collectively, and ask yourselves whether it does not seem a fair inference from them, that the apostles considered the period to be not very remote when the world, which in the days of Noah was destroyed by water, should again be destroyed by fire, according to 2 Pet. ii. But if the thousand years in the passage before us are to be reckoned a day for a year, it is manifest that the world is yet in its infancy; and so far from these being "the latter days," "the last times," when "the judge standeth before the door," the world has barely begun to exist; for what proportion does six thousand years bear to three hundred and sixty thousand? The last judgment must in that case be at a distance of three hundred and fifty-four thousand years. The inference, therefore, which I draw from all this is, that we are to understand the term in the passage before us *literally*, even as we do the names, the Devil, and Satan. In all prophecies there must be introduced some terms that are to be

understood literally, otherwise the prophecy could have no definite meaning, no certain application, and such I take to be the case before us.

But an inquiry of more importance now presents itself for our consideration, and that is, what shall be the nature, character, or description of that reign of Christ and his people upon this earth, during the period that Satan is bound or shut up in the bottomless pit? The subject is thus set before us, by the inspired writer.

*“ And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years; but the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished; this is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years,”* ver.\*4, 5, 6. On these verses, and the grand and interesting subject included in them, so much has been said and written by persons too of such learning, ingenuity, and talent; and things of so opposite a nature have been advanced, that I confess, I approach it with fear and trembling. The question which divides the writers referred to is this; will the reign of Christ, during the thousand years here mentioned, be spiritual or personal? Are we to understand these verses in a literal or figurative sense?—As the language of history or of prophecy? Is the resurrection here spoken of to be interpreted *literally* of the resurrection of the body from the grave? Will Christ descend *in person* from his throne in glory to remain again upon this our earth during a thousand years; and shall all his people be raised from their graves at the commencement of the millennium period, and in their risen and glorified bodies inherit this earth? These, brethren, are some of the questions which call for consideration; these things are affirmed and maintained by those who understand the words literally; while others who consider the language to be prophetic and figurative, give a corresponding interpretation of it, considering the millennium period to denote a time when the everlasting gospel shall be universally preached; and the blessings of it participated both by Jews and Gentiles in a far more abundant and general way than at any former period; when those prophecies shall be fulfilled which speak of the cessation of wars, Is. ii. 4; when the stone that was cut out of the mountain without hands, shall itself become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth, Dan. ii. 35, 44.

when the grain of mustard seed shall spring up, expand its ramifications, and become a great tree, Matt. xiii. 31 ; or, when the little leaven shall leaven the whole lump, Luke xiii. 20 ; when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters do the channels of the deep, Is. xi. 9 ; in short, when "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High," according to Daniel's prophecy, ch. vii. 27. So opposite are the views that are taken of this subject ; which shall we adopt ? That difficulties attach to each of them, it were vain to disguise, and useless to deny ; but what else could be expected on a subject of unfulfilled prophecy ? It relates to events that are yet in the womb of time ; but which, in all probability, a century or two more may convert into matters of history ; as you have seen to be the case with the opening of the seven seals, and the sounding of the seven trumpets, and the pouring out of most of the vials. Let this consideration guard us from a spirit of dogmatising, while we now proceed to examine each of these systems, confining ourselves, in what remains of the present lecture, to an inquiry into the bearings of what is termed the personal reign.

From the verses before us, then, it has been contended, and is still peremptorily insisted on, that the righteous will all be raised from their graves at the commencement of the thousand years ; that, whereas they are represented as living and reigning *with Christ* during that period, Christ must personally appear, and be personally present among them ;—and that "*the rest of the dead,*" by whom they understand the wicked of all ages, will be cut off from the face of the earth, and continue in their graves till the thousand years are fulfilled, and the millennial reign is terminated ; for, it is said, "*they lived not again* until the thousand years were finished : " on which I remark as follows :

According to this view of the subject, the Millennium is, to Christ's people, a state of immortality ; a state in which the righteous, being raised from their graves with bodies spiritual, incorruptible, glorious, and powerful, are to live and reign with Christ a thousand years : after which, the wicked dead being raised, the general judgment follows. The following extracts will further explain the views of the Millennarians on this subject :

"The beast is destroyed, and given to the burning flame, or cast into the lake of fire *at the coming of Christ* ; and this is the time of the resurrection of all the saints to reign over the world a thousand years, while Satan is restrained from tempting and deceiving the nations."<sup>a</sup> Again, we are told by the advocates of a personal reign, that "the apostle represents the Man of sin as

<sup>a</sup> Works of Mr. John Glas, vol. iv. p. 173.



falling into a consumption, and then wholly perishing. He that brings him down and destroys him is the Lord Christ, who will first consume him, wasting him by degrees, and this he will do by *the spirit of his mouth*—by the gospel of his kingdom, the word of truth, accompanied with the power of his Spirit upon the minds of men. Then the apostle says, he will next destroy him; and this is to be effected by *the brightness of his coming*; which is not a bright coming in the preached gospel, for that is the spirit of his mouth; and this expression is too high to be understood of his acting against Antichrist by means of the powers of the earth. Wherefore it is more agreeable to explain this, of *Christ's second coming*.<sup>b</sup> “And so we find, while the saints were persecuted before the reign of Antichrist, under the opening of the first six seals—they most firmly believed the reign of the saints (Rev. v. 10.), and encouraged them under their sufferings on the earth, while they were killed for the word of God, and the testimony which they held, with the hope of reigning on the earth, according to that saying of the Lord, ‘*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth,*’<sup>c</sup> Matt. v. 5; Ps. xxxvii. 9-11. That this was generally believed and hoped for among the first Christians, is manifest from the writings of the primitive fathers.”<sup>d</sup> “So far were the first Christians from imagining that in any one time that can be thought of *before Christ's* [second] *coming*, Christians should bear sway in the kingdoms of this world, they believed it was not the saints living in any one season and time only, but all the redeemed out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, that should live again from the dead; all partaking of that first resurrection, over which the second death hath no power. The first Christians looked for a reign of the saints raised from the dead, and for a heavenly reign on earth of all the saints that had been first humbled in this life, in conformity to Christ, who first suffered, and then entered into his glory. And the book of the Revelation seems plainly to say the same thing that the first Christians believed and hoped for.”<sup>e</sup>

<sup>b</sup> Works of Mr. John Glas, vol. iv. p. 16, 17.

<sup>c</sup> Ibid. p. 94.

<sup>e</sup> Ibid. p. 96, 97.

<sup>d</sup> “*The meek shall inherit the earth.*” It may not be improper in this place to take a little notice of the use that has been made of this and similar texts contained in the Psalms and some other parts of the prophetic writings, by the advocates of a *personal* reign of Christ during the millennium period. That this “*inheriting of the earth* was generally believed and hoped for among the first Christians,” we are told, “is manifest from the writings of the primitive fathers.” Of the sentiments of the fathers, and the controversy that was carried on among them respecting this subject, I purpose taking some notice in the preface to these lectures. For the present I content myself with laying before the reader, the following extract from *Dr. Whitby's Treatise on the Millennium*, affixed to his Commentary.

“As for the pretended tradition from the apostle John touching this

The quotations now given are from one of the most judicious and sober-minded writers, in favour of a *personal* reign, with whom I am acquainted;<sup>f</sup> but, much as I respect his memory, I think his positions untenable, and I will now state wherein. I think his errors take their rise from his confounding Christ's second coming to raise the dead and judge the world, with his coming in a way of vengeance upon Babylon, or in the destruction of Antichrist. Nothing is more common in scripture, than to represent some notable dispensation either of judgment or mercy, as being effected by the *coming* of the Lord. To convince you of this, I will quote a number of texts from the Old Testament, which you can examine at your leisure. Thus, Ps. xviii. 9,

doctrine, it is only mentioned by Irenæus as received from Papias; and the words in which it is delivered, are sufficient to demonstrate the incredibility, and the apparent folly of it; for these elders pretend to have received from the apostle John these romantic words: "The day shall come, in which there shall be vines which shall severally have ten thousand branches, and every of these branches shall have ten thousand lesser branches, and every of these branches shall have ten thousand twigs, and every one of these twigs shall have ten thousand clusters of grapes, and every one of these grapes being pressed, shall have twenty-five metretas (two hundred and seventy-five gallons) of wine; and when one shall take hold of one of these sacred branches, another shall cry out, I am a better bunch, take me, and by me, bless the Lord."

"To omit what he says, from the same tradition, of every grain of wheat, and of apples, seeds, and herbs; now, can any man be so wholly bereft of sense, as to imagine this stuff could ever come out of the mouth of an apostle? No, certainly; he had it only from the converted Jews, in whose writings, some learned persons have informed me, the words cited by Irenæus from Papias, are yet to be found. As for Papias, the only voucher of this tradition, Eusebius informs us, he was a man of a very slender judgment." So far Dr. Whitby.

This extract is chiefly interesting for the discovery which it makes of the notion entertained by the earliest millennarians on the subject of *inheriting the earth*, during the thousand years' reign. In justice, however, to the advocates of Christ's *personal* reign, of the present day, it should be told, that they look upon the representation given by Papias as *extravagant*. "It must be owned" says Mr. John Glas, "that some of them imagined an earthly paradise; as to which, and the city, *they indulged their fancy too much.*" Works, vol. iv. p. 97.

This censure of our author's is *very gentle*, it must be owned; he nevertheless contends strenuously, that "the meek shall inherit the earth," at the *time* of Christ's second coming, *after* they are raised from the dead, when they shall have no more need or enjoyment of any thing earthly! and when we push our inquiries respecting the *manner* of inheriting this earth, it turns out to be an *inheriting some other thing* than the earth, viz. enjoying for ever the blissful presence of the Lamb; and also by enjoying abundance of peace and safety; not as a consequence of the restraint of Satan's influence upon wicked men, but by the total destruction of all such from off the face of the earth.

<sup>f</sup> If the reader would examine the opinions of more recent writers on the same side of the question, he may consult *A Discourse on the Doctrine of the Millennium*, by Mr. J. Morison, delivered at Stepney, August 16th, 1829, p. 16-21, where those of three cotemporary writers are given; not, indeed, much in accordance with each other!

“The Lord bowed the heavens, and *came down*.” Ps. lxxii. 6, “He shall *come down* like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth.” Ps. cxliv. 5, “Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and *come down*; touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.” Isa. xiii. 9, “Behold, *the day of the Lord cometh*, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger,” &c. Isa. xix. 1, “Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and *he shall come into Egypt*,” &c. Ch. xxvi. 21, “Behold *the Lord cometh out of his place* to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.” Ch. xxx. 27, “Behold the name of the Lord *cometh* from far, burning with his anger,” &c. Ch. lxvi. 15, “Behold *the Lord will come* with fire, to render his anger with fury,” &c. Hos. vi. 3, “His going forth is prepared as the morning, and he shall *come unto us* as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” Mic. i. 3, “For behold the Lord *cometh forth* out of his place, and will *come down* and *tread upon* the high places of the earth,” &c. Now, in none of all these texts is a *personal* coming of the Lord intended. And I am of opinion, that the (επιφανεια) “*brightness of his coming*,” whereby he will destroy the Man of sin, 2 Thess. ii. 8, will be of the same nature with that coming whereby he took vengeance on the Jewish church, and destroyed its persecuting power, which is often termed his *coming*, and is described in the prophets as *ημεραν κυριου την μεγαλην και επιφανη*, “the great and BRIGHT day of the Lord,” Joel ii. 31; Mal. iv. 5, *Sept. comp.* with Acts ii. 20; and by our Lord himself in this manner, “As the LIGHTNING cometh out of the east, and SHINETH even unto the west, so shall also the COMING of the Son of Man be; for wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together,” Matt. xxiv. 27, 28. There is, therefore, no ground from the expression to conclude, that *the brightness of the Lord’s coming*, whereby he shall destroy the Man of sin, is his *personal appearance*, or that this destruction will be any more his proper and immediate work, excluding instruments, than the destruction of Jerusalem was.

Again, it is important to notice upon this subject, that Christ’s coming to destroy Antichrist, and his personal coming to raise the dead and judge the world, are clearly distinguishable in the Scriptures, and that in various particulars. The *first* is described, Rev. xix. 11-21; and 2 Thess. ii. 8. The *last* is described, Rev. xx. 11-15; 1 Thess. iv. 16; Matt. xxv. 31-46. The *one* is *before* the Millennium; the *other* at the *end* of it. The *former* is a visional representation of him under the emblem of a *warrior*, sitting on a white horse, having his vesture dyed with the blood of his enemies, ch. xix. 11-13. The *latter* is a representation of him in his personal appearance as a *judge* coming in his glory, and sitting upon the throne of his glory, or judgment-seat, with all nations of the quick and dead, righteous and wicked, gathered

before him, Rev. xx. 11, 12; Matt. xxv. 31, 32; 2 Cor. v. 10. The *effects* of the *first*, are the destruction of Antichrist, the binding of Satan, the first resurrection, and the reign of the saints with Christ a thousand years, Rev. xix. 19-21; ch. xx. 1-7. The effects of the *last*, are the literal resurrection of the just and unjust, the judgment and final sentence of both, and the result of the whole; viz. "these [the wicked] shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal," Rev. xx. 11, &c.; Dan. xii. 2; John v. 28, 29; Acts xxiv. 15; Matt. xxv. 31, &c. From all this it appears clear, that these two comings of Christ are quite distinct; that the last only is his *personal* coming; and that the saints shall not *then* "inherit the earth," but the kingdom prepared for them—namely, their "great reward *in heaven*," Matt. v. 12; "the hope laid up for them *in heaven*," Col. i. 5; the "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved *in heaven* for them," 1 Pet. i. 4.

But, further, you may have observed another prominent feature in the scheme of Christ's *personal* reign during the Millennium; which is, that it supposes all the wicked to be cut off from the earth at the commencement, and to be raised from their graves at the end of it, which I think another questionable point. We are told in ver. 3 of this chapter, that Satan is bound during that period "that he should deceive THE NATIONS no more, till the thousand years are fulfilled." The *nations* here, cannot intend the nations of them who are saved, ch. xxi. 24, who reign with Christ, and are termed "blessed and holy," ch. xx. 4, 6, but they are evidently the people of the world, as distinguished from the saints: the same kind of nations that are afterwards deceived when Satan is loosed, ver. 8. These nations must certainly be existing on the earth during the Millennium; for we cannot reasonably suppose that Satan would be bound, shut up, and secured with a seal, in the bottomless pit, that he might not deceive those that had no existence, but were utterly exterminated. So far from that being the case, it is clear that the nations of the wicked are not totally cut off from the earth at this time; for, at the end of the thousand years, when Satan is loosed, he finds them inhabiting all quarters of the earth, and both deceives and gathers them to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea, ver. 7, 8. To suppose them raised up from the dead, and in their raised bodies attacking the saints in their glorified state, is a strange imagination, which owes its birth entirely to the error of supposing them to have been entirely cut off from the earth a thousand years before, even as the latter arises from interpreting literally the figurative language of prophecy. But to proceed with our subject:

It is said in ver. 4, "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded

for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years;” this is said to be, “*the first resurrection.*” Those who are advocates for the *personal* reign of Christ during the Millennium, understand this *literally*—the resurrection spoken of, they interpret to be the resurrection of the bodies of all the saints; but against this opinion there appear to be many and invincible objections. As,

1. This passage does not so much as mention the resurrection of the *body*, but of the *souls* of the martyrs. “And I saw the  $\psi\omega\chi\alpha\tau$  souls of them that were beheaded, &c., and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years, ver. 4. The Greek term  $\psi\omega\chi\eta$  occurs in six other places of this book of Revelation. Sometimes it signifies the *life*, or living principle in the body, as in ch. viii. 9, and ch. xii. 11. At other times it is spoken of in distinction from the body, ch. xviii. 13, and even in a state of separation from it, as in ch. vi. 9, but it is nowhere ever put for the body itself, far less for the *dead body*, which alone is capable of a proper resurrection, or of *living again*. I am not aware of any part of the Scriptures which expresses a literal resurrection, by the *living of the souls* of persons; but always by a raising up, or quickening of their *dead bodies*, or, in general, by raising them *from the dead*, or raising the dead. To me it appears, therefore that the *living of the souls* of the persons here mentioned, denotes, not a proper, but a metaphorical resurrection, agreeable to the figurative style of the context. But observe further—

2. The *proper* and *general* resurrection of the dead, is placed a thousand years after this resurrection, and is plainly described, ver. 12, 13, “I saw the dead small and great stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and the grave gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every man according to their works.” It is evident that this is a *proper resurrection*; for the sea, death, and hades, or the grave, “deliver up the dead which are in them,” and this undoubtedly must be their *dead bodies*. It is moreover equally evident, that it is a *general resurrection* of all the dead, both just and unjust, for it is a resurrection of *the dead small and great*, who stand before God in judgment—of all the dead who have any concern with the things written in the books,” the book of life not excepted; of all that shall be judged “according to their works,” which must surely include the saints as well as the wicked; for “we must ALL appear before the judgment-seat of

Christ," 2 Cor. v. 10: and be judged according to our works, 1 Pet. i. 17; Matt. xxv. 31-46. This, therefore, being the *literal* and *general* resurrection of the just and unjust, the *first resurrection*, which is a thousand years before it, must either be a *metaphorical* resurrection, or a *partial* one, of the martyrs only, as is indeed admitted by some writers.

3. To explain the first resurrection of a literal rising again of all the just, a thousand years before the resurrection of the wicked and general judgment, is to contradict in many particulars the plain accounts given of the proper resurrection of the just and unjust, both in the gospels and apostolic epistles.

Our Lord has said, John v. 28, 29, "The hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." The *hour* here cannot signify two different periods at the distance of a thousand years from each other, but only one time of short duration. In that *hour*, he says, "ALL that are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth." Not all the righteous dead only; for these are not "all that are in their graves;" nor all the wicked dead only, for these have not "done good;" but he expressly declares, that in that *hour*, both they that have *done good*, and they that have *done evil*, even "all that are in their graves," shall come forth, the one unto the "resurrection of life," the other "to the resurrection of damnation." This appears to me to be decisive on the point.

Again; the Lord Jesus, speaking of his own peculiar people, such as believe and obey him, repeatedly declares, "I will raise him up *at the last day*, John, vi. 39, 40, 44, 45. But if believers in him are to be raised up *τη εσχατη ημερα* at the *LAST DAY*, the wicked must be raised at the same time, or not at all; for we read of no day a thousand years *after the last day*, allotted for that purpose. In fact, to suppose the existence of such a day, would be to impute to the Saviour a great impropriety of speech, in terming that *the last day* which was not so, but a thousand years before it. Indeed, he has left us no possibility of mistaking his words here; for this *last day* in which believers shall be raised, he afterwards tells us is the day in which men shall be *judged*: "the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the *LAST DAY*," ch. xii. 48; and we are certain the wicked will not be raised up *after* the day of judgment. It is clear, then, that both the righteous and wicked are to be raised up at the *last day*, and that this last day is also the *day of judgment*, which totally overturns the literal explanation of the first resurrection.

Further; it is said, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon

the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on the left." Then, having judged both parties according to their works, it is said, "These (the wicked) shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal," Matt. xxv. 31, to the end. On these texts, I would observe, that the *time* here mentioned is, WHEN the Son of Man shall come in his glory, not at the destruction of Antichrist, and the first resurrection; but "THEN" when he shall "sit upon the throne of his glory," to judge the world, as the whole passage shews. The *work* he then performs is not to raise the just only, but both the just and unjust, and cite them before his judgment seat; for then, "before him shall be gathered all nations," (ver. 12,) including both the righteous and the wicked, as is plainly stated. The next step is his *separating* the two parties, "dividing his sheep from the goats;" and "he shall set his sheep on his right hand, and the goats on the left." But observe, I beseech you, the bearing of this narrative on the subject before us: if the righteous had been literally raised from their graves a thousand years before this; if during all that period they had been entirely separated from the wicked, as is alleged by the advocates for Christ's personal reign, how is it that they come now to be so intermingled with them as to require a second separation? Their being separated at this eventful crisis, plainly supposes, that the living, of both parties upon the earth, were in some respects mixed together until now; and that the dead of both parties were raised promiscuously as they lay in their graves, and collected in that state before the judgment-seat of Christ, all which is incompatible with the notion of a literal resurrection and total separation of the just from the unjust, a thousand years before. In short, to sum up this argument, here are both the righteous and the wicked, judged according to their works, and the former rewarded, while the latter are punished. But if the saints had received their *reward* in the resurrection state a thousand years before this; if they had all this time been reigning with Christ in glory upon the earth, and possessing the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, how are we to account for their being now judged, a thousand years after they had been rewarded; and for the kingdom being conferred upon them, *after* they had inherited it so long? These are difficulties which attach to the millennium system, as it is called, that is, to the doctrine of Christ's *personal* reign upon the earth during this thousand years, whether with the martyrs only, or with all his saints, it matters not which: difficulties which I confess myself wholly unable to solve. But I have given you merely a specimen of them; the limits of this exercise prevents my noticing

a great variety of passages in the Holy Scriptures, which militate against the sentiment in question, and I fear I shall be already thought tedious on the point by some of my audience. I shall, therefore, take my leave of it with mentioning only one passage more, which you will find 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. Here we have the apostle Paul declaring that "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, (for the trumpet shall sound) and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." This agrees precisely with what he wrote to the Thessalonians on the same subject: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, or astounding noise; with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall first rise; *then* we who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord," 1 Thess. iv. 16, &c. From these parallel passages we learn, that the sleeping saints shall be raised, and the living changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye: that this shall take place when the Lord himself (that is, *in person*) shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the sound of the last trump. Now this must also be the time of the resurrection of the wicked, unless we can suppose that they will be raised and summoned to judgment without the voice of the archangel, or the sound of *the last trump*; for we can never suppose that another trump shall sound for that purpose a thousand years *after the last!* Nor, indeed, are we allowed this absurd supposition; for, our Lord plainly intimates that the same *voice* will call forth both the righteous and the wicked from their graves about the same time, or hour, John, v. 28, 29. We also learn, from the passage before us, that when the righteous dead are raised, and the living changed, which will be in a moment, they shall both be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so be ever with the Lord. This appears to be their *separation* from the wicked, and their being *placed at the right hand of the Judge*, Matt. xxv. 32, 33; and their being ever with the Lord, is their *going with him into life eternal*, and so *inheriting the kingdom*, ver. 34, 46, which never can be justly interpreted of their reigning upon or inheriting this earth; but of their "great reward in heaven," where they shall inherit a better country, and partake of a better and enduring substance, Heb. x. 34, ch. xi. 16.

Upon the whole, I think we may see from the plain concurring doctrine of the New Testament, that at the *second* or *personal* coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust, which will be immediately followed by the judgment of both, by the eternal and heavenly reward of the righteous, and the everlasting punishment of the



wicked ; and if so, it must follow as a necessary consequence, that *the first resurrection*, which is a thousand years before this, must be understood, not in a literal, but metaphorical sense.

There are various other particulars connected with the scheme of Christ's *personal* reign upon this earth during the millennium period, which are as difficult to get over as any thing I have mentioned, but our time will not allow of further enlargement ; I think sufficient has been said to convince an unprejudiced mind that the *hypothesis* is untenable ; but having paved the way for it, we shall, if spared to meet again, in our next lecture, enter upon the subject of the millennium, and consider what we are warranted by a connected view of scripture, to expect to constitute the grand discriminating features of that blissful period—the reign of Christ and his saints on earth.<sup>§</sup>

§ Since this lecture was delivered, my attention has been arrested by an advertisement in the newspaper, of a pamphlet entitled “*Strictures on the Rev. John Morison's Discourse on the Doctrine of the Millennium*, by William Vint.” As I had read that discourse with pleasure and satisfaction, I felt anxious to see these “*Strictures*,” being aware that, if well-founded, they must be equally applicable to my own views of the millennium, in which I have the happiness to agree with Mr. Morison. I, therefore, procured the pamphlet, and perused it, again and again, for I could scarcely believe my own eyes, so strange, so unaccountably strange, to me, were the things which I found in it. To give the reader some idea of these things ; 1. In page 30, Mr. Morison is accused of having adopted, on the subject of the millennium, the views of Papias, [for which see the note on page 548 of these lectures], the very scheme of things which Mr. Morison *opposes* throughout his discourse ! 2. In adducing authorities against Mr. Morison, he gives us a quotation of three pages from the celebrated Witsius ; and having done this, he represents “*the sentiments of that learned divine to be as far removed from those of our preacher, as the poles are asunder*,” p. 19. Now, what must the reader think of Mr. Vint, when he is told that the sentiments of Witsius and Mr. Morison, are *precisely the same* on the subject of the millennium ; that Witsius wrote the whole of those pages *expressly* in *confutation* of the millenarian hypothesis, and to establish those views of Rev. xx. 4, for which Mr. Morison contends ? See his *Dissertations on the Apostle's Creed*, vol. ii. p. 448. But, 3. The most singular part of this very singular pamphlet is, the conclusion ; in which, after having *rated* Mr. Morison, at no ordinary pace, through more than forty pages, Mr. Vint suddenly turns round, and states his own views of the millennium, which turn out to be precisely those of Mr. Morison ! Thus writes Mr. Vint : “*In the sacred volume of divine truth, a period is described as approaching, which will have for its characteristics, peace, and righteousness, and felicity ; a universal jubilee is proclaimed, as intended for the inhabitants of the earth, a new era of happy time is announced as about to terminate those ages of guilt and misery which have been revolving since our father Adam left the delightful vale of Paradise. The kingdom, we are told, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, and they shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.*” If the reader will take the trouble to read Mr. Morison's Discourse, he will find it in perfect unison with this view of the subject ; *wherefore, then, were these Strictures written ?*

## LECTURE XLII.

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AND I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them : and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands ; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.—Rev. xx. 4-6.

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### THE MILLENNIAL REIGN.—PART II.

HAVING, as I hope, satisfactorily shewn in the last lecture, that the principle so clamourously contended for by many in our day of a *personal* reign of Christ with all his saints in their glorified bodies on this earth, during a thousand years, is quite at variance with the plain current doctrine of the evangelists and apostles respecting the second coming of the Saviour, the resurrection of the dead, the reward of the righteous, and the punishment of the wicked : I shall now proceed to state what I think we are warranted by the holy Scriptures, to consider will be the nature of the millennial reign, and the blessings to be enjoyed during that period.

This happy period commences with what is termed, in prophetic style, “*the first resurrection*,” and which, beyond all doubt, must be a high state of privilege : for it is said, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection ; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years,” ver. 6. I assigned reasons in my last lecture for thinking that this is not to be understood of a proper and literal resurrection of the body from the grave : for it is described as the living of *the souls* (*πῶν ψυχῶν*) of persons. The words of the prophet are, “I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands ; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years,” ver. 4. On this I remarked that the inspired writers never

express the proper resurrection of the body (which alone is capable of it) by the *living of the soul*, which is distinguished from it, and never dies; but always by words which import the quickening of the dead body, and raising it up from the grave. Besides, we have seen in our last lecture, that this first resurrection takes place a thousand years before the general and proper resurrection of the just and unjust, as described in ver. 13 and 14, of the chapter before us. From all this, it follows, that the *first resurrection*, here spoken of, must be taken in a *metaphorical* sense, as denoting a revival of the spirit of true Christianity; the cause for which the martyrs suffered under the heathen and antichristian persecution, and a raising up of the church of Christ from its depressed, captive, and afflicted state, to a prosperous and flourishing condition, by the conversion of the Jews to the faith of Christ, and the coming in of the fulness of the Gentiles from all nations of the earth, as I have repeatedly mentioned to you in this course of lectures; and, let me now add, in which alone many of the sublime descriptions of the Old Testament prophets can meet their full accomplishment.

This blissful and dignified state of the Redeemer's kingdom upon earth, during the millennial period, was exhibited to the prophet in vision, under the symbolical imagery of thrones filled by persons sitting in judgment: for thus his words run: "*And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them,*" ver. 4. In these words there is an evident allusion to the prophecy of Daniel relating to the same subject, which is as follows: "And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him," Dan. vii. 27. We all know that thrones are places of dignity and of judicature; agreeable to which significant use of the term, we find the Saviour promising his twelve apostles that they should "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," Matt. xix. 28. When it is said that "judgment was given unto them; and to the souls that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus," &c. &c.; the language appears to denote that the time was now come, when God would vindicate their righteous cause, and avenge their wrongs; that the cause in which the martyrs suffered should now triumph: and while the names of their persecutors should be branded with infamy, the characters of the persecuted servants of Jesus should be embalmed in the memory of mankind. In Daniel we see "the judgment sits"—"judgment is given to the saints;" they "take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom." In the passage before us "thrones are placed, and they sit upon them, and judgment is given unto

them, and *they live and reign with Christ a thousand years.*" In both places the imagery is so similar, that it cannot fail to be perceived by an unprejudiced mind; and the import of the whole is, as I understand it, that, during this favourable period, the church or kingdom of Christ, should gloriously rise from the state of abject suffering and oppression which had been its lot and portion during the antichristian apostacy and tyranny, answerable to the language of the ancient prophets; as when it is said, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean; Shake thyself from the dust, loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion," Isa. li. 1, 2, and ch. lx. 1, &c.

To substantiate what has now been said, and to confirm the general view now given of the first resurrection, let it be observed, that the deliverance of God's ancient church from the Babylonian captivity, and from the distresses incident to such a state, and restoring them to their former privileges and prosperity, is frequently expressed in prophetic language, by a *revival* and *resurrection from the dead*. In this sense the word *revival* or *quicken*, is often used by the Old Testament writers. To give you a few instances of this, see Ezra. ix. 8, 9. "And now for a little space, grace hath been shewed from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little *reviving* in our bondage; for we were bondmen: yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a *reviving*, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof." Look next at the language of David, when in a state of exile, through the unnatural rebellion of his son Absalom, Ps. lxxi. 20. "Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt *quicken me again*, and shall *bring me up again from the depths of the earth*: thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side." Again, Ps. lxxxv. 6, where the prophet is celebrating the goodness of the Lord in bringing again the captivity of Jacob: "Wilt thou not *revive us* again; that thy people may rejoice in thee?" In the texts now quoted, you can be at no loss to see how the restoration of ancient Israel to their church state and privileges, is expressed as a *revival* of a cause which had been in a low, languishing, and depressed state. In the following passages, the same thing is expressed by a resurrection. "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," Isa. xxvi. 19. While this text is before us, I cannot help giving you

the note of that elegant scholar, and prince of biblical critics, bishop Lowth, upon it. "The deliverance of the people of God, from a state of the lowest depression," says he, "is explained by images plainly taken from the resurrection of the dead. In the same manner the prophet Ezekiel represents the restoration of the Jewish nation from a state of utter dissolution, by the restoring of the dry bones to life, exhibited to him in a vision, ch. xxxvii., which is directly thus applied and explained, ver. 11-13. And this deliverance is expressed with a manifest opposition to what is said by Isaiah, in ver. 14 of this chapter, of the great lords and tyrants under whom they had groaned ;

"They are dead, they shall not live ;  
They are deceased tyrants, they shall not rise ;"

that they should be destroyed utterly, and should never be restored to their former power and glory. But to proceed :

Look next at Hosea, ch. vi. 1, "Come and let us return unto the LORD ; for he hath torn and he will heal us ; he hath smitten and he will bind us up : after two days will he *revive* us : in the third he will *raise us up*, and we shall *live* in his sight." This is the very same imagery applied to the very same subject : but we have it followed out at great length, as bishop Lowth justly observes, in Ezek. xxxvii. 1-15. Here the whole house of Israel, in their afflicted captive state, are represented as dry bones lying in the valley ; and their restoration from that state is presented to our view by the process of a resurrection ; the bones come together bone to his bone ; the sinews and the flesh come up upon them ; and the skin covered them above ; and the breath came into them ; and they lived and stood up upon their feet. Now observe how this imagery is explained in the following verses. "Then he said unto me, Son of Man, these bones are the whole house of Israel : behold, they say, our bones are dried, and our hope is lost ; we are cut off for our parts. Therefore, prophesy and say unto them—Thus saith the Lord God ; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel ; and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land, then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord," ver. 11-15. Here we have a *metaphorical resurrection* amplified and expanded with sufficient minuteness, and such as I humbly conceive lays a foundation for the use we make of corresponding imagery in the passage under consideration.

In the book of the Revelation the same metaphor frequently occurs. Thus, for instance, in ch. xiii. the beast that had received the *deadly wound*, and one of whose heads was *wounded to death*, is said to *live again*, ver. 3, 14, 15, viz. in the succession of the antichristian beast, who revived the idolatry and other abominations of the heathen Roman empire, and exercised again the power of the dragon over the earth. Again; It is said concerning the two witnesses, who are represented as being *killed*, and their *dead bodies* as lying unburied in the street of the great city; "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 that saw them," ch. xi. 11. Now, whether, by the two witnesses here, we understand the Old Testament and the New, or the two churches of the Waldenses and Albigenses, or both, their resurrection is evidently figurative, and does not mean a literal resurrection of two individual persons that were killed; it evidently denotes a revival of the cause of Christ—a bringing forth anew the testimony of Jesus, which had been silenced by Antichrist, and this by means of such successive instruments as he is pleased to employ for bringing his word to light.

Now, to sum up the amount of these general observations—a resurrection from the dead, we see, is the well-known prophetic symbol for denoting a deliverance from a state of deadness, weakness, captivity, and depression; and an advancement to a state of life and animation, of pardon, prosperity, and happiness. And since, in the book of the Revelation it is more than once used in that sense, need we wonder that the happy change which shall take place in the state of the church at the commencement of the Millennium, should be held forth under the figure of a resurrection?—especially when we call to mind, that the apostle Paul, when speaking of the reception of the Jews into the kingdom of Christ, which will take place at that period, says it will be, *ζωη εκ νεκρων*, *life from the dead*, Rom. xi. 15.

When it is said "*οι λοιποι*, *the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished*," ver. 5, the words are evidently to be understood in the same figurative sense. It does not refer to all the dead who are in their graves and who do not partake of the first resurrection; but to the rest or *remnant* (*λοιποι*) who were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, ch. xix. 21, for though our translators have varied the expression, using the word "remnant" in one place, and "the rest" in another, the same Greek term answers to both. These "live not again," but are deprived of all political, military, or hostile power and authority, and so continue as dead and slain, giving no molestation to the saints, till the thousand years are finished; at

which time they live again *in their successors of the same spirit*, when Satan is loosed, again deceives the nations, and gathers them together to battle against the saints, ver. 7-9.

Having thus given a general view of what I understand by the first resurrection; we shall now proceed to consider the description which is here given of the church that shall enjoy the blessedness of it. They are described in the scheme of the vision, as "those that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God," in which there seems to be an allusion to the ten persecutions which took place under the heathen Roman emperors, and of which I gave some account in a former lecture. (See Lect. xvii. p. 200, &c.) These, rather than comply in the least with the established idolatry of the times, or renounce the name of Christ and deny his faith, suffered every species of persecution, and were faithful unto death. They are further described as "those who had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands." These are they who kept themselves pure from the pollutions of Antichrist, who did not acknowledge or honour him, nor comply with his errors, idolatrous practices, his superstition, and his blasphemous claims: but, on the contrary, testified against all his abominations, and consequently were marked out as the objects of his vengeance, ch. xiii. 15-17. Now, as this is a description of the real followers of Christ, as contrasted with both his avowed enemies and also with the false church or anti-christian party, from whom they suffered; so it must be only the true church of Christ that shall be made partakers of the first resurrection; accordingly, they are termed *blessed* and *holy*. It were perhaps too much for us to affirm, that no hypocrites will gain access into the churches of Christ during this blissful period; yet I think we are warranted to expect that they will attain to such purity in faith, worship, order, and discipline; such fervency of brotherly love, such spirituality of mind, and universal holiness, as will at least equal any thing that ever took place in the first and purest of the apostolic churches, whom the apostles pronounced (according to their profession and appearance) to be *blessed* and *holy*, and exempt from the power of the second death, or *wrath to come*, Eph. i. 3; 1 Pet. ii. 9; 1 Thess. i. 10.

We shall now briefly consider the means by which the churches of Christ shall be raised to this state; and the privileges and blessings which they shall enjoy during its continuance. We have already seen, that all adverse and opposing powers shall be destroyed and removed out of the way; and that Satan himself, that grand adversary, shall be closely imprisoned in the bottomless pit. This will doubtless be a work of signal vengeance upon the enemies of Christ's kingdom: you will find its progress and

its issue described, Rev. xi. 13, 18, 19; ch. xvi. 18-21; ch. xix. 17-21; and ch. xx. 2, 3. When these things shall be accomplished, I think we are fully warranted from the connected voice of scripture to expect the following things.

1. That there will be a remarkable *effusion of the Holy Spirit*, similar to what took place on the day of Pentecost, when the Redeemer's kingdom was at first set up in the world, Acts, ch. ii. The prophecies of the Old Testament abound with promises to this effect,—promises which, when we consider the context, do not seem to have met their full accomplishment in the apostolic age. Thus, in Isa. ch. xxxii., we have a description of Christ's kingdom, as set up at his first coming; after which, the prophet describes the succeeding desolate state of the Jews, which he represents as continuing “*until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest,*” &c. ver. 15-18. Again, the apostle Paul, to prove the conversion of the Jews at this period, Rom. xi. 26, 27, cites to this purpose Isa. lix. 20, 21, where a promise of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon them is made to them. His words are, “*As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, My Spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.*” There is another remarkable promise of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the people of the Jews, in Ezek. ch. xxxvi. There the Lord, having adverted to their forlorn and dispersed state throughout the nations among whom they had profaned his name, promises to gather them, to cleanse them, and to give them a new heart and spirit, adding, “*And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them,*” ver. 27. See also ch. xxxix. 28, 29. The promise in Zech. xii. 10, of “*pouring out upon them the Spirit of grace and supplication,*” has also an evident aspect to the millennium period.

Now, though I do not think we are authorized to expect that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit will again be revived, seeing that the truth of the gospel has already been sufficiently confirmed; yet I do think that we are warranted to look for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in such an abundant measure, as shall qualify men for preaching the gospel of God throughout the world, and for filling them with light, zeal, courage, and faithfulness in that work; and not only so, but to give success to the gospel in converting men to the faith, quickening the dead in trespasses and sins, and translating them into the kingdom of Christ; to all which let me add, that the enlightening, sanctifying, comforting influences of the Holy Spirit, will pervade the whole church of



God, exciting Christians to much greater liveliness, zeal, activity, and fruitfulness in their profession, than at any former period. To me it appears, that the Holy Spirit, poured out abundantly, and producing these glorious effects by means of the word of God, will be the great quickening principle in the first resurrection. The result of this will be,

2. An *universal spread of the gospel of Christ*, diffusing the knowledge of the Lord throughout the world, in a far more extensive and effectual manner than at any former period. That this shall be the case, there are abundant promises upon record: the following are a specimen. "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee: for the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations," Ps. xxii. 27, 28. "He [the Messiah] shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth: all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him: His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed," Ps. lxxii. "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and *all nations shall flow unto it*; and many people shall go and say, Come ye, let us go up unto the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths, for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem," Isa. ii. 2, 3. The eleventh chapter of Isaiah is direct to this purpose; for it is there promised, "that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," ver. 9. And this is promised to take place in that day when the Gentiles shall seek to the root of Jesse, whose rest shall be glorious, ver. 10; and when the Lord shall set his hand a second time to recover the remnant of his people, and "shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth," ver. 11, 12. The same promise is repeated, Hab. ii. 14: "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord," Numb. xiv. 21, and Ps. lxxii. 19; Mal. i. 11.

3. Another thing that will then take place, is *the purity of church communion*, by the separation of Christ's people from the world, and the restoration of the primitive apostolic church-order, worship, and discipline. During the reign of Antichrist, a corrupted form of christianity was forced upon the nations,—a system which was laid in the political constitution of the kingdoms which

were subject to that monstrous power. Hereby the outward form and order of Christ's visible churches were defaced; and the children of God were in a great measure mixed, and, as it were, buried and absorbed in the common corrupt mass. So that during this period, which continues one thousand two hundred and sixty years, the virgin daughter of Zion, the woman, or true church, is in a persecuted condition in the wilderness, Rev. xii. 14; the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, ch. xi. 3; and the outer court of the temple, or church of God, is given unto the nations, who profane it with their abominations, and tread the holy city under foot; so that the visible communion, form, and order of the Lord's house cannot, in such a situation, be measured by the rule of the word of God, ver. 2. But after the expiration of the forty-two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty years of Antichrist's reign,—the time, times, and a half, of the prophet Daniel,—the sanctuary will be cleansed, and the outer court of the Lord's house may then be measured by the rule of God's word, Dan. viii. 14. Its visible communion, worship, order, and discipline will then accord with the primitive apostolic pattern in all parts of the world. This will be the total ruin of all national churches, which are established by human laws,—a corrupt constitution of things, which mixes the people of God in religious fellowship with the profane world, and which is subservient to the corrupt policy, pride, avarice, and ambition of men;—which robs the Redeemer of his glory as king of Zion, and transfers it to sinful worms of the earth.

4. *The divine special presence and residence* will then be in the midst of his people. Not the bodily presence of the Saviour, as some in our day are clamorously insisting on; for concerning this we hear an apostle say, "Whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began," Acts, iii. 21. In other words, the Lord Jesus will continue in heaven until all the predictions of the holy prophets are fulfilled, and among others, that of the latter day glory. But what I would be understood to mean by the divine special presence and residence, is the full and abundant realization of what the Lord promised to his obedient disciples when he said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself unto him."—"If any man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him," John, xiv. 21-23. Christ indeed promised to be with his people in every period of the church, even unto the end of the world, Matt. xxviii. 20; and also that he would be *in the midst* of even

two or three when assembled in his name, ch. xviii. 20. Moreover he calls them to "Come out and be separate from every impure connection, in religious worship, and promises *to dwell in them, and walk in them*, to be their God, and take them unto himself for a peculiar people," 2 Cor. vi. 16-18. But this will be fulfilled in an eminent degree and remarkable manner during the Millennium period: for thus runs his own gracious promise. Ezek. xxxvii. 26-28, "I will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore; My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people; and the heathen shall know that I do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore." Now, that this gracious promise has a reference to the Millennium period is clear from the context, which speaks of the gathering the children of Israel, and bringing them into the church and kingdom of Christ, ver. 21-26, and also from the prophecy against Gog and Magog, for their evil designs against them, which follows in the two next chapters, viz. xxxviii. and xxxix., as it does also in ver. 8, 9, of the chapter before us, Rev. ch. xx. This special presence of the Lord among his churches, alludes to his dwelling of old among Israel in the tabernacle and sanctuary, Lev. xxvi. 11, 12, and implies that he will hold the most intimate correspondence with them in his ordinances, communicating light, life and consolation to their souls, and also affording them his protection and care, as his peculiar people. It seems also, that there will be afforded from time to time such manifest tokens of his gracious presence among them, as will fall under the notice of the world, filling the latter with awe and respect for them, as was in some measure the case in the apostolic churches, (See Acts v. 11-13; 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25) for it is said, "And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them," Ezek. xxxvii. 28. And this very promise is represented as being accomplished, Rev. xxi. 3.

5. The Millennium period will be *a time of universal peace and tranquillity*. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them; and the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play upon the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand upon the cockatrice den: They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain," Isa. xi. 6-10. That this interesting passage respects the Millennium period, I have already shewn in a former part of this lecture. It is generally thought, that the ferocious and hurtful animal here mentioned, are intended to represent persons converted to the faith,

and that they are thus described to shew the power of divine grace in producing such a change upon them. This is the commonly received interpretation of the passage, and I feel no disposition to dissent from the truth of the doctrine. We see it exemplified in the instances of Saul of Tarsus, the Philippian jailer, and many others. But may we not also take the passage as descriptive of the unconverted, who, during the Millennium and the period of Satan's imprisonment are under subjection and awe, and become harmless to the people of God, so that their outward peace is not disturbed by them? The same thing is repeated in Isa. lxv. 25, "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock, and dust shall be the serpent's food: they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." The serpent who eats dust, according to the original curse, Gen. iii. 14; Mic. vii. 17, cannot represent a converted sinner—neither do the wolf and the lion; but persons of this description will then be restrained from doing hurt, or from persecuting the saints. There shall be no war or bloodshed among the nations during this happy period; for it is written, "the Lord shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more," Isa. ii. 4. The same promise is made *verbatim* in Mic. iv. 3, and in both places it is promised to be accomplished "*in the last days*, when the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, and when all nations shall flow unto it." And this was to take place long after the utter destruction of the Jewish church and polity, when Zion should be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem become heaps, and the mountain of the house, as the high places of the forest, ch. iii. 12. There are many other promises respecting the peace, tranquillity, and safety which the people of God shall enjoy during this happy period—such as "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders: but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise," Isa. lx. 18. "Behold I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream," ch. lxvi. 12. "In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground; and I will break the bow, and the sword, and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely," Hos. ii. 18. These are promises which never yet have been fulfilled to the church; surely they are not non-entities!

6. We have reason to expect that *the civil rulers and judges of*

*the earth shall, during this period, be distinguished for the righteous and peaceable administration of their respective offices.* I had occasion, in a former lecture (See p. 414, &c.) to make some observations on the importance of the ordinance of civil government to the good of society, and to show how monstrously it was perverted from its original end and design, by the ten kings who gave their power to the beast, when they made use of it to enforce an uniformity of religious profession upon all their subjects. This system of things will have no existence during the Millennium; for the beast and false prophet with whom it was embodied, are both cast alive into a lake of fire, and with their destruction, the system ends! But though Christ shall then put down all rule, and all authority, and power, yet I do not understand it to extend to all civil government of every kind, but only to all tyrannical, unjust, oppressive, and cruel governments which have persecuted the saints, and embroiled the earth in war and bloodshed. These are remarked among the enemies which shall be put under Christ's feet, 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25. But, forasmuch as civil government is an ordinance of God, and intended for the good of mankind; as Christians are enjoined to be subject in the civil affairs of life, even to the worst governments; and as good government is one of the greatest outward blessings that mankind can enjoy in this world: so it appears to me that it will be one of the outward blessings of the millennium period, and conducive to the universal peace which shall distinguish that blissful era. Without admitting this, I am quite at a loss to understand what interpretation I am to put upon many things that occur in the prophecies of the Old Testament: such as Isa. lx. 17, 18, "I will also make thine officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness:" the consequence of this will be, "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise." The churches of Christ will, doubtless, be regulated in all their concerns according to the model laid down by the king of Zion, and his apostles in the New Testament; but by *officers* and *exactors* here, I understand the civil magistrates and judges which shall be over them as communities, or kingdoms of this world. Thus, when the nations are given to Christ for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, the kings and judges of the earth are admonished to "serve the Lord with fear: to rejoice with trembling: to kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and they perish from the way," Ps. ii. 8-12. This shews his sovereign dominion, as the Messiah over the powers of the earth, for he is King of kings, and Lord of lords; and that they must either submit to him, or be destroyed. Accordingly, when the kingdoms of this world shall actually

become our Lord's and his Christ's, and when "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High;" according to ancient prophecy, Dan. vii. then he will make their officers peace, and their exactors righteousness, corresponding to his own character as the true Melchisedec, the "king of righteousness, and king of peace;" and then the two cardinal ends of government will be attained—the maintaining of peace, and the administration of justice or righteousness. And as this is the time when the saints are to reign upon the earth, so we may reasonably expect that their influence will predominate and the wicked be in subjection to them. Then, indeed, will "kings be their nursing fathers, and their queens their nursing mothers," Isa. xlix. 23. See also ch. lx. 11-19; ch. lxi. 5-7. Then shall the promise be accomplished, "In righteousness shalt thou be established; thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee," Isa. liv. 14. And as the administration shall be peaceable and righteous, so—

7. *All the true subjects of Messiah's kingdom shall be righteous;* for thus it is promised to Zion: "Thy people shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified," Isa. lx. 21. And as in reference to the purity of religious communion it is said, "henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean," Isa. lii. 1. And again, "In that day there shall no more be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts," Zech. xiv. 21. So in like manner, it is only the saints that shall inherit the earth as heirs, Matt. v. 5, for to them the kingdom and dominion will be given, Dan. vii. 27.

8. Lastly, "*They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years,*" ver. 6. In ch. v. 10, it is said, "Thou hast made us unto our God, kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." The saints even now are "made kings and priests unto God," according to ch. i. 6. They are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 17. They are sanctified to his service as priests, have access into the holiest of all, and offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 5, and so are "a chosen generation, a royal, or kingly priesthood, a peculiar people, that they should shew forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness, into his marvellous light," ver. 9. But they shall be more eminently, conspicuously, and extensively so, during these thousand years; when by the holiness of their lives, the purity of their faith and worship, and their zeal and diligence in spreading the gospel of the kingdom, "the earth shall be filled with the know-

ledge of the Lord." Then the promise shall be fully accomplished, "Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God," Isa. lxi. 6. Then will "God's way be generally known on earth, and his saving health among all the nations; the peoples shall be glad, and sing for joy: for the Lord will judge them righteously; then shall the earth yield her increase," a revenue of praise to God, and the Lamb: "and God, even our own God, shall bless us; God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him," Ps. lxxvii. During this glorious period, the church will have its Pauls, and Peters, and Johns over again: men will be raised up who shall go forth in the spirit and power of these worthies, as much as John the Baptist did in the spirit and power of Elias: and thus the apostles and martyrs will, as it were, be raised from their graves, and live again upon the earth.

With regard to *the nature* of the reign of the saints during the millennial period, it will undoubtedly, correspond in all respects with the spiritual and heavenly nature of Christ's kingdom, to the promotion of which all their power will be subservient. It is a reign of peace and righteousness, of godliness, and humanity; consequently the reverse in all respects of the reign of Antichrist and his supporters. Those who cannot conceive of any reign on earth, but such as consists in lordly and oppressive domination, maintained by craft and violence, and whose object is the gratification of pride, ambition, avarice, and every other worldly lust, can have no idea whatever of that which will constitute the glory and felicity of the thousand year's reign of the saints, which we have now had under consideration; and therefore, would act wisely to let the subject alone.

But I desist: I have briefly stated the views which, after forty years' patient attention to the subject, I find myself compelled by the authority of scripture, to entertain on this much controverted doctrine. On calmly reviewing them at your leisure, you will, I trust, find that they rest upon the representations that have been given us by the ancient prophets of the extensive and universal spread of the Messiah's kingdom previous to his second coming to raise the dead and judge the world, and so put an end to the present dispensation; that they are corroborated and confirmed by the concurrent testimony of the Saviour himself, his evangelists and apostles; that they are in strict accordance with all that is taught us in the holy Scriptures concerning the nature of Christ's kingdom, and the genius and spirit of his mediatorial reign, as a kingdom of "righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Spirit;" and though I could not undertake to solve every difficulty that might be started by a captious querist, I feel confident that it is embarrassed with less of this kind, than the hypothesis which

stands opposed to it, and of which I gave you some account in my last lecture, with my reasons, at some length, for dissenting from it. After all, "I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say;" and, should doubts and difficulties beset any of your minds concerning any part of it, let me intreat you to keep in mind, that the subject is one of unfulfilled prophecy; that it relates to events which are yet future; that it does not constitute an article of "the faith once delivered to the saints," though it certainly is one of no inconsiderable importance in reference to our duty in using means to extend the Redeemer's kingdom in the earth; and, finally, let this consideration console us, under the pressure of whatever difficulties we may have to encounter, that "what we know not now, we shall know hereafter." Amen.

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" Rise, crown'd with light, imperial Salem, rise!  
 Exalt thy tow'ry head, and lift thy eyes!  
 See a long race thy spacious courts adorn;  
 See future sons and daughters yet unborn,  
 In crowding ranks on every side arise,  
 Demanding life, impatient for the skies!  
 See barbarous nations at thy gates attend,  
 Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend;  
 See thy bright altars throng'd with prostrate kings,  
 And heap'd with products of Sabean springs!  
 For thee Idumea's spicy forests blow,  
 And seeds of gold in Ophir's mountains glow.  
 See heav'n its sparkling portals wide display,  
 And break upon thee in a flood of day.  
 No more the rising sun shall gild the morn,  
 Nor evening Cynthia fill her silver horn;  
 But lost, dissolv'd in thy superior rays,  
 One tide of glory, one unclouded blaze  
 O'erflow thy courts: the Light himself shall shine  
 Revealed, and God's eternal day be thine!  
 The seas shall waste, the skies in smoke decay,  
 Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away:  
 But fix'd his word, his saving power remains:  
 Thy realm for ever lasts, thy own MESSIAH reigns!"

See Isa. ch. lx. and ch. lxxv. 25; ch. li. 6, and ch. liv. 10.



## LECTURE XLIII.

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AND when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went upon the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.—Rev. xx. 7-15.

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### THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, AND GENERAL JUDGMENT.

THE subject of the Millenium, or thousand years' reign of Christ and his saints upon the earth, we have had under consideration in our last two lectures. In the former of them, I endeavoured to shew, that the opinion so loudly contended for by many in our day, of the *personal* residence of the Saviour among his saints in their risen, immortal, and glorified state, who are said to inherit this sinful earth during that period, is at variance with the concurrent doctrine of the New Testament at large, in reference to the second coming of the Lord, the general resurrection of the dead, and the reward of the righteous: and in the latter, I submitted to your consideration, the views which I think the connected sense of scripture warrants us to entertain concerning the nature of the saints' reign, and the peaceable, happy, and glorious state of the christian church, during the period when Satan is bound, and shut up in the bottomless pit, and Antichrist and his supporters have perished from the earth. The verses which form the basis of the present lecture, will now lead us briefly to consider the events which shall succeed that happy period.

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison: and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea,” ver. 7, 8. The restraint, which, at the commencement of the thousand years, was laid upon the power and influence of Satan, that restless and malignant spirit, is taken off at its termination; and he is once more permitted to practise his old arts, and make another attempt upon the saints of the Most High. And now, without loss of time, he avails himself of his liberty, and goes out through the whole world to deceive the nations, and muster up his whole force against the church of Christ. “And he shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea,” ver. 8. Here, I cannot help interposing a remark, which well deserves the consideration of those who contend for Christ’s *personal* reign on earth with all his saints in their risen and glorified bodies. According to their view of the matter, all the wicked were cut off from the earth at the beginning of the millennium, for they take up the words in ver. 5, *literally*, “the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished.” But if so, where does Satan find materials for the grand confederacy which he now raises against the saints, and which the apostle terms Gog and Magog? The general resurrection—or, if they prefer it, the partial resurrection of the wicked has not yet taken place, for it follows in a subsequent part of this chapter, ver. 12, 13. The advocates of a *personal* reign have felt the full force of this objection to their view of the matter, and to surmount it they have had recourse to a variety of expedients far too numerous for me to specify. The truth is, that it is a millstone about the neck of that system, and every attempt to get rid of it only serves to involve them in fresh difficulties, as Mr. Faber has shewn,<sup>a</sup> and others besides him. But let the words be understood *figuratively*, as I explained them in my last two or three lectures, and this difficulty does not exist. The nations here mentioned, consist of those who never were really converted to Christianity, but who, during the imprisonment of Satan and reign of the saints, had been in a state of subjection—a state of political death; who were tamed of their ferocity by the universal prevalence of the gospel influence, and thus rendered so harmless as to produce no outward commotion or disturbance. These are the successors of “the *remnant* of them that were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse—a sword proceeding out of his mouth,”

<sup>a</sup> Sacred Calendar, vol. iii. p. 452-60.

ch. xix. 21 ; they are “the *rest* of the dead who lived not again until the thousand years were finished,” according to ch. xx. 5. But now, when Satan is liberated from his prison, he exerts his diabolical influence on them, raises them up from that death, and infuses into them his wicked spirit of pride, ambition, enmity, and opposition to the saints, which he effects by *deceiving them*, or representing things to them in a false light ; perhaps vilifying and accusing them, shewing how inglorious it was to them to be subject to the saints, and flattering their hopes with their entire destruction. But whatever stratagems the arch-adversary may have recourse to ; whatever the suggestions by means of which he deludes and spirits them up, he ultimately succeeds, and gains his end ; for he gathers together to battle an innumerable army. This formidable army is termed Gog and Magog, an appellation which has given occasion to much fruitless criticism. They are evidently so termed in allusion to what is said of those two nations in the prophecies of Ezekiel, chapters thirty-eight and thirty-nine. If you read these two chapters at your leisure, you will find that they were the last powerful enemies of Israel, after their deliverance from the Babylonian captivity, and before the *first* coming of Christ ; and so they are here brought forward *prophetically* or *figuratively*, as the last enemies of the true church after the thousand years of its prosperity, and previous to the *second* coming of the Lord from heaven. The next thing to be noticed by us is their attempt upon the saints and their sudden destruction.

“*And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and encompassed the camp of the saints about ; and the beloved city ; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them,*” ver. 9. The saints are here represented as encamped, but not in a hostile manner. The allusion is to the encampment of Israel around the tabernacle in the wilderness ; an account of which you have in Numb. ii. 2, &c., which is a fit representation of the true church, and the Lord dwelling in the midst of them. The beloved city is an allusion to Jerusalem, where the true God had chosen to place his name—where he delighted to dwell—and where the whole church of Israel assembled to worship ; and which also is figuratively put for the true church of Christ in its full order and beauty. When this immense army, led on by Satan, has compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city, hemming them in on all sides, that none of them might escape, but pleasing themselves with the fond imagination that they should extirpate the whole of them ; at that critical moment, the Lord interposes in their behalf, “and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.” You will find this to be the punishment that was threatened against ancient Gog and Magog, by turning to Ezek. xxxviii. 22, “I will plead against him (Gog)

with a pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone." And with respect to Magog, see ch. xxxix. 6, "I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles, and they shall know that I am the Lord." Whether this is to be considered as the total destruction of all the wicked that are then alive upon the earth, does not seem to me very clear, and therefore I hesitate to pronounce any thing decisively on that head. If the threatening against ancient Gog and Magog can throw any light upon this, it would appear that the Lord, by this signal deliverance of his church, and punishment of its enemies, will make himself known, and bring many to the acknowledgment of the truth, even in the eleventh hour. For, with respect to Gog we find it said, "And thou shalt come up against my people Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, *that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes,* Ezek. xxxviii. 16. And having mentioned his destruction by an overflowing rain, great hailstones, with fire and brimstone, it is added, "*Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord,*" ver. 23. Would it not appear from all this—I mean, upon the supposition that what is said concerning the Lord's dealings with Gog and Magog, in ancient times, has a further reference to the case before us, viz. his dealings with the enemies of his church posterior to the Millennium—that he has a large portion of mercy in reserve for those who are deceived by Satan after his liberation? But I merely throw out the hint, and leave you to judge for yourselves upon the matter.

I will take this opportunity of making one observation more upon a point which has been briefly adverted to more than once in these lectures, namely, that it is the Lord himself who defends his church, and destroys her enemies. Though the Apocalypse presents us with a prophetic history of the church of Christ, from its first establishment on the day of Pentecost to the final consummation of all things, yet it never represents his own people as making head against, or overcoming their enemies by the sword. True, indeed, they overcome even in their suffering state; but it is by faith and patience, and the word of their testimony. In all the judgments and plagues inflicted, whether upon Rome pagan, or upon Antichrist and his followers, the saints are never represented as being employed against them with carnal weapons. In all the wars of extermination and slaughter that have taken place in the world since the setting up of Christ's kingdom, the Lord in his providence has ever employed the enemies of his

church to inflict them upon each other. As it is said of Gog, "I will call for a sword against him, every man's sword shall be against his brother," Ez. xxxviii, 21. So when Antichrist shall be destroyed with the kings of the earth, and their armies who are leagued with him, it will not be effected by the sword in the hands of the saints, but by Christ himself at the head of his heavenly armies, Rev. xix. 11-21, who, as in other instances, can also make use of the sword of the ungodly, to bring about his own purposes. In like manner, the destruction of Gog and Magog is represented as effected not by the saints, but by fire from God out of heaven. From hence we may see that carnal weapons belong not to the church of Christ, whose kingdom is not of this world; that all the great events, all the terrible judgments, and mighty revolutions that take place in this world, are under the providential controul and special management of Christ, who is the governor among the nations, and who will make all things subservient to his own glory, and the happiness and final salvation of his church. And while the subject is before us, I would enter my solemn protest against the mad enthusiasm of those called Fifth-monarchy-men, a set of wrong-headed and turbulent people, who, in the year 1660, sprang up in this city expecting Christ's sudden appearance upon earth, to establish a new kingdom. The notion of these deluded people was, that the millennial kingdom was to be obtained by the saints conquering the wicked with the sword; and thus, fostering the principle of sedition, ambition, and worldly-mindedness, they would take Christ's work out of his own hands, instead of standing still and seeing the salvation of God.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>b</sup> *The Fifth-monarchy-men* here referred to, were a set of enthusiastic republicans who first made their appearance in the days of Oliver Cromwell; and as their history has some connection with the subject of the millennial reign of Christ, I subjoin a sketch of it for the information of those who are unacquainted with it. There were among them a few persons of note in the state, who having failed of their design in parliament, agreed with their associates to the number of three hundred, to attempt a revolution in the government by force; and their object was to put the Protector to death, and then proclaim King Jesus. Mr. Secretary Thurloe, however, who never spared expence to gain intelligence, had a spy among them, who discovered their intrigues, on which the government seized their arms and ammunition in Shoreditch, with their standard, which was that of a lion *couchant*, alluding to the lion of the tribe of Judah, with this motto, "*Who will rouse him up?*" The chief of the conspirators, as Venner, Gray, Hopkins, &c. were imprisoned in the Gatehouse till the Protector's death, with their accomplices, major-general Harrison, Colonel Rich, Colonel Danvers, and others, when they were all liberated.

In the year 1660, immediately after the restoration of Charles the Second, they imagined a favourable opportunity presented itself of carrying their former project into effect. Their leader was Thomas Venner, a wine cooper, who, in his little conventicle in Coleman Street, warmed the imagination of

“ *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever,*” ver. 10. Having been foiled in his last daring effort against the church, Satan, the

his admirers with passionate expectations of a *fifth universal monarchy under the personal reign of king Jesus upon earth*; and that the saints were to take the kingdom themselves! To introduce this imaginary kingdom, they marched out of their meeting house towards St. Paul’s church-yard, on Sunday, January 6th, to the number of about fifty men well armed, with a determination to subvert the existing government, or die in the attempt. They published a declaration of the design of their rising, and stationed sentinels at proper places. The Lord Mayor sent the trained-bands to disperse them; but the latter were speedily routed; and in the evening the insurgents retired to Canewood, between Highgate and Hampstead. On Wednesday morning they returned to town, and dispersed a party of the king’s soldiers in Threadneedle Street. In Wood Street they repulsed the trained bands, and some of the horse guards; but Venner himself was knocked down, and some of his party killed; from hence the remainder retreated to Cripplegate, and took possession of a house, which they threatened to defend with a desperate resolution; but nobody appearing to countenance their frenzy, they surrendered after having lost about half their number. Venner and one of his officers were hanged before the door of their meeting house in Coleman Street, January 19th, and a few days after, nine more were executed in divers parts of the city. See *Neal’s History of the Puritans*, vol. i.

This foolish and wicked project cost the peaceable dissenters of the day *very dear*. It gave occasion to the Duke of York, to push his arbitrary measures: and though it plainly appeared on the examination of these insurgents, that they had entered into no plot with any other conspirators; that the whole affair was the result of the religious frenzy of a few individuals, it was the origin of a national burden and evil which was long felt. It put the loyal and peaceable dissenters under the ban. The Independents, the Baptists, and the Quakers, published their declarations and apologies, protesting against these wicked and treasonable proceedings of which they had not the least knowledge; nevertheless, their religious assemblies were disturbed in all places,—their ministers imprisoned—pious persons were haled out of their houses—four hundred were committed to Newgate alone, others to Wood Street Compter, and most of the prisons of the metropolis were filled with the innocent victims of this mad project. The Baptists suffered most of any party on the occasion, though Venner is said to have declared “that he believed there was not one baptist among his adherents; and that if they succeeded, the Baptists should know, that infant baptism was an ordinance of Jesus Christ.”

But, “why bring forward this piece of forgotten history on the present occasion—what connection has it with the case in hand?” In answer to this question, I will frankly confess myself an alarmist in part. I greatly dislike *the spirit* that pervades the mass of publications issued by the millennarians of the present day, so little in unison with the spirit of Him who “did not strive nor cry, neither was his voice heard in the street.” I deprecate the vociferation and clamour which have not dignified, but *disgraced* certain pulpits in the metropolis, the organs of the millennarian peculiarities, and I cannot divest my mind of painful apprehensions when I witness the measures which are resorted to for *forcing* these things upon the public mind. . . . . I am sure I give these gentlemen credit for the very best intentions; and from my inmost soul I deprecate all persecution for religious opinions in every form and shape: I am an advocate for the utmost freedom of discussion on all points

prime mover of all the mischief that has taken place in the world, is now consigned to his eternal prison, where his agents, the beast and the false prophet, are. "There is no mention," says Mr. Fuller, "of *their* being 'tormented,' because they, as political bodies, were incapable of it; but of *him* it is said, 'he shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.' Perdition to them will be oblivion; but, to him, a state of everlasting punishment." This is, no doubt, true of the beast and false prophet, *considered merely as symbols* of the false church, or antichristian kingdom; but it ought to be remembered, that there is nothing here said of the punishment of Satan, that is not threatened against the *individuals* who are found worshipping the beast and his image; for thus it is written, Rev. xiv. 9-11: "If *any man* worship the beast and his image, and receive their mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

We are thus brought, my brethren and friends, in the order of revealed events, to the personal coming of Christ from heaven, to raise the dead, and judge the world, and so put a final period to time and the present dispensation. Whether the destruction of the army of Gog and Magog, with the casting of the devil and his angels into eternal perdition, takes place immediately before, or at the time of Christ's personal coming, I am unable to determine, nor need we be very solicitous so to do. They are events which the Scriptures class under the transactions of *the last day*, a period which evidently comprehends the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, both just and unjust, and the general judgment, including the reward of the righteous and the condemnation of the wicked. Concerning these solemn and most important subjects, in which we are all so deeply interested, and the consideration of which is brought before us in the sequel of this chapter, ver. 11-15, we have some additional light thrown by the inspired writers in other parts of scripture, and to which we must

that are not *contra bonos mores*, and would ever be prompt to concede to another, the privilege which I would ask for myself; but I question if the public mind be fairly dealt with in this instance. *Let truth have fair play and I have no dread of the issue!* I sincerely wish the peace of the realm, and deprecate all measures which have a tendency to disturb it; and this is my sole motive in inditing this note, which is only intended to put my brethren and friends upon their guard.

have recourse on the present occasion, collecting, as far as we can, the scattered rays, and embodying the whole in one consistent mass.

“ *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it; from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them; and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works: and the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works: and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire: this is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire,*” ver. 11-15. The sublime description which is given of the Judge and judgment-seat, in ver. 11, revives in my recollection an anecdote, related by the late venerable Dr. John Erskine, of Edinburgh, which I think is worth recording, though it may not be new to all my hearers. A young gentleman, lately returned from finishing his college education, chanced to fall into the company of a number of aged Christians, whom he thought to astonish by reciting sublime passages from the poets and orators of the age; and among other things of this description, he quoted, with great emphasis and effect, the well-known lines of Shakspeare—

“ The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself;  
Yea, all which it inherits, shall dissolve,  
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,  
Leave not a wreck behind!”

Having finished the quotation, he began to pronounce an eulogium upon it, boldly affirming, that there was nothing to be found equal to it in sublimity and grandeur in either ancient or modern literature. An aged Christian, who had attentively listened to the whole harangue, at length interposed, and ventured to question the decision, affirming that he could produce a passage equally sublime. The young man, startled with surprize, instantly challenged the point; on which the old gentleman, in a grave and solemn tone, responded, “ *And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them.*”—“ *Well,*” said the young man, overpowered with astonishment, “ you have indeed made good your point—that does infinitely surpass it; but pray, allow me to ask, where did you meet with it—in which of



our classical authors does it occur? for in all my reading, I never met with it.”—“O,” said the old gentleman gravely, “it occurs in a very common every-day book;” and, calling for a bible, he turned to the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse, and laying his finger upon ver. 11—“There,” said he, “read for yourself.” This completed the gentleman’s confusion; he declared that he had read the bible over and over again, but that he had never noticed that verse before; and with difficulty could he be brought to believe his own eyes!

Unhappily, the case of this young man was far from being singular. What wonderful things are there in the book of God, which we all overlook, while our attention is beguiled from day to day with the trifles of nature and the art of man! A more grand and impressive description is not in the power of language, than that contained in this short verse. The words are simple, but the ideas suggested by them are the true sublime. “The language is so plain,” says an eminent critic on the Scriptures, “as not to need, and so majestic and grand as to exceed, commentary or paraphrase.” The reader who meditates upon it, and fills his mind with the ideas conveyed by it, may *feel* the weight of the subject; but every attempt to expand or illustrate it, can have no other tendency than to weaken the impression. It is not for us, however, to stand admiring the language till we overlook the event itself. Lo, the dead, both “small and great, stand before God.” Young and old, rich and poor, all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. None are so insignificant as to be overlooked; none so mighty as to escape: the governors and the governed, the parent and the child, the master and the servant, the oppressor and the oppressed, the preacher and the hearer, all must give an account of themselves to God.

But, waiving for the present these general remarks, I shall endeavour to sketch, as far as I am able, the order in which the transactions of this decisive day appear to stand according to the Scriptures.

1. Christ will come personally from heaven, and appear in his glory, as the judge of the world. This he has himself informed us, Matt. xxv. 31: “The Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him.” With which agrees what the apostle Paul taught the Thessalonians: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God,” 1 Thess. iv. 16.

2. By this voice at the sound of the last trump, he will raise the dead: “The dead in Christ shall first rise, before the living are caught up,” 1 Thess. iv. 16. “The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible,” 1 Cor. xv. 52. “The

hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation," John v. 28, 29. "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hades [or the grave] delivered up the dead which were in them," Rev. xx. 13. This is the destruction of the *last enemy*, viz. death, for now death is cast into the lake of fire, ver. 14.

3. The living, and the dead now raised, comprising both righteous and wicked, will be gathered before the judgment-seat of Christ. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them: and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God," &c. ch. xx. 11, 12. "Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations," Matt. xxv. 31, 32. "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ," 2 Cor. v. 10.

4. The Judge will now separate the righteous from the wicked, according to Matthew xxv. 32, 33, "He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand but the goats on the left."

5. He then proceeds to judge and pass sentence on them according to their respective characters and works. "And the books were opened; and another book was opened which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Rev. xx. 12; also, Matt. xxv. 34-46.

6. Then follows the execution of the sentence.—"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire," Rev. xx. 15. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment," viz. "into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels,"—"but the righteous into life eternal." Matt. xxv. 34, 41, 46.

Such, brethren, are the grand and interesting topics set before us in the verses under consideration, and such, I conceive, will be the order in which they will occur. The following just and pertinent observations on the subject, occurs in Mr. Fuller's Expository Notes, and they are very deserving of our regard.

"Men, owing to the imperfection of their knowledge, and of their memories, make use of 'books;' but God's infinite knowledge requires no such assistance. It is merely in allusion to human proceedings that this is spoken (ver. 12.) His memory is itself the book from which he judges the world.

"Believing sinners are justified by grace; but both believers and unbelievers will be judged according to their works." Those

who have sinned without the light of revelation, will be judged by the light of nature : those who have sinned against revelation will be judged by it according to the light they had, or might have had. Believers themselves, though not dealt with according to their deserts (for they will *obtain mercy of the Lord* in that day) yet their works will be censured or approved according to what they were. Their sinful works will be burnt up, though they themselves are saved ; and as to their good works, though there be nothing in them deserving eternal life, or furnishing the least ground for boasting, yet will they be admitted as evidences in their favour. Matt. xxv. 31-40.

“There have been many days of judgment, as it were, in miniature ; but this will be universal. Whether men have died at sea, or on land, and whatever became of their bodies, whether slain in battle, devoured by the beasts of prey, or decently interred in their graves,—all will rise and be judged, ver. 13, “*Death and hades, or the grave, were cast into the lake of fire.*” Death and the grave are things which belong to time, and which, as rivers are lost in the ocean, will now be swallowed up in eternity. Prior to the day of judgment the ungodly were confined under their power as in a prison : but having received their doom, they shall not be remanded thither, but shall go away into everlasting punishment,—“This is the second death.” Into this dreadful abyss all will be cast, as the just punishment of their sins, those only excepted whose names are “written in the book of life.” An interest in the salvation of Christ is the only security against the second death.”<sup>c</sup>

The subjects which have now passed under our review and hitherto engaged our meditations, are of the most solemn and interesting kind—death, judgment, heaven and hell ! Let us not dismiss them slightly, but endeavour to lay them to heart. Surely the prospects which Divine revelation opens up to us, are awfully grand and glorious. They are eminently adapted, by their sublimity and grandeur, to fill the mind of the real Christian with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory ; and, at the same time to teach him to pass the time of his sojourning here in fear, or, as the Psalmist expresses it, “to rejoice with trembling.” And if men in general are not thus affected by them, it can only arise from ignorance, unbelief, and that stupid insensibility which sin has infused into the soul, which benumbs all its faculties, sears the conscience as with a hot iron, and bars the door against all reflection :

“Like brutes they live, like brutes they die !”

The Scriptures represent not only human life and the things of this world as momentary, passing shadows ; but they also teach us

<sup>c</sup> Fuller on the Apocalypse, p. 365-7.

that the whole frame of nature is every day hastening to its end, that all the works of creation which our eyes behold, shall be burnt up, or dissolved by fire; and this tremendous catastrophe, though not expressly adverted to and mentioned by the prophet, in the chapter before us, is, nevertheless, described by the pen of inspiration, in other parts of holy scripture, as immediately taking place after the event we have had under consideration—the judgment of the world; for no sooner is that solemn process terminated, and the saints taken with Christ into heaven, than the general conflagration takes place, and the world shall be burnt up; according to the apostle Peter's declaration, "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up," 2 Pet. iii. 10. Let us bestow a few thoughts upon this grand subject—the present is obviously the proper place for doing it.

It would appear from a general review of the whole of this chapter, that there were, in the days of the apostles, as there are in our own day, men who laughed at the Christian's hope, and scoffed at the promise of Christ's coming, with the events which are then to take place, as being things wholly incredible. These were men of vicious lives, walking after their own ungodly lusts, and none but such men would seek their ease in infidelity. They used arguments in support of their opinions drawn from the apparent delay of the promise of Christ's coming, since it was first made to the fathers, and from the circumstance of no change happening in the order of nature, since the creation of the world, which the apostle affirms they know to be false. It was highly proper, therefore, that he should refute the silly sophism of these wicked men, and guard Christians against the pernicious influence of their tenets, which he does by shewing that the world has been destroyed by water since it was first created, ver. 5, 6, and that although the threatening which has been denounced against it, that it should be again destroyed by fire, hath not yet been executed, this ought not to be made a handle for scepticism and infidelity, because a thousand years are with the Lord but as one day, ver. 8, and that the interval of delay was a proof of the divine long-suffering, and intended to give men space to repent, ver. 8, 9. He then insists, ver. 10, that the Lord will come, and that suddenly, when men least expect him, for it will be like a thief in the night, even as the apostle Paul told the Thessalonians, (1 Thess. v. 2.) And now let us mark the apostle Peter's description of this catastrophe. "The heavens and the earth, which now exist, by the same word; which first called them into existence, are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men," ver. 7. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens

shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up," ver. 10. In this tremendous day, the *heavens*, the aerial heavens, or atmosphere belonging to this earth, probably including the planetary system, the sun, moon, and stars, shall pass away with a great noise, or as the word signifies, a tremendous crash, an overpowering roar, like a violent storm, or tempest of thunder, lightning, wind, and rain; and "*the elements shall melt with fervent heat.*" Some understand by the "elements," the planets; others the elementary substances of which the world is composed:—these shall all melt like wax in the general conflagration. And "*the earth also,*" that is, this solid globe on which we dwell; yea, "*and all the works that are therein,*"—all its stately furniture of nature and art, all the works of men which are so much the object of admiration, and on which so many place their happiness, these shall all perish in the general conflagration—they shall be wholly burnt up and consumed, ver. 10, 12.

There are some very sublime passages in the writings of the Old Testament prophets, which seem to glance at this subject, and which I think, can only find their full accomplishment in it.

Thus Isaiah xxxiv. 4. "All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree." Again, ch. li. 6, "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner;" which agrees with Ps. cii. 25, "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands: they shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed, but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." How inexpressibly grand and awful are the descriptions thus set before the children of men, of an event which awaits us all, especially when we connect with it "*the perdition of ungodly men,*" ver. 7; for then, "the Lord Jesus Christ will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, *in flaming fire*, taking vengeance on those that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of his Son; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe, in that day," 2 Thess. i. 7-10. Let not the Christian, then, be affected by the taunts of the scoffers of the age, "saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" for he may be fully assured, that God can find *fire* as easily as he did *water* to execute his will; of which we have

proof in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah ! It is added by the apostle Peter, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," ver. 13. The promise here referred to, I understand to be that which is contained in Isa. lxxv. 17, the words of which read thus : "For, behold I create new heavens and a new earth ; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." And this is the subject on which the prophet enters in Rev. xxi. 1, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth ; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea ;" but on this we must not enter at present. Rather let us turn our attention to the improvement which the apostle Peter calls upon us to make, of the great subject on which he has been discoursing. "Seeing ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless," ver. 14.

To be "found of the Lord in peace," is to stand before the Son of Man with acceptance, as his faithful and approved servants ; in reference to which the apostle Paul says, "Wherefore we labour that whether present or absent we may be accepted of him," 2 Cor. v. 9, 10. To be "without spot and blameless," is to have our robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb ; and to have the decided character of his people, or of those whom he will approve and acknowledge, in that day when many will say unto him, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works ? but to whom he will answer, I never knew you, Depart from me, ye that wrought iniquity," Matt. vii. 21. Now, this exhortation to *diligence* implies, that there is a connection in the economy of grace, between our diligence here, and our being found of Christ in peace, without spot and blameless ; for the whole force of the exhortation rests upon this. And indeed the whole word of God shews this connection so fully, that to deny it would be to subvert all religion. For, though God justifies the ungodly freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus—not working but *believing*—though we are saved by grace through faith, which is the gift of God, and not of works lest any man should boast ; yet, we must ever keep this in mind, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord" in that day. The gospel is a doctrine according to godliness ; for, while it brings salvation to perishing sinners, it teaches to deny ungodliness, &c., and to live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world. And this is the declared end of our redemption ; for "Christ gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Further, the exhortation implies that believers should be influ-

enced in their diligence *by motives* drawn from the second coming of Christ, and the mighty events that shall then take place. And what motives can possibly be presented to the human mind so rousing, or that can more forcibly operate upon our hopes and fears? The unexpected suddenness of Christ's appearance—at midnight the cry will resound, "the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him"—the awful glory and majesty in which he will appear, not as formerly, the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief—but as the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory; attended by myriads of angels and archangels! Add to which, the burning up of the world, and the perdition of ungodly men! But with all its tremendous solemnities, this will be a joyful day to the meek, and humble, and self-denied followers of the Lamb; the saints who shall then be found *in him*, and found *of him* in peace, without spot and blameless. Such motives as these touch the most vigorous springs of action, if they be duly realized and recollected.

Be exhorted, then, my beloved brethren, to diligence in holding fast the faith of the second coming of the Saviour; that so ye be not led away with the error of the wicked, and come short through unbelief. Be diligent in watching for his coming, so as to be in readiness to receive him. Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares; for as a snare it shall come upon all them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the Son of Man, Luke xxi. 34-36.

YE servants of the Lord,  
 Each in his office wait;  
 Observant of his heav'nly word,  
 And watchful at his gate.

Let all your lamps be bright,  
 And trim the golden flame;  
 Gird up your loins as in his sight,  
 For awful is his name.

Watch! 'tis your Lord's command;  
 And while we speak he's near:  
 Mark the first signal of his hand,  
 And ready all appear.

O happy servant he,  
 In such a posture found!  
 He shall his Lord with rapture see,  
 And be with honour crown'd.

Christ shall the banquet spread,  
 With his own royal hand;  
 And raise that fav'rite servant's head,  
 Amidst th' angelic band.

## LECTURE XLIV.

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AND I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. 5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. 6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. 9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. 10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; 12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. 17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. 18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. 19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; 20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. 22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. 23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the



moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. 24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. 25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. 26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. 27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

AND he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits and yielded her fruit, every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: 4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. 5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever.—Rev. xxi.-xxii. 1-5.

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THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH, AND THE  
NEW JERUSALEM.

THE Course of Lectures which has occupied our attention, and that without intermission, during the full period of nine months, is now fast approaching its termination.<sup>a</sup> In the last lecture, we had under consideration, events of the most solemn and interesting kind that the heart of man conceive. These were, the second coming of Christ from heaven, and that “with power and great glory,” attended by an innumerable retinue of angels, the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; the resurrection of the dead, both just and unjust; the general judgment; the sentence pronounced upon both classes; the burning up of the heavens and the earth; with the creation of the new heavens and the new earth, in which righteousness alone should dwell.

The verses which I have read to you as the basis of the present lecture, beginning with the twenty-first chapter, and ending with the fifth verse of the twenty-second, you will find to comprise three interesting topics, namely, the new heavens, the new earth, and the new Jerusalem: and to these we must now bend our attention, humbly inquiring what the Scriptures teach us concerning them.

“*And I saw a new heaven, and a new earth: for the first heaven and the earth, were passed away, and there was no more sea,*” ver. 1. The general judgment having taken place, and the heavens and the earth passed away, as described, ch. xx. 11, and

<sup>a</sup> It commenced on Lord's day, January 4; and was finished on Lord's day, November 8, 1329.

also by the apostle Peter, 2 Pet. ch. iii. they are succeeded, according to both writers, by "new heavens and a new earth," which, indeed had been foretold by the prophet Isaiah, and to which Peter refers as to a prophecy unfulfilled, see Isa. lxxv. 17, and ch. lxxvi. 22. Here, however, a difficulty of no ordinary magnitude presents itself to us; what are we to understand by this "new heaven and new earth," this "new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven," and this "pure river of the water of life," which is said to flow in the midst of it? These are points which we must dispose of, and questions which must be somehow resolved, before we can safely advance any farther with the consideration of our present subject.

Those who have written on the book of the Revelation, are divided in their opinions, whether these two concluding chapters are to be considered in the light of an amplification of the blessedness of the millennial period, which had only been briefly mentioned, in the preceding chapter, or whether they relate to the blessedness of the heavenly state, the ultimate glory which awaits the church.

Now, in reference to the first mentioned hypothesis, I find some of them stating three objections, as follows: 1. That the Millennium precedes the last judgment, whereas the new heavens and the new earth follow it. 2. The Millennium was for a limited time; but this is "forever and ever," ch. xxii. 5. 3. Under the Millennium, the dragon (Satan) is only bound for a season, and afterwards loosed; but here there is neither dragon nor enemy of any kind. The devil is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, to be tormented day and night, for ever and ever, ch. xx. 10; "and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away," ver. 4. To the first of these objections, however, it is important to notice, that the order in which the visions are placed does not invariably mark the order of time; because the same things are exhibited to us under different forms in successive visions, and the narrative sometimes retrogrades, as I formerly mentioned to you, and comes over the same ground again with additional illustrations. The other two objections are easily surmounted upon a principle which I shall presently lay before you.

On this first verse I would notice, that some of our commentators have perplexed themselves to find a particular representation signified by the emblem of the *sea*. It does not, however, appear to me, that any such is intended. The *heaven*, the *earth*, and the *sea* (with sometimes the rivers and fountains of water) are taken by the sacred writers to denote the *whole world*. For instance, it is said, Exod. xx. 11, "In six days God made heaven and

earth, the sea, and all that in them is." And as these component parts are mentioned at the creation, so again are they specified at the dissolution of the world: these all pass away, "all things are made new,"—the sea is no more.

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write, for these words are true and faithful," ver. 2-5.—Here, brethren, the difficulty which I just now mentioned, comes fully before us; and it is a difficulty which all must feel who bend their attention to this sublime subject. The prophet saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, &c.<sup>a</sup> "I apprehend," says Dr. Doddridge, "he saw in the vision, an appearance of a city, which seemed, like the sheet which Peter saw, to be let down from heaven, and appeared pendent, as it were in the air, in such a view, that the foundations were visibly distinguishable from the superstructure: and this he considered not as actually the abode of the blessed, but as a figurative representation of the holiness and felicity, in which they were to dwell, so that it was a type of what the church should be. To interpret it, therefore, as if there were now such a city made in heaven, and by angelic power to be brought down to earth, and settled upon some spot of it, is so wild and romantic a thought, that one would wonder any one person of learning and understanding should ever have embraced it." Note, *in loco*.

I fully concur with the doctor, that it is highly absurd to put a literal construction on the highly figurative language of prophecy here used; but then some may question how far he is himself correct in the view he has given us of *the descent* of the holy city,

<sup>b</sup> Many sincere Christians have needlessly perplexed themselves on this subject, by forgetting that this is not the language of history, but of prophecy; that, consequently, the words are not to be construed literally, but taken in a metaphorical or figurative sense. In the language of scripture, that is said to come down from heaven, or from above, which is of divine origin. For instance, "Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights," &c. Thus, the baptism of John was from heaven because his authority was from God, and not from men. When the apostle Paul mentions "Jerusalem which is above," Gal. iv. 26, he evidently means a state of things which is of heavenly origin and constitution. See Mr. Lowman's note on Rev. xxi. 2.

the new Jerusalem. That I may not waste our time, and distract your attention by numerous quotations from what others have said and written on this subject, I will lay before you an extract from an author who had paid considerable attention to it, and whose judgment I highly venerate.

“The *heavens* and the *earth*,” says he, “are terms that often occur in prophecy, in a figurative sense, and particularly in the Apocalypse; and, in this sense, John’s vision of the new heavens and the new earth, may apply to the millennium. It appears to be the same with what is promised in Isa. lxxv. 17: “Behold I create new heavens and new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.” And the happiness that shall be enjoyed in this new state of things, is described to the end of that chapter, in terms suited to the millennium, but not to the ultimate blessedness of the saints in heaven. Yet the apostle Peter, referring to the same promise, applies it to that state of things which shall succeed the *literal* dissolution of the present heaven and earth by fire, which must be the state of heavenly happiness. It is plain, therefore, that this promise has a two-fold application; and as there are several prophecies of the Old Testament, which have a first and secondary sense, involving in the same prediction the affairs both of the Jewish theocracy, and of the kingdom of Christ, two connected, though successive dispensations; so, in the present case, the prophetic spirit, in dilating upon the happiness of the millennium, runs beyond it, and anticipates the succeeding glories of the heavenly state, to which it is so nearly allied.”<sup>b</sup>

I am much inclined to believe, that in what I have now quoted, you will find the true key to the interpretation of these two last chapters of the Book of the Revelation. Mr. Fuller’s view of the matter is somewhat different, and not so clearly or happily expressed as is usual with him. His words are, “The whole of what is said in the first four verses of this chapter, instead of describing the heaven of heavens, represents the glory of that state as ‘coming down upon the earth.’ The truth appears to me to be this: It is a representation of heavenly glory, in so far as that glory relates to the state of the earth on which we dwell; which, instead of being the stew of the mother of harlots, shall become the seat of the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. The earth will not be annihilated by fire, any more than it was by water. It will be purified from sin, and all its effects. The generations of a corrupt race of creatures having terminated, it will become the perfect and perpetual abode of righteousness.

<sup>b</sup> M’Lean’s Works, vol. i. p. 354, 8vo. edition.

The creation has long been subject to the "vanity" of supplying its Creator's enemies with the means of carrying on their rebellion against him. Under this "bondage of corruption," it has groaned and travailed, as it were, in pain, longing to be delivered: and now the period is arrived. The liberation of the sons of God from the power of the grave, shall be the signal of deliverance to the whole creation."<sup>c</sup>

Now, if I rightly understand his meaning, he would interpret what is here said of the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, to denote the existing state of things *after* the dissolution of the heavens and the earth: for he adds, "It is not the object of the Holy Spirit to tell as what the heavenly glory is, but rather what this world shall become in opposition to what it now is; this opposition is preserved throughout the description." There are difficulties, however, attached to this view of the subject which I shall notice hereafter. In the mean time, permit me to lay before you a beautiful passage from a sermon of Dr. Wardlaw's recently published. It is founded on Rom. viii. 19-22, and is entitled "Groans and Hopes of Creation." He differs from Mr. Fuller in resolving these things into that state which succeeds the general conflagration, and applies them to the millennial period. His words are, "Although the full manifestation of the sons of God, and the perfect enjoyment of their "glorious liberty," must necessarily succeed their rising from the dead, and obtaining their final release from the bondage in which they were held by "the last enemy;" yet may the honour and the joy comprehended in the phrase be considered, without any unnatural straining, as having their commencement on earth. According to all the prophetic intimations of the happy state of the church during the period of signal prosperity yet awaiting her interests in this world, the language of the apostle may well be applied to that state, without any charge of extravagance. The scene of triumph will have its opening here. The millennium will be "heaven begun below;" and heaven will be the millennium consummated, the perfection of its light of knowledge, of holiness, and of joy. And, perhaps, in confirmation of this view, it may not be unworthy of remark, how similar the language is, which the prophets employ, in describing both stages of the same progressive glory; so similar, that, of various parts of it commentators have differed in their application; and the descriptions appear at times to run so much into each other, as to render it difficult to draw the line of distinction between them."<sup>d</sup>

This you will perceive is precisely the view that is taken of the

<sup>c</sup> Fuller's Expository Discourses, p. 373.

<sup>d</sup> Dr. Wardlaw's Sermons, p. 473.

subject by my venerable friend, Mr. M'Lean, in the extract which I gave you from his writings; and I shall now continue that quotation: thus he proceeds—

“ Indeed, upon any other hypothesis, it is not easy to explain and reconcile the different things contained in the last two chapters of the Apocalypse. Some of them do not come up to the account which the scripture gives us of the complete glory and happiness of the heavenly state. The new Jerusalem is repeatedly represented, as “ coming down from God out of heaven,” not that John might get a view of it, as some conceive, for he had visions of things in heaven; and our Lord, in his promise to the church in Philadelphia, describes the new Jerusalem as that “ which cometh down out of heaven from God.” It must, therefore, be a happy state of the church on earth, when the tabernacle of God is with men, though of *heavenly origin*. But the scripture always represents the place of the saints' final happiness to be heaven itself, where Christ now is: their great reward is in heaven, and the inheritance is reserved for them there. It is said, “ The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it;” and again, “ They shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it,” ver. 24-26. It requires some explanation to show how this applies even to the church on earth, but seems altogether inapplicable to the heavenly glorified state. Again, it is said, “ And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there,” ver. 25; that is, “ its gates shall be continually open, they shall not be shut day nor night,” as in Isa. lx. 11, which imports the free and ready access that converts from all nations shall have into it, and who are called “ the glory and honour of the nations” in the next verse; and in Isaiah, “ the forces of the Gentiles,” ch. lx. 11; but there is no continued admission of converts into heaven after the accepted time and day of salvation is passed away. Further, it is said of the tree of life, “ which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month,” that “ the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations,” ch. xxii. 2, with Ezek. xlvii. 12. We cannot apply this to the heavenly state, unless we suppose that the nations of them that were saved will need this healing after they are raised from the dead and glorified. These particulars seem to be applicable only to the state of the church during the millennium.

“ But there are some parts of the description, which if taken in their strict and full sense, seem too high for the millennium, or any state of the church short of heaven. For instance, it is promised, that “ God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any pain; for, the former things are passed away,” ver. 4. There are, indeed, expressions similar to these, in Old

Testament prophecies which seem to relate to a prosperous state of the church in this world,<sup>e</sup> and in this view, must not be taken in an absolute, but comparative sense; namely, considered with relation to the foregoing afflicted and persecuted state of the church. But these expressions have also a higher sense, and are undoubtedly descriptive of the heavenly state; for, this promise is the very same with that in the prophecies of Isaiah, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces," Isa. xxv. 4, which the apostle Paul explains of the resurrection of the dead, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life, 1 Cor. xv. 54. It is also said, "that the throne of God, and of the Lamb, shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads," ch. xxii. 3, 4. This must certainly ultimately intend heaven itself, where the Divine Majesty peculiarly resides and has placed his throne; where his glorious presence is most immediately and eminently manifested, and where the redeemed shall for ever enjoy the beatific vision of his blissful countenance."<sup>f</sup>

I have given you this long quotation, brethren, because it furnishes a valuable commentary on the verses which are the subject of our lecture, and must render enlargement on my part, less necessary.

"*And he said unto me, IT IS DONE. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part, in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death,*" ver. 6-8. The truth and certainty of this blessed state are ratified by the word and promise of God, who commands his prophet to commit to writing what he had seen and heard, as matter of perpetual record. "WRITE, for these words are true and faithful," ver. 5. It is then added, "It is done," or, as it is said in Dan. vii. 28, "Hitherto is the end of the matter:" i. e. Thou hast now seen the consummation to which all this train of visions and prophecy tends. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." This ascertains the speaker to be the Son of God; for it is the very title by which he made himself known to the holy prophet, at the beginning, see ch. i. 8, 11. It is he who "liveth, and was dead, but is now alive for evermore, and has the keys of death and the invisible world." From his eternal throne he announces the freeness of

<sup>e</sup> Isa. xxxv. 10; Hos. xiii. 14; Zech. xiv. 11.

<sup>f</sup> M'Lean's Works, vol. i. p. 355-8.

the blessings of the gospel of his grace ; just as he did in the days of his public ministry, when he said, “ If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink,” John vii. 37 ; and there is a glorious promise also to the conqueror, similar to those given to the seven churches of Asia, ch. ii. and iii. : “ He that overcometh shall inherit all things,” &c. From this, a transition is made to the awful state which awaits the wicked, the finally impenitent and unbelieving, ver. 8 ; they shall have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death. They must die another death after their natural death : the agonies and terrors of the first death will consign them over to the far greater terrors and agonies of eternal death—to die and to be always dying ! Thus the misery of the damned will illustrate the blessedness of those that are saved ; and the blessedness of the saved will aggravate the misery of those that perish. These are alarming considerations : may we all lay them to heart in this the day of our merciful visitation !

“ *And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper-stone, clear as crystal : and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel : on the east three gates ; on the north three gates ; on the south three gates ; and on the west three gates : and the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb,*” &c. ver. 9-27. These verses present us with a most magnificent description of the new Jerusalem, which is exhibited under a twofold aspect, viz. that of a city, and also of a bride, the spouse of Christ,—that glorious church which was the purchase of his precious blood, and now “ without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.” As great Babylon and the mother of harlots were one and the same thing, so the new Jerusalem and the bride, the Lamb's wife, are one also. In the description of the new Jerusalem, as a city, there is a manifest allusion to some things that are contained in the writings of the ancient prophets ; as, for instance, what is said of its walls and its gates, &c. ver. 12, appears to be borrowed from Ezek. xlvi. 31-34 : “ And the gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel ; three gates northward ; one gate of Reuben, one gate of Judah, one gate of Levi : and at the east side three gates ; one gate for Joseph, one gate of Benjamin, one gate of Dan : at the south side three gates ;



one gate of Simeon, one gate of Issachar, one gate of Zebulun : at the west side three gates ; one gate of Gad, one gate of Ashur, one gate of Naphtali." It is added in the following verse, " the name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there," which is expressed in the Apocalypse by the words, " The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God," ch. xxi. 3 ; and again, ch. xxii. 3, " The throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads." Further, in the description that is given of *the glory* of this city, ver. 11, there is evidently a reference to Isa. liv. 11, &c. : " O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted ; behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires ; and I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones." I think the note of bishop Lowth upon these verses is exceedingly judicious, and proper to regulate our conduct in reference to the contents of these two chapters in the Apocalypse. Speaking of Isaiah's description of Zion, the church of the living God, he observes, " These seem to be general images to express beauty, magnificence, purity, strength, and solidity, agreeably to the ideas of eastern nations ; and to have never been intended to be strictly scrutinized, or minutely and accurately explained, as if they had each of them some moral and precise meaning." Under the authority of this great critic, then, I take shelter, and excuse myself from following the example of some of my predecessors, who have written largely and learnedly in explaining the properties of the precious stones which constituted the foundations of the new Jerusalem, according to ver. 19, 20, 21, of the chapter before us. I do not perceive that any thing more is intended than to afford some general, but lofty and sublime notion of the splendour of this superb and heavenly mansion ; and to describe the building as being composed of the richest and most costly materials, yet such as few persons have seen or can imagine. " As the new Jerusalem is denominated ' the bride, the Lamb's wife,' all that is said of her as *a city*, from ver. 10-27, though couched in highly figurative language, is descriptive of the church triumphant. Her high wall denotes her complete security ; her twelve gates, on which were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, denote that none but Israelites indeed, who have the seal of God in their foreheads, shall enter into it. Her twelve foundations may refer to the doctrine of the twelve apostles, on which she stands. The pearls and precious stones with which she is adorned,

† Lowth's Isaiah, note on ch. liv. 11.

are her spiritual riches and glory. There being ‘no temple, nor sun, nor moon,’ denotes that there will be no need of those means of grace (the ordinances of public worship) which we now attend upon; what we now receive *mediately* (or by their means), we shall then receive *immediately*. Finally, the nations of the saved walking in the light of it, may allude to the interest which surrounding nations take in a metropolitan city; and denotes that the saved, who have been gathered from all nations, will rejoice in the honour that God will have bestowed upon his church.”<sup>h</sup>

To complete the description of the city, and to finish the prophecy, we must consider the first five verses of the twenty-second chapter, in connection with the foregoing; they certainly ought to have made a part of that chapter.

“*And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun: for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever,*” ver. 1-5. The heavenly state, which in the foregoing chapter was described as a *city*, and called the new Jerusalem, is here described as a *paradise*, alluding to the garden of Eden, that earthly paradise, which was lost by the sin of the first Adam, but restored in its antitype by the obedience of the second. In the first paradise, there were only two persons to behold the beauty and partake of its pleasures; but in this second paradise, “the nations of them that are saved,” even all the redeemed company, shall find abundant delight and satisfaction.

We cannot reasonably doubt, that there is a reference in these verses to Ezek. xlvii. 1-12, and that the language of the Old Testament prophet had an ultimate respect to the very same subject as do the verses under consideration. Both prophets make mention of a city, of a river, and of trees growing upon the banks of it, and of the fruit thereof being for meat, and the leaves for medicine. In Ezekiel’s vision the waters were seen to flow from the temple, near the altar: while those of John are said to proceed out of “the throne of God and the Lamb.” Ezekiel’s city had a temple; but that of John had no temple, “for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof.” This difference

<sup>h</sup> Fuller, p. 376.

is accounted for upon the principle, that the Old Testament prophet describes the state of the church under the millenium period ; while the writer of the Apocalypse has in view the ultimate glory that awaits her, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life,—correspondent to the promise, ch. ii. 7, “ To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

Both the tree of life, and the water of life, are emblems of immortality. The waters of the river of life proceed from the throne of God and the Lamb, from the fountain of all mercy ; and the salutary streams support the tree of life, which is to be seen in this *paradise regained*, a never-failing source of immortality. “ With God is the fountain of life,” says the Psalmist ; “ Thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.”—“ In thy presence is fulness of joy ; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” Thus the figure of a river of water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb, elegantly expresses that state of glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life, which shall be the happy lot and portion of the many sons whom Christ shall bring to the fruition of his eternal kingdom.

But, waiving all further critical remarks, and that I may not seem tedious, I shall bring the present lecture to a close, as I did the last, with offering a few observations in the way of improvement.

In reviewing the subject of these last two chapters, we find it to consist of a prophetic representation of the happiness of the heavenly state ; and it is a composition every way worthy of the subject. No descriptive writing in the possession of mankind can be compared with it in sublimity and splendour. The most beautiful and the most magnificent objects which were ever presented to the imagination of man, are here selected with unrivalled skill, and combined with supreme felicity. Every stroke discovers the dictate of the Spirit of inspiration,—an emanation of a mind filled with the immense grandeur of the subject, and giving vent to the wonders and glories of the celestial vision,—every where invigorated with the conciseness which is so characteristic of the Scriptures, and especially of their sublimest effusions. It is equally distinguished for the particularity of imagery and phraseology, which is indispensable to all vivid, powerful impressions. Little and ordinary things are here forgotten, or purposely left to be supplied by the mind of the reader, while the writer employs himself in exhibiting those only which are eminently important, intensely beautiful, or gloriously majestic.

1. The residence of these happy beings, the heirs of salvation, deserves our notice. It is the antitype of that earthly paradise—the garden of Eden planted by the hand of the Almighty Creator,

to be the residence of our first parents, and over the loss of which every reflecting mind must have dropped the tear of sensibility. If that earthly paradise has been so delightful to the human mind ; if the human heart has ever sighed over the loss of this happy residence, it must certainly be a more delightful, as well as a more rational employment to contemplate a paradise wonderfully superior both in its nature and duration. Peculiarly will this employment be proper, consolatory, and edifying to him who, feeling himself a pilgrim and stranger in the present world, looks for a permanent residence beyond the grave ; “ a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” The heavenly Paradise is formed for eternity, and will, in every respect deserve to continue through this immense duration. It is intended to be the scene in which the infinitely glorious obedience of Christ will find its reward, and will itself constitute a proper part of that reward, and one honourable testimony of his Father’s complacency in that divine work. All the redeemed will be gathered into that happy place. “ The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs ; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads : they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

2. Contemplate for a moment, the description of inhabitants of which this blest world will consist. They are all holy and happy beings—many of them sons of God by adoption and grace, the children whom he had given to the Son of his love, to be redeemed by his blood ; the sheep for whom he laid down his precious life, and for whom he gave himself, that he might redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. Called by his gospel, justified by his grace, and sanctified by his word and Spirit, they are made heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus, and thus fit partakers of his kingdom and glory, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away ; an inheritance “ eternal in the heavens,” a kingdom “ prepared for them from the foundation of the world.” They are the companions of angels, the first of all created beings in worth, dignity, and glory. “ Ye are come,” says the apostle, “ unto Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem ; and to an innumerable company of angels—the general assembly and church of the first-born which are in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.” And so throughout the whole of this book, angels and glorified saints are exhibited as dwelling together in the same glorious mansions, occupied in the same employments, and uniting in the same praises to God and the Lamb.

3. Let us consider for a moment *how* they are employed. It will not be in slothful ease and indolence—for they will *serve*

God day and night in his temple, "his servants shall serve him," ch. xxii. 3. Who can doubt that this is the proper employment of the intellectual faculties possessed by rational beings? The purpose for which they were created. They will study the character of the blessed God, as displayed in his works of creation, providence, and redemption; and this they will do with ever new delight. Even in the present world, glimmering as we do through a few feeble organs, we discern sufficient of the divine wisdom and power, and goodness, to raise our admiration of the Divine architect; "the invisible things of God are clearly to be learned from the things which he has created, even his eternal power and godhead." Accordingly we find the inspired writers, particularly the Psalmist, making the material world, or the objects constituting this part of the creation, the theme of their wonder and praise. When we lift up our thoughts, by the aid of astronomy, to the solar system, and contemplate the sun as a vast central world, encircled by a host of other worlds, with their innumerable inhabitants; when we consider the universe as filled with suns surrounded by similar worlds; still more, if we regard all these as arranged into one vast harmonious system, suspended from the throne of God, and, amid all their apparent wanderings and mazes, moving for ever with perfect order around the heaven of heavens; we can want no proofs that the material creation is sufficiently magnificent to become a most important object of investigation to any created mind, however capacious, however dignified, however sublime may be its powers of conception.<sup>i</sup>

But the providence of God will become a still more glorious field of knowledge to the blessed inhabitants of heaven in the world to come. The providence of God, including the wonders of redeeming grace, is the end for which the creation exists. In that blessed world, no revelation will be needed to illumine the thoughts of its inhabitants concerning the divine administrations. While they were here below, they thought as children, they spake as children, and they reasoned as children; but now they have become men, and have left behind them all their childish imperfections. Once "they knew in part," now "they know even as they also are known." The mysteries which in this world have perplexed their views concerning the dispensations and character of God, will there be finished by a complete disclosure of their nature, tendencies, and ends. It will there be clearly discerned, that in every case God proposed and accomplished that which was fittest to be done, which was most worthy of the universal Ruler. The perfection of the *past* will induce complete evidence of the *future*; the soul will therefore cheerfully yield itself with

<sup>i</sup> Dwight.

implicit confidence, to the guidance and conduct of its Creator through the never-ending progress of its duration. But,

Christ is the light of heaven, as well as of the present world. He will feed his followers, and “lead them to living fountains of waters. He will furnish them with that knowledge which is the true food of the mind, and to slake their thirst for improvement, will lead them to the fountain of eternal wisdom, from which they shall drink for ever. The perfections of the uncreated mind he will eternally unfold; the instructor will be their Saviour; the disciples will be those whom he has redeemed from perdition by his own precious blood, and has made them both kings and priests unto God, and they shall reign with him for ever and ever.

To conclude the present Lecture: it is surely a very natural enquiry for each of us to propose in this place, For what particular purpose are we furnished with this sublime and splendid description of the heavenly state—that glorious country which shall be the inheritance of the saints in light, when this world, and the elements of which it is composed shall have passed away? Surely the design of the Spirit of inspiration in furnishing us with a description of such overwhelming grandeur, cannot be merely, nor even partially, to astonish and confound us amidst our weakness; he must have had a higher and nobler end in view. His object must have been to arouse slumbering mortals from their dreams in this world, and awaken in them the most energetic prayers and exertions to obtain an inheritance in that awfully glorious and superior state, so different from any thing we know or experience here below—a country where there shall be no sorrow, no pain, no death, no night, no curse; none of those evils which embitter this mortal life; but where “glory from the eternal throne, spreads everlasting day.” All that the human mind can conceive of as contributing to splendour, to the sublimest glory, is here brought together, to delineate the brightness and bliss of this royal city, in which is the palace of the Great King! This dazzling scene which seems to combine all that is admired on earth, with all the lustre of the skies—all that is noble in architecture, with all that is grand in design, is doubtless intended to draw off the affections from earth, to which they so strongly cleave, and to fix the pilgrim’s regards on that one happy place, which combines the glories and the felicities of all. Let those who through grace have believed, be persuaded to make this use of the subject; let them gird up the loins of their minds, be sober, and hope perfectly for the grace which shall be brought unto them at the appearing of Jesus Christ. And if there be any now present, who have hitherto never thought seriously on this subject—who have taken up with this wretched world as their portion; who are saying with the epicure, “Let us eat and drink,

for to-morrow we die,"—would to God, they could be aroused from their state of insensibility and stupor! Oh, say not there is no hope, say not the object is too high, too grand, too glorious to be desired and expected; the gates of that celestial city stand open night and day, for, we are told, "they are never closed." Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation—this is the period of your merciful visitation. Do you ask, what you shall do to be saved? how you shall obtain access into that eternal kingdom? The answer is easy, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Remember that he came into this world to save sinners, even the very chief of them. He is "the way, the truth, and the life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by him." He now invites you pressingly to partake of the waters of life freely. His own gracious words are, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

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Lift up, ye saints, your weeping eyes,  
Banish your sorrows and your sighs;  
Turn all your groans to joyful songs,  
Which Jesus dictates to your tongues.

Thus saith the Saviour from his throne,  
'Behold all former things are gone,  
'Past like an anxious dream away,  
'Chas'd by the golden beams of day.

'See in celestial pomp array'd,  
'A new-created world display'd;  
'Mark with what light its prospects shine!  
'How grand, how various, how divine!

'There my own gentle hand shall dry  
'Each tear from each o'erflowing eye,  
'And open wide my friendly breast  
'To soothe the weary soul to rest.

'No more shall grief assail your heart,  
'No boding fear, no piercing smart:  
'For ever there my people dwell  
'Beyond the range of death and hell.'

Vain king of terrors, boast no more  
Thine ancient wide extended power,  
Each saint in life with Christ his Head  
Shall reign, when thou thyself art dead.

## LECTURE XLV.

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AND he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true : and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. 7 Behold I come quickly : blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. 8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. 9 Then saith he unto me, see thou do it not ; for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book : worship God. 10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book : for the time is at hand. 11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still ! and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still, and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still : and he that is holy, let him be holy still. 12 And, behold, I come quickly ; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. 13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. 14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. 15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. 16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. 17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. 18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book : 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. 20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly ; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.—  
Rev. xxii. 6-21.

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### THE ATTENTION DUE TO PROPHECY.

THE prophetic part of the book of Revelation, ends with the first five verses of this chapter, which are the conclusion of a discourse exhibiting a visional representation of the blessedness of the heavenly state, grand beyond imagination, certain as the word of prophecy, and lasting as eternity. And this is set before the meek and humble followers of the Lamb, as an encouragement and persuasive to constancy in the good profession which they have made of Christ's name amidst the difficulties, the persecutions, and distresses which invariably attend it in this world. The verses now read, and comprising the remainder of the chapter,



contain the practical improvement which we are called upon, to make of the whole book of the Apocalypse; they consist of attestations, directions, invitations, and solemn warnings, in reference to the things contained in it.

“*And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets, sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done,*” ver. 6. It deserves our notice in this place, that the book of the Revelation is introduced to us by a declaration, chap. i. 1, that God had sent his angel to signify unto his servant John, the things which must shortly come to pass; and now that this entire train of prophecies concerning the events that were to befall the church of Christ, had been presented to him in vision, an angel, probably the same which appeared to him at the beginning, and who had been commissioned to exhibit this closing scene of prophecy, gives his solemn attestation to the truth and certainty of the whole. He had received it, not from man, but from the Saviour himself, the Lord God of the holy prophets, who had commissioned him to make them known to his servant John, that by him they might be communicated unto his churches on earth. And no sooner has the angel affixed his own attestation, than it is followed by that of him that sent him, ratifying and confirming the whole.

“*Behold I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.*” ver. 7. The mention concerning the speedy coming of the Lord, is repeated in ver. 12, and again in ver 20, of this chapter, where it is said, “*Surely I come quickly;*” and indeed it is the fourth time that we find the same declaration made in this book, see chap. iii. 11. But why have we the same thing so often repeated, but to draw our attention to the *certainty* of the event. The scoffers of every age deride this promise, and mock the hopes of christians upon the principle, that “all things continue as they were from the beginning of the world;” whence they infer, that they will continue to do so. But God hath promised a new heaven, and a new earth, and “the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness.” As he destroyed a former world by water, so certainly he will destroy this by fire, when his elect are gathered out of it, 2 Pet. iii. 3-10. “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the words of Christ shall not pass away,” Matt. xxiv. 35. The destruction of Jerusalem is a pledge of it, and the justice of his administration requires it. His coming is here declared to be *quickly!* But it may be retorted, have not one thousand seven hundred years already elapsed, since this promise was repeatedly made; how then can the coming of the Lord be said, to answer to this account of the matter? This deserves a little notice in this place; and to meet the objection, I remark as follows.

The first coming of the Saviour was promised to be *suddenly,*

Mal. iii. 1 "The Lord whom ye seek, shall *suddenly* come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in." Such was the promise; nevertheless he came not for four hundred years afterwards. Again, the Lord declared by the mouth of his prophet, Haggai, "Yet once, it is a *little while*, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth; and the desire of all nations shall come," ch. ii. 6, 7. Heb. xii. 26; yet this little while was more than five hundred and twenty years. Of Habakkuk's vision it is said, "It is yet for an appointed time, but at the end, it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry," ch. ii. 3. Here that is said, *not to tarry*, which comes with certainty, and does not exceed the appointed time, though that be at some distance, as in this, which was no less than six hundred and thirty years. The apostle Paul applies it also to the second coming of Christ, when his people shall receive the promise, Heb. x. 37. Moreover, that coming may be pronounced *quickly* in God's reckoning, which is otherwise in the estimation of his creatures, since with him, "a thousand years, are but as one day," Ps. xc. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 8. So also that, in scripture style, is said to come *suddenly*, which comes unexpectedly at last, 1 Thess. v. 2, 3. In a word, the coming of Christ was represented to be *quickly* from the beginning, that christians then, as well as now, might have the near prospect of it, to support their hopes, influence their conduct, and lead them to be continually waiting for him, 1 Cor. vii. 29-31.

Further: many events were to take place, before this promise of Christ's second coming, was to be accomplished. Paul rectifies the mistake of some of the Thessalonians, who imagined that the day of the Lord was at hand; and he does this, by shewing them that there must first be a great apostacy from the Christian profession; the heathen emperor must be taken out of the way; and the man of sin be revealed, whom the Lord should consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming, 2 Thess. ii. 1-9. The reign of the Antichristian power, is foretold to be forty-two months, equal to one thousand, two hundred and sixty prophetic days, or so many years, Rev. xiii. 5, during which time, the holy city was to be trodden under foot of the nations—the witnesses to prophesy in sackcloth, ch. xi. 2, 3, and the woman to be in the wilderness, ch. xii. 6-14. Now, though the Lord repeatedly announces his coming in this book, and his coming *quickly*, yet the expression must be taken with a due regard to all these intervening events, and many others that might be mentioned, such as the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles. But, let us not forget that we live at a time when the greater part of these intervening events have taken place—his coming therefore must be approach-

ing. What has been already accomplished, is a pledge of the certainty of his coming. Let us not sleep, as do others, or be entangled with the cares, or intoxicated with the enjoyments of this life; but wait for his coming, and be diligent, that we may be found of him in peace, remembering that himself has pronounced a blessing on him that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

*“And I John saw these things, and heard them: and when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel, which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren, the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book, worship God,”* 8, 9 It seems to be generally admitted by the commentators, that this is merely a repetition of what we have in ch. xix. 10, and that the same words are repeated for the purpose of adding weight to the attestation—not that the prophet fell prostrate a second time to worship the heavenly messenger, (See p. 528.)

*“And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still: and behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man, according as his works shall be,”* ver. 10-12. When the prophet Daniel was favoured with visions of the Lord, and thereby enabled to commit to writing, those wonderful predictions, concerning the setting up of Christ’s kingdom in the world—the overthrow of the Roman empire—the rise of the ten kingdoms out of its ruins—the springing up of the little horn, the symbol of Antichrist, with a variety of other interesting events, connected with the subject; he was told to “shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end,” Dan. xii. 4, and again, “Go thy way Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end,” ver. 9. The meaning of this I understand to be—that a long period of time, (five hundred years,) must roll on and elapse, ere these prophecies were to begin to take effect: and therefore, until that epoch arrived, the “words must remain sealed up;” but when the beloved disciple (John) had been favoured with similar manifestations, he is commanded *not* to seal the prophecies of this book; and for this important reason, because the time had now arrived, when they were to begin to take effect. The Messiah had made his appearance, he had finished the work of redemption—“the God of heaven had set up his kingdom” in the world, and all the grand and interesting events which Daniel had foretold, were receiving their accomplishment. The import of the injunction, consequently is,

“conceal not from the church, those important occurrences which thou hast committed to writing—for they are things of deep interest, and immediate concernment; let them, therefore, be made known, that the churches of the saints may reap the benefit of them.” This is followed by a solemn declaration of the near approach of that awful period, when the characters of men should receive the impress of eternity upon them, and the destiny of mortals be unalterably fixed. When the righteous Judge comes, he will have his reward with him, “to give every man according as his work shall be found to be.”

“*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star,*” ver. 13-16. As these verses have an immediate respect to the judgment of the world, and to the final destiny which shall be allotted to mankind, it is with great propriety that they are introduced by a declaration of the character of the judge of all. He is the “Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” He possesses both a divine and human character, he is both God and man in one individual person—Emanuel, God manifest in flesh, and he will judge the world in righteousness. Having by his deep humiliation and meritorious obedience, in laying down his life for the sheep, procured their pardon and acceptance with God, he is, as the reward of his sufferings, invested with power over all flesh, to give eternal life to as many as the Father has given him. And here he pronounces those “blessed who do his commandments.” Those who amidst the temptations and persecutions of the world, have kept his sayings, shall obtain favour of him in that day. All the blessedness contained in partaking of “the tree of life,” and of the glory and felicity of “the new Jerusalem,” shall be their portion. While “dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, shall be debarred admission into the holy city.” Nor does this description appear to refer to ordinary sinners, of which the world is full; but rather to the enemies of the gospel, and the corrupters of pure and undefiled religion. Thus, in scripture style, “dogs,” denote false teachers, Phil. iii. 2; “sorcerers,” those who have been employed in seducing mankind, by means of the lures of the mother of harlots, Rev. xviii. 23; “whoremongers,” those that have committed spiritual fornication with her, or her daughters, ver. 3; “murderers,” such as have entered

into her persecuting spirit, and have shed the blood of the saints, ver. 24; "idolaters," those who have gone into the worship of saints and images, which is a striking feature in the church of Rome; and "he who loveth and maketh a lie," may denote such as have pleasure in unrighteousness, whose hearts favouring corrupt doctrine, have employed themselves in framing and propagating it."<sup>a</sup> See ch. xxi. 8. The Lord Jesus, having addressed himself to his servant John, ver. 13-15, now authorises him to assure the churches, that whatever has now been communicated in this long train of prophecy was for their immediate use. "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches," not only the seven churches of Asia, but also the churches of the saints in every succeeding age, 'till he return. They must consequently be regarded as a message from Christ *to us*, for in these things he speaks to us from his eternal throne. The things contained in this book are the voice of Him who is "the first and the last," the author and finisher of the faith, "the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star," David's son according to the flesh, Rom. 1, 3; yet David's Lord, as respects his divine nature, or his eternal power and godhead, ch. ix. 5; and in all this Revelation manifesting himself as "the bright and morning star," furnishing his churches with the light of prophecy, and so giving them assurance of the light of that perfect day which is approaching, a day of everlasting light, and joy, and gladness.

"*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely*, ver. 16, 17. The former part of these verses appears to be expressive of the earnest desire of the redeemed for the second coming of the Saviour. The Holy Spirit, who in the economy of redemption, acts as the Comforter and Sanctifier of the elect, joins with the bride, the Lamb's wife, in an ardent wish and fervent aspiration for the accomplishment of the Lord's gracious promise to "come again and receive his people unto himself, that where he is, there they may also be;" and the same thing is repeated, ver. 20, "Even so, Come, Lord Jesus." But ver. 17, comprises a most free and gracious invitation to him that is athirst, and to whosoever will, to take the water of life freely. The words are precisely of the same import as Isa. lv. 1, 2. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and and he that hath no money, come ye buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price," &c. The preaching of the gospel is often represented in scripture under the notion of inviting guests to a marriage

<sup>a</sup> Fuller.

feast, where all things were prepared and ready for their use. All sorts of guests are invited; the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind; and that from every place that could be supposed the haunts of the destitute and the miserable, such as the streets and lanes of the city, the highways and the hedges of the fields; and his servants are enjoined to bid them to the marriage: nay to *compel* them to come in, that the house may be filled with guests, Matt. xxii. 2-15; Luke xiv. 16-24. In perfect consistency with this, is the invitation from the eternal throne in the passage before us; "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Wherever the gospel comes, none are excluded from a participation in its blessings, but those who exclude themselves by unbelief, self-righteousness, the love of the world, and wilful neglect of the great salvation. The language of the gospel is, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth, the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness," or obtains the blessing of justification, "and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation;" for the scripture saith, "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed," Rom. x. 9-11. "Beware, then ye despisers, and wonder, and perish"—"Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation."

*"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things, saith, surely, I come quickly, AMEN, Even so Come Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, be with you all, AMEN, ver. 18-21.*

These verses contain a most solemn warning addressed to all the churches, and to every individual member of those churches, to beware how they either add unto, or take away from the things contained in the Apocalypse—and this warning is followed by an awful denunciation of the divine indignation, against those who shall be found guilty in either respect. It forbids the invention of any new prophecies contrary to, or any way interfering with the prophecies of this book, under penalty of an eternal exclusion from the state of blessedness which it holds forth as the hope of the righteous. It is as much as if he should say—"Let every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, keep this ever in mind, that every thing here testified is sacred; and that if any man be found adding to, or detracting from what is here said, God shall deprive him of the part, which he may have hoped to share in its blessings."

“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely, I come quickly, Amen. Even so, Come Lord Jesus.” Thus, he reiterates the assurance of his second coming, and would have his disciples rest fully satisfied, that while they long for that event to perfect their salvation, it shall take place as soon as is consistent with his own glory, and the real interest of the whole redeemed body; and that every event in providence is hastening it forward. Whatever revolutions take place among the kingdoms of this world, and which are foretold in this book, are necessary preparations for it, and are, one after another, making way for it with speed, under *his* guidance and management, who is Head over all things to his church, and who is “expecting till all his enemies be made his footstool.” To this solemn testimony of the Lord Jesus, the apostle adds his cordial “AMEN, Even so, Come Lord Jesus;” and so concludes the book of the Apocalypse, with the usual apostolic benediction, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen.”

And thus, my beloved brethren and Christian friends, through the good hand of our God upon us, we are brought to the final close of this course of lectures. Adored be his holy name “who gives power to the faint, and to them that have no might increaseth strength.” To Him it becomes us to look up with heart-felt gratitude and humble praise, for his manifold goodness shewn to us as a church, and as individuals. Let us lay his goodness to heart, and say with the Psalmist, “Bless the Lord, O our souls, and forget not all his benefits.” But I cannot prevail upon myself to put a period to the grand and interesting subject which has so long occupied our meditations, without indulging in a short review of it, and subjoining a few reflections by way of improvement.

It is one mark of the wicked, that “they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.” In marking the course of events, “God is not in all their thoughts;” they seek only for second causes, or substitute chance for Divine government. But a constant recognition of the absolute controul of God over all human affairs—of his superintendance exercised over the concerns of every individual and every empire, pervades the whole volume of inspiration. When we are called to behold what “desolations are made in the earth” by the contentions of hostile powers, or to view the spear, the sword, and the chariot broken and burned in the fire, as the indications of returning peace, we are reminded that it is *He* who hath done it, and that these are “the works of the Lord.” Assyria, in its conquests and ravages, is, without any such intention on the part of its ambi-

tious leader, "the rod of his anger sent against an hypocritical nation." The king of Babylon, in pursuing his own inclinations, fulfilled the purposes of heaven against Tyre, and had the land of Egypt for his labour, and the wages of his army. The kings of the earth "may take counsel together," may form alliances, and project plans, but one higher than they, hath said, "*my* counsel shall stand, and *I* will do all my pleasure." Let us remember, then, that the absolute controul which God exercises over human affairs, is not confined to Palestine, or to the prophetic age: his sovereignty is as lasting as it is universal, comprehending all created beings, and enduring throughout all generations. His designs never vary; his plan is formed, and is a perfect whole, which, when completed, will bring the highest glory to the Divine perfections, and excite the admiration and praise of all intelligent and holy beings. Consequently, all the evolutions of his providence present us with some parts of his plan in a course of accomplishment, and are highly deserving of our notice. It is no doubt true, that considerable darkness and mystery, in many cases, attend his dispensations towards empires, as well as individuals, but if we attentively "consider the operations of his hands," we shall often see reason to admire the wisdom, the justice, and the mercy of his providential arrangements. "Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even he shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."

The prophecies of scripture are, to a certain degree, a disclosure of the intentions of God. They relate ultimately to the state of the church, the interests of true religion, the kingdom of God amongst men, and, as far as the great political changes of this world are connected with those more important objects, they are marked in the page of prophecy with more or less distinctness. Sometimes the prophetic Spirit fixes upon some period in the succession of ages, the important occurrences of which are presented to the mind of the holy seer in a vivid manner, and by him are briefly and rapidly sketched, in language for the most part glowing and highly figurative. In other cases, a compendious view is given by the inspired writers, of the most remarkable empires in succession, from their own time to that of the world's complete renovation by the universal prevalence of the gospel; such are the visions of the image, and the four beasts, with their annexed interpretation, recorded in the book of Daniel. But in the Apocalypse, by a series of prophetic descriptions, less interrupted, and more in detail than those which are found in any other part of the sacred writings, we are conducted from the apostolic age, down through succeeding times, to the final triumph of the gospel, and "the end of all things." These intimations of the future, are, it must be allowed, often clothed with obscurity; but,



amidst the surrounding darkness we may discern many luminous points. We can understand the general nature of the event, but not every particular connected with it; we perceive what the great result will be, but not all the circumstances preceding and attending it; we know that a certain state of things will be produced, but of the exact time we can only judge, as we see, in the general course of things, an evident bearing towards the predicted event. And this accords with the design of prophecy, which is not to give us such a clear and distinct enumeration of particulars as curiosity might wish, but which would tend to frustrate the prediction, and might often interfere with our obvious duty; but to afford us such a general view of the future as may strengthen our confidence in God, support our hopes, and animate us to vigorous exertions in his cause. Now, why is this done, but to excite our attention to what is passing in the world, and induce us to compare his word and providence together? If God speak to us by a precept, he expects our implicit obedience: if he address us in a promise, he requires our confidence: and if a prophecy be the subject of his communications, diligent enquiry to ascertain its meaning, and attentive observation to the manner of its accomplishment, evidently becomes our duty. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy," is the motto prefixed to the book of the Revelation; but if we take no pains to comprehend its meaning, what blessing can we expect in hearing or reading it? If there are any of the predictions of scripture now fulfilling in the world, surely it is our duty to behold the hand of the Most High therein displayed.<sup>b</sup>

I now conclude, with the words of an eminent historian, o. the Roman Catholic school,—and let no one be surpriz'd at this, for truth loses nothing of its value with me, for being found in the mouth of an adversary.

In reviewing the pages of ancient history, "we see three great successive empires, founded on the ruins of each other, subsisting during a long series of ages, and we see them at length entirely to disappear: these were, the empire of the Babylonians, the empire of the Medes and Persians, and the empire of the Macedonians and Grecian princes, successors of Alexander the Great. After these, a fourth empire rose up, which was that of the Romans, and which swallowed up those that preceded it, extending its conquests, and, after subjecting all to its power by force of arms, is itself torn to pieces; and this, by being dismembered, made way for the establishment of almost all the kingdoms which now divide Europe, Asia, and

<sup>b</sup> See "A Discourse on the Signs of the Times," by my esteemed friend, Mr. B. Godwin, Classical Tutor of the Baptist Academy, Bradford, York.

Africa. Behold here a picture, on a small scale, of the duration of all ages; of the glory and power of all the empires of the world;—in a word, of all that is most splendid, and most capable of exciting admiration in human greatness. Every excellence is here found assembled:—the fire of genius; delicacy of taste, accompanied by solid judgment; uncommon powers of eloquence, carried to the highest degree of perfection; the glory of arms, of arts and sciences; valour in conquering; and ability in government, &c. In this manner we think and judge. But, whilst we are in admiration and extacy at the view of so many and shining virtues, the Supreme Judge, who can alone truly estimate all things, sees nothing in them but littleness, meanness, vanity, and pride. And, whilst mankind are anxiously busied in perpetuating the power of their families, in founding kingdoms, and, if that were possible, rendering them eternal, God, from his throne on high, overthrows all their projects, and makes even their ambition the means of executing his purposes, in a manner infinitely superior to our understandings. He alone knows his operations and designs. All ages are present to him. ‘He seeth from everlasting to everlasting.’ He has assigned to all empires their fate and duration. In all the revolutions which take place in the world, nothing comes to pass by chance. We know that under the image of that statue which Nebuchadnezzar saw, of an enormous height, and terrible aspect, whose head was of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and the thighs of brass, and the legs of iron, mixed with clay, God thought fit to represent the four great empires, uniting in them all that was splendid, grand, formidable, and powerful. And of what has the Almighty occasion for overthrowing this immense colossus? *A small stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet, that were of iron and clay, and broke them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth,*” Dan. ch. ii.

“We see with our own eyes the accomplishment of this wonderful prophecy of Daniel, at least in part. Jesus Christ, who came down from heaven to clothe himself in flesh and blood in the sacred womb of the blessed virgin, without the participation of man, is the small stone that came from the mountain without human aid. The prevailing characteristics of his person, of his relatives, his appearance, his manner of teaching, his disciples; in a word, of every thing that relates to him, were simplicity, poverty, humility, which were so extreme, that they concealed from the eyes of the proud Jews the divine lustre of his miracles

how shining soever it was; and from the sight of the devil himself, penetrating and attentive as he was, the evident proofs of his divinity.

“Notwithstanding that apparent weakness, and even meanness, the Lord Jesus Christ will certainly conquer the whole universe. It is under this idea that a prophet represents him to us: ‘*He went forth conquering and to conquer.*’ His work and mission were, to ‘set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed;’ a kingdom ‘which shall not be left to other people, but which shall break in pieces and consume all the kingdoms of the world, and it shall stand for ever.’

“The power granted to the Lord Jesus Christ, the founder of this empire, is without bounds, measure, or end. The kings of the earth, who glory so much in their might, have nothing which approaches, in the slightest degree, to that of Jesus Christ. They do not reign over the will of man, which alone is real dominion. Their subjects can think as they please, independently of them. But, ‘*all power is given unto Christ, both in heaven and on earth;*’ and he exercises it principally on the hearts and minds of men. Nothing is done without his order or permission; every thing is disposed by his wisdom and power; every thing co-operates, directly or indirectly, to the accomplishment of his designs.

“Whilst all human affairs are in a state of perpetual fluctuation; whilst states and empires pass away with incredible rapidity, and the human race, vainly employed with these outward appearances, are also drawn in by the same torrent, almost without perceiving it; there passes in secret, (unobserved by the world in general) an order and disposition of things unknown and invisible, which, however, is pregnant with the eternal destinies of men. The duration of ages has no other end or object, than the completion of the number of the elect, which every day augments, and tends towards perfection. When it shall have received its final accomplishment by the death of the last of the chosen race, ‘Then cometh the end, when Jesus Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom to GOD, even the FATHER; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power.’ God grant that we may all have our share in that blessed kingdom, whose law is truth, whose King is love, and whose duration is eternity! AMEN and AMEN.”<sup>d</sup>

<sup>d</sup> Rollin’s Ancient History, *conclusion*.

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ERRATA.

- Page 6, Note, line 12, for *broughtun* to read *brought unto*.  
 — 91, line 13, for *lv.* read *xlv.*  
 — 180, head-line, for *081* read *180*.  
 — 266, line 10, for *even* read *ever*.  
 — 285, line 6 from the bottom, for *Tehy* read *They*.

P.S. The Author finds he has been chargeable with an oversight, p. 43, about the middle. Instead of *but* Corinth, Philippi, &c. &c., read *and* Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Athens, were also in *Europe*; but Ephesus, Colosse, and all the churches of Pontus, Galatia, &c. were included in *Asia Minor*.



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