

# PATMOS

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Charles Beecher

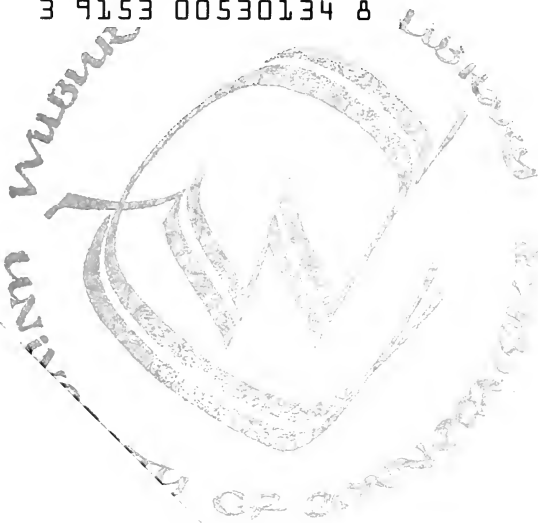
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# PATMOS

OR

## THE UNVEILING

BY

REV. CHARLES BEECHER

*“Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him.”*

— REVELATION i. 7.



BOSTON

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PATMOS

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# PATMOS

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## CHAPTER I

### THE BELOVED DISCIPLE

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy.”—REVELATION i. 3.

THE three schools of interpretation, Præterist, Historical, and Futurist, must all, in greater or less degree, share in this blessing. We, with the common people who belong to neither, but are eclectic, may also claim a modest portion.

The Bible is like a bow, the two horns of which, tipped with gold, are powerless in themselves, but united by the threefold cord of prophetic inspiration, wing the shaft to the heart of the King's enemies in the diagonal of conviction.

The Bible is one, with the unity of a great idea. It is like a sublime poem, or story of redeeming love. Christ is the hero of the glorious epic of ages. The plot is laid in Eden,

and winds up in the New Jerusalem, and Calvary stands midway between. As the globe, with its rugged, shattered crust, is one, round, smooth, and brilliant when seen from afar, so the Bible, with all its rudeness and ruggedness, is one, with the oneness of a divine thought, and shines like a star. Of the whole Bible, so full of treasure and of beauty, no part is more precious than the Revelation. A succession of scenes of beauty and of gloom passes before the eye. The objects are symbolic, the language literal. If in dreams one sees objects of unusual form, he uses literal language to describe them when awake.

The more unusual and complex the object, the more literal and simple must be the description. It may seem paradoxical to say that there are but few figures of speech in the Apocalypse, but a moment's reflection will convince us that such is the fact. The enigma is not in the words, but in the objects and actions described.

The stranger the object, the more literal the language. Some of the agents are monstrous, unnatural, or supernatural. All the more necessary to use natural words, and a simple, child-like style. John tells in the plainest possible terms what he saw and heard. Hence the English version is as good to see with as the original

Greek, and the Sunday-school teacher or pupil as competent to understand it as the college professor. The same is true of the emblems of the whole Bible. The analogic system of nature and of the Bible are the same, and may be reduced to a scientific form, thus:—

$$a : b :: x : y.$$

A known and familiar relation,  $a : b$ , is employed to represent a less known, unfamiliar relation,  $x : y$ . In studying the analogies of the Revelation, we are studying those of the whole Bible. All the gospel is in Moses in the blade, in David and the prophets in the ear, ripened in the full corn in Christ and the apostles, and garnered in Revelation.

As from the mountain ranges of the Pacific the gold has been washed down and buried in the deep valleys of California, so from the mountains of the Word, from Horeb and Sinai, from Zion and Moriah, the precious ore has been brought down and deposited in this alluvial book, till it is all over bespangled and glistening with gold seven times refined.

Here Truth lives before us in dramatic forms. Here she is incarnate in one mighty panoramic representation. It is the same Truth which we find in manifold form all through the previous Scriptures, but transfigured here before us, her

face shining like the sun, her raiment white and glistering. If in his humiliation Jesus spake as never man spake, much more here from the throne of his glory, and through the lips of the beloved disciple. Forty years of heaven have not made him forget the friend who had leaned upon his breast. That disciple was now advanced in years, and near the close of an eventful career. The scenes of Gethsemane and of Calvary were yet fresh in his memory. That mother whom Jesus, with dying breath, commended to his care, had been laid in the grave. The disciples who had shared the excitements of Pentecost and the opening toils and triumphs of a world's evangelization, had sealed their testimony with their blood. He alone was left.

He had seen strange changes. Tiberius had finished his inhuman career. Caligula's brief and profligate reign was past. The weak and stupid Claudius had been succeeded by the atrocious Nero, whose cruelties had made even the hard heart of Paganism shudder. Nero had given place to Vespasian; and John had seen his beloved Jerusalem taken by Titus and destroyed, and the Jews led away captive into all nations, and sold till none would buy them. And now Domitian had ascended the throne, lighting anew the torch of persecution, fiercer

and more extensive than that of Nero, and banishing him, the last of the twelve apostles, to the isle of Patmos in the Ægean. Under these circumstances, thus aged and solitary, the world about him so uncongenial and strange, the destinies of the churches and of the empire so darkly overcast, it is that Jesus remembers him once more, and stands by his side. But in what guise does that heavenly Friend appear, on whose bosom he once might lean? Not now, as then, a man of sorrows, in the lowly attire of service and of suffering. Past is all that astonishing ordeal of humiliation, open now upon the enraptured disciple glimpses of a nobler plane of existence, a glorious mode of life full of immortality. It is a voice as of a trumpet that startles the silence, as he walks on the Ægean shore, —

“I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last!”

He turns. Once before, on the transfiguration mount, had he seen that glorified form, and now, as then, mortality cannot endure the vision. He falls as dead to the earth; but a hand is laid lovingly upon him, and a well-known voice says, —

“Fear not; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Write the things thou hast seen, even the things

which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."

He obeys. He records the whole series of visions, and writing as it were the last page first, exclaims, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God, to him be glory and dominion for ever! Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him!"

## CHAPTER II

## THE SEVEN LETTERS

What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia. — REVELATION i. 11.

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. — REVELATION ii. 7.

WE speak familiarly of “the Dark Ages;” Christ foretold that there would be dark ages. We see that civilization and religion have struggled through long periods of trial and suffering; Christ predicted just such a development. During the forty days before his ascension, he opened his disciples’ minds to understand the prophecies, and they unani- mously foretold just such a history as we look back upon. Things are and have been exactly as they said they would be. The prophetic word has indeed been “a light shining in a dark place” (2 Peter i. 19). The churches have been just what Christ said they would be, “the light of the world;” not suns, but stars in the night.

As you sail along the Atlantic coast in the

night, you see every now and then a light on the shore, shining like a star: so have the churches shone along the coasts of time; so are they shining yet, for it is a dark world still, though "the night is far spent, and the day is at hand." How apt, then, the emblem, and how beautiful, when Christ said, "the candlesticks are the seven churches, and the stars are the angels of the seven churches." For "the angels are all sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation" (Hebrews i. 14), and "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of the Father" (Matthew xviii. 10). If every babe has its guardian angel, much more every church and every minister.

These seven churches (seven the perfect number) are specimens of all churches, till the millennial morning. In them were found at that time different stages of experience, comprising the main features of experience in every age, so long as the world is a dark world, so long as the sun is below the horizon, so long as the light of Christian civilization is but starlight. In speaking to them, Christ spoke to all churches like them, in every letter saying, —

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

The membership of churches have ever been



simple, plain, and for the most part uneducated. These letters are meant for just such.

Three things are most prominent, most practically important, — Christ's portrait of himself, his warnings, his promises. Let us unite in one portrait the scattered rays of the seven letters, as he unveils himself. He is the first and the last, that liveth and was dead, that hath the sharp two-edged sword. He is the Son of God, his eyes like flames of fire, his feet like incandescent brass. He hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars. He is holy, he is true, he hath the key of David; he openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth; he is the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

Such is Christ's portrait of himself. This is an unveiling, an apocalypse indeed! From such a being comes to every church, however humble, to every Christian, however obscure, a letter, directly dictated to the beloved disciple from the risen Saviour's own lips, and sent to us by the wings of the holy Dove. A letter from Jesus, not as he was when emptied of his celestial fulness, but as he is now, in his own native world of life, beauty, and glory. Irresistible both in his humiliation and in his exaltation, he speaks to those he loves, in their humiliation, as they taste his cup. "As I was,

you are," he seems to say, "as I am, you shall be." From this Saviour every disciple, every brotherhood, to the end of the age, receives suitable warnings.

To any who have left their first love he says, "Repent, or I will remove thy candlestick out of his place." As much as to say, without love you cannot illumine this dark world. Where false teachers have crept in, he says, "Repent, or I will come unto thee quickly, and fight against them with the sword of my mouth."

Of an idolatrous church he says, "I will cast them into great tribulation, except they repent." To a church in deep declension, the warning is, "Repent, or I will come on thee as a thief." To one that is lukewarm and self-righteous, "I will spue thee out of my mouth." Only two of seven churches are passed without censure, Smyrna and Philadelphia; and both are suffering persecution. But none of the seven are described as persecutors. For that a wholly different emblem is reserved. Solemn as the warnings are, they breathe a tender, hopeful spirit. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." In every instance but one he finds something to commend. "I know," he says to one, "thy labour, and thy patience, and how for my name's sake thou hast laboured and hast not fainted." To another, "I know thy tribulation and pov-

erty, but thou art rich!" To a third, "I know where thou dwellest, where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith." Yet to another, "I know thy charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience." To a fifth, "Thou hast a few names that have not defiled their garments;" to a sixth, "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." There is but one, the seventh, in which he finds nothing to praise. Laodicea is already so self-satisfied, so rich, so elated, he cannot praise without increasing her self-complacency.

With these warnings and commendations are given great and precious promises. As the trials are great, so the rewards are great in proportion. Those that overcome shall eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Defeat changed to victory, paradise lost to paradise regained. Those faithful unto death shall have a crown of life, and not be liable to the second death. Those who overcome shall eat of the hidden manna. Those recondite truths impossible in this desert pilgrimage shall be laid up for them in the ark of the covenant till they pass over Jordan. They shall have each a white stone, or radiant gem, with a name floating in its translucent depths known only to the wearer — a secret

love-token between the Lord and his bride. He that overcomes in the midst of persecution, poverty, shame, and pain shall "rule the nations with a rod of iron," and wear the morning star on his diadem. He that overcomes shall be clothed in white, his name not blotted out from the celestial census-roll, where it was inscribed before the world began. He shall be a pillar in the final temple, and on him the name of God and of the city be written. And finally, summing up redemption, "To him that overcometh I will grant to sit with me on my throne, as I also overcame and am set down with my Father on his throne."

These letters are brief, but of infinite scope. They reach backward to the tree of life in Eden, and forward to the tree of life in the New Jerusalem. The warfare is that declared between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent at the threshold of history, and fought out to its close in the visions of this book. The question at issue is not the mere continued existence of the soul, nor its escape from punishment, nor the liberation of captives under sentence of death; it is the exaltation of a royal priestly order, the coronation of the joint heirs with Christ, over universal empire, with which these letters and the following visions have to do. It is the ransom from for-

feiture of an elect order, predestined to the primogeniture or birthright of the universe, and therefore subjected, like their head, to a peculiar ordeal.

“Ye who have continued with me in my trials,” said Jesus, “shall in the regeneration sit on thrones.” Those who are taken out of the nations before the millennium must stand against world majorities, and against principalities and powers in the heavens. This is the fundamental idea of the whole Apocalypse, as of all prophecy, the one idea of the Bible: not mere salvation, but dominion; not mere escape, but glory. The redeemed go not into heaven with the least taint of the felon, the convict, hanging about them. There is not even the smell of fire on their garments. They are exiles whose outlawry is repealed, whose confiscated estates are redeemed from sequestration, and who re-enter upon their inheritance in the jubilee of ages. Such is the voice of the Spirit to him that hath an ear to hear. We shrink back from so much greatness. Our tired souls do not want to rule. Our ignorance and imbecility dread such crushing responsibility. Our conscious unworthiness recoils from such conspicuity. So long humiliated by the accusations and insults of the adversary, we blench from the envious criticism of jealous rivals.

Sit on thrones? We? Have power over nations? Have the morning star? Sit with Jesus on his throne?

“Ah, Lord,” we cry, “this is too much! Let us rest in some shady bower of Paradise, hid from the focal rays of that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!”

And what would he reply? He would doubtless instruct us as to the true nature of reigning. He who suffers reigns. Suffering for others is the true Lethe. Forgetfulness of self in the healing of others, the true Nepenthe. Heaven is not a place of unlimited self-indulgence or self-admiration. Self is quite forgotten. The pain of weakness, of bondage to sinful habit, will be absent, but not the tonic pain of pity, fortitude, exertion in the care and training of others. The whole lesson of redemption is voluntary taking pains for others. Christ carried this principle to its maximum. In so doing he manifested the true nature and character of God, who sympathetically bears the entire sentient universe on his heart.

We are learning to reign because we are learning to suffer cheerfully with and for others, when we take pains to help one another over the consequences of our ignorance, our mistakes, our sins.

Precious letters! They have not been read

in vain, though not a thousandth part of their significance has been even suspected! In the first centuries and in the last, and in all the centuries between, they have been conned by Christ's suffering people, who have been warned, encouraged, inspired by them. No equal portion of the Bible has been more useful. Only as we fly forward and look back can we estimate their influence. We are orphans in the night-watches. The world is wild and stormy. The visions before us are many of them dark and dreadful. The history of the era, the persecutions, the wars, the cruelties, are shocking. The realities of history are as sombre as the visions. But Jesus said, "I will not leave you orphans: I will come unto you." In these letters he keeps his promise. He comes very near to us. The voice of the Spirit is his voice. "Be of good cheer! I have overcome the world."

## CHAPTER III

## THE CHERUBIM

LET us conceive ourselves with the aged exile in lonely Patmos, the silver Ægean gleaming about us. We are gazing on the clouds before the break of day. They assume the form of a portal through which a trumpet voice issues: "Come up hither, and I will show thee things that must be hereafter." We obey. We soar aloft to the surface of the aerial ocean, and sweep through the cloudy gates. We enter a region of amplitude and grandeur, and stand on the level cloudland plain, whereon move forms of light and beauty, while earth spreads mapped out far below, at the bottom of the atmospheric sea. We are "in heaven," but we have not quite left the earth. In the centre of the celestial plain we behold a throne, and upon it a human form. His robes of jasper and sardius combine the shades of purple, blue, green, and deep blood-red. Over his head arches a rainbow.

In the midst of the throne, portions, as it



were, of the vital fabric, we see four living ones ( $Z\bar{o}\bar{a}$ ),<sup>1</sup> six-winged, covered with eyes, with faces of man, eagle, ox, lion ; and from beneath the throne flashes of lightning, voices, and thunder-peals are bursting forth.

From the description given by John alone we might suppose each  $Z\bar{o}\bar{v}$  had but one face. But doubtless these  $Z\bar{o}\bar{a}$  are essentially the same emblematic figure with the cherubim described elsewhere in Scripture. Whatever the symbol means, and however differing in details, it is one and the same emblem, whether divinely stationed on the east of Eden, or mechanically represented in the tabernacle at Sinai, in the temple of Solomon, or as seen in vision by Isaiah and Ezekiel. It is manifestly one and the same grand symbol, however variously exhibited, and stands at the centre of the whole divine analogic system.

In the vision of Ezekiel on the banks of the Chebar, the description is more full than that of John, and shows the  $Z\bar{o}\bar{a}$  as possessing each four faces. This can be accounted for by supposing that John mentions only the face directly fronting him. Supposing the human face to be in every case looking outward from the throne-floor, then at the front he would see the man, at

<sup>1</sup> Singular  $Z\bar{o}\bar{v}$ , plural  $Z\bar{o}\bar{a}$ . We transfer these terms rather than translate them. Pronounced  $Z\bar{o}$ -on,  $Z\bar{o}$ -ah.

the rear the face turned under the floor, on his right the right side-face, on his left the left side-face.

From Ezekiel's description it appears that the *Zōa* were beneath the circular throne-floor, and when in motion bore it up by their wings. This would account for his mentioning only four wings, while John saw six. Ezekiel saw the complex throne in motion; it went this way and that like a flash of lightning. John saw it at rest, and could see one pair of wings, which from rapidity of motion were invisible to Ezekiel.

These mighty cherubim, like colossal humming-birds, darted hither and thither with inconceivable velocity; and the noise of their wings was "like the noise of great waters," "as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of a host." But John saw those tremendous pinions folded, and therefore describes each *Zōōν* as having three pairs of wings.<sup>1</sup>

These *Zōā* seem more like parts of the throne, as if the fabric itself were composed, not of dead, but intensely vital, elements, forming a vast, grand, complex organism, inspired with one spirit, and possessing the power of volition,

<sup>1</sup> To gain some adequate idea of this vision, read the first chapter of Ezekiel, also 1 Kings viii. 4-11.

moving swift as thought in any direction, with the human countenance ever forward, rising or falling, or suspended motionless in space. In the present vision the throne is at rest. In a wide semicircle it is girt by twenty-four thrones, on which sit princely forms, wearing crowns of gold, their raiment white and glistening, like that in the Mount of Transfiguration. And while the *Zōā* chant continually, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come!" the four and twenty elders respond, casting their crowns at his feet. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and by thy will they are and were created."

The open space before the throne is like a sea of glass, so transparent is that atmospheric medium on which angels walk, and on which that throne seems floating, buoyed up by cherubic wings. Across this mirror surface gleam seven lamps, whose lambent flames seem in some strange way to assume the semblance of angelic figures, and represent "the seven spirits of God." In visions all things are vague and dreamlike, not from lack of meaning, but from its excess. The seven letters are addressed to seven angels. Of little children, Jesus said, "In heaven their angels do alway behold the face

of my Father;” and we read that the angels are all sent forth to minister. These seven lambent flames become an emblem of the same kind as the seven stars in Christ’s right hand, multiplied emblems of one great reality.

In the person seated on the throne we behold the Son of man as he was before his incarnation, as he was again after his resurrection. “He that descended is the same also that ascended” (Ephesians iv. 10),—the perfect human representative of God. As man was created in the Divine image, so the Divine can express itself to man in no better way than by an ideally perfect humanity. This enthroned one is the “brightness of the Father’s glory, and express image of his person.” It is the visioned fulfilment of Christ’s words, “When the Son of man shall come in his glory. . . . then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.” It is millennial. This throne and the great white throne of xx. 11 are identical. Who, then, are the four *Zōā* and the four and twenty elders? We reply, they both denote one and the same reality in two different aspects. The four and twenty elders represent the risen saints (xx. 5), viewed in their relations to the creature universe subjected to them. The four *Zōā* represent the same risen saints in their relation to Christ and his administration. Both join in

the new song, "Thou hast redeemed us 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 reign upon the earth." Not "shall reign," but "do reign." It is millennial. We have not only flown upward, but forward. We are those presbyters. We are those *Zōā*. And we are looking back on pre-millennial days.

The relation of redeemed man to the creature universe is simplest, and hence directly represented by the crowned princes. Their relation to Christ and his administration is more mysterious, and therefore symbolized by the *Zōā*. Stated concisely, in the terms of the analogic formula,  $a : b :: x : y$ , we have: —

As the *Zōā* to the throne and its occupant, so are the saints of the first resurrection to Christ and his government.

Again, as the *Zōā* to all other orders of the natural creation, so the order of kings and priests in the first resurrection to all other created orders in the universe.

In these is fulfilled nearly every promise made in the seven letters "to him that overcometh." The "white raiment," the "crown of life," "power over the nations," "sitting with Christ on his throne," "eating the hidden manna," wearing "the morning star." We are

caught up and carried forward; we stand in the presence of the reigning Saviour and his reigning bride, and throw back our gaze upon the great tribulation out of which such jubilant myriads have come, while Christ unrolls the scroll of history,—time past to the seer entranced among the glorified, time future to us only as we awake to the stern realities of mortality.

## CHAPTER IV

## THE BOOK

“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.”—REVELATION v. 1.

THIS book was a parchment scroll, written on both sides, indicating abundance of matter. A mighty angel is heard proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” And “none in heaven, on earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book or to look thereon.”

The mighty angels cannot even look at that book containing the story of redemption. The twenty-four princes turn away their dazzled eyes. There is a strong desire, an ardent curiosity, there is even in heaven a passionate regret. “I wept much,” says the seer. Mortals engrossed in the cares and pleasures of this low plane of being may be indifferent to the deep things of God, but there is no indifference in heaven; and we, if we ascend in spirit, shall long with tears to know the breadth and

length and depth and height of redeeming love.

“Weep not!” says one of the princes. “Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose its seven seals.”

But why this title? How incongruous! How unnatural! A lion open a sealed book? We have said that there are but few figures of speech in the Apocalypse. Here is one of them.

Christ was of that tribe, but does not appear in the form of a lion in the vision. So “root of David” is figurative. The eye does not see a root of David. It is a mere verbal figure. So in the next verse the term Lamb is figurative. John did not see a lamb — lambs do not have horns. A lamb cannot easily be conceived of as taking and unsealing a book or scroll. It would be contrary to the whole spirit of the Bible to represent the worship of a fourfooted animal. If there be a place in the Apocalypse where the figurative is in order, where the literal is contrary to good taste and common-sense, it is here. It is as certainly figurative here as when on Jordan the Baptist said, as Jesus walked by, “Behold the Lamb of God!” It was, then, such a lamb the mighty angel proclaimed to have prevailed to open the book.



John sees not "a lamb," but "the Lamb," standing as having been slain in the midst of the throned princes. On his hands and feet the print of the nail, in his side the mark of the spear, on his brow a crown, not of thorns, but of beams of light, like horns diverging, — a royal tiara so often mentioned in the regalia of the Orient. In each of the horns, i.e., beams of light radiating from his brow, was an eye; and the explanation is interjected: "Which are [i.e., symbolize] the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." A symbol of the same significance with the seven lamps of fire, — different symbols of one and the same reality.

This reduplication of emblems is a constant feature of all both inspired and uninspired pictorial illustrations. Christ as the representative of God is exhibited by the apparition on the throne; Christ as the representative Man stands before the throne "as having been slain." The book which no creature in the universe could even look upon passes from one to the other, thus implying that as a result of his suffering and death he had acquired power to do what would otherwise have been impossible. This is plainly declared by the new song of the first resurrection: "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 . . . . and we reign on the earth." To which the entire universe respond, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

It is because he descended and suffered, and rose again, that he obtained the moral power to open to the universe what must otherwise have remained sealed. We are wafted onward in vision to a time when creation is renewed, the cherubic throne group synchronizing with the martyr thrones (xx. 11) and the New Jerusalem throne (xxii. 1). The end meets us at the beginning. The eternal ages are all about us, and time's brief measures almost annihilated. We have moved on so far beyond the consummation, that the entire rejuvenescent universe throngs to behold and hear the drama of the past now fully unfolded, "the old, old story," ever new, of divine sorrow and redeeming love.

## CHAPTER V

## THE SEALS OPENED

“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the zōā saying,

*COME!*”

THIS book or scroll we conceive of as so made as to be unrolled from one roller and rolled up upon another, thus passing before the eye. The eye sees no picture on the parchment, but close, continuous writing. The ear hears nothing read; but, to give a hint of the things recorded there, actors are summoned to “come forth,” and act a significant part on the empyreal stage. The time will arrive, it is thus implied, or rather has arrived, for Christ to unseal and unroll the great book of history, and make the events recorded there as plain and lifelike to back-looking saints and angels as if they saw them actually taking place.

When the first thunder summons “Come!” is heard, from the distance, out upon the ethereal stage, “comes” a horseman of radiant whiteness, who rides majestically across the field of

vision. As he passes, a chaplet is placed upon his brow; in his hand he carries a bow, on his shoulder a quiver; and as he moves out into space he begins to launch shaft after shaft, as if in conflict, and so passes out of sight.

The second seal is then broken, a second compartment of the scroll unrolled, and a second cherubic summons thundered forth, —

“*COME!*”

In the distance a second horseman appears, not white like the first, but of a fiery red, like metal that has cooled down from a molten state; not armed with primitive weapons, bow and quiver, but with “a great sword.” As he rides out upon the plain, there rise around him visionary armies, battlefields, sieges, and all the horrors of war. He has power to take peace from the earth.

A third seal is now broken, the scroll again unrolled, and a third cherubic voice thunders, —

“*COME!*”

A black horseman obeys the summons. In his hand he bears a yoke.<sup>1</sup> And as he rides, a voice from beneath the throne seems chanting, “A measure of wheat for a denarius, and three measures of barley for a denarius; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.”

<sup>1</sup> ζυγον. Compare Acts xv. 10; Galatians v. 1; Matthew xi. 29.

The fourth seal is now broken, and a fourth thunder summons heard, —

“*COME!*”

And a steed of ashen hue appears, bestrode by a skeleton rider, and followed by the spectral host of Hades. As the phantom army glides along, scenes of havoc seem enacting, famine and pestilence follow, and wild beasts prowl ravening over the slain.

These were the visions of the first four seals. We can see them in imagination somewhat as John saw them; and we understand them to act out in dumb show what is written in that scroll, and what Christ is unfolding to the mind of back-looking myriads, and making so vivid to their thought that they seem almost to see the reality.

Of what, then, are these horsemen the emblems? What is the  $a : b$  of the analogic formula, and what the  $x : y$ ?

The relation seen is military. These are warriors. Of course the  $x : y$ , or relation symbolized, is also military, but on a higher plane.  $a : b$  is a relation on the natural or carnal plane;  $x : y$  is a relation on the spiritual plane: as Paul says, “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual.”

· These represent the leaders of the church militant in a certain fourfoldness of moral char-

acter suggested by difference of color, weapons, and effects. It is the most common and wide-reaching of analogies. All nature symbolizes war. All Scripture uses nature's analogies with skill divine. In Genesis iii. 15 war is declared; in Ephesians vi. 12 the panoply is described; in 1 Corinthians xv. 24 "cometh the end," when all hostile principality and power are "put down." In that war Christ is the "Captain of salvation;" the apostles were victors. "I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith," said Paul, ready to be offered. In that war not only ministers, but members of churches, are militant; witness in the seven letters the grand rewards "to him that overcometh."

The first of the series is white, with the whiteness of the transfiguration, denoting not only purity, but love. It is incandescent whiteness, as if it burned in a furnace (i. 15), and love that "hath a vehement flame" (Canticles viii. 6). The bow and arrows, primitive weapons, form the constant symbol of elementary truth and of conviction. The white horseman fitly represents a preacher of the gospel, of primitive simplicity and fervor; one who "rides prosperously because of truth, meekness, and righteousness," whose "arrows are sharp in the hearts of the King's enemies, whereby the people fall under him."

Such there have been in every age. They rode conquering through the Roman Empire, conquering even when slain. The Paulicians, Paterines, Waldenses, Albigenses, Puritans, were specimens. Their arrows were sharp. And wherever the simple truths of the gospel have been faithfully preached to the conviction and conversion of sinners, there the white horseman is visible to the eye of faith, riding on from conquering to conquer.

On earth the true history of such men has not been written. Humility, self-sacrifice, devotion to the simple word of God, and consequent opposition to reigning systems, are not the qualities history chiefly delights to emblazon. Such men have generally suffered from scorn, poverty, and obstruction; often sealing their testimony with their blood. Not to man have they appeared crowned with a wreath of victory. The symbol shows how they appeared to God, and were written in his book of remembrance.

Thousands of such have lived unappreciated, died dishonored, perhaps tortured, and been utterly forgotten. But earthly history is not all, is scarcely worthy of the name. There is a scroll, though now sealed to us, where all is recorded. When that shall be unsealed and unrolled, the back-looking universe will see

that wherever, in catacomb or cathedral, on ship or shore, in mountain or mine, in pulpit, pew, or choir, is said or sung the old "old story of Jesus' dying love," the white horseman has been riding on from conquering to conquer.

What, then, shall we say of the red horseman? He, too, is a leader of the same kind with the preceding, but of a lower temperature. The redness is that of metal cooling down from fusion, fiery still, but not incandescent. He wields the sword of the Spirit, not so much to "pierce to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit," as to coerce by authority. Such teachers are but too well known in church history; men who hold the truth as correctly as any in their day, and propagate it with zeal, but who work less by love and more by intimidation, who compel rather than convince. They are honest, but deceived; they do not know that love has grown cold, and is blended with ambitious thirst for power. Such there were already even in apostolic times, and such there have continued to be. They laid the foundations of those ecclesiastical systems that rose to power and became despotic. Whenever old corruptions have been assailed, and new developments of truth have been made, then the red horseman has been sure to ride in and brandish his great sword; and his career is not yet ended;



he is yet riding, and taking peace from the earth.

But the history of such polemic divines has never been truly written. They figure largely in that which is called ecclesiastical history, in courts, councils, conclaves; but they figure as they seemed to the eye of man. More is said of them than of the former class; for they thrust themselves forward, and hew their way. No uninspired historian could write an impartial account of the career of many who for eighteen centuries have been prominent champions of the faith; and if such book were written, but few would credit or even read it. But their true history, as seen from the divine standpoint, is written in the second compartment of the unsealed scroll; and Christ is exhibited in the act of making them live again before the eyes of back-looking men and angels.

Come we, then, to the third of these military leaders, the black horseman. Iron, cooling down from the molten state, or "white heat," becomes first fiery red, and then at length black. So love, cooling down, becomes a fiery zeal for orthodoxy, and hardens into superstition, cold and dark. Most expositors think this horseman carries a balance in his hand, but that is what superstition never does. There is something nice and discriminating suggested by the idea

of a jeweller's scales, weighing the minutest grains of golden ore or precious gems. But superstition never weighs, never discriminates, cares nothing for minute but priceless particles out of the mine. Superstition says, "Take this system, venerable with age, as a whole, or die eternally. Presume not to weigh anything, believe as you are told or be damned." It is not the lapidary with his scales, then, but the spiritual despot who rides forth with a heart cold and dark, to fasten his "iron yoke on the necks of the brethren."

Such produce a famine of the word. The prices mentioned are famine prices. Such teachers have always existed. The apostle saw them riding out. They multiplied in the early centuries, and rushed in squadrons in the Middle Ages. But where on earth is their true history written? The pen has been in their hands. The writings of their opponents and victims have been carefully collected and burned. They have exterminated, not only heretics, but their writings. They have caused history to be written to please themselves. They have appeared in lofty attitudes and in gorgeous colors, — men of renown, temporal omnipotence and glory. But under the third seal their true history is recorded, as Christ appears in the act of disclosing it to back-looking millennial eyes.

Come we, then, to the skeleton rider, on the pale or ashen-hued steed, with Hades following. When love has yielded to ambition, where ambition and avarice have put on the yoke of superstition, where spiritual famine has run its course, then comes in an age of utter infidelity. The priest at the altar becomes a scoffer at the rites he performs, and from such ministrants scepticism impregnates the congregation; and when a master spirit like Voltaire speaks openly what ecclesiastics secretly think, then sanguinary revolution is nigh. Witness the reign of terror in that land of Europe where the red and the black horsemen had most thoroughly done their work. In France the yoke was heavy and cruel. There was perpetrated the St. Bartholomew massacre; there took place the Huguenot exodus and other atrocities; and there followed the full infidel reaction; and Death on the pale horse rode, and Hades followed.

It is not contended that these emblems are confined to any one age exclusively, or to individuals of one nationality or religious establishment. There may be many fulfilments, more or less signal. We may select such as most clearly illustrate the necessary development of moral declension in all ages and worlds. The true history of infidelity, old as the world and older, has never been written. Man cannot

write it correctly, as it has appeared to the divine eye. But in the sealed book it is recorded; and Christ in the vision is unsealing and unrolling it, and causing it to re-enact itself, as it were, before the eyes of his risen and reigning bride and of the onlooking universe. And the fact that Jesus, and he only, was able even to look at the book, implies that it contains the history of his experience as Redeemer, and that he is able to explain everything because he was slain. That record was, as it were, written in his blood.

## CHAPTER VI

## SOULS UNDER THE ALTAR

WHEN Christ was on earth he plainly foretold the character of the dispensation between the first and second Advents. Not peace, but a sword. Not unity, but division. Not normal growth, but apostasy. Some seed would fall on good ground, but more on the wayside among stones and thorns. The tares would grow among the wheat. The field would seem neglected and overgrown with weeds. The three measures of meal would be leavened with the leaven of the Pharisee, which is hypocrisy. The gospel net would bring to shore both good and bad. There would be some who should teach the truth in love, but more who would be ambitious, superstitious, and, in the divine estimate, infidel. Of course there would be persecutions and martyrdom all along the line. And under the fifth seal the souls of the martyrs appear under the altar. Not the real altar of Jerusalem below, already destroyed by Titus, but an ærial pageant above the clouds,

that bodied itself to view after the manner of visions, like to that he had seen in Jerusalem below. He sees not only the temple and cloistered porticos, but the spacious subterranean courts and arched halls and passageways beneath the temple area, through which he had been wont to go in and out with the thronging worshippers.

In the heats of summer ever cool, in the storms of winter still and mild, with the soft, subdued light, those subways in the mountain, and those deep cisterns of living water, were delicious retreats from the turmoil above and without. Far, far overhead waved palms, and smoke of incense went up, and the thundering chant of thousands of harps and voices, till the whole mountain trembled. Those deep and sacred adyta the seer's gaze now penetrates. Those holy penetralia of Moriah are teeming with shadowy forms, bearing upon their person marks of violent death, — some as they suffered under pagan Rome, torn by wild beasts, crucified, slain by the sword, wrapped in pitchy shrouds and consumed; others, as victims of another Rome in a later age, in the *san benito*, with fiends and flames painted thereon.

Perhaps the seer seems to hear the thunder of the upper choir: "Let the sea roar and the fulness thereof, let the floods clap their hands,

let the hills be joyful together, before the Lord, for he cometh to judge the earth!" And then the weird but plaintive response of the nether choir: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" In answer to this appeal, white robes are given to every one of them; and they are told to "rest yet a little season until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." Such emblems, so mixed with the real, the unblematic, are themselves a revelation. The whole history of confessors and martyrs on earth and in the intermediate state, though mysterious, is divinely written, and is being made plain by Christ. The throned and crowned princes are looking back on their own history, and all angels and principalities with them, while Christ brings all freshly to mind.

## CHAPTER VII

## SIXTH SEAL

As the sixth written compartment of the scroll is unrolled, the whole scene changes. In visions, as in dreams, the whole framework of the representation may alter in a moment. One picture dissolves, and another bodies itself forth to view.

The temple is gone. The altar scene vanishes. The seer is looking down upon the earth. He sees a great earthquake, affecting the whole globe; mountains sinking, abysses yawning; cities shaken; the sun dark, the moon lurid, and vast meteoric showers falling; clouds whirling and rolling together; the ocean tossing, and islands ingulfed. He sees the whole population in terror, high and low, all ranks and classes seeking shelter, as men do in violent shocks of earthquake. But the peculiarity of this scene is that the multitudes as they fly seem to be looking at one and the same point in the sky, and seem to be saying the same thing. The seer tells us what they said,



not what they saw. They call to the rocks and mountains, saying, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!" It is to the feeling expressed on that countenance, at which all are looking, that the world-wide convulsion is owing. It is his answer to the agonized cry of souls beneath the altar, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood!" If Christ should fully express his emotions at the treatment of his saints, the sun would be darkened, and the rocks rent, and the graves opened. They were told to wait. They have waited. This is the result. It is the end of gradualism. It is the acme of catastrophism. It is the advent. Up to that time persecuting powers prevail. Christ either seems indifferent, or is represented by persecuting powers as very angry with their victims. In his name they have been slandered, and slaughtered, and sentenced to eternal woe!

But not so is it written in that sublime scroll! Not so is he explaining it from his great white cherubic throne!

The meekest, purest, tenderest, most loving spirits of the centuries have been made to feel as if he were offended with them, or indifferent to their agonies. This has touched him more than all beside. His grief and pity and resent-

ment grew deeper from age to age, till at last he could repress it no longer.

Either by a personal and visible appearing, or by a spiritual revelation as vivid, or by both, he must express his emotion so that all mankind shall not misunderstand or doubt any longer. The effect is to revolutionize society, and destroy the destroyers of the earth. This world was made for Christ in which to conquer principalities and redeem lost man. Whatever hinders that grieves him. He made the church, the state, the family, and all social institutions, to co-operate in the grand work of redemption. When they are abused so as to thwart him he is offended; and when that resistance amounts to persecution, and that in his name, grief becomes indignation, and is called wrath. But the wrath of the Lamb is not the wrath of the wild beast, but one of the highest forms of benevolent emotion.

Now we in the flesh are looking forward to the great day of his wrath, and wondering when and how it will come. In the visions we seem to see ourselves looking back from glory, and seeing how it did come; and he is telling how he pitied us, and how his indignation at last shook the earth.

## CHAPTER VIII

THE ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR  
THOUSAND SEALED

SEVERAL times in the Revelation we find a train of development taken up and carried forward to the Advent, and then the view returning to take up a parallel train, and carry that forward to the same great crisis. Under the preceding seals the development of an anti-Christian hierarchy was thus outlined. Now the vision returns to intimate more clearly something that has been going on all the while under that nominally Christian hierarchy.

Gazing down on the empire, John sees at the four points of the compass four angels striving with the winds, which are about to rush in. An angel rises from the east to check them till he finishes sealing the servants of God, a work he has been doing through the other seals, which must be finished under the sixth. What is that work? How did it appear to the eye of the seer, and what was its emblematic significance?

Apparently John sees the twelve tribes of Israel as of old, on their march to Canaan, in their rectangular encampment, with the tribe standards flying. Among these the angel goes from tent to tent, and man to man, sealing the faithful with the word Jehovah on their forehead. When he has finished the result is read: one hundred and forty-four thousand in all, twelve thousand from every tribe, — one, the tribe of Dan, being omitted. Then the view returns to the heavenly plane, and he sees the white-robed multitude, and hears their song of triumph.

Let us see the vision with the mind's eye. The desert, the encampment, the angel interrupted in his work by signs of tempest, his completion of his work, and reading of the number; then let us ask what by analogy is symbolized?

The idea in general would be, that as Israel was on the march to Canaan, so the church is on the march to heaven. As a seal in the forehead of the divine name would have been then, so a divine impress upon the character would be now. While Israel was ever stiff-necked and rebellious, ever ready to worship idols, even at the foot of Sinai, yet some there were who never apostatized. So in the pilgrimage of life, there should be in all branches of the visible

church, even in the darkest ages, some true Christians. As in the former case the faithful were a minority, twelve thousand to a tribe, so those sealed under the present dispensation would have to stand against majorities in every branch of the visible church. As Dan, one of the twelve tribes, was omitted in the vision, so perhaps it might be intimated that the sealing may not reach all nations without exception, but only substantially, the emblem being sufficiently fulfilled if at the Advent all nations substantially shall be included in nominal Christendom. As in the vision the sealed ones were exposed not only to the external perils of the desert march, but to a hostile majority of their own tribes, so those sealed by the Spirit might encounter the common trials of mortality, and the persecution of an unspiritual majority of their own church, or sect, or nation.

Such being the simple and easily stated analogy, we then behold the glorious result. No sooner is the symbolical sealing done, and the mystic numbers read, when in a new form the sublime result presents itself to the seer's eye. There on the empyreal stage come thronging the very realities themselves, innumerable, of all nations, glistening in white, and chanting, "Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb!"

No emblems these, but the very realities. It is the salutation of the order to the chief, the members to their head — “All hail!” they cry, and wave victor palms — and angels join in the acclaim, “Amen! Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever!” — “What are these?” exclaims one of the throned elders, “and whence came they?” “Sir” (*κυριε*), replies the seer, “thou knowest.” Who should know better than those gold-crowned princes? “These are they who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb!”

“These through fiery trials trod!—  
These from great affliction came;  
Now before the throne of God,  
Sealed with his Almighty name,  
Clad in raiment pure and white,  
Victor palms in every hand,  
Through their dear Redeemer’s might  
More than conquerors they stand.”

But let us not forget, enraptured with this exquisite scene, that all the while Christ is holding the great scroll in his hands, with all the history written there, which he is interpreting to back-looking myriads, and making it live over again before their eyes.

To human view, in their lifetime (as in ours), the history of their era was a sealed book, chaotic and gloomy, the mystery of Godliness and the mystery of iniquity in inextricable confusion. But all was recorded in that scroll on which none but Christ could so much as look. It is to us on earth still in great measure sealed; but we know it is to be unrolled before all eyes, and that it contains the working out of some grand symmetrical idea in the divine mind, as  $12 \times 12 \times 1000 = 144,000$ . We can only faintly conjecture what it may be in advance. We fly forward, and look back on time. We soar upward, and look down. We sit with Christ in heavenly places. The end of the unveiling meets us at the beginning. The  $\omega$  anticipates the  $\alpha$ . The latest epoch of glory is at the threshold. Such is the grand central method of the unveiling, the ground on which the stage is built on which the august tableaux are displayed; namely, the far distant future, looking back on the present, — eternity looking back on time.

Sometimes men have, in reading the Apocalypse, a sombre feeling, as though the imagery were too dark. But is not this a dark world? And are not the ages of history since Christ by common consent called, “the Dark Ages”? It is by means of this vision, and such as this,

that we throw off depression, and breathe the exhilarating air of hope. Nothing can be imagined later, farther down in the ages, more heavenly, than the closing scene of this vision. It is in the style of the New Jerusalem. It synchronizes with the last chapter of the book.

“For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”



## CHAPTER IX

## SILENCE IN HEAVEN

WHEN the first six seals were successively opened, the portion of the scroll each time unrolled we conceive as of moderate length, such as to occupy a few moments in being exhibited. But when the seventh seal was broken, the quantity of parchment to be unrolled was much greater. The act of opening a scroll or volume was to unroll it from the roller in one hand, and roll it up on the roller in the other hand, causing the writing to pass before the eye. When we read, then, that, "there was silence in heaven for half an hour," we are to conceive the whole celestial company as watching the significant process. So voluminous is that record, that as Christ silently unrolls it from hand to hand, minute after minute glides past, interrupted by no voice or emblematic action, till half an hour has gone by. Impressively is it suggested that the contents of that seal, especially if it reach the end of the parchment, are very ample, containing, in

fact, the matter to be symbolized by all the varied emblems of the remaining visions.

But first there is a kind of prelude, which may foreshadow the character of the subsequent developments. Suppose all the cherubic throne-scene still standing, and the four and twenty gold-crowned elders, and a visionary temple like to but grander than that which has been destroyed below. There is the golden altar of incense, and by it seven angels with trumpets, and another angel with a golden censer, to whom is given much incense. And here the real breaks through the emblematic. Thrown in, as it were casually, is implied the meaning of that incense, the counterpart of that so precious in the earthly temple, a confection of stacte, onycha, galbanum, and frankincense. So sacred was this perfume and so holy, that none might counterfeit it on pain of death (Exodus xxx. 34-38).

This consecrated incense is by the angel cast upon the fire which he has taken from the altar in his golden censer. The smoke of the precious incense now ascends before the throne, "mingled with the prayers of all the saints." *The saints.* No emblem this! It is a sad and suffering reality. All through the trials, sorrows, sharp persecutions of the ages, every sigh, every groan, every filial yearning, every agon-

izing cry for help, ascends before the throne sweeter than the sweetest perfume, to the Father. And when the angel fills a censer with fire from the altar, and casts it into the earth, and there are "voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake, it suggests that however those prayers may seem to the saints themselves, and to a sceptical world, unanswered and unheeded, they enter into the ears of the Lord of Hosts, and are the real cause of the great providential judgments that fall on the nations. Many, many such prayers of all the saints there will be, and much, very much incense offered with them; and these prayers, and the incense and the judgments, are all recorded in that scroll Christ is unrolling; and the saints, from their thrones looking back on the groanings unutterable of the past, shall see that "praying breath was never spent in vain." Then, in the days of their flesh, all was mystery, — the migration of nations! "the sea and waves roaring," the irruption of barbarism upon civilization, all in the time of it intensely mysterious, and trying to faith. It is so still. We can but faintly identify certain great ethnological phenomena, — invasions from the North and East, — to which the emblems under the trumpets may generally allude; but in the great scroll all is recorded, and Christ will make it

plain to back-looking eyes of all the saints. It is often said, and well said, that we cannot give a detailed historic explanation of the emblems. Of course not. They are sealed. The seal is not yet broken. But it is to be broken, and we can form a conjecture what the meaning will be. We fly forward and look back. We soar aloft and look down.

## CHAPTER X

## ALARIC

WHEN the first trumpet sounded, there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth. "Hail and fire" is a Hebraism for fiery hail. The appearance to the eye was like what occurs in a volcanic eruption. Red-hot stones are thrown to a great height, and fall in a fiery hail, like drops of blood. The seer beholds the effects natural to such a shower, falling as if ejected from a distant volcano. Wherever it smites, a conflagration follows, the green fields are burned over, and a third part of the trees consumed.

The analogy is very plain. As a fall of volcanic stones and scoriæ upon pasture-land, vineyards, orchards, and forests, so is a barbarian invasion upon a civilized community. Wherever, in any age, such an eruption has taken place, then this analogy has been fulfilled. The invasion of Judea by the Assyrians is pictured forth in the same way.

“The Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm shall cast down to the earth; the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valleys, shall be as a fading flower” (Isaiah xxviii. 2). There have been many such fulfilments. Of course, the greater the empire, and the fiercer the savage invaders, the more striking the verification. The emblem may have what Lord Bacon calls “a springing and germament accomplishment.”

Now, no empire has been greater or more conspicuous in the field of prophetic vision than the Roman, or more signally ravaged by destructive barbarians.

The empire, at the date of this vision, was predominant, was being evangelized, was persecuting, was apparently flourishing. When the Jews were on the point of insurrection, before the destruction of Jerusalem, Agrippa, in a public oration, thus dissuaded them: “Numberless nations beside the Greeks receive her yoke; you alone disdain servitude to those unto whom the universe has submitted.” Men already called Rome “the Eternal City,” and the empire, “*orbis terrarum*.”

Under Augustus there was a standing army of twenty-eight legions, one hundred and eighty thousand men. The immense territories now

comprised in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Russia, China, though full of Japhetic life, were then unknown. "Around the Mediterranean, the central sea of the ancient world, dwelt the cultivated nations. Far into the midst of this sea projects the long peninsula of Italy; and in the middle of this peninsula stood Rome, the centre of the centre. From this point the world was controlled. . . . Augustus erected in the Forum a golden milestone. It stood as a symbol that there was the centre of the world. A network of artificial highways extended from this point through the empire. From Cadiz in Spain, through France, through Italy, away up to the cataracts of the Nile, from the lands of the Danube even to the pillars of Hercules, the traveller could journey over well-built roads, and find everywhere, at certain distances, *mutationes* for change of horses, and *mansiones* for lodging at night. . . . On these roads marched the legions, to keep under control a subjugated world. . . . Over these highways, too, went the messengers of the gospel." <sup>1</sup>

In all the nations of this empire persecution had raged, and was to rage; and the prayers of "all the saints" had begun to ascend like clouds of sweet incense. But the colossal strength of

<sup>1</sup> Ullhorn, "Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism."

that empire could not make it eternal. For centuries it stood, gradually declining by luxury and slavery and military despotism, "like a noble but partly decayed tree, which the tornado dashes to the earth."

"Meanwhile," says Gibbon, "the numberless nations of the great northern hive, beginning from the remotest East beyond the Chinese wall, began to sway westward. A motion, originating mysteriously<sup>1</sup> in the farthest recesses of those unknown tribes, communicated itself throughout the vast extent. As their pressure accumulated on the Gothic and German tribes on the Danube and the Rhine, it became momentarily more impossible for these tribes to resist.

"At length the fated moment arrived. At the first sound of the trumpet<sup>2</sup> the Gothic nation was in arms. Led by the terrible Alaric, the savage Scythian warriors rushed from the woody shores of Dalmatia to the walls of Constantinople; Macedonia and Thessaly offered no resistance; Phocis and Bœotia were deluged with barbarians, who massacred the males, and drove away the beautiful females with the spoil and cattle. The whole territory of Attica was blasted. Sparta yielded without resistance.

<sup>1</sup> It is a sealed secret yet.

<sup>2</sup> The coincidence of the historian's language with that of the seer is remarkable.



The inhabitants were slain in the midst of their blazing cities.

“Retiring to the Danube, Alaric re-enforced his army with fresh swarms of barbarians, and marched on Italy.” Checked by a temporary defeat, “in three years he reappeared with a larger force than ever. Meanwhile Rhodogast, with two hundred thousand fighting men, poured down from the forests of Germany. The beautiful banks of the Rhine became a smoking desert. The seventeen provinces of Gaul were burnt over as the prairie is burnt by the fires in autumn . . . and now Alaric resumed the field . . . and advanced on defenceless Italy. For four years the whole peninsula was given up to uncontrolled ravages; and in A.D. 410 the proud city which had boasted herself eternal was pillaged, the streets filled with dead bodies, and many public and private buildings laid in ashes.” Attila, king of the Huns, in 441 poured an army of five hundred thousand barbarians on the plains of the Eastern empire, passed the Alps, and invaded Italy. His ravages surpassed even those of Alaric in fury. It was his boast that the grass never grew on the spot where his horse had trod. Thus were the emblems of the first trumpet fulfilled almost to the very letter.

## CHAPTER XI

## GENSERIC

WHEN the second angel sounded, the apostle saw "a burning mountain" or volcano plunged into the Mediterranean, as if torn up by the roots by a subterranean explosion, and projected through the air. In dreams and visions there are no impossibilities. The burning mountain or volcano continues to vomit forth showers of red-hot stones and scoriæ and lava, which falling on the fleets consume them; the sea is lurid with a blood-red glow, while from the lava pouring into the deep, thousands of fish are killed.

Such is the vision, and the analogy is similar to that of the preceding. Instead of an irruption of plunderers who ravage and retire, leaving the empire broken, but not destroyed, we conceive of the entrance of a nation who fix themselves in the midst of the nations of the disordered empire, destroying the provincial governments of a third part, and making havoc with the various social, literary, artistic, and re-

ligious institutions of civilization. Such were the Vandals led by Genseric through France and Spain, across the Mediterranean, to the shores of Africa.

“Carthage became the seat of a naval power,” says Gibbon, “that claimed the empire of the Mediterranean. Sicily was conquered. Palermo was sacked. Leucania ravaged. Rome was fourteen days pillaged by the Vandals and Moors. Italy long continued to be afflicted by these Vandal pirates. In the spring of each year a navy was equipped in the port of Carthage.

“Whither shall we steer?” asked the pilot.

“Leave that to the winds,” was the answer. “They will transport us to the guilty coast, whose inhabitants have provoked the divine justice!”

During all these dreadful scenes, and those of the previous trumpet, the saints throughout the empire were praying, and their prayers ascending like sweet incense to God. Such events, with such awful blending of good and evil, seemed mysterious to men living in those times. But to heavenly intelligences Christ is making it plain. Mortals look forward. Immortals are looking backward. Christ holds the unsealed scroll unrolled; and though we know not what was written there, although it is not read aloud

to us, the action is significant. Actions speak louder than words. We see that he is calling up the past to memory, and making it live again before the reverted gaze of glorified saints and angels.

## CHAPTER XII

## WORMWOOD

SUCH a movement of nations would have profound and lasting effects on society. At first there would be pillage and massacre, and a carnival of destructiveness. But in the course of time the new population would be partly withdrawn to their original seats, partly absorbed and amalgamated with the remnants of the old. Thus there would be deep effects on the civil, social, and religious character of the resulting nations. Of this the emblem is seen in the star or meteor called Wormwood. It is described by the seer as burning like a lamp or torch, filling the air with vapors, and falling on the river sources. It must have been a great meteor indeed to fall on the rivers and fountains of waters of a continent. It must have been a nebulous projectile in keeping with the fiery hail and the upturn volcano. You see it with the mind's eye, rushing low across the horizon, leaving a long trail of vapors behind it, settling down on highland fountains, where rivers take their rise, covering with malarious

effluvia their sparkling waters. The star is in the vision, though it is not stated by whom, called Wormwood; and the waters become bitter, as if wormwood had been steeped in them. Now, wormwood is medicinal; yet in the vision it seems to be deadly in its effects, for all along the banks of the rivers the inhabitants are seen drinking the water and dying.

Such is the vision. Of what, then, by analogy is it the emblem? The seven stars of chapter i. 20 denoted teachers. This "star" may be a teacher. But such a great meteor, with its noxious vapors so widely diffused, is not such a teacher as those were. It may not represent single individuals whose office it is to teach and give light in the night. It may rather be an emblem of a body, — minds not professedly teachers, but imbued with certain ideas and prejudices, which they impart by contagion as it were, imbuing those with whom they come in contact with their own bitter and destructive spirit.

Now, the barbarian conquerors were physically superior to the enervated Southrons. Gigantic in stature, many of them hardy, healthful, they might well impart a tonic element physically to the population, but morally and intellectually their influence would be fatal to civilization. Such was the effect of the great

Northern and Eastern invasions. "For all these nations," observes Mosheim, "considered arms and military courage as the only sources of all glory and virtue, and therefore they despised learning and the arts. Hence, wherever they planted themselves, there barbarism insensibly sprang up and flourished, and the pursuit of learning was abandoned exclusively to the priests and monks." This should be taken in connection with the riding forth of the red horseman in a previous chapter. "The efforts of Charlemagne to encourage science, and instruct the people," says an eminent historian, "hardly produced any effect beyond his life, for they were not in the spirit of the time. For several centuries after him . . . the barbarism was so great that most of the clergy . . . could scarcely read and write, . . . and he who obtained a knowledge of mathematics and natural science was in danger of being burnt as a sorcerer."

"The splendid days of Augustus and Trajan," says Gibbon, "were palled by clouds of ignorance; and barbarism subverted the laws and palaces of Rome." Another striking instance in which the language of the great historian might almost seem to have been borrowed from the emblems of the Apocalypse

## CHAPTER XIII

## THE DARK AGES

AND now the fourth angel sounds; and the sun, moon, and stars are darkened, being shorn of one-third of their beams. This would well indicate an obscuration of the divine character and of gospel truth in a twilight period. It is the eve of the Dark Ages.

This obscuration of the true character of God had begun at a very early period, even among Christians. God was conceived of as such a being that he could not be pleased with matter, with his own works of nature, with physical health and beauty, with conjugal love and family ties. To please him, one must give up all such joys and endearments, and live in celibacy and bodily mortification. Thus the character of God, who is love, and who made man in his own image, was early darkened by ascetic teaching, and the reflected light of the church and the ministry grew dim and wan. This deterioration under the deluge of barbarism from the North and East greatly increased.



“So thoroughly,” says Isaac Taylor, “had the feeling and the notions of what I cannot scruple to call a baptized Soofeeism pervaded the Christian community, that no suspicion seems to have been entertained of the cheat which so early had put the Buddhist theosophy in the room of Christian theology.”

Even at the present day, after the great Reformation era, under the light of the nineteenth century, we cannot, with our utmost endeavors, entirely rid ourselves of those ascetic “feelings and notions.” They are scarcely hid in the Roman and Greek communions; they deeply agitate our partially reformed Protestant system. The Arminian says to the Calvinist, “You represent God as worse than the devil.” The Calvinist replies, “The doctrine of universal redemption as set forth by Wesley is really the highest reproach upon the dignity of the Son of God and the merit of his blood.”<sup>1</sup>

The author of the “Conflict of Ages” has in that immortal work shown the history of the darkening of the character of God from the early ages to the present by the denial of pre-existence.<sup>2</sup>

The modern philosophy of evolution, which denies the fall of man, either in Adam or in

<sup>1</sup> “Life and Times of Wesley,” 319-323.

<sup>2</sup> “Conflict of Ages.” Book IV.

any other way, does not illumine the gloom, but, if possible, deepens it. Agnosticism is like a veil spread over the darkling nations. Men are so accustomed to the shadows that they do not know that it is shadow. We shall never realize fully the truth on this subject until from our thrones we look back upon the present; and Christ, with the open scroll in his hand, makes the reality live again before our anointed eye. Now we think we are rich and increased in goods, and in need of nothing; then we shall see that we were poor and miserable and blind, and in want of all things.

## CHAPTER XIV

## THE SARACENS

WHEN the barbarians came down on the empire, and the ancient fabric of civilization gave way, gloomy presentiments filled the minds of far-sighted men. To such a man as Augustine, voices of woe seemed sounding through the sky, — the coming of antichrist, the devastation of the world, the conflagration and judgment day, seemed close at hand; and the note of alarm was like the angel's sonorous song, "Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth" — This is thrown in between the fourth and fifth trumpets, as if to heighten the effect.

As the fifth angel sounds, a star shoots to earth, or an angel like a star. He has a key to the door of the abyss, or Hades, as conceived of anciently. Virgil conducts his hero, Æneas, through the portals of a vast cavern to the underworld. In the mountains around the Dead Sea in Palestine, there are caverns which, if closed by iron-studded doors, might have answered to the vision. To such a door the

angel applies his key, the ponderous valves fly open, and immediately volumes of smoke burst forth, and out of the smoke emerge hybrid insect cavalry, part locust, part war-horse. Their leader, named Destroyer, leads the winged squadron with a noise as of chariots rushing to battle. Not westward does he see them careering, towards the fertile plain of the empire, but east and south into the Arabian desert. There are seen the twelve tribes of Israel, encamped as in a previous vision. Twelve thousand in each tribe have been sealed, and bear on their foreheads the name Jehovah. The others, unsealed, a majority of each tribe, are seen bowing down to idols. The winged locust-cavalry dash in upon the encampment, and fasten upon the idolatrous victims with a sting so painful that they seek by suicide to put an end to the torment.

Such are the emblems; what, by analogy, may they signify? As the unlocking of the doors of a subterranean cavern and letting out smoke would be to the eye, so is the publishing of a system of delusion to the mind. As the smoke let forth locust-cavalry, so should the system of error embody itself in a military propagandism. These military apostles shall unite opposite extremes of character, masculine intellect with feminine delicacy and refinement, destruc-

tiveness with magnanimity. Their onset shall be boisterous, their teaching incoherent and painful to the minds subjected to attack. The fact that they sting idolatrous Israelites only, comes near to being an element of the real, blending with the symbolic. The tribes and the sealing are symbolic, the idolatry is real. It is an assault upon idolatrous Christendom. And as one hundred and fifty days would be to the natural continuance of a swarm of locusts, so would a much longer period, say of one hundred and fifty years, be to the career of a body of fanatical propagandists. Systems of delusion are not measured by days, years are as necessary to them as days to the growth of locust swarms.

Such a symbolization may have several fulfilments, more or less complete. It may be having a fulfilment before our eyes in the monstrous career of Mormonism. But the most striking fulfilment may be found in the system of Mahomet, as embodied in the Saracen soldiery. There was much truth in his system, but enveloped in clouds of error. It struck at idolatry in the camp of apostate Christendom, and stung the guilty conscience like a scorpion. It had so much truth, proclaiming as it did the unity of God, and his hatred of idols, that it did not kill,—it might even

exert a reformatory influence. The Saracen character had traits of honesty, generosity, and magnanimity. Their language was a noble one. Their literature during the Dark Ages outshone that of Christendom.

To minds sealed by the spirit, and there were such, though in minority, this system could not be a torment, for they were not idolaters. They abhorred the idolatries of the visible church more even than did the votaries of Mahomet.

“Let us forget for a time the actual course of events,” says Edward Beecher, “and in imagination go back to A.D. 716, and station ourselves on the sky-pointing peaks of ‘Sovran Blanc,’ and survey the prospect on either side. Look then to the east, over Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia, and Transoxiana, the conquering crescent floats over them all. . . . Look southward over Egypt, Libya, Numidia, and Mauritania, — neither the Roman nor the Vandals are masters there. Cairo, Memphis, and Carthage are taken; and where Augustine and Cyprian once expounded the Gospels, the voice of the mufti is heard enforcing the doctrine of the Koran, ‘There is one God, and Mahomet is his prophet.’ . . . Look then to the west. . . . Over the broad plains of beauteous and fertile Spain, the mosques and minarets of the Saracen conquerors arise, and the Christian

fugitives are driven into the fastnesses of the northern mountains. . . . Plans the most comprehensive fill the minds of the caliphs. The south of the Roman empire is subdued, the north, too, must fall. By two routes our armies must pursue their victorious course. From Spain, France must be assailed, and then Belgium, Britain, and Germany." From the east, Constantinople must be taken, Thrace, Macedonia, Greece, Hungary, and then from all quarters must we concentrate on Italy.

"Gigantic efforts were put forth to execute this plan. One hundred and twenty thousand Arabs besieged Constantinople, eighteen thousand vessels assailed it by water. . . . On the other hand, the South of France had already submitted to the Saracens. The veteran and daring Abderame twice defeated the armies of the Christians, the second time with a slaughter so immense, that, in their own words, God only could number the slain. More than three-quarters of France was already subdued."

In the language of Gibbon, "A victorious line of march had been prolonged above a thousand miles from the Rock of Gibraltar to the banks of the Loire; the repetition of an equal space would have carried the Saracens to the confines of Poland and the Highlands of Scotland. Perhaps the Koran would now be taught

in the schools of Oxford, and her pulpits might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelations of Mahomet."

"In this emergency," says Dr. Beecher, "God raised up Charles Martel, father of Charlemagne, to be the champion of Europe. A battle of seven days at Tours decided the fate of Christendom, and dissipated the Saracenic dreams of universal conquest."

In the year 762, just one hundred and fifty years from the time when Mahomet began to preach, the city of Bagdad was built. From this moment a modification in the character of the Saracenic power was visible. They lost their fanatical, proselyting, apostolic zeal, and became a settled nation, making no more conquests. They suddenly became the patrons of literature and the arts. Says the same writer, "Though this transformation was sudden, it is not inconsistent with the elements of Arab character. Impetuous, enthusiastic, imaginative, for a time they were known only as the armed propagandists of the Koran. . . . Hence, when their warlike fervor was checked, their energy turned into a new channel, and a sudden and brilliant intellectual development was the result."

There is something incongruous in the two parts of their career, as also in the emblem



denoting it. Fanatical propagandists of a new faith to-day, patrons of the arts and sciences to-morrow; burning Alexandrine libraries one year, founding libraries the next; massacring Christian teachers one century, collecting classics and scholars to translate them the next; assisting to plunge Europe, with its rude and barbarous dialects, into moral night, and with the beautiful and copious Arabic kindling a literary radiance in all the world besides.

Ishmael puts Isaac to shame. The two phases of Saracenic life are as strange a hybrid as the two ends of the visionary cavalry,—a scorpion's tail, a horse's head with a crown of gold. If Thomas J. Nast were invited to construct a cartoon of the whole Saracenic career, with so many contradictory elements, so prominent in religious and literary history, could he do it with fewer strokes of his magic pencil, or in a more lifelike manner?

And we are to remember that in the divine camera we see men and nations not as they appeared to themselves and their enemies, but as they appeared to God, and as Christ is in the vision in the act of making them appear to the celestial spectators. To themselves they have a humane aspect, feminine delicacy, chivalric prowess, and golden coronets; to their enemies they seemed monstrous scorpion locusts; to

God they were both ; and so the eye of saints and angels is yet to see them. Even so, Christ, unsealing and unrolling the scroll, is causing them to appear to the back-looking eyes of millennial myriads. We fly forward, and look back ; we soar upward, and look down.

## CHAPTER XV

## OTTOMANS

THE Revelation is the people's book, and also the scholars' book, because scholars are people. But the master has so contrived the unveiling that scholarship should be at a discount, and common-sense at a premium. The question is, What did John see, and what did the things seen signify?

The language used is descriptive, plain, literal. The *things* are symbolic, analogic. The English translation is just as good as the original Greek to look through, to see with. And as to interpreting the things seen, it is the faculty in which common people are quickest and shrewdest; namely, seeing the point of a conundrum, a parallel case, a caricature. The Lord has not supplied pictorial illustrations of these visions; but he has described them in popular language, and expects us to supply the illustrations in our own minds. It is not the erudite professor or specialist who is quickest at guessing a charade or tableau; it is the average wit

of common folk, even of children. It is human nature to see the point. If it is some historical event that is presented, of course the historian can help identify characters; but that is about all. The meaning of the scene all can see, old and young, learned and unlearned.

The vision before us (xix. 13-21) illustrates this. The question first in order is not what the loosing of the angels bound in the Euphrates signified, but what it was, what it looked like? What did John, what do we, see?

There were four angels and a great army prepared for a campaign, bound (or detained) in or on the Euphrates, and then "loosed."

Now, how are armies bound in or on rivers? Naturally by the width and depth of the current, the want of fords or bridges or flotilla, or by overflow and inundation. Briefly we conceive that the seer beholds an army in four divisions endeavoring to cross the Euphrates, but unable. The river is up. The banks are overflowed. The country is under water. The armies are on the Euphrates and in it, and are "bound" or detained.

Now, the Euphrates was the boundary of the covenant soil. It is therefore an attempted invasion which we behold. It is quite in keeping with preceding visions, where we saw the twelve

tribes encamped, and one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed, the rest assailed by the scorpion-locust cavalry. This threatens, so it looks to the eye, another attack. There are some resemblances, too, between the assailing hosts, — the same blending of opposites in a monstrous whole; a similar blending of destructive elements. In short, they are so much like those of the previous vision, yet in several respects so unlike and so much worse, that we should almost think it was the same army under a new uniform, or recruited by new material, or a different corps of the same army. Moreover, we hear the objective of the campaign. They are prepared for an hour, day, month, year, to slay a third part of men; i.e., of the men in the camp of Israel, towards which they were on the march till “bound” by the inundation. They were to spend three hundred and ninety-one days in slaying the unsealed in four out of twelve tribes; i.e., a third part of the unsealed in all the tribes.

Of course when the seer beheld the angels loosed, we know how it appeared. The inundation subsides, the river becomes fordable, the armies cross over. They traverse the intervening space, and pour down on the camp of Israel. The guilty idolaters are slain. Four tribes are almost depopulated. The eight remaining tribes

go on with their idolatrous practices as though nothing had happened, "worshipping [and here again the real pierces through the emblematic] demons [i.e., saints], and idols of gold, silver, brass, wood, and stone."

Of what, then, are these things the emblems? Does the vision portend an attack on the Jews as such? By no means; the nation was already scattered, and the twelve tribes dispersed. It would be something that would be to the nations of Christendom what that would have been to the tribes of Israel. And if the scorpion-locust cavalry of the preceding chapter denoted a fanatical propagandism chastising idolatrous Christian communities, this may denote the same system passed into other hands. If that were Islam the Saracen, this may be Islam the Turk. No woman's hair in this picture, no crown of gold. In the whole complex portraiture not one redeeming trait. Even iron is not fit breastplate for them, but fire, jacinth, and brimstone, indicating not merely a heart steeled to pity, but burning with cruelty.

In brief, the suggestion is that the same system should be embraced by another nation, with none of the noble traits of the Saracens, but far surpassing them in ferocity and barbarity, who should be prepared to burst in upon the Eastern empire, but be held in check by a

mighty inundation, not of a river of waters, but of nations, like Euphrates in overflow. The threatened invasion is to be held in check by a counter-invasion of the population of Europe. The nations of Christendom should flow eastward to prevent Oriental hordes from flowing westward.

But when that counter-movement is over, the prepared invader shall enter, and run a course of destructive conquest for about four centuries (three hundred and ninety-one years). Islam, under their auspices, shall lose all the generous traits of the early Saracenic period. It will be a "woe" only, an insufferable incubus on one of the fairest regions of earth.

At the time denoted in the vision, the four sultanies of Bagdad, Damascus, Aleppo, and Iconium were about to invade the Eastern empire. The Crusades prevented them. European Euphrates overflowed, and held them "bound" on its banks. "In the course of one hundred and fifty-two years," says the historian, "Europe was deprived of more than half its population." From A.D. 1096 to 1270 the foe was held in check, awaiting the hour when Asia "no longer feared a crusade." In 1281 the Turks took Kutaiah; in 1291 the Mamelukes captured Nice, and the Turk became the terror of all Europe.

The four sultanies combined in one by Othman, first of the Ottoman name, became the first military power of Europe, and in 1453 enthroned itself on the Dardanelles. The glory of the Greek Church was at an end. Christians were unbelieving dogs. Ignorance and barbarism prevailed in Asia Minor. The Turks, "a mixed people composed of Tartars, robbers, slaves, and kidnapped Christian children, are the only barbarians who have reduced civilized nations to their yoke without mingling with them, and adopting their languages, sciences, arts, and manners. Originally a horde of robbers, they remain strangers in the midst of Europe, and for four centuries have trodden under foot the holy place, and profaned the classic soil of Athens, Sparta, and Corinth."

But the nations of Western Christendom, seeing all this, like the tribes in the vision, went on worshipping idol images, "neither repented they of their murders, nor of their demon-worship, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their theft."

Human history is imperfect. Our insight is dim. The politics of the world turn on the so-called Eastern question. Yet the world realizes little what is the real *nodus* of that question. It is the question, Who shall have Constantinople and Jerusalem? and what shall



be done with the insufferable Turk? Diplomacy is at fault; but in the great book it is written, and we on our golden thrones from out the fastnesses of eternity are looking back on the answer.

## CHAPTER XVI

## THE REFORMATION

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

THE vision here described is vivid, and not difficult to see with the mental eye, as a bright interlude between the woes. The eye beholds the world as devastated by the fiery hail, the burning mountain, the locust-cavalry, and the Euphratean army. The Roman empire has fallen, ravaged in turn by Goths, Huns, Vandals, Saracens, and Turks. Civilization is almost extinct; and the Dark Ages have set in, and almost run their predestined course. Into that midnight world an angel is seen descending; not malign like him who unlocked the abyss, but benign, with hope's rainbow over his head, clouds his vestments, his person lustrous, his face and feet like sunbeams. Into the dark world he comes, and stands on the Mediterranean shore, one foot on land, the

other on the wave, uttering a summons to which seven thunder-voices respond. He is about to write what they said, but is checked: "Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not."

The angel then lifts his hand to heaven, and swears that there shall be no more delay, but that in the days of the voice of the seventh angel the mystery of God should be finished. John is then bidden to eat the little book; and it is sweet to the taste, but painful in its effects, making his stomach bitter or painful. "Thou must prophesy again," says the angel, "before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

Of what, then, are these things emblematic? The angel evidently is acting a symbolic part. John himself becomes for the moment an actor in the scene. In the darkness of the Dark Ages, there is portended an illumination of light and truth like this. Some man, or body of men, should appear as conspicuous, as bright, as cheering to the nations, as this angel. The response of the nations should be instant and loud as thunder, yet for various reasons not worthy of remembrance. Nations so long dark and debased would not be likely to say quite the right thing. The burden of the angelic proclamation should be the approaching end of

the mystery of God, the dawn of the millennial day.

The reign of ignorance and despotism, for so many centuries after Christ's resurrection, is indeed mysterious. It seems unaccountable that God should refrain, and withhold the expression of his feelings so long. But the men symbolized by the angel should proclaim to the nations the near approach of the day of the revelation of his righteous judgment. When the seventh trumpet should sound, the divine reserve should cease, and the full expression of his emotions take place.

But what, then, is symbolized by the little book and its curious use and effects? Is it an emblem of the Bible, then opened from the dead languages to the common people? Or may it mean those creeds and confessions which the reformers devoured with avidity, and which, like unripe fruit, proved indigestible, producing intestine cramps and convulsions in the Christian body?

Perhaps both may be shadowed forth. Eating is believing. Both the Bible and the Catechism were eagerly devoured. Divisions and controversies followed. The seven thunders that uttered their voices were the natural consequence. The Vatican thundered. The explosions of popular enthusiasm and the artillery

of religious warfare thundered. The direction to seal up what the thunders uttered might, perhaps, be intended to admonish mankind that in such controversies there is much said on both sides that is not worth remembering. The statement that John should prophesy before people, nations, and kings may denote that the Apocalypse would be much appealed to by the reformers, which we know to have been strikingly fulfilled.

Things are as they should be if this view of the emblems is correct. The true history of the Reformation era is not and cannot be adequately written by earthly pens. But it is divinely recorded in that great scroll in Christ's hand; and the risen saints on their thrones, and we in their persons, are looking back on time while he explains the whole, and makes it live before our eyes. Then we shall know why even the thunders of Sinai were sealed up, because the wrath of God, as then fulminated, was the wrath of a wild beast, and not the wrath of the Lamb.

## CHAPTER XVII

## THE TWO WITNESSES

THE scene of the slaying of the witnesses is said to be "in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." This last statement is decisive of the locality. The real breaks through the emblematic. But where, then, it may be asked, is Jerusalem spiritually, or figuratively, called Sodom? We answer, Isaiah i. 10: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom!" Where, also, is Jerusalem called Egypt? We answer, by implication, on the Mount of Transfiguration. John himself there heard Moses and Elias speaking with Jesus concerning his decease, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem. The use of the word Exodus (*εξοδον*) is very striking. In using it the Spirit virtually calls Jerusalem Egypt. It is clear, then, that the scene is laid in Jerusalem. The scenes of earlier years rise round the seer as formerly familiar when as a disciple he went in and out, and frequented the temple courts. He

is in those courts. A reed or measuring-rod is given him; and an angel says, "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."

To understand what is implied by this measurement, it is necessary to consider carefully the location and structure of the temple, and of the mountain on which it was built. Mount Moriah rose from the valley several hundred feet, massive walls being built up like a veneering of stone on four sides, to a level with the top, and filled in and paved. Thus the mountain of the house became like an immense cube of masonry, three hundred yards square. Around the spacious rectangular esplanade were built porches, or porticos, supported on triple rows of marble columns. On every side there were massive gateways and stairways leading to the city below.

Within this great rectangle, or, as modern measurement proves, parallelogram, a smaller square was laid off, raised thirty feet high, with a strong wall thirty feet more; sixty feet from the great court to the top of the wall. This wall had very strong gates and colonnades inside; chambers for priests, magazines, treasuries, and immense storerooms of wine, oil, wheat, and

other provisions. In the centre of this smaller court stood the temple proper, small compared to the whole mount, though in itself massive, and of exquisite workmanship. Thus this second square was a hill upon a hill, its walls massive, its gates ponderous, impregnable, every part formed with the utmost durability and beauty. It was, in fact, a military fortress as well as a religious edifice. The mountain itself, dominating the city, excavated with deep galleries and subterranean wells and cisterns, was adapted to stand a siege; while the inner court was a citadel to which Israel might resort to defy the camp of the aliens. So it had often been used. That great esplanade had been the theatre of many desperate conflicts; especially in the siege and sack of Jerusalem by Titus, only a few years before John saw this vision,<sup>1</sup> and with the details of which he must have been acquainted.

When, with immense difficulty, Titus had taken the city, and even the tower Antonia, the holy fane still resisted him. It was only through the castle Antonia he could force an entrance to the outer court, or great quadrangle of eighteen acres; nor could he do this till

<sup>1</sup> Those who assign an earlier date to the Apocalypse will, of course, understand that the seer sees things prophetically, foresees them.



the colonnades had been burned. Then he poured in his legions, and the Jews retreated to the inner square; thus was the outer court "given to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles." That vast esplanade became their camp, their battlefield, whereon Titus built mounds against the walls of the second square, and began to batter the foundations. Six days the battering-rams thundered without producing any impression. The Romans tried to undermine the gates, but, after rolling out one or two stones, abandoned the attempt.

Now, the precise juncture of affairs seen in the vision appears to be just this. The Romans have occupied the outer court, and are attacking the inner court, so far in vain. The besieged are safe for the present, yet to human view in a desperate extremity, retreating to the last fortress, surrounded by the iron legionaries, the mounds and towers, the ballistæ and catapults, the din and clang of the battering-ram incessantly thundering.

Now the seer is commanded to take his reed and measure. He obeys. He measures all the interior works. The walls are plumb, the gates erect, the heavy battering-ram has not moved the bulwarks one line. Within, all is secure, and the worshippers are going on with their service, and the sweet psalm rises,—

“God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved, God shall help her, and that right early.”

The clouds of incense ascend, but the outer court and the city below are given up to scenes of violence and carnage.

It is at this point that two new actors enter upon the stage, to defend the beleaguered garrison. Clothed in sackcloth they sally forth; they need but to breathe in the face of the foe as they pass, and he falls lifeless. Their warfare is, however, defensive. The besiegers still hold the outer court and the city, but the temple proper is impregnable. Like prophets of old, Moses, Elijah, etc., they smite the enemy with drought and other plagues.

While the besieged have corn, wine, and oil, and living waters from the rock, the besiegers are scorched under a Syrian sky, the water in their camp turned to blood, and their ranks decimated by pestilence.

Such is the relative posture of the two great parties, as spread before the visionary eye; and it seems to the seer, as it sometimes seems in dreams, that time has passed away, and that the siege has continued forty-two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days. This time has elapsed, and the witnesses have finished their testimony. A wild beast appears on the stage,

now mentioned for the first time, but playing an important part in future visions. It is a striking example of the last first, the  $\omega$  before  $\alpha$ , so often occurring in the Revelation. By this wild beast the witnesses are slain, and their dead bodies cast down from the mount, and exposed in the streets of the city below.

From every quarter of the besiegers' camp, filled with recruits from all Gentile nations, men flock to gaze on the hated champions. By a sort of clairvoyance, or second sight, the seer perceives the whole Roman empire aware of the event, and rejoicing, and sending gifts, and holding festivals. But on the third day the witnesses revive, and ascend to heaven, while an earthquake shakes the city, a third part of which is laid in ruins, and seven thousand of the soldiers slain; the rest, affrighted, give glory to God.

Such we conceive to be the events which John saw. What, then, is their import by the law of analogy,  $a : b :: x : y$ ? In a general sense the answer is easy. As such things would be to natural Israel, so shall corresponding things be to spiritual Israel, the Israel of faith. We have to fill out the analogy as we best may, and conjecture what it will be when Christ shall open the scroll, and we look back instead of forward. As such a siege to natural

Israel, so a moral siege to spiritual Israel. True Christians against world majorities, besieged, beleaguered, during a period which would be to moral and intellectual development what twelve hundred and sixty days or forty-two months would be to the resistance of a citadel after the outworks have been taken. As such witnesses to the defence of Israel in Jerusalem, so the leaders in intellectual and spiritual conflict to the Israel of faith. Such witnesses smite the earth with plagues by warning men of the consequences of their sins and crimes. They torment those who dwell on earth as virtue torments vice; truth, falsehood; holiness, sin, — by contrast and by expressing the holy wrath of God.

Spiritual Israel would be derided, and triumphed over by scoffers, wits, and savants, and seem on the point of surrender clear down to the Advent, but defended in extremity by witnesses in sackcloth. Such there have been, are, and will be; and the gates and walls of the Redemption faith have not been moved one line from the perpendicular by all the fury of assault.

What, then, is symbolized by the slaying of the witnesses? Is it a past event? or is it yet future? Is it a corporeal martyrdom or spiritual? Are they slain because they testify, or

because they cease to testify? The language indicates, "as plainly as words can imply it, that the whole period of their testimony will be at an end"<sup>1</sup> when they are slain. They prophesy twelve hundred and sixty days, which brings us down to a time nearly preceding the Advent, when "the second woe is past, and the third woe cometh quickly;" and the third woe, or seventh trumpet, brings in the Advent.

But it may be asked, Are believers now in a condition symbolized by a besieged fortress? Are not Christians free and powerful, and even aiming at the conversion of the world and universal dominion? We admit that, so far as outward persecution is concerned, times seem to have changed, at least for the present. But no man ever tries to be faithful to Christ, and to his own conscience, without finding that he is besieged. Sometimes the emblem is of captivity in Babylon; sometimes, as here, of a siege of Jerusalem. There is a constant attack of objections, doubts, arguments, against the faith, going on. The churches, however prosperous outwardly, are assailed, undermined, battered at continually.

Says a late writer: "Indeed, against the person of Christ, as both historic and divine, has been directed a series of protracted assaults

<sup>1</sup> *Alford in loc.*

which can be described as nothing less than a siege. One onset no sooner loses its force, than another more subtle is begun, until now we are in the midst of a movement keener, more dangerous, than any yet directed against the historic appearance and true divinity of our Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

Says another recent writer, “Materialism, Agnosticism, and the hostility of certain schools of thought to faith in the integrity and faith of the Bible, are uniting for a grand assault upon Christianity during the closing quarter of the century.”<sup>2</sup> Still another writer affirms, “The dogma which has been the key-stone of Christianity has been shaken from all sides. The divinity of Christ is practically all that Judaism denies, and there is no need to insist on the negative attitude of modern thought toward this primal conception. From the ranks of Unitarianism, Theism, Agnosticism, and Atheism, the disbelief has definitely spread to Protestantism, the doctors of which are providing more or less nebulous substitutes for the concrete Christ of the every-day Christian. The literature of the day is thoroughly anti-Christian, the great writers to a man do not believe in Christ. It is not only the specifically polemical

<sup>1</sup> Professor C. A. Beckwith, *Andover Review*, August, 1893.

<sup>2</sup> *Congregationalist*, Boston, July 11, 1895.

writers like Mrs. Humphry Ward, it is the literary class in general. Books with distinctively Christian teaching appeal only to cliques; the leading things of general literature are the work of men not Christians. The higher mind of the world is being fed from non-Christian sources. The great movement of the modern mind is away from the Trinity. Of the writers with European reputation, Tolstoï alone maintains even the ideals of Christianity; and Tolstoï is accounted mad. In our own literature alone, the most conservative of all modern literatures, what trace of Trinitarianism is there in Browning, Swinburne, Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, William Morris, George Meredith, George Eliot, Carlyle, Emerson, Hawthorne, Whitman, Lowell, Holmes, Rudyard Kipling, Stevenson, Hardy, Howells, Henry James, Mill, Spencer, Darwin, and a score of others who do the modern man's thinking? This part of Christianity is crumbling away, even while Judaism looks idly on. History and science do not corroborate the episodes on which it is founded, and the conception itself jars upon the modern mind."<sup>1</sup>

And prosperity has its dangers as well as adversity. Christians may fall into a Laodicean state, saying, "I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing," and Christ

<sup>1</sup> Zangwill in *N. A. Review*, May 9, 1895.

may be saying, "Thou knowest not that thou art poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, and in want of all things." It was in reference to such a state of carnal self-sufficiency that Isaac Taylor used the following language:—

"Just in proportion as there comes upon me a deeper sense of the awful reality of the Christian scheme, and of its bearing upon the welfare of the human family, do I feel distrustful of the easy, overweening, and egotistic Christianity of Christian people. At the impulse of this uneasiness, I am fain to cry out, looking across the road to the ranks of 'Infidels and Atheists,' 'Friends, come over and help us; set the house on fire, and then we shall shake off our illusions and do our duty.'"

The perils of persecution are great at all times, but never greater than after a season of overweening confidence and carnal security. Our Saviour foretold a time of great tribulation before his second coming, such as was not from the beginning of the world. "For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so as to deceive if it were possible even the very elect" (Matthew xxiv. 24). It may not be possible to deceive the elect, but it may be quite possible to silence them. They are not silent because slain, but slain because silent. The errors



latent and even deemed fundamental in their systems may be so exposed, and there may be such a combination of pseudo philosophies, and unripe sciences, and supernatural phenomena, that the witnesses shall not know what to say; they shall abandon the logical defence of the system, and take refuge in mystery. The witnesses as witnesses are dead, covered with odium and ridicule, and the world holds high jubilee over their exposed corpses. Man is nothing but developed protoplasm or primordial germ. Conviction of sin is obsolete. The glorious gospel of redeeming love is a myth. There is no grand poem of creation, no sublime oratorio of Messiah, no glorious winding up of the drama of ages. Man is no denizen of the skies destined to reascend and reign forever, but a transient bubble on the rushing tide of materialistic evolution.

Already we hear the exulting shouts of the assailants of Christianity in our day. Says Frederic Harrison of the defenders of the faith: "They know all the while, that before the advancing line of positive thought they are fighting a forlorn hope, and they see their own line daily more and more demoralized by the consciousness that they have no rational plan of campaign. They know that their own account of the soul, of the spiritual life, of Provi-

dence, of heaven, is shifting, is growing more vague, more inconsistent, more various. They hurry wildly from one untenable position to another like a routed and disorganized army."

That expresses the feeling of great numbers of men in the very focus of civilization. The prevalence of such ideas is widespread, not only among the educated classes, but among the toiling and discontented masses in our own land and throughout Christendom.

Now, the wild beast in the vision is the emblem of a persecuting world-power. He appears in several forms in course of the visions. This, the first in order, is latest in meaning.

It denotes a lawless, turbulent, destructive world-power, — the name of blasphemy, not now on the head, but on the whole body. It may portend an outward martyrdom of Christian teachers; it must portend an inward martyrdom, or seeming logical defeat, possibly both.

But the reaction is speedy and powerful. It will be like a resurrection, and ascension to glory. The details, the minutiae of unfulfilled prophecy, are beyond our ken; sealed so far as we are concerned, but in the visionary scene unsealed, unfolded, disclosed. We ascend to sit among those golden thrones. We fly forward and look back, while Christ makes the vision like reality before our eyes.

## CHAPTER XVIII

## THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

WHEN the seventh trumpet sounds, great voices are heard 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." Can this, we ask, be the third woe which the angel flying through heaven proclaimed? But before the thought has time to pass through our mind, the four and twenty elders prostrate themselves before the throne, chanting, "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art and wast, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead that they should be judged."

As the seer listens, the temple rises before him, after the manner of visions, and all the celestial company seem to be looking towards the portal. The hangings of the first apartment, or holy place, are already withdrawn, disclosing the incense-altar, the shew-bread table, and the golden candelabra. But the veil still

covers the second apartment, or holy of holies, and hides its contents. But as they gaze, that veil is rent away, and the ark of the testament, the cherubic throne or mercy-seat, made visible.

At the same instant the empyreal vault beneath seems crashing with thunder, blazing with lightning, and re-echoing with voices; and up from below comes the dull roar of descending hailstones, earthquake shocks, and universal concussion.

Such is the vision; what, then, the analogic meaning? The seer is apparently caught up, and carried forward, and we with him, into the far future, beyond the second Advent and first resurrection. The eye is reverted. Celestial myriads are gazing back on time past, especially on the close of the dispensation. This explains the shout instead of the woe. As the gold-crowned princes look back on the history of the witnesses, it is their own earthly life they see illustrated there. Christ, from the record of Omniscience, conveys to their mind a knowledge previously impossible, of all that history in which their earthly fate had been involved. All the manifold, mysterious series of causes which for thousands of years had gone on working toward that great crisis, he unfolds and explains as he has seen and understood them; and as the process draws on to the wind-

ing up, the day when their own redemption was consummated, suddenly for a moment they forget what they are doing, interrupt the regular process of the visions, and break forth into shouts of thanksgiving. They speak of the resurrection as a past event, "Thy wrath came and the time of the dead." They speak of themselves as already enthroned, "We do reign on earth." The vision is chronologically the same with the throne-scene of chapter iv., and with the "thrones, and they sat on them" of xx. 4, and the "great white throne," xx. 11.

Having thus given vent to their emotion, they cease, and the regular symbolization proceeds, showing the tremendous throes by which the victory was brought in, the last crisis of the age-long struggle. Those past events (past to them, future to us) are described in plain, literal language. When they speak of "the kingdoms of this world," "Christ," "angry nations," "the dead," "prophets," "saints," etc., they mean just what we mean by those terms in ordinary usage. There is nothing in those terms "figurative" or emblematic; the real breaks through and interprets the enigmatic, and the vision explains itself. To this the opening of the temple in heaven agrees. What their language literally states, the rending of the veil from the holy of holies symbol-

izes ; emblem and reality go together, indicating the end of a mysterious dispensation, when "the mystery of God should be finished."

When the cherubim were tabernacled on the east of Eden (Genesis iii. 24), it was the end of one dispensation, paradisaical, and the setting up of another, patriarchal. When at Sinai, Moses retabernacled the cherubim, it was the end of the patriarchal and the setting up of the Levitical. When Solomon tabernacled the cherubim on Moriah, it ushered in the regal dispensation.

When Christ expired on the cross, and the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom, it denoted the end of that dispensation of types and shadows, and the setting up of another. Now this same emblem seems employed in like manner to denote the close of a dispensation. It is the end of the Christian dispensation, commonly so called on earth, but as seen from heaven, the end of the anti-Christian dispensation. To call the present dispensation, with its fleets and navies, and its great persecuting powers, Christian, is an infinite paradox. The millennium as we look back from our thrones will be seen to be the Christian dispensation. Before that the prince of this world reigns, but there he is bound and imprisoned, as shown in later visions, and Christ takes the sceptre ; the destroyers are destroyed, the kingdoms of this

world become the kingdoms of Christ. That is the Christian dispensation, and that is characterized by the unveiling of the holy of holies. No veil hides the mercy-seat. To all holy intelligences the throne of God is seen to be a throne of love, a true mercy-seat, even while destroying destroyers; and on that point doubt and mystery are gone forever.

## CHAPTER XIX

## THE WAR IN HEAVEN

And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up to God, and his throne. . . . And there was war in heaven.—  
REVELATION xii. 5-7.

WITH anointed eye and with unsandalled foot we approach to behold this great sight. A woman appears in heaven clothed with the sun; her raiment of incandescent whiteness like that of the Transfiguration; on her head a crown of twelve stars, under her feet a crescent moon; and "she being with child cries, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." A great fiery dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, whose tail draws a third part of the stars, and casts them to the earth, stands, or hovers before her, waiting to devour her child as soon as it is born. But the child is caught up to the throne, and the woman flies to the visionary wilderness, to be nourished there twelve hundred and sixty days.

Meanwhile "there is war in heaven." We



behold angelic legions, with shield and helm and spear and sword, the dragon leading one host, Michael the other, in a desperate but decisive encounter. The dragon host is defeated and expelled, and cast down to earth, and we hear the shout of victory. "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of the brethren is cast down, that 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, in great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

Such are the emblems, the vastest, the most sublime and awful, of any in the whole Apocalypse. Of what is this aerial monster the emblem, whose coils lash the skies, and hurl constellations to the earth? Of what this travelling woman and her translated Seed? It is a symbolic presentment of that which was spoken in Eden, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; thou shalt bruise his heel, he shall bruise thy head" (Genesis iii. 15).

This woman symbolizes the church invisible, "Jerusalem above, the mother of us all." This dragon symbolizes the celestial principalities and powers, and their chief, who energizes unseen through all visible world despotisms. The birth and catching away of the man child symbolize the resurrection and ascension of Christ. The war in heaven symbolizes, not such a conflict as Milton describes, but an intellectual and moral conflict consequent upon Christ's return. By his blood Christ purifies heaven. He convicts the accuser of having shed that blood. It is his testimony as to his own personal sufferings and death, at the hands of the brightest archangel of heaven, prince of the power, or army of the air, which overcomes him. He convicts him of having shed that blood, and of being liar and murderer. The victory was intellectual and moral, not by brute force. They overcame, not by "thunderbolts wing'd with red lightning and impetuous rage," but by "testimony" to matters of fact and personal experience. They convicted the proud accuser, till then unconvicted, of having shed Christ's blood while claiming to be the embodiment of justice, and of a holiness so intense that naught human could satisfy it. He had crucified the only just and sinless man that had ever lived. In vain did the great archangel seek to throw the blame

on inferiors, Jew or Gentile ; in vain, like Pilate, wash his hands, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person ;" In vain repeat the words of the rulers who said, "His blood be on us." — "No," was the response, "his blood be on thee, O Lucifer, son of the morning ! Thou art his murderer ; go forth and go down, there is no place for thee and thine in all heaven."

But the full understanding of this vision is beyond us now. The world does not believe that there is any such being as the prince of the power of the air, and that he resists by every art in his power the formation of a public opinion on this whole subject, which would be to him a consuming fire. The world does not believe, and even the church visible does not. He is a myth, a fable. Redemption, the whole sublime poem, the whole awful tragedy of ages, so far as he is concerned, is shrouded in mystery — "the mystery of iniquity."

But it is written in that great scroll, and Christ is seen in the vision unsealing and unrolling the scroll, and making the history of the universe live again before our eyes.

## CHAPTER XX

## FLIGHT OF THE WOMAN

THE attention, withdrawn awhile from the woman by the "war in heaven," now returns to her as she flies to the wilderness. As often happens in visions, the scene changes. The birth and the war are on the empyreal stage, the flight on the terrestrial plane. As of old the Lord "bore Israel on eagle's wings" (Exodus xix. 3), so now the woman is borne by the wings of a great eagle. The dragon, hurled from heaven to earth, pours a flood of water after her. The inundation sinks into the sands of the desert, and is absorbed. Again time seems to elapse, till from the moment of reaching her retreat twelve hundred and sixty days seem to have gone by. At the end of that time the dragon goes to make war with "the rest of her seed." As the man child was her first-born, "the rest of her seed" must necessarily be of subsequent birth. Though not again seen or described, there must be implied a renewed travail, and a renewed attitude of hostile ex-

pectation of the dragon, waiting to devour. "Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." The groaning and travailing creation, that reached its height at the resurrection of Christ, is renewed at the resurrection of his joint heirs. He is "first-born of many first-born." So much is implied in the brief phrase, "the rest of her seed." And here, again, the real pierces through the emblematic; and the explanatory clause is thrown in, "which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

The question now arises, What is the import of this portion of the vision? We answer, It is an outline of the history of the church invisible from the resurrection of Christ to the second Advent, as that history appeared to the eye of God. It is true church history, as Christ writes it, sealed to us now, unsealed and unfolded to us when we sit with the gold-crowned elders by the glassy sea.

There was a heavenly altitude in early Christian experience. John, who saw these visions, must have lived in heaven ever after. Paul, who saw the Lord on the road to Damascus, and who had been caught up to the third heaven, reached an elevation from which he never descended. Heaven was "fatherland" to one who knew that while "at home in the body we are

absentees from the Lord" (2 Corinthians v. 6). Paul ever had a desire "to depart [*ἀναλῦσαι*]<sup>1</sup> and be with Christ" (Phil. i. 23). "Jerusalem above," he says, "the mother of us all" (Galatians iv. 6). "Our citizenship [*πολίτευμα*] is in heaven" (Philippians iii. 20).

As the resurrection of Christ was his return to his native home and Father's house of many mansions, so Paul considered our resurrection would be our return, ardently to be longed for (Romans viii. 23). "We which have the first-fruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption [or sonship], i.e., the redemption of the body," or resurrection.

And as anticipation is a partial realization, he says (Hebrews iv. 3). "We which have believed do enter into rest." "Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Hebrews x. 19).

That blood, as we have already explained, having purified heaven of the presence of our adversary, who accused us day and night, and prevented our return.—in imagination we can enter there; for God "hath raised us up together with Christ, and made us sit together with him in heavenly places" (Ephesians ii. 6).

<sup>1</sup> A nautical term, unmoor, unloose, slip cable, on the return voyage. So in Luke xii. 36, "return from the wedding;" 2 Maccabees ix. 1, return from expedition; *ἀναλῦσαι* in each case.

Hence he says, "If ye be risen with Christ, set your affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God;" as if to say, "You were alive with the life immortal in your former home with the Lord, but you fled like the woman to the desert; and, though you have a kind of natural life, you are dead, and your true life can be seen only in your risen Saviour, first begotten from the dead." Such was the level at which Paul lived; such the altitude from which he surveyed human history and the whole system of redemption.

The original constitution of the moral universe; the gradual corruption of principalities and powers in heaven by pride, fraud, and selfishness; the necessity of reorganization or regeneration; the substitution of man in the birthright; the jealous hostility of angels; the war of races; the incarnation of man, and of man's Head; his victory, their return and final coronation; the pacification and purification of the moral universe. — were all clear to the eye that looked from this lofty elevation.

Sin was seen to be of the nature of pride, untruth, selfishness; repentance a return to meekness, sincerity, love; faith a childlike spirit, saying,  $\alpha\beta\beta\alpha$ .<sup>1</sup> and the resurrection and millen-

<sup>1</sup> The first word a child learns, "abba," "mamma," "papa."

nial judgment the winding up of the mediatorial economy by the return of the exiled race to primeval purity, character, and station.

From this altitude, also, the institutions of life, the family, the state, the brotherhood, and all other forms of social organization, were best seen. The material world a vast analogon of spiritual realities; nature medicinal; matter not depraving, but sanative; the body not a prison, but a fortress, a castle, a shelter; the family holy, a type of heaven; and all bodily appetites and passions, when regulated, sinless and sanctifying; the entire material system created by Christ and for Christ, to be remedial to the incarnate race, the instrument of its defence and recovery.

No need of excessive vigils, penances, flagellations, celibacy, abstraction from nature, — dead works all, of which the world had been full for ages; the asceticism of the Pharisees, the monasticism of the Essenes, Platonists, Pythagoreans, Gnostics, Buddhists, Brahmins, and other systems of false philosophy, by which the nations were, and were to be, so deeply corrupted. No need of that mistake, so natural yet so unfortunate, of trying to “divorce the heaven-born soul from matter, so as to escape from the degradations and defilements of the body, and thus returning to the skies.”



When Paul spoke of putting to death the body of sin, mortifying the flesh, crucifying the flesh, and other figurative terms, he had no reference to the literal body, but to a body of sinful habits, — pride, envy, ambition, revenge, avarice, and excessive appetites. The whole process of return home to heaven was neither magical nor physical nor sacramental, but voluntary reformation, divine forgiveness, and restoration by the indwelling Spirit, a renewed soul, reunited to God, the very same character originally possessed in heaven, and died out of, by the prodigal in a far country.

Living thus in heaven as the point of origin and return, the whole gospel was to Paul and to the early Christians simple, intelligible, unclouded, and glorious beyond description. Not a doubt or difficulty could possibly obscure its splendor, or occasion a moment's pain. All was bright, all consistent, all transparent as crystal; nor could he even speak of redemption without breaking forth into rapture at "the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." <sup>1</sup>

The woman shone like the sun. But as she fled to her hiding-place, her raiment grew dim. There have been traces of that attitude of mind all along through the ages, as there still are.

<sup>1</sup> καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν αἰώνιον βάρους δόξης.

But very early a change began which brought the Christian mind down to a lower level. Eden was put in place of heaven: a terrestrial origin by physical generation, for an immortal origin by incarnation. This mistake, though quite natural, was lamentable in its results, as the foundation of the great sacramental system of Babylon the great.

So we see the primeval mother, true Urania, descend from heaven to earth and the pilgrimage of mortality. Flood after flood of barbarism, deluge after deluge, have been poured after her; but there has always been some sylvan retreat, some leafy bower, some quiet oasis, while the waves of invasion sink into the thirsty sands and are absorbed, leaving their Druidical, patriarchal sediment. No mural crown nor leopard now, no starry diadem nor sun-bright attire. Has she quite forgotten? Has she quaffed too deeply the Lethean cup? And is the glory she had with God before the world quite erased from the depths of memory? Ah, no, not quite, —

“ They come as half-forgotten dreams  
From that eternal land,  
The sound of its celestial streams  
And shores of silver sand!”

In all the hidden ones, Jew or Gentile, of every name and nation, noble or vulgar, learned

or ignorant, in palace or in hovel, on throne or in dungeon, there linger the divine, mysterious, homesick yearning, the memory, that cannot quite remember, of better days,—the deep, strange reminiscence of a lost immortality, a forfeited innocence, a departed bliss!

“Poetry,” says one of the profoundest thinkers of our era, “would take but feeble hold of the human mind,—distracted as it is with cares, broken as it is with toils, sorrowing in recollection of yesterday and in fear of to-morrow,—if it did not find there a shadowy belief, like an almost forgotten dream, of a world where once all things were bright, gay, pure, and blessed in love. . . . The feeling is deep in every human spirit, that at some time, we know not when, in some world or region, we know not where, the brightest of those things which the poet imagines were realized in the lot of man. But is, then, this conception an illusion? . . . The musings and the yearnings of millions of souls are so many inarticulate utterances of a dreamlike conception of innocence, love, ease, leafy, fragrant bowers, and shining skies, which those who have never found those things in their earthly lot, nevertheless persist in thinking have been wanting in it only through adverse accidents and their evil stars.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Isaac Taylor, “Spirit of Hebrew Poetry,” pp. 99-103.

But it is the heavenly Eden the poetic instinct of exile sighs for and almost remembers. We are all poets, because we are all "pilgrims and strangers" sighing for fatherland.

Nor has this precious faith of Israel and of the primitive churches ever been wholly lost. Corrupt as the visible church had become in the sixth century, it was not this idea in its purity which she condemned, but another quite different; namely, "That souls in heaven cooled down from the love of God, and were sent into bodies to be punished." That the Council of Constantinople in 541 condemned; but that souls were so sent down *to be redeemed* has never been condemned by any ecumenical council. The true scriptural statement slightly paraphrased runs thus: "For as much as the children had become incarnate, he also in like manner became incarnate; that through death he might bring to naught him that had the power of life and death;" i.e., dethrone him who was prince of the power of the air. Such is the true import of Hebrews ii. 14. But the idea itself of heaven as our native country, fatherland, and home, as I have shown in a former work,<sup>1</sup> has never entirely perished, even though denied in words. The heart has been stronger than the head; imagination, which is

<sup>1</sup> "Redeemer and Redeemed," pp. 150-168. Lee and Shepard.

faith, truer than philosophy. Upborne by this deep sentiment as by the cherubic wings of a great eagle, the woman has been wafted to her secluded covert. Hear Augustine, not as theologian, not as prelate, but as a suffering saint struggling against the current of his age:—

“Lo, my infancy died long since, and I live! But thou, Lord, who ever livest . . . say to me thy suppliant, thy pitiable one, did my infancy succeed another age of mine that died before it? Was it that which I spent in the womb? . . . And what, again, was I before that life, O God, my joy? Was I anywhere or anybody? For this I have none to tell me, neither father nor mother, nor experience of others. Dost thou laugh at me for this? . . . But if I ‘was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me,’ where, I beseech thee, or when, was thy servant guiltless? But lo! that period I pass by, for what have I to do with that of which I can recall no vestige?”

At another time, addressing the heavenly city as “our mother which is above and is free and eternal in the heavens,” he exclaims, “O house most lightsome and delightsome, I have loved thy beauty, and the place of the habitation of the glory of my Lord, the builder and possessor. Let my wayfaring sigh after thee! And I say to him that made thee, let him take

possession of me also in thee, seeing he hath made me likewise.

“I have gone astray like a lost sheep, yet upon the shoulders of my shepherd, thy builder, I hope to be brought back unto thee! . . . Myself will enter into my chamber, and sing there a song of loves unto thee; groaning with groanings unutterable in my wayfaring, and remembering Jerusalem with heart lifted up unto it! Jerusalem my country, Jerusalem my mother, and thyself that rulest over it, enlightener, father, guardian, husband, the pure and strong delight, and solid joy; nor will I be turned away till thou gather all I am from this dispersed and disordered state, into the peace of that our most dear mother, where are the first-fruits of my spirit already.”

Thus that ardent poetic soul, struggling against the spirit of his age, reveals the deep, hidden yearning of the soul for fatherland and home.

“For sure, as olden sages tell,  
We are not all of earth,  
The soul by some mysterious spell  
Has glimpses of her birth,  
And memories of things divine  
Thrill o'er me at that voice of thine.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus through darker ages have pious souls con-

<sup>1</sup> Anonymous.

tinued dreamily to use the language of a heavenly origin. The garments of the exiled mother no longer glowed as with sunlight; but the spirit saw her prophetically a "glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing;" and as we draw nigh to her future final travail, of which the vision hints, the birth-pangs of the *first resurrection* (Revelations xx. 5), these songs of the Spirit become wonderfully full, rich, and free. That deep, mysterious memory of Eden, of which Isaac Taylor so finely discourses, reveals itself as a veiled reminiscence of heaven. It is a new revelation. The mind grows transcendental. In this wilderness world of doubt, objection, obstruction, and unbelief, the hidden Eve feeds on manna daily gathered, and drinks water from the Rock, and sings, —

"I'm but a stranger here,  
Heaven is my home.  
Earth is a desert drear,  
Heaven is my home.  
Danger and sorrow stand  
Round me on every hand;  
Heaven is my fatherland,  
Heaven is my home.

What though the tempest rage,  
Heaven is my home.  
Short is my pilgrimage,  
Heaven is my home.

And I shall surely stand  
There at my Lord's right hand;  
Heaven is my fatherland,  
Heaven is my home."

And Christ, holding the mighty scroll before the reverted gaze of throned princes, is awakening that long dormant memory from oblivion, recalling the day when they were given to him in glory before the foundation of the world.



## CHAPTER XXI

## THE LEOPARD

THE first step towards the interpretation of a vision is to see it ourselves. We are standing on the Mediterranean shore, looking off upon the water. A wild beast rises out of the waves, and comes up upon the land. It is a leopard, with bear's feet and lion's mouth. It has seven heads, one behind another, on the same flexible neck. It is as if the creature had lived under five heads successively, which look superannuated, and is now living under a sixth, with a seventh in embryo on which ten crowned horns are budding. As we gaze, there is a flash as of a sword-stroke wounding the sixth head "unto death;" but the deadly wound is presently healed. On each head is some divine name, or title, or archaic inscription, called "the name of blasphemy," i.e., self-deification.<sup>1</sup>

As the animal advances on the land, a wide

<sup>1</sup> Then the Jews said to Jesus, "For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; in that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."

plain opens before him, in the centre of which is a throne, with multitudes surrounding. Hovering in the air, half seen, spectral, appears the dragon of the preceding vision, in some respects of the same shape, i.e., having the same number of heads (as the soul may be conceived as having the same shape as the body), and conducting this his own counterpart to a throne, and conferring upon him his own insignia of royalty. The one is the soul of the other. The one is, as it were, incarnate in the other. The one is to be conceived of as invisible to the multitude, the other visible.

Monstrous and repulsive as such a creature might seem to us, he does not so seem to the multitude; for all the world wondered after the wild beast, and worshipped him, saying, "Who is like unto the wild beast? who is able to make war with him?"

And there is given unto him a mouth, speaking great things. We see him declaiming eloquently, and virtually claiming divine honors, or speaking blasphemy.

Here an element of the real breaks out through the symbolic; viz., he is to make war with "the saints" during the oft-mentioned period of forty-two months or twelve hundred and sixty days, and "all not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation

of the world are to worship him." How this idea is conveyed in the vision is not indicated; but it is so contrived as to show that the elect are those in every age who stand against world majorities. Hence the so oft repeated interjection, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear."

This world is a world of captivity and of conflict. The race is under bondage; and the campaign of ages is to destroy him that had the power of life and death, and set man free. Here are the faith and patience of the saints. This simple explanation of the sombre tragedy of ages enlightens the mind and comforts the heart of the saints.

The emblem cannot be confined to any one empire, as Rome, for example, under seven forms of government. The Roman empire never had seven forms of government, at least with sufficient prominence at all to correspond with this great symbolization. The only natural explanation, as Auberlen well says, "is that the beast represents the world power in general, according to its successive world monarchies, which we find in the seven heads."<sup>1</sup>

Let us, then, interrogate the page of history. What are the great world empires? What waves have rolled highest, foamed brightest,

<sup>1</sup> Auberlen on "Daniel and John," p. 264.

frowned darkest, on the wind-tossed ocean? And the interpreting angel answers, "Five are fallen, one now is, the other is not yet come."

Now, what world empire then was? Answer, the Roman. Rome, then, was the sixth head. What five empires were already fallen? Counting back from Rome, we have Greece, Medo-Persia, Assyria, Egypt, and the Antediluvian or Titanic. Most writers prefer, however, to omit the latter, and beginning with Egypt, divide the Assyrian into two, Assyria and Babylonia. What empire, then, has succeeded to Rome? Answer, the kingdoms of modern Europe, averaging about ten in number, and hereafter to be, perhaps, exactly ten, that rose up out of the sea of population after the barbarian inundation. It may be a definite number put for an indefinite, a number that would be to modern Europe like what ten horns would be to a wild beast. Let it be asked, where, since Rome fell, has been the governing brain, the despotic mind, of the world? Answer, in the European governments and their colonies, east and west, sprung from the ruins of imperial Rome, rising up out of the waves of barbarian invasion. They are divided, yet united; manifold, yet with what is called balance of power. Writers have made out the number ten in various ways.

We may leave it indefinite — ten or thereabout.

Lithe as a leopard, shuffling in gait as a bear, and voiced like a lion, the confederacy of kings, largely Germanic, preponderating in Europe, is the seventh, which was to continue a short time," i.e., make a protracted stay; emphasize the "continue," — he is to *continue* a while.

In confirmation, look at the visions of Daniel. Daniel saw four wild beasts rise out of the sea, as John sees this rise out of the sea; the first was a lion, and this has a lion's mouth; the second a bear, and this has a bear's feet; the third was a leopard, and this has a leopard's body; the fourth had ten horns, and this has ten horns. The wild beast of the Revelation is made up of parts of the four wild beasts of Daniel, and some parts additional. Daniel sees a part of the series of world empires, beginning at his own time, and running forward; John sees the whole series, both at his own time, and running backward and forward. "The wild beast which thou sawest," says the interpreting angel, "was, and is not, and yet is." Let us beware and not make the interpretation of the emblems more obscure than the emblems themselves. It is the world past, present, and future. It *was* in the five that are fallen, it *is*

in the one head that now stands, it *is not* yet in the seventh that is to come; yet, as a complex whole, it is one and the same in all ages.

By the scar on the sixth head is denoted what the world has called the conversion of the empire to Christianity under Constantine. The sword of the Spirit smote sore at the life of a selfish world; but the beast nature revived, and the baptized paganism was but a scar. Yet the blow itself was divine. The death and resurrection of Christ, as already shown, Chapter XIX., was omnipotent in upper and in nether worlds. In Hades he proclaimed to the strong man's captives the resurrection; in the higher realm he confronted the great archangel, where he stood accusing, and by his blood cast him down, and cleansed heaven of his influence, and opened the way for man's return. And when the disciples went into all the world preaching "Jesus and the resurrection," the world was virtually slain. The ten persecutions that raged over the Roman empire are somewhat like the death agonies of a wild beast. But, as already intimated, the wound was healed, and the wild beast was a wild beast still, with only a cicatrice of a nominal Christianity on its head. That it was the same carnivorous creature was shown by the fact that it went on persecuting for opinion,

the only difference being that before it persecuted Christians, and now it persecuted pagans, and anon heretics. It was the same wild beast in either case, and it is so still.

What, then, are we to understand by the name of blasphemy written on the heads of the wild beast? As already intimated, it signifies the claim of divine honors by the successive world empires from their subjects.

Of the Titanic empire we hardly need to speak. The mythology of all nations preserves traces of the marriage of Cœlus and Terra, the sons of God and the daughters of men. A precocious civilization was developed, of which the great pyramid of Gizeh is a sublime memorial,—an empire of vast strength, opulence, scientific lore, and magnificence; so that in speaking of the civilization of the age before the second Advent, our Saviour compares it to that before the Flood. That that gigantic age of violence wrote the name of blasphemy on its brow, the Deluge was the proof.

After the Flood, Egypt was the first world empire closely connected with the great plan of redemption. Some contend that the Flood was limited, and that nations existed beyond its scope, in China, India, America, and the islands of the sea. Of these we know nothing, but certainly they were not included in the circle

of mediatorial development. Their epoch will be millennial.

In Egypt the title of the king, commonly, though incorrectly, written Pharaoh, expresses an incarnation of the sun, and is a divine title, and the winged solar disk is a divine emblem. Thus was the name of blasphemy, i.e., self-deification, written on the second head.

Assyria and Babylon came next; and here the same fact meets us. The king's palace is a temple, — the king a god; and on all his belongings, even to the trappings of his steeds, the emblems of divinity are emblazoned. Medo-Persia came next, and in the cuneiform characters of her day the same "name of blasphemy" was inscribed on the fourth head of universal empire.

Greece followed next; and though the principles of absolutism were somewhat modified by the Greek spirit of liberty, they were not essentially changed, but *σεβαστος* (sebastos, adorable) became the customary imperial title.

Rome came next; and the usual titles of imperial sovereignty were Augustus, Divus, Sebastos, and the image of the emperor was everywhere worshipped.

The divided empire of modern Europe calls itself Christendom. The old forms of idolatry have been laid aside or baptized. The king is



not directly called god, nor is incense offered to his image. But the doctrine of the divine right of kings," and the duty of passive obedience and of party fealty, really puts man in the place of God, and writes the name of blasphemy on the head of government; and this is true even under democratic auspices when "*Vox populi, vox Dei*," is the cry.

Through this historical series of world empires the invisible cosmocracy, or world rulers, energize as the soul through the members of the body, giving them a unity in diversity, and a strength in spite of decay. It is one world of pride, force, and fraud from beginning to end. In selfishly organized society, "the body politic," with court and cabinet, army and navy, the cosmocracy (or invisible world rulers) have always had an organ for the expression of themselves, as the body is an organ for the expression of the soul. By this wild beast the saints are overcome. It is a persecuting world empire, in its Pharaohs and Neros and Alvas and Claverhouses, and cruel oppressors in all ages down to the end. History is full of cruelty. It is painful reading to a heavenly minded soul. And it is in a large sense the same political life, whether ancient or modern, in Greece or Rome, Spain, Holland, France, England, or America.

Under the seventh head, the saints are to be persecuted through the so oft repeated mystic period of twelve hundred and sixty days; a period that would be to religious development what twelve hundred and sixty days would be to the life of a wild beast.

Under this divided empire the saints have been persecuted and slain in great numbers. They have also been defeated in their efforts at reform. They have not converted the world, nor conquered ignorance, intemperance, vice, crime. Look at the pictures of our great metropolitan journals. The serpent, the tiger, is as prominent there as here. Nast is as apocalyptic as John. The wild beast is a wild beast everywhere and always, and all the world wonders after him.

Yet a wild beast has its rights. A leopard is wonderfully strong, agile, and graceful. "The young lions seek their meat from God." "Dragons and all deeps praise the Lord." Leviathan is "king over all the children of pride." Despotism is better than anarchy. "Render unto Cæsar," said Jesus, "the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." We are exhorted to obey rulers, and pray for them; it is only as writing the name of deity on their heads that we die rather than yield them homage.

This vision is wonderful for its condensation of all earthly history into one complex emblem. Unsightly, ungainly, monstrous to look back upon from our heavenly seats, yet all the world now admiringly crying, "Who is like unto him? who can make war with him?" In that one emblem the student of history learns more in brief compass than in many volumes written from the human standpoint.

## CHAPTER XXII

## THE FALSE PROPHET

WE now behold a second wild beast, who rises out of the land, not out of the sea, and is described rather by what he does than by his looks. The only details by which we may conjecture his appearance are the "two horns as a Lamb." But as lambs do not have horns, we are at a loss how to see this, till we remember that "the Lamb" is a figurative title, as already shown (Chapter IV.), and wherever used throughout the visions denotes a human form. So here the two-horned wild beast is of the human form. The traits are blended, as so often happens in dreams, as in the cartoons of a skilful artist. The Lamb in a former vision (Chapter IV.) had a crown with seven horns or spikes, so this has a crown with two similar horns. It describes the headdress in both cases. This, then, is an imitation lamb; yet his lamblike traits are small and merely external. His voice betrays his real character: he "spake as a dragon." In a previous vision the dragon is called "the ac-

cuser of the brethren, who accused them day and night before God." There is where the dragon "spake." There the tones of his voice were heard. Now a similar voice with similar tones is heard. It is an accuser of the brethren on earth in human form, like that other accuser in heaven in angelic form. As the celestial accuser arrogated to himself intense holiness, and imputed to men unpardonable guilt, so this pseudo prophet, this false Christ, is the impersonation of sanctity on earth, and accuses and condemns all who resist his authority. He becomes the ally of the sea-born leopard, exerts in his presence all his power, performing before him all the miracles pertaining to the prophetic office, even, like Elijah, calling fire from heaven.

He tells them to make an image to the wild beast, by which we understand not a copy, but a complement. An image *to* the wild beast, belonging to it, associated with it, riding upon it.

Such an image let us imagine we see actually made in the vision. Gold, silver, precious stones, costly fabrics, are collected to adorn the image. Sculptors and cunning artificers are there. Men of anatomical and chemical and magical science; they are making an image of flesh and blood. It is made. It is done. It looks to the eye like a sleeping Venus, such as the classic chisel delighted to create. But it is no cold marble

statue; it is flexible, though lifeless yet; it needs but the Promethean spark to be a second Eve. They robe that form in scarlet; they adorn her with gems; they place upon her brow the mural crown of the ancient queen of heaven. The false prophet, a mitred, fleecy-robed human form, approaches and bends over her, and breathes into her nostrils the breath of life. The rosy flush of beauty glows in her cheek; the sealed eyelids unclose; the lips divide; the bosom heaves; the warm life-blood pulses through her veins. She rises. She approaches the sea-born leopard, and seats herself on his glossy back. And now her voice is heard, melodious as that of the Sirens, claiming, as queen of heaven, the homage of all mankind. Should any refuse to worship, they are given to be slain by the leopard, whom she now guides and governs. And the false prophet commands all, of all classes and conditions, to receive a mark, or charagma,  $\chi\xi\varsigma$ , on forehead and hand, without which (and here the real breaks through the emblematic) none "can either buy or sell."

Of what, then, is this double emblem significant? or say, rather, triple, for the woman seats herself on the leopard. We have already said that the wild beast of seven heads and ten horns condenses in itself volumes of meaning,

even the political history of all premillennial ages. But here are two more complete emblems contemporaneous with it, and condensing the religious history of the ages. The two-horned wild beast symbolizes the world priesthood, the woman the world church. In short, we have an exceedingly complex emblem of church and state in all ages. Under all world empires, there has been a priesthood; that priesthood has built a church, that church has ridden upon the state, guides and governs it. The symbolization is not confined to any one age or world empire, yet has its most striking fulfilment in the so-called Christian era.

The false prophet we consider as representing the clergy, whose head or chief bishop tells the nations to make the Venus image: they obey; and he breathes into her the breath of life, the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. An Italian prince, in virtue of the forged donation of Constantine, yet "the veritable inheritor of pagan rites, images, and superstitions, actually the continuator of the same worship, in the same places . . . lamb-like in profession, but dragon-like in word and act."<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to discriminate among so many and so various emblems. Yet if we consider the leopard to denote the seven universal em-

<sup>1</sup> Alford.

pires, with some special references to the last, or Christian era so-called, and the two-horned wild beast or false prophet to denote the sacerdotal persecuting power in all ages, which has co-operated with and controlled the secular, the matter is simplified. We have a general symbol of sacerdotal power, with special reference to the papacy, at whose instigation the combination of all national churches into one Catholic mother church was made.



## CHAPTER XXIII

## THE SORCERESS IMAGE

WHAT, then, is shadowed forth by the building and vivifying of the image that, as we conceive the vision, seated herself on the leopard? We answer, It symbolizes the building of a mother church by the nations of Europe, instigated by the Bishop of Rome. He said to the nations that they should make an image of universal empire, like in the spiritual realm to what the Roman Empire was in the natural world; and the nations obeyed him; and we can trace the steps of the wonderful process.

“Before A.D. 773,” says Edward Beecher,<sup>1</sup> “the Bishop of Rome did not claim universal jurisdiction, his decisions being influential, but not authoritative. Foreign bishops did not acknowledge his sovereignty, nor could he appoint to sacred office in the ten kingdoms. Until the ninth century the churches of those kingdoms chose their own pastors, or they were appointed by their own bishops. . . . But as

<sup>1</sup> “Papal Conspiracy Exposed.”

soon as the Bishop of Rome became an independent civil ruler, he set his hand to erect a universal hierarchy, not secular, but spiritual, called 'Mother Church.'

"From that day he incessantly preached to the people of Europe to construct such a universal see or bishopric. Before that point he could not do it. His object was a universal hierarchy absolved from temporal allegiance; for all Catholic bishops owe no allegiance to the governments under which they live, but to the Pope alone. He could not even begin to do this so long as he was himself a subject, owing allegiance to a civil authority. He must first be independent as a civil ruler to have a *pou sto* and fulcrum for his lever to move the world. Hence, when the old Roman Empire fell to pieces, and Latium and Rome fell to his share, the hindrance was removed (2 Thessalonians ii. 7). He began without let or hindrance to build. He began to claim authority over foreign bishops, to assert universal jurisdiction, to interfere in appointments to benefices, and erect his chair to a tribunal.

"Yet how sustain these novel pretensions? . . . He had never enjoyed such power before; how could he convince the world that he had always enjoyed it? Mosheim answers the question. The Roman bishops procured the

forgery . . . of conventions, acts of councils, epistles, and other documents, by which they might make it appear that from the earliest ages the Roman pontiffs had possessed the power they now claimed. . . . Ninety-three letters were forged, and published as genuine letters of Clement in the days of the Apostle Paul. The proceedings of a council that never was held were published. A few discerning bishops in France suspected the fraud, but were overcome by the pertinacity of the pontiffs."

"Ignorance was deep and universal. There were no newspapers and few books. Baluze says these forged letters, when produced in France by Riculf, Archbishop of Mentz, struck the minds of all, because of the names of the holy pontiffs they bore, and the new views of antiquity they exhibited. Hence a feeling arose that it was not lawful to doubt their authority."

Thus the image, the woman, the sorceress, was built; all who were introduced into the sacred office being required "to acknowledge the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church as mother and mistress of all churches, and promise a true obedience to the Roman Pontiff as to Jesus Christ."

How, then, did the false prophet breathe the breath of life into this image, this mother church? That which gives her all her power

over the imagination of the world is the supposed inspiration and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Her officials, however unholy in their lives, represent her as the organ of the Holy Ghost. This gives her a tremendous sway over the imagination and the reverence of the masses of her votaries. And this supposed inspiration or indwelling of the Holy Spirit, or rather that theology thus incarnate, has two formative elements, viz., a false character of God, and a false philosophy of nature. Jesus revealed the true character of God when he said, "I am meek and lowly in heart." But the character enthroned in the Catholic theological temple is not meek, not lowly, but proud, false, and cruel. God has been presented to Christendom as incapable of sympathy, supremely selfish, whose justice can never forgive, but must punish sin with infinite severity, either on the sinner or on the sinner's substitute.

The other main formative element of false theology is the notion of a material system necessarily depraving to the soul, — the world, nature, the family, the state, one vast, complex sin-producing machine. The apostle teaches that all things were made by Christ and for Christ, as a vehicle of redemption, — the body a citadel and shield of the soul, the temple of the Holy Spirit. But the theology of Christen-

dom has taught that the body and all its environments are sinful and sin-producing. As the logical complement of such a conception came the sacraments; a sin produced by material law may be removed by material law, — hence a world-wide traffic in spiritual commodities.

Out of this conception also grows the idea of a world of physical torment. On all the sacraments, by which alone escape from everlasting torment is possible, a price is set, and a vast commerce established, “that no man might buy nor sell” in this great soul market without a mark on brow and hand. Thus by the motives of fear and hope, infinite torment and infinite joy, it brings mankind in chains.

We do not regard the symbolization as confined to the Roman Church. It is essentially the same superstition that has existed in all the successive world empires. It has its fulfilment in the Greek, Armenian, and other Oriental churches, as well as in the Latin; and to some extent in the great nationalized hierarchies and sectarian organizations of modern times, just so far as they retain her radical Gnostic philosophy unreformed, and breathe her intolerant persecuting spirit. Protestant theology has by no means cast out all Romish leaven. Like mother, like daughters. The despotic character of God still sits in the thought-temple. Hereditary

depravity, imputed guilt, and a depraving material system are not disavowed. The great prophetic problems of eschatology are in a large measure ignored, or replaced by the dreams of evolutionary philosophy. The being, history, and judgment of the prince of this world are caricatured or scornfully derided. Therefore the great sorceress, kept in countenance by her daughters, sits upon her fawning leopard, saying, "I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow."

## CHAPTER XXIV

## CHARAGMA

Let him that hath understanding count the number of the wild beast, for it is the number of man, and his number is  $\chi\xi\sigma'$ . — REVELATION xiii. 16-18.

IN former chapters we have shown the dragon to be the emblem of invisible powers in all ages; the wild beast the emblem of visible despotism in seven successive world empires; the false prophet and woman the emblems of the corrupt clergy and church in all ages, — the world, in brief, in its successive empires, visible and invisible, civil and ecclesiastical (1 John ii. 15, 16).

These make war on “the saints,” a real, unfigurative, suffering minority, yet sealed with the seal of God in their forehead, this seal, (perhaps the tetragrammaton, יהוה), designating them as sons, with the divine character impressed on them.

On the other hand, the worshippers of the wild beast also receive a mark on forehead or hand, consisting of three Greek letters,  $\chi\xi\sigma'$ . Such

was the appearance to the seer's eye. The persecuted, with their father's name on them, the persecutors, with "the name of the wild beast," or "the number of his name," or "the number of man," without which "none can buy or sell." To count that name demands wisdom and understanding. This may mean that it is very obscure, and to understand it demands great wisdom; or it may mean that it is so simple that any one who has any true wisdom at all can compute or understand it. Nor would due warning be lacking of its import. There would be those under every one of the seven great world empires, especially the last, who would proclaim, as though an angel flew through the sky, the awful consequences of idolatry. "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." Substantially this warning, it is implied, has been given under all the great world empires; thus (Deuteronomy xxix. 18-21), if any man turn away from the Lord to serve other Gods, "the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him." But it seems to be implied that under the last



world-empire this awful warning would be given with startling emphasis. God's messengers would warn the persecuting world of his wrath against them, and his pity for their victims.

After such tremendous warnings, it cannot be true that we cannot "count" that number, or know whether we are receiving it. It is certain that he who has any true wisdom, a babe in divine knowledge, may solve this seeming enigma, and understand that the divine wrath is intense against idolatry in all its forms, and God's sympathy with his martyred saints equally tender and intense. On every cruel persecutor, from highest to lowest, his eye saw what was invisible to man, the charagma or sign-manual of an idolatrous world. And how, then, are those three Greek letters such a sign-manual? We answer, by regarding them not as literal numbers, but as initials of some title, phrase, or sentence. If this were a literal number, there would not be so much doubt about their meaning. The only certainty thus far on that hypothesis is that we do not know the true interpretation.

The most common solution has been the word Lateinos, the letters of which, added together, make 666. Alford favors this in his notes on the Apocalypse, but subsequently says,

in his prolegomena, "Even while I print my note in favor of the Lateinos of Irenæus, I feel almost disposed to withdraw it. It is beyond question the best solution that has been given, but that it is not the solution I have a persuasion almost amounting to certainty."

This persuasion we share. If Alford could not defend this explanation, no one can. We rule out, therefore, the literal arithmetical method altogether. We look in another direction. The three Greek letters,  $\chi\xi\sigma'$ , are not to be taken as numerals. "Counting" is not to be understood literally. This is one of the few "figurative" expressions in the Apocalypse. It is not a "sum" in simple addition. It is not a "name," literally, of a particular man or nation. What, then, is it? We answer, it is an inscription; a sentence or title denoted by initials. This use of initials, so common at the present day, was widely prevalent in past ages, in inscriptions on coins, on public buildings, and on standards. On the Roman standard, for example, was inscribed S. P. Q. R., "Senatus Populusque Romanus." On the labarum, or banner, of Constantine, I. H. S., which may read in either of two ways, "In hoc Signo," or  $\text{I}\eta\sigma\upsilon\sigma\upsilon\varsigma\ \text{H}\mu\omega\upsilon\upsilon\ \Sigma\omega\tau\eta\rho\upsilon$ , "Jesus our Saviour."

On the walls of the Catacombs in which the

early Christians took refuge were engraved various devices, — a lamp, an olive branch, a fish, etc. The latter emblem was, perhaps, most curious and instructive. The word fish, ἰχθύς, contains the initials of the following sentence, Ἰησοῦς Χριστός Θεοῦ Υἱός Σωτήρ, “Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Saviour.” This was the earliest confession of faith.

The early Christians also had much to say about “the wood,” i.e., the cross; as by the “wood,” ξύλω, paradise was lost, so by the “wood,” ξύλω, paradise was regained. It is several times used in the New Testament for a cross, Acts v. 30; x. 39, etc. That χ stands for Χριστός is seen at a glance. That ξ stands for ξύλω is easily perceptible. There remains σ’, which we can hardly err in thinking stands for some derivative of σταυρω, “to crucify.”

It would be entirely in keeping with Scripture and with all ancient habits of thought for the visionary eye to see branded on the brow of persecutors, Χριστόν ξύλω σταυρόων, or, σταυρῶσας, “He who crucifies Christ on the Cross.” This would indeed apply to the Latin race, but not to them exclusively. It would apply to Israel as well; but more than that, it would apply to the human race, being figuratively the “name” and “number” and charagma of man; for it was just sinful, selfish, fallen human nature

that crucified Christ on the cross, and crucifies him afresh in the house of his friends.

Yet it is implied that those who bore this "mark" received it willingly, and those who impressed it on others did not "count" or interpret it aright. Like the mark on Cain, it was in some sort a temporary protection to those who received it, enabling them to buy and sell.

It was only those who had true wisdom who perceived the deep significance of this awful heraldry, and chose rather to die than to receive it.

## CHAPTER XXV

## THE FIRST-FRUITS

These were redeemed from among men, the first fruits unto God and the Lamb. — REVELATION xiv. 4.

IN preceding visions, the world seems given up to the dominion of evil; civil and ecclesiastical despotisms triumph; the saints are overcome. In visions that follow, we are to behold the divine wrath poured out, and the final overthrow of great Babylon. Lest, under the continued pressure of scenes so sombre, the mind should faint, “the action of the grand moving panorama,” to use the language of another, “is stayed, and an episode thrown in to show the end of these things.” The mind flashes forward a moment to the far future, and looks back on time. We ascend with him of Patmos, and hear the new song, and then the symbolic panorama moves on again, with the tragedies of earthly history.

We are standing on the empyreal plain. Before us rises Jerusalem, the heavenly metropolis. Not the earthly, which is in bondage, but the

heavenly, which is free, the mother of us all. On Mount Zion, the sunny mount, we behold "the Lamb," the glorified man, Christ Jesus, standing with one hundred and forty-four thousand, his counterparts, or "symmorphs" (Philippians iii. 21), as bright, as glorious as he, each with the Father's name sealed upon his brow.

And here, as in so many other instances, the real pierces through the symbolic. "These were redeemed from among men, the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb." As the first sheaf before harvest, choicest of the wheat, was brought to the temple, and waved by the high priest to the four points of the compass, so these, offered by Christ to the view of the heavenly universe, are the choicest trophies of redemption; "for in their mouth was no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God," — not literally virgins, but spiritually undefiled by idolatry; not literally Jews, but those of whom the sealed in the twelve tribes would be the fit emblem; not precisely one hundred and forty-four thousand, but a somewhat proportionate minority of the different nations of mankind; not of one particular age, but of all the ages of the seven successive world empires, the first fruits of that redeeming work for which this world was built. Take one hundred and forty-four thousand out of the twelve tribes

of Israel in the desert, and you have the main body still on the march to Canaan. So, out of all the nations at the dawn of the millennium, this proportionate minority, having been sealed, are found on Mount Zion, leaving the main body still on the march. The field is the world. This is not the harvest, but its prelude, its anticipative festival. The millennium is to be a grand harvest day of at least ten centuries, in which the gospel uncorrupt, unthwarted, will reveal all its reserved forces, and accomplish its full design; and the world field, all wheat, no tares, be garnered, the universe shouting the harvest home.

Before that harvest can commence, Christ must raise from the dead, and present in the upper temple his choicest, earliest-ripened, most select trophies, a sheaf of joy before God. They have stood against world-majorities; they have drunk their Master's cup; they have suffered more, been tempted more, and fought a harder battle than those can do in the good time coming.

Why should they not be distinguished as elect to the highest station in the universe, joint-heirs with Christ, to sit enthroned with him? God is infinite meekness, truth, and love; and his name and character are stamped on their brow. As we gaze they burst into

song, striking their grand harps of gold. Heard you ever a grand harp played by a skilful performer? It is powerful, yet sweet. It seems as if the soul of the player, through the finger, elicited the soul of the instrument. But heard mortal ear ever a hundred grand harps played in perfect unison?— a thousand?— on some marble-crowned earthly acropolis?— twelve thousand?— no?

What, then, on those gleaming heights of glory to hear that grand army of harpers, one hundred and forty-four thousand! Their white tents glisten on Acra and Zion, Moriah and Bezetha, and across the Kedron, filling all valleys, and clothing the steeps of Olivet, the camp of the Lord of Hosts! The very mountain trembles at the sound. It is the roar of the whirlwind; it is the deep detonation of Niagara; it is the long, reverberating roll of tropical thunder, peal upon peal, all around the wide horizon, yet again soft, tender, passion-fraught, sweet.

“Loud is the song, the heavenly plain  
Is shaken by the heavenly strain,  
And dying echoes floating far  
Draw music from each chiming star.”

But this is not the song of angels, however sweet, however grand theirs might be; this is a new song, never before heard on earth or in



heaven! It is a grand oratorio just composed by some glorified Mozart or Mendelssohn, an anthem outrivalling Beethoven's "Hallelujah to the Father, worlds unborn shall sing his glory!" This song is not only new, but sweet, tender, joyful, a joy only pardoned sinners can know.

"Tears of such pure and deep delight,  
Ye angels, never dimm'd your sight!"

That song only the redeemed of the first resurrection, the first-fruits before the millennial harvest, can learn. But to them it is taught by the Spirit as they go singing and making melody in their hearts home to Zion, to the Father's house of many mansions. Yes, the meanest child of glory, the captive, the outcast, the martyr, can learn a song the angels cannot!

"For I amid your choirs shall shine,  
And all your knowledge shall be mine;  
Ye on your harps must lean to hear  
A secret chord that mine will bear!"

Redeeming love! O ecstasy! O bliss! Sin not only forgiven, but annihilated; obliterated by waters more potent than Lethe, more absolute than oblivion.

"By the water and the blood,  
From His side the healing flood!"

Yes, the stain of that unfaithfulness to the soul's husband and Lord, of which unchastity

is the too faint emblem, that to remember which would unheaven heaven; that stain the blood of Jesus can cover, can annihilate, shall expel from existence as if it had not been; and in the make-up of that new-born soul, in heavenly sonship, the memory of that grief shall be left out; sunk as in the depths of the sea; blotted out forever; and the virgin soul go spotless, shining and chiming on in purity, and in peace, and in power forever!

I have heard oratorios in the great cathedrals of Europe, mighty combinations of voice and instrument; in colossal jubilees, when one seemed floating like a mote in sunbeams in a sea of sound; I have heard "The Messiah" in such wise, but angels could learn that. But here is a theme, here a style of composition and execution, no celestial race, no "princedom, virtues, powers," could learn, but exiled man redeemed, restored, and glorified in his own native sphere. Thus in some sacred Sabbath hour, we pilgrims of time endeavor to see with the mental eye what John saw, and hear what he heard. Taking his brief and childlike words, we endeavor to reproduce the vision as if real. Does any one say we exaggerate? that such conceptions are the play of fancy, the creations of the poet's ideality? Rather let us say

that our loftiest, most ideal imaginings fall far short of the reality. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived," the melodies, the harmonies, the anthems, the oratorios, of that world which we are rapidly nearing. The veil grows thin. As the sounds this side grow faint, those the other side are almost audible, ready to burst upon us; no discord there, no babel din, no sounds of sorrow and distress, but voices of friendship and holy love and adoration.

"Behold! behold! the land is nearing,  
Where the wild sea-storm's rage is o'er;  
Hark, how the heavenly hosts are cheering,  
See in what throngs they range the shore.

Away! away! leave all for glory,  
Thy name is graven on the throne;  
Thy home is in that world of glory,  
Where thy Redeemer reigns alone."

## CHAPTER XXVI

## PRELUDE TO THE VIALS

AFTER the episode of the one hundred and forty-four thousand harpers, the view returns to darker, more painful scenes. What is to be the fate of those great hostile combinations of civil and sacerdotal despotism? Is the leopard to change his spots, the false prophet to become lamblike, the idolatress a chaste bride? Evidently not. The nations are not left unwarned of their approaching judgment. Three successive angels cleave the air over their heads, and endeavor to excite their attention. The first summons the nations to worship God, and proclaims the near approach of the millennial judgment: "The hour of his judgment is come!" The second predicts the speedy downfall of Babylon. It is the first time that symbolic title has been used. It is afterwards identified with the sorceress, or woman sitting on the leopard. There is something startlingly sudden and impressive in the cry, *ἐπεσεν ἐπεσε βαβυλῶν ἡ μεγάλη*, "Fallen, fallen, Babylon, the great!" using the past tense, after the manner of prophets, to de-

note the nearness and certainty of the event ; “because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” And when the nations seem not to heed these warnings, a third angel proclaims that those who worship the wild beast and his rider, and receive the Christ-crucifying mark,  $\chi\epsilon\sigma'$ , shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God. Thus the wrath of earth is contrasted with the wrath of heaven ; the wrath of pride, fraud, and cruelty set against the wrath of meekness, truth, and love. By all this it is shown that previous to the downfall of the great anti-Christian systems of church and state, the nations shall have a threefold, ample warning, as impressive as if three angels should fly above their heads and proclaim it.

Such warnings are implied under all the sevenfold world empires, but with special emphasis under the later. The first warning may be that of the reformers. They proclaimed the everlasting gospel afresh, after centuries of corruption, summoning men to worship God only, and declaring the second Advent to be at hand. Luther taught that the sixth thousand years of the world's duration was more than half gone. That would bring the end about A.D. 2000 if the full time should be allowed to run out ; but, from the words of Christ, he expected that the days would be shortened.

Melanchthon said, "We are not far from the end." Most German and English reformers thought the Advent would be about A.D. 1866.

Again the reformers identified the corrupt, idolatrous, persecuting church of Rome as Babylon, and predicted her speedy downfall; and that cry has continued to echo through the sky, and is sounding yet. So with the third great warning. The reformers denounced against the corrupt church the divine indignation. The church retaliated. There were threats of eternal perdition on both sides. "The wine of the wrath of her fornication" denotes the threats of endless material torment by which Rome and her daughters have terrorized, debased, and maddened the nations; "the wine of the wrath of God," the intense holy displeasure of meekness, truth, and love, against pride, falsehood, and cruelty, a wrath purely spiritual and necessary. Babylon has condemned to eternal fire all who reject her authority, however moral and Christ-like their lives. Protestants have retorted that all receiving the mark of Christ-crucifying intolerance should drink the unmixed wrath of God. There would be on either side an earnest appeal to future retributions; and there has been, is, and will be increasingly to the end. Omnipotence cannot make a selfish, proud, perfidious, cruel soul happy, and would not if it

could. Place such a soul in heaven, "in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb," and the contact of infinite truth, meekness, and love would be like consuming fire. And if that soul were fixed in character, and continued to exist forever, it must continue to suffer, and the smoke of its torment would ascend up forever.

It seems to be implied by these three angel heralds, that before the millennium this whole subject of future eternal retribution will be studied anew with absorbing interest; that efforts will be made to detect mistakes, and present the character of God in its true light, and to show what the necessary effect of the full revelation of his righteous judgment on the tragedies of time must be, by the necessary laws of mind. And this process has been going on, and must continue increasingly until the end. And whereas, during the era of persecution those who refuse the Christ-crucifying mark, and are slain, are by Babylon pronounced accursed, we hear the Spirit pronounce them blessed; however tragic their fate, they "die in the Lord;" they "rest from their labors, and their works follow them." Such men never know on earth the good they do, and the influence they exert; despotism seems to crush them. They seem wasted, thrown away, their lives a failure; but they find out as they pass

behind the veil that nothing good is wasted or lost, and that they have not lived in vain.

“ For God has marked each sorrowing day,  
And numbered every secret tear,  
And heaven’s long age of bliss shall pay  
For all his children suffer here.”

And now, to signalize this pre-millennial era, two visions are thrown in by way of prelude, viz., the harvest and the vintage, one emblematic of mercy, the other of judgment. The thrusting in the sickle, and reaping the harvest of the earth, symbolize a great revival period that should precede the Advent. “The field-preaching of Wesley and Whitefield in 1739,” says Isaac Taylor, “was the event whence the epoch now current must date its commencement.”

This was one specimen. Jonathan Edwards thrust in the sickle, Gilbert Tennent, and in our own day Mr. Finney, Mr. Moody, and a host of other “laborers.” In the midst of wars and rumors of wars, in spite of controversies and declensions, and apparent eclipses of faith, there should be, and there have been, and are, Pentecostal outpourings of the Spirit, and ingatherings of the ripened grain.

But side by side with the harvest, or following close upon it, is the vintage. The “clusters of the vine of the earth” (vast and compre-



hensive image!) are trodden in the wine-press, and "the blood of the grape" gushes forth in waves, multitudinous, incarnadine. All the land is deluged, and the horsemen are swimming in the red tide up to the horses' bridles.

Even in our age of missions and of revivals, controversies should go on, and battles be fought with incredible destructiveness, as in the Seven Years' War, the campaigns of Napoleon, the Franco-German War, and the War of the Rebellion in our own land.

The two visions, harvest and vintage, are exceeding brief, but amazingly expressive. There are no details of time, place, or manner, but a grand omen of impending change.

Human affairs, science, literature, business, diplomacy, reform, evangelism, missions, — all will go on together, as grain grows in the summer harvest-field, or as the clusters ripen ruddy on the vine. To man it may seem a wild and deafening chaos, to God the wide uproar be hushed as the summer's noon upon the bending grain or laden vines.

It is the same sun that ripens the wheat for the garner, and the clusters for the wine-press. Progress is always double, — development of good, counter development of evil. There will be progress and regress, gradualism and catastrophism. The divine reserve, so mysterious to

faith, so painful to a travailing universe, ends in the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. The nature of divine justice as purifying and protective, as well as punitive, is made manifest. The sincerity, meekness, patience, and long-suffering of the Eternal are fully revealed in contrast to the false and cruel justice of him who so long sat in the thought-temple of humanity, "showing himself as God;" and then it is that the adoring cry goes up, "Thou only art holy! Just and true are thy ways! Thy judgments are made manifest."

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## CHAPTER XXVII

## SONG OF MOSES AND OF THE LAMB

And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire, and them that had gotten the victory over the wild 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. — REVELATION XV. 2.

WE identify these harpers with the one hundred and forty-four thousand on Mount Zion of chapter xiv. 1, and with the sealed ones of chapter vii. 4. It is the same emblem, varied in details. First we see them sealed out of the twelve tribes; next they are encamped on Mount Zion; here they stand on the shore of the glassy, flame-lit sea. Hereafter we shall recognize them as the beloved city. Everywhere the square, or some multiple of twelve.

The song is like that sung by Israel after passing through the Red Sea. The two songs are one in idea: they strike the same grand chords in the same sublime oratorio of redemption, though this on a higher plane, with more expressive symbolization. Let us call up the

scene of Moses' song of triumph, and compare this therewith.

The passage of the Red Sea, as described in Exodus, is full of sublimity. It was in the night when the fugitive tribes were caught as in a net, the desert on one side, the sea in front, the thunder of battle in the rear. The prophet's rod is stretched out over the sea, the waves divide, the tribes march through, Pharaoh coming up behind. On they march between emerald walls, the pillar of fire and cloud illuminating their road, but frowning darkly backward on the pursuing host. The morning watch draws nigh. The Lord is looking through the pillar of fire and cloud, and there is trouble in the Egyptian army. "Let us flee!" is the cry, "for the Lord fighteth for them!"

Too late! The last son of the covenant has reached the shore; again the prophet's rod is stretched out over the sea, "and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared." All night long those waters had gleamed like "a sea of glass mingled with fire," as the rays of the Shekinah flame shone upon them. Now they blaze in the splendors of the rising sun, and Israel beholds the Egyptians dead upon the shore. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel that song of which this in the vision is the repetition on the antitypical

plane, for "all these things happened unto them for types," says the apostle.

"Who is like unto thee, O Lord, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"

Let us then reproduce the vision. Let us imagine the atmosphere itself, above which the representation of heaven is located, to be the crystal sea. To angel senses the air is indeed a sea; and its mighty waves and tides and currents bathe the earth, or wreck it with tornadoes. From its surface above the region of storms, angels look down on earth's animal and vegetable tribes, the fauna and flora of a translucent ocean. Out of the level bosom of that serene and vitreous expanse arise the heights and hills of the heavenly Canaan. In its mirror surface are reflected the cherubic throne, and crowned elders, and shining angel forms innumerable. Across it play the dazzling beams of an eternal morning. On the diamond detritus of the beach of this fire-fraught sea, we behold those whose exodus out of spiritual Egypt has just been consummated. They sing as Israel sang. Theirs is the song of Moses and the Lamb. That was type, this is reality. The song of Moses is, "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth thy people which thou hast redeemed, thou hast guided them unto thy holy habitation."

But this of the one hundred and forty-four thousand harpers is the song of the Lamb. They chant a greater, grander rescue, to a higher, nobler birthright, out of a deeper bondage, and by greater judgments upon a mightier oppressor. These one hundred and forty-four thousand are they that have gotten the victory over the wild beast and his sorceress image. They have stood against world majorities in all past times. The wild beast does not exist during the millennium. Those who live in the millennium cannot gain victories over what does not exist. Victories they may gain, but not this victory. These one hundred and forty-four thousand are premillennial, from the nature of the case. They are the veterans of the age-long conflict, covered all over with scars. On their standards are inscribed the battlefields of history, — on the Nile, the Euphrates, the Tigris; in the campaigns of Persia, Greece, and Rome. Hence their song speaks of the “all nations” who people the millennial earth as coming to worship, because the victims of past epochs are victors of this, reigning with Christ, while the wild beast and all despoticisms are smitten down under the wrath of God. And what is the key-note of their song, the fundamental chord of their anthem? It is the greatness and marvellousness of God’s

works, united to the justice and truth of his ways. "Thou only art holy! Thy judgments are made manifest!" Every one of those songsters, when incarnate, was sore tried. Even Jesus on the cross cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" So at times his members have cried, when tasting his cup, and "made conformable to his death." Their faith clung to him. Their hearts indorsed him. But how to defend him? How to justify his ways to man? How to write the great poem of the universe? This they despaired of. But now they see, and the universe sees, and the irrepressible anthem rolls and peals and thunders, "Thou only art holy! Just and true are thy ways! Thy judgments are made manifest!"

And as they chant, they are looking back upon the scenes of time. They seem to see the angels with the vials coming forth. It is all written in that scroll Christ has unsealed. It is long past, but he is bringing it up to their memory as present. It is "long, long ago;" it preceded and accompanied their resurrection and exaltation; but he makes it live before their eyes, as if now first taking place. In those vials is filled up the wrath of God. In no other world or later age will there, can there, be a fuller expression of his emotions in view of the sufferings of his joint heirs.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

## FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD VIALS

THE seven vials are cumulative, each adding to the effect of the preceding. Together they embrace in their effects, earth, sea, rivers, and fountains, the sun, the throne of the wild beast, the Euphrates, and the air, giving an impression of comprehensiveness and universality. The earth is usually the symbol of permanent society; the sea, of population; rivers and fountains, of the rising generation; the air, of invisible orders; the sun, of God; and Euphrates, the great world stream, or influx, on which stands the Babylon of civil and ecclesiastical despotism. Every one of these analogies could be verified by the formula  $a : b :: x : y$ , but it is scarcely necessary; we can carry that "rule of three" in the mind, and measure as we go.

We first endeavor to see the visions. From the empyreal plane we look down upon the earth out-spread below, and see the wild beast enthroned, and peoples nations, kindreds, and



tongues, admiring and worshipping, and receiving his Christ-crucifying mark. The warning voices of the three angels are sounding above them, but in vain. Out of the temple in heaven, now appear seven angels clothed in pure white linen, having their breasts girded with golden girdles. As they enter the circle about the cherubic throne, they receive from one of the living ones (ζώων) golden vials full of the wrath of God; and the temple is filled with Shekinah cloud and fire, out of the midst of which a great voice is heard, —

“Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth!”

The first vial is poured out upon the earth, and the idolatrous worshippers are smitten with a grievous sore. It is as if a malaria arose from the ground, producing an epidemic ulceration of the body. They seem to be suffering, but do not desist from their idolatrous worship.

The second vial falls upon the sea, and changes the blue Mediterranean wave into the dark gore of the slain, a most virulent and incurable poison. But still the idolatrous worship goes on.

The third libation now smites the rivers and fountains. These are not, like the sea, made dark and deadly, but changed to life-blood, warm and flowing. The complicate river sys-

tem of the continent is seen like a mazy network of scarlet threads and veins, winding their way toward the deep. Nor does this arrest the nations in their false worship.

Postponing the consideration of the other vials, we pause to inquire into the meaning of these, by the laws of analogy. Evidently a painful mental excitement is here shadowed forth, of which bodily ulceration would be the natural emblem. In common language, we speak of persons feeling sore when they are offended and grieved. And the formula  $a : b :: x : y$ , when filled out, would read, as ulceration of the body produced by disease latent in the system, so the soreness of the popular mind from corruptions in the body politic. And as this sore seemed to be generated by an exhalation from the earth, so the mental ulceration is generated from unhealthy influences springing from the settled institutions of society.

Men have a grievance. The masses feel themselves robbed and spoiled. They are crushed by toil, taxation, poverty. Convinced of the sins of the upper classes, forgetful of their own, they are inflamed with resentment. The surface of society becomes ulcerated, and this prepares the way for revolution.

Hence the next vial on the sea, changing it, as already described, produces an emblem

of revolutionary destructiveness. Revolutions would break out here and there, now in this nation, now in that, with more or less destructiveness according to circumstances, but with evident tendency to Mirabeau's "*culbute générale*," general overturn.

The third vial might well presage a new military character in the rising generation. Man is indeed, and always has been, of combative temper; but this emblem might indicate an unprecedented manifestation of this temper, as if a generation of warrior souls had come in upon the stage, making life one vast camp, and training the young in military science as never before.

Such being the analogies, we inquire how far can we verify them in history. The wrath here executed is that previously announced by the three angels. It is that wrath which has ever been revealed from heaven, under all successive world empires, executed by the agency of men left to themselves. Let it be supposed that the angel warnings of harvest and vintage, and fall of Babylon, have special reference to the general period from the Reformation to the millennium; then the vials might be supposed to have a special reference to that period.

Taking the peace of Westphalia, in 1648, for the close of the Reformation, we may perhaps

consider the English revolution, when Charles I. was beheaded, in 1649, as earliest and mildest specimen of the revolutionary, or vial, era. And we may perhaps regard the coronation of William and Mary in 1688, the American Revolution in 1776, and the late War of the Rebellion, as subsequent specimens, in English history, of the general principles of that era. But it is in Catholic nations that the exemplification of those principles will naturally be most vivid,—nations who have most conspicuously worn the Christ-crucifying mark,  $\chi\xi\sigma'$ , and from which those refusing the mark have been most thoroughly exterminated by fire and sword. Of these France stands most conspicuous, by her St. Bartholomew massacre, and her crusades against the Huguenots, Albigenses, and Vaudois, and by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; and Spain by her Philips, her Alvas, and her unspeakable atrocities in the Netherlands.

But the vials are of broader scope than to be confined to one nation, or to a single age or generation. We may say that, by position, by genius, and by history, France was adapted to be a representative specimen, the abscess, as it were, of the European body politic, and as such we may assign her a prominent place in our studies; but we are not to forget

that it is but a specimen of principles that are of world-wide application.

From no nation was the conservative element of true Christian faith and life more thoroughly eradicated than from France, by exile, by persecution, and by massacre. In no nation were social corruptions deeper, abuses heavier or longer continued. Speaking of the regency preceding the reign of Louis XV., Sir Walter Scott declares it "marked with infamy deep enough to have called down, in an age of miracles, an immediate judgment from heaven; and crimes which the worst of the Roman emperors would have at least hidden in his solitary isle of Capræa, were acted as publicly as if men had no eyes, and God no thunderbolts."

Carlyle, writing of France in 1774, speaks in a similar strain: "From a France smitten with plague after plague, and lying now in shame and pain, with a harlot's foot on her neck, what prayer can come? Those lank scarecrows that prowl hunger-stricken through all the highways and byways of French existence, will they pray?" Of the nobles, he says, "As for their debauchery and depravity, it is perhaps unexampled since the days of Tiberius and Commodus. . . . Of the working people in France, whom we call the masses, there are from twenty to twenty-five millions. Dreary, languid, do

these struggle in their remoteness, — their hearth cheerless, their diet thin, — a dumb generation, their voice only an inarticulate cry, with none to plead their cause before the king's council or the world's forum." The same writer quotes from a letter of Mirabeau *père* to a court lady of those times, describing a gathering of people at a public festival, where the dance is interrupted by a scuffle: "Frightful men, or frightful wild animals rather, clad in jupes of coarse woollen, with large leather girdles studded with copper nails; of gigantic stature, heightened by wooden clogs, rising on tiptoe to see the fight, tramping time to it, their faces haggard and covered with long greasy hair, the countenance distorted with cruel laugh and a sort of ferocious impatience. And these people pay the taxes! And now you want further to take their salt from them! And you know not what it is you are stripping barer, or, as you call it, *governing*; and what, by the spirt of your pen in its cold, dastard indifference, you fancy you can always starve with impunity, — always till the catastrophe come! Ah, Madame, such government, stumbling blindly along, will end at last in a general overturn<sup>1</sup> (*culbute générale*)."

What a picture of twenty-five millions, and

<sup>1</sup> "French Revolution," vol. i., chap. ii.

they only a specimen of the masses of so-called Christendom! What ages of heartless selfishness and cruelty in church and state must have been necessary to bring that gay, intelligent, brilliant nation, no more destructive naturally than the average, to such an ulcerating delirium! The vial smote. "Up rose those haggard millions, and the flames of seventy châteaux in two provinces alone reddened the nightly sky. The conflagration spread all over France. Fero­city, atrocity, hunger, and revenge made strange work. High-bred seigneurs, with their delicate women and little children, fled half-naked, glad to escape the flames, and even worse."<sup>1</sup>

Let us look in upon the streets of Paris awhile, during the celebrated hundred hours of September, 1792. "There are seven prisons in Paris full of aristocrats, and there are seventy times seven patriot hearts in a state of frenzy. Before these sudden courts of wild justice, raging tumult howling without, a name is called, — the bolts jingle, a prisoner is there.

"A few questions are put. Swiftly the sudden jury decides. Royalist plotter or not? If not, he is let out into the street, with the password, '*Vive la nation!*' and escapes. If, as is most probable, he is, then let him out into

<sup>1</sup> "French Revolution," vol. i., chap. iii.

the street with the password, '*A la Force!*' The doomed man is enlarged at the outer gate into a howling sea, under an arch of wild sabres, axes, and pikes, and sinks, hewn asunder. And another sinks, and another; and there forms a piled heap of corpses, and the kennels begin to run red. Fancy the yells of these men, and the crueller shrieks of the women, — for there are women too, — their faces of sweat and blood, and a fellow-mortal hurled naked into it all! Brave, gray-haired veterans, who have seen fields of battle without fear, now quail in horror, and clasp each other spasmodically, and hang back, crying, '*Merci, messieurs! ah, merci!*' But there was no mercy; man after man is cut down. . . . A vast, sombre-faced multitude look on in dull approval, or dull recognition that it is necessity."<sup>1</sup>

Do we ask how could human beings be so cruel? Because for twelve hundred and sixty years they had been taught by the leopard-borne harlot and the false prophet that God would do crueller things than these, not for a hundred hours, but for all eternity. In these hundred hours, a thousand and eighty-nine, of whom two hundred were priests, met this terrible death. Was not this worthy to be symbolized by changing the sea to the blood of a

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle's "French Revolution," vol. ii., chap. iv.



corpse? Yet from that hour that destructiveness imbued the social sea. The king was slain. The beautiful Queen Marie Antoinette followed him to the guillotine. Then, by a singular fatality, the vengeance which first wreaked itself on the upper classes descended to classes of lower rank. The Constitutionalists slew the king and nobles; the Girondists slew the Constitutionalists; the Dantonists slew the Girondists; the Sans Culottes slew the Dantonists; and finally Robespierre went to the guillotine, and Napoleon swept the mob with grape-shot.

During this reign of terror, the nation seemed an incarnation of destructiveness. From Saumur to Nantes, a distance of sixty miles, the Loire was for weeks red with human blood. Says Alison, "Such accumulated horrors annihilated all the charities and the intercourse of life. The farmers trembled to bring their fruits to market; the shopkeepers, to expose them for sale. The richest quarters of the town were deserted. No equipages or crowds of passengers were to be seen on the streets. Passengers hesitated to address their most intimate friends on meeting. Calamity had made men suspicious of those they loved most. Every one assumed the coarsest dress and most squalid appearance. Night brought no diminution of

anxiety. Every family early assembled its members; with trembling looks they gazed around the room, fearful that the very walls might harbor traitors." Such was the reign of terror, when the sea became as the blood of a dead man.

The natural operation of the Revolution was to plunge the Republic into war with almost every other nation in Europe. In 1793 the armies of England, Prussia, Spain, and Austria seemed on the point of over-running her territory all around the horizon. In two years the Republic defeated them all. The celebrated conscription system was the secret, or method, of her triumph. The fundamental principle of that system was, every citizen is born a soldier, and is obliged to serve in the army from sixteen years of age to forty; no excuse, no delay, no substitution; instant, literal compliance was the law; the sole reward of success, promotion; the sole penalty of failure, death. It seemed as though a generation of martial spirits were sent in upon the stage. "The youth of France," says Sir Walter Scott, "adopted the habits necessary for a soldier with singular facility; the nation became one vast camp. . . . A race of generals arose the world never saw equalled; Pichegru, Moreau, Murat, Joubert, Macdonald, Masséna, Berthier, Augereau,

Lannes, Ney, Napoleon. The art of war was revolutionized. Only the fewest motions, the simplest manœuvres, were retained. The number of light troops increased, flying artillery invented, heavy baggage-trains dispensed with,—armies subsisted by *la maraud*. Napoleon taught the world the value of time and the worthlessness of life. Young conscripts were “*chair à canon*,” food for cannon, flesh for the wild beast, as they were hurled, column after column, on the enemy’s line, till it broke, and victory was won. Napoleon was called by his foes a general at the rate of ten thousand men a day. “It is certain,” says Sir Walter, “that in his various campaigns not less than a million conscripts were consumed.” The flowing of these conscripts toward the army is strikingly suggestive of fountains and rivulets of blood.

“The little bands of conscripts, setting off from their homes on the frontier, met at places assigned, and, as their numbers increased by each successive junction, were formed into companies, next into battalions, and last into regiments. When they joined the army, these temporary combinations were laid aside, and the conscripts distributed to the old regiments.”

So on mountain heights drop mingles with drop, and forms a tiny thread; threads meeting form rivulets; rivulets unite to make a stream,

streams a river; and the river is lost, with all its drops, in the sea. But the drops were scarlet drops, — the warm young blood of twenty-five millions, fountains of the popular deep. Instinctively the historian towards the last, when the conscription began to fail to raise recruits, uses the figure of bleeding. “The lancet had been so often used that blood no longer followed it so readily. . . . Drained of blood, France fainted, and could no longer repel the banded nations whom England subsidized to pour in floods across her border. . . . While Bonaparte, like a tiger hemmed in by hounds and hunters, now menaced one of his foes, now sprung furiously upon another, the scene of war was laid waste in the most merciless manner. . . . The terrors of battle, fire, famine, and slaughter extended into the most remote and sequestered districts. The woods afforded no concealment, the churches no sanctuary, the grave no cover to the relics of mortality.”

In a greater or less degree the conscription exists still throughout Christendom. Every birth must be registered; every male is born a soldier, and must serve a specified time in the army. Nor has the rising generation lost its revolutionary instinct; nor have causes of irritation ceased to operate. The burdens of taxation increase by armies and armaments by

land and sea, and by an enormous war-debt. The remedy aggravates the disease, and the cycle of judgment slowly but surely revolves, — taxation, discontent, revolution, war, debt; taxation, discontent, revolution, war, debt; every cycle increasing the intensity of the causes, and heralding some greater crisis of anarchy and “*culbute générale*.” Thus the history of France this century is a history of revolutions. Reign of Terror, 1792; Empire, 1804; Bourbons, 1814; Louis Philippe, 1830; Republic, 1848; Coup d’État, 1851; Franco-German War and Siege of Paris, 1870, — seven revolutions in seventy years; a revolution every ten years. It is a revolutionary era; and there is no certainty how long peace may last, or what the end may be.

We take France as a specimen, but the causes are operative in all nations. The vials are poured out, not on one nation or locality, but on all nations, on the entire corrupt civilized world. It might be thought China and Japan would sleep on forever, but the heavy guns of their ironclads have scarce ceased to thunder. It might be thought our New World would escape the outpouring, and inaugurate a millennial period. But the first century of our existence has had five wars, one for every twenty years, the last being one of the greatest and most costly ever known, leaving us with a

debt of four billion dollars. And we feel the burden of taxation; and in what are called the labor troubles we see the smouldering of discontent; and in the anarchist propaganda, symptoms of the same revolutionary spirit which agitates the nations of the Old World; so that we, like them, are revolving in the outer rim of the great maelstrom, — war, debt, taxation, discontent, revolution; war, debt, taxation, discontent, revolution. We feel lost in the multiplicity of events, and unable to judge calmly of cause and effect in the excitements of the hour. But the history is written in that great scroll, on which none in heaven or on earth dared to look. Such is the emblem; and we see Christ with that book in his hand, every seal broken, the seventh and last compartment unrolled. He is, as it were, looking back, and turning the eyes of crowned presbyters back upon premillennial scenes, and causing them to live again before their gaze, and explaining to their comprehension the whole tragedy, until they exclaim, with the angel of the waters, “Righteous art thou, O Lord, for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy!”

## CHAPTER XXIX

## FOURTH AND FIFTH VIALS

“And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun.”

THE effect of the fourth vial is seen, not in the sun, but on the earth. The Roman Empire lay mainly in the temperate zone; but a suddenly increased power of the sun would make the climate tropical or torrid. The effect on vegetation, though not described, is easily imagined. We see gardens, groves, and vineyards more exuberant, more tropical, till at length the earth begins to be parched, vegetation withers, and the air becomes like that of Sahara. It is at this point that the effect on the population is described. The idolatrous nations, already under the previous vials inflamed and sore, are now scorched with great heat. Yet — and here again the real breaks through the symbolic — they do not repent, nor desist from the worship of the wild beast and his rider, nor give glory to God.

At this point the fifth angel pours out his vial on the throne of the wild beast, and his

kingdom is filled with darkness. It is not an eclipse of the sun which is indicated, for the heat seems to continue. It is not total darkness, for the worship is seen going on. It may be conceived of as an unnatural twilight, such as precedes in volcanic regions an earthquake or some great convulsion of nature. The worshippers gnaw their tongues for pain, and utter imprecations against the author of their plagues. Yet — and it is no symbol, but reality — they repent not. They still wonder after and worship the wild beast and his image-rider, the sorceress.

What, then, is the meaning symbolized? In the great sign-system of nature (Genesis i. 14), the sun, by his central position, by his control of the seasons, his illuminating, vitalizing power, is the great emblem of God in his relations to the moral universe. Around God all moral worlds revolve. His truth alone is light; his love, warmth. Only in the direct rays of communion with God do creature minds grow green, symmetrical, and fruitful. The absence of God, or dispersion or interception of his beams, produces moral night and winter. On the other hand, if minds are in abnormal conditions, like plants without moisture, or bodies inflamed and sore, then his direct ray or full self-manifestation is painful.



The chief part of the business of life is the proper adjustment of the relations of the body to the sun, in food, clothing, building, and the like. Human language is largely built up on these analogies. "Their line is gone out into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." The Bible uses them constantly and scientifically. "The Lord God is a sun and shield" (Psalms lxxxiv. 11). "Thy sun shall no more go down. . . . The Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and thy God thy glory" (Isaiah lx. 20). "The city hath no need of the sun . . . for the glory of God did lighten it" (Revelation xxi. 23).

Now, in the present vision, power is given unto the sun to scorch men, already by previous vials brought into an inflamed and sensitive state; and they blaspheme the name of God, which had power over these plagues. The emblem and the reality are mentioned side by side. The sun has power, and men blaspheme God who has power. The vision interprets itself. The sun and God are sign and thing signified.

Heat also is the constant emblem of intense emotion, whether of love or of indignation. Of course the divine love, in all its intensity, would not be painful to a holy creature in sympathy therewith, but would cause ecstatic delight;

but to a selfish, proud, jealous, revengeful soul, it must be painful. But if divine love be shadowed forth by heat, so also is the divine wrath, an emotion pure, not malignant, harmonious with benevolence, the necessary antagonist of evil.

To some extent the divine disapproval is already "revealed from heaven," and manifest in the human consciousness; but the full expression of it is mercifully restrained. If he should fully express his emotions at the sight of cruelty and wrong, the wrong-doer might be consumed in a moment. This, doubtless, is one reason why the race is incarnate. And now he mercifully refrains, and is long-suffering. But Scripture everywhere points to a day, even in this world, when this silence, this reserve, shall end, "the day of the revelation of his righteous judgment." The time when he would give a more full expression, not only of natural affection and love of the true, the beautiful, the good, but also his abhorrence of the false, the cruel, and the proud.

Such a manifestation may have commenced with the vials, but reached its height with the fourth, the climate, as it were, having insensibly changed, becoming more and more tropical, but now equatorial.

We understand, then, a time to be foreshown

(to us, but looked back upon by celestial myriads) previous to the millennium, when such a change of climate, so to speak, occurs. The sun is, to us, coming up out of the winter solstice. His coming ought to bring out sweet buds and fruits of penitence and faith. He energizes increasingly by his purity, justice, truth, loving kindness, and tender mercy, and by his abhorrence of wrong. He reveals how painful to him are our idolatries. It is only because men refuse to repent that his rays begin to burn like fire. It is when men cling to their idols that the rays scorch them, and they flame out in anger.

Such would be the general import of the emblems under the fourth vial. Those of the fifth naturally follow. The vial is poured out on the throne of the wild beast, and the effect is to fill his kingdom with darkness. The wild beast, as already shown, symbolizes the world power, or selfishly organized civil society in all ages. The throne is the emblem of sovereignty, organized selfishness, the kingdom moral, not local. What we see in the vision is not a total eclipse of the sun, not midnight, but some kind of twilight, shielding men from the rays. Selfishness reacts in self-defence, and sends up mists and vapors, screening society from the heat. The public mind is darkened, but no real relief

is felt. As the sun sends his heat-rays to the earth, even though his light-rays are intercepted, so God can manifest his abhorrence of selfishness, in spite of intellectual scepticism and unbelief.

Can we, then, in any degree verify these emblems? Like other prophecies, they may have what Bacon calls "a springing and germinant accomplishment." Can we find in or near our own times such germinant specimen fulfillments?

By common consent the Middle Ages have been named the Dark Ages. By an equally common consent the present century is spoken of as an enlightened age. Christians often speak of the present day as the dawn of the millennium. Others, not Christians, sometimes characterize it as noonday. If we look at the interval since the discovery of America, we shall discover a gradual change of climate in the intellectual and moral world. As the sun gradually changes the climate from spring to midsummer, so a mighty influence has been changing the temperature of the civilized world. What an awakening of the human mind there has been from its torpor, a quickening of functions, a swelling of buds, a development of redundant growth, a ripening of fruits, good and bad, and an approach to tropical and even equa-

torial fervors! Is not this a sure indication of a divine energy? As leaves, buds, flowers, and fruits do not start and ripen without the sun's return, so the myriad mental and moral activities of the human mind do not start and ripen of themselves, nor except as impregnated by a returning God.

“Early in the seventeenth century,” says Professor H. B. Smith, “literature and art had assumed new forms and new power; modern philosophy had begun its career in opposition to Aristotelianism. Idealism, rationalism, and the inductive philosophy had already begun that conflict which has continued ever since, with each other and with Christianity. During the eighteenth century the progress continued. “Calvinism was aggressive, and never at peace with the rulers of this world. . . . In literature and philosophy, the development of Europe was rapid, the art of historical narrative was perfected by Hume, Gibbon, and Robertson.<sup>1</sup> . . . The French language became the vehicle of diplomacy. . . . The works of Voltaire and Rousseau spread the influence of France throughout Europe. Locke, Leibnitz, Hume, Berkeley, exerted prodigious influence on mental philosophy; and though at the close

<sup>1</sup> And in the nineteenth century Macaulay, Froude, Hildreth, Motley.

of the century the prospects of the church seemed dark, though France was given over to infidelity, Germany to rationalism, England to indifference," still, "in the New World, Jonathan Edwards was defending the system of Calvin with unrivalled acuteness, and laying the foundations of the new divinity," and the age of revivals and of missions was being ushered in.

Infidelity itself must be regarded as an activity of mind, stimulated by the divine approach to react against some deeply latent errors in the conventional faith. This change of climate reaches its tropical stage in the nineteenth century, and will reach its torrid stage in the twentieth.

How many discoveries, inventions, improvements in art and science, have been made in the last fifty years! And how they have changed everything! If the inventions and improvements of the last fifty years were suddenly annihilated, we should not know the world. The power of steam drives countless trains, urges fleets and navies across the ocean, sets in motion millions of spindles and looms, ploughs, reaps, mines, drives gigantic presses, and does ten thousand things besides; and electricity is fast outrivalling steam, annihilating time and space by the telegraph, and condensing continents to a point. And we stand waiting for

some greater invention or discovery that shall outstrip present appliances, as these outstrip those of our grandfathers. The luxuriance, the rank tropical redundance, of literary products is proverbial, yet ever increasing. Who does not see an extraordinary character to the present century, and that the human mind breathes more and more a tropical, exhilarating atmosphere? And what does that mean, but that the sun is drawing nigh?

“The Christian faith,” says the writer just quoted, “never passed through such a conflict with the different forms of philosophy as during the present century. Materialism in France, rationalism and then pantheism in Germany, all the chief modern sciences, and the great schemes for reorganizing society, have entered into this conflict; and one by one they have proved ineffectual. In all the arts and sciences, in general literature and historical research, the progress of the human race during this period has been unprecedented. The whole past was never so fully reproduced, nor were the signs of progress ever more conspicuous.”

But it may be objected, Is this the effect of a vial of wrath? We answer, That depends on the idea we attach to that word. In the divine displeasure at oppression and wrong, there is no malignity; yet it must burn like fire against

all cruel tyrants and destroyers, and that holy displeasure is more and more revealed against corruption in church and state, against intemperance and vice, against injustice in every form. The stimulating influence of the divine Spirit, however genial and joyful to the good, must be painful to the evil. Those who dislike reform, and cling to the corruptions of the past, are increasingly uncomfortable. They are scorched by the chemical rays of the solar spectrum. They are inflamed as if burned by the truth. It is not peculiar to any one nation or class, but is apparent in all. Those who refuse to obey the golden rule, those who sell principle for power, justice for emolument, conscience for success, feel the approach of Christ's Spirit with pain and fear. Instead of repenting of their idolatrous world worship, they lay the blame on nature, which is blasphemy against God.

Come we then to the verification of the emblems of the fifth vial, viz., the reaction of selfishness, and the endeavor to shield conscience from the divine rays. "Although," observes the author just quoted, "in the eighteenth century Rome lost hold on the nations, yet in 1815 she entered on a new career in alliance with absolutism, after the restoration of the Bourbons. . . . France has been the



centre of reaction, as it was of the revolution. The Lyons Propagation Society is the most efficient single missionary organization in the world. In Germany, Mohler constructed the most skilful defence of the Roman Catholic faith. The tractarian movement in England shows that the Catholic system has a pervading influence. The Greek Church has renewed its strength. It is rooted among the Slavonic, as Rome is among the Celtic, races. Its influence is growing in the old Oriental churches." Thus far the reaction in its absolutist forms. But besides these, the socialistic, and even anarchist, forms are more and more manifest. All sorts of philosophies, schemes, poetries, romances, constructive and destructive, fill the air with mists. The socialistic ferment especially is more and more pervasive. Its principles leaven the revolutionary masses, so that Professor Smith declares "the future problem is between a humanitarian and a Christian republic." That is to say, there is to be a republic; but the question is, whether it shall be organized on the principles of naturalism and of evolution, or of revelation and of redemption. The former takes away deep conviction of sin, and thus seems to shade and shield the mind from the heat of the sun, the displeasure of God. The human race, according to this

philosophy, is not a fallen race, but a risen, or rising, race. Guilt is simply undeveloped growth. The devil is "arrested development." Man is not blameworthy; he is the victim of environment.

Thus the air is filled with fog and miasm, thick enough to intercept most of the rays of divine light, but not the rays of heat, the moral rays. By taking away conviction of sin, they give transient, deceitful relief, yet they remove the only thing that could give real peace and protection in the midst of the divine chastisements. Those chastisements are real; the strokes of the iron rod are heavy; the actual sufferings of guilty nations are acute and of frightful dimensions. If there be no penitence, resignation, pardon, faith, how dark the situation!

If men are innocent, if they do not deserve such things, if they are mere victims, the sense of injustice gives poignancy to grief, and envenoms every wound. Truly, if the race is innocent, it is most unfortunate, most unspeakably to be pitied, and the universe goes into mourning. Thus the whole realm of selfishness becomes dark, while there is no power in these delusions to shelter men from the divine displeasure. Even his long-suffering, his gentleness and pity, as well as his purity and justice,

are painful by contrast with the opposite characters in men.

It is and must be difficult to do justice to emblems like these. The vials are all linked together; the descriptions are very concise; and the phenomena indicated seem very near the age in which we live. Of course it is more difficult to give distinctness and precision to the view. The age is full; is crowded; is contradictory. It is revolutionary, an age of destructiveness, yet of conservatism; of progress as well as regress; of missions, revivals, and reforms, as well as of relapses, corruptions, and failures. Who, in the midst of it all, can master it? Who can think clearly and calmly in the rush and roar and whirl of the great maelstrom? Let us rise. Let us ascend to a higher plane. Let us sit with Christ in heavenly places. Enthroned among the white-robed elders, we look down, and look back, while Christ unrolls the seventh compartment of the scroll, and makes all history live before our eyes.

## CHAPTER XXX

## DRYING UP THE EUPHRATES

THE mention of the drying up of the great river Euphrates suggests the fate of ancient Babylon. We see in vision something resembling the capture of the city by Cyrus. The noble river, more than two furlongs wide, rolls through the centre of a great quadrangular capital, sixty miles in circumference, with walls over three hundred feet high and eighty feet thick, with a hundred brazen gates, filled with towers, temples, palaces, and gardens, the mightiest concentration of opulence, strength, and magnificence of the ancient world; "the beauty of kingdoms;" "the glory of the Chaldees' excellency;" "the golden city;" "the lady of kingdoms;" "the praise of the whole earth!" But the vial is poured out, and the great river is dried up, — "that the way of the kings from the East may be prepared." We behold afar the hosts of Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz advancing against the city, but repelled by the mighty stream that pours its waters through the centre of the metropolis. But those waters are gradu-

ally lessening in volume. They are being "dried up." New channels have been dug far above, and the waters are being drawn off. Entering by the dry bed of the stream, the invaders march in to the capture of the city. The handwriting is on the wall of the banqueting-hall: "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin!" The river is dried up. The Persians are here. The city is taken.

Before attempting to interpret this emblematic vision, it is important to remember that the city was not destroyed or devastated. On the contrary, Cyrus endeavored by wise institutions to perpetuate its pre-eminence and postpone its downfall, leaving it to his successor in undiminished grandeur. Accordingly, in the present vision we behold not the final sack of the city, which was later, but her capture, and continuance as mistress of a still wider and more universal empire. Of what, then, is the drying up of the Euphrates the emblem? In a former vision (chapter xv.) we have seen an overflow of Euphrates as symbolizing an inundation of the population of Europe at the Crusades, preventing Ottoman hordes from marching westward. In that vision the city did not appear. Now we see the river dried up, and the city captured. The city is a symbol of the same meaning as the "woman" on whose brow in subsequent visions is inscribed, "Babylon the great." City, woman,

image, joint emblems of one thing. The woman an ecclesiastical emblem, as the wild beast on which she rides is political. Leopard and rider are church and state ; so Babylon and Euphrates are a corrupt church, and people, nations, and tongues over which the church reigns. As the drawing off or "drying up" of Euphrates left the city open to a change of dynasty, apparently ruinous, but subsequently for a time advantageous, so the alienation of the masses from the hierarchy leads to some analogous change in the fortunes of that hierarchy. And as Cyrus was king of an Eastern political empire, so shall the author of the change in question act as the head of an Oriental ecclesiastical empire. And as Cyrus endeavored to enlarge the civil dominion of the city, and transmit it with augmented power to his successor, so shall the agent symbolized endeavor to enlarge the bounds of the Catholic hierarchy, and hand it down with increased splendor to futurity. In short, it is here symbolized that the population of the Catholic kingdoms shall be in some way alienated from their priesthood, and their revenues "dried up," and that some Eastern power shall take advantage of this to introduce a new Oriental, priestly element, rendering the hierarchy more Catholic, more powerful, and apparently more permanent, than before.

We come, then, to inquire into the historical verification of these symbols. The fulfilment of the first part of the series has already commenced, and is proceeding before our eyes. "The Reformation under Luther," says Macaulay, "deprived the church of half Europe; the counter revolution in the church kept the other half, and regained some that had been lost." Infidelity also alienated the affections of multitudes from her communion. Modern socialism and anarchism hate the very name of priest; but the church outlived the French Revolution, and, like Babylon of old, seems to say, "I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow." She not only survives, but extends her dominion. "There is not," says Macaulay, "and there never was on this earth, a work of human policy so well deserving examination as the Roman Catholic Church, . . . nor do we see any sign that the term of her long dominion is approaching."

The Euphrates has been dried up, and the city apparently captured, but is not yet destroyed. Her dominion may yet be greatly extended. She may yet drop the "Roman," and retain the "Catholic" in her title. There is one measure of policy that has been often tried, but hitherto tried in vain. Time is rapidly developing an agent by whose diplo-

matic power that expedient may at length be effectual, namely, a union of the Roman and Greek Churches. Powerful as the Roman Catholic Church is, it is remarkable that she has always been Occidental, and not Oriental. Claiming to be the mistress of the world, never has the cradle of the race and starting-point of the gospel been hers. The great seats of ancient Christianity — Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople, Alexandria, and all the churches of Asia Minor — have never yielded to her jurisdiction. How serious a flaw in her title to catholicity! The whole East, a powerful communion, old as herself, excommunicated and excommunicating in return! Can these great churches be reunited? To realize the importance of the question, glance at some incidents in the history of the Eastern or Greek Church.

When Constantine transferred the seat of empire from Rome to Byzantium, he unconsciously laid the foundations of the separate ecclesiastical empire now known as the Greek Church. As Rome had been the greatest city in the world, the Roman bishop felt himself to be the greatest bishop in the world. But when Constantinople became a new Rome, it was natural that her bishop should aspire to a corresponding dignity, equal, if not superior,



to that of the old capital. In the Council of 381 the bishop of Constantinople was declared to be next in rank to the bishop of Rome, much to the chagrin of the latter. Hence, from that time these two rival prelates were continually striving for priority, and about the extent of their territorial jurisdiction. Indeed, it is not quite certain but that the bishop of Constantinople was a little beforehand with him of Rome, in claiming the ominous title of universal (or catholic) bishop. At any rate, in 587 he received that title from a council of Oriental bishops at Constantinople.

The Roman bishop, hearing of this, remonstrated. His successor, Gregory the Great, was still more troubled, and by entreaties, threats, and appeals to the emperor, tried to have the title discontinued. It was profane, he said, that John of Constantinople should be called universal (catholic) bishop. It was a title anti-Christian and infernal, by whomsoever assumed. The difference between the two rival bishops was still further increased in the eighth century. The emperor conferred upon the bishop of Constantinople certain estates of the Roman bishop in Sicily, Calabria, and Apulia, and placed under his jurisdiction the clergy of those provinces and of Illyricum. This was the chief cause of the final rupture between

the Eastern and Western churches. Nicholas I. of Rome excommunicated Photius of Constantinople, and was excommunicated by him in return.

Several attempts, historians tell us, were made in after years to accommodate the points of difference, and bring about a reunion. The popes desired it, in order to annex the East to their see. The emperors desired it, in order to secure the assistance of the West against the Mahometans. But pride, obstinacy, and selfishness frustrated every attempt. At one time, in the Council of Lyons, in 1274, the union seemed for a moment achieved. The emperor gave up the points in dispute, and acknowledged the supremacy of the Pope; and a joint synod to cement the union was held at Constantinople in 1277. Yet the mass of the Eastern bishops were opposed to this; and, meeting in council at Constantinople in 1283-1285, refused to ratify it, and restored the old state of things.

The last attempt was made at Ferrara and Florence in 1438, by the emperor, then hard pressed by the Turks. This union also, as it looked like submission to the Roman See, was altogether rejected by the Oriental clergy, and the schism continued. At last Constantinople was taken by the Turks, the Eastern Empire

fell, and all efforts at reunion from that side ceased.

Nor, on the other hand, have the efforts of the Roman Church ever succeeded in accomplishing anything worth naming. During all this time, thus rapidly sketched, the position of the parties was in some respects the reverse of what it is now, and will be more and more in future. Thus the Roman See had a population physically reinvigorated by the inundation of northern tribes. The European kingdoms were yet youthful, rude, vigorous. The day of impoverishment, old age, and decay was far away. Therefore the spirit of the pontifical court was proud, confident, and overbearing, and could not stoop to such a compromise as would propitiate the East. The East, on the other hand, was gradually declining. The population, highly civilized, were enervated and effeminate. No stratum of barbarian alluvium rejuvenated the exhausted social soil. The empire waned, was in its dotage, and could not cope with Rome in diplomacy. And when the Turks came in, instead of infusing new life into the empire, as the barbarians had done for the West by adopting its religion and laws, they brought in a new religion and new laws, and never amalgamated with the conquered population, but held them in vassalage. Islam covered the rich soil with

the sand of its own burning deserts. The Church of Constantinople still survived, faithful to its ancient constitution. There still is the holy synod, with its patriarchal head, who has a considerable income, half of which goes to the Sultan in tribute. Christians are not allowed to build new churches, and pay dearly for permission to repair old ones. They not only pay tolls from which Turks are exempt, but every male over fifteen years of age pays a heavy poll-tax, under the ignominious name of "exemption from beheading." Thus the Western church ran its career of greatness, while the Eastern was running its counter career of depression and distress. But now the tables are turned. For, while the Romish Church has lost the affections and the revenues of half Europe, the Eastern church beholds with exultation the approaching dawn of a day of triumph and splendor, outshining that of the era of Constantine. As far back as 988 several Slavonic nations were converted to the Greek faith, especially the Russians. These Russians, originally a savage horde, now a civilized and powerful empire, holding the destinies of Europe and Asia in their hands, are the hereditary foes of the Ottoman power, and zealous upholders of the orthodox faith, the faith of Chrysostom and other illustrious Fathers of the early church.

To drive out the odious Turk from that throne on the Bosphorus where Constantine reigned; to purge out the stain of Moslem imposture from the holy city where Christ died and rose again; to restore the churches of Antioch, Alexandria, and Asia Minor to primitive independence and power, — this is the “manifest destiny” of the “prince of Ross, Mosc, and Tobol” (Ezekiel xxxviii.), the Czar of holy Russia. This is the secret of “the Eastern question,” on which the diplomacy of the world hinges. Hardy, robust, fired with religious zeal, the myrmidons of the North and East await the destined moment to sweep the insufferable Turk from the earth, rejuvenate the empire, and replace the cross on the domes and spires of Byzantium and on the temple of Moriah in Jerusalem.

Before such a movement, predicted thirty centuries ago,<sup>1</sup> actuated by motives of religious fanaticism, in all ages the most resistless of impulses, there is nothing in Europe, east or west, nothing in Asia, that can stand. It is the approach of such a power to which the Greek priesthood throughout Turkey look with eager hope and joy as to an advent and a resurrection; nor will they be disappointed. To the See of Constantinople will be attached

<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel, chap. xxxviii.

the jurisdiction, not only of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria, but of the vast realms of the Russian Empire, which in A.D. 1852 numbered 31 dioceses, 4 metropolitans, 11 archbishops, 19 bishops, 12,500 parish churches, 425 convents, and 58 theological seminaries. And while the bishop of Rome is deprived of the revenues of half Europe, he sees the way of the kings, or kingdoms, from the sunrise prepared, and the star of Constantinople ascending to the zenith.

Under such circumstances the term catholic, applied to the Roman bishop, must be seen and felt to be a misnomer. The logic of events will be conclusive. The reunion of these great churches, both Roman in origin, into one immense sacerdotal empire, will be a necessity. Motives of utmost force on both sides will coerce them to a union. On the side of Rome it is manifest that, if she cannot effect a compromise with this so formidable rival, weakened as she is by Protestantism, by infidelity, by democracy, and by socialism, she must sink in inglorious ruin. Hence she will be ready to concede all but the primacy of St. Peter; let but Russia, throned on the Bosphorus, concede that, and almost anything else she may have. She may abolish image-worship, abolish the celibacy of the clergy, abolish the confessional; she may, in her turn, nominate Oriental candi-

dates for election by the College of Cardinals to the papal chair, — all will be granted, provided that seat be not robbed of its primacy, its ecumenical, infallible supremacy. On the other hand, the motives that will press on the mind of the Czar, the new Emperor of Constantinople that is to be, will be not less decisive. In him the seventh head of universal power, which John saw as in embryo, the repetition and successor of the sixth, will be developed. It will be the Roman empire over again, yet on a more extensive scale. It will be still tenfold, since the ten horns of the sixth head are shed off, and reappear on the seventh; that is to say, when Russia becomes ascendant in Europe and Asia, she will not obliterate the great monarchies of Europe, but rather confederate them in closer diplomatic bonds, and make them subservient to her policy. They will be the ten horns, but the brain of the system will be in the Russian head at Constantinople. Indeed, that tenfold combination may probably become more numerically exact than ever before.

Now, when this shall have come to pass, it will involve a temporary repression of the revolutionary masses, such as they do not now anticipate. Yet they will still survive; and the smouldering fires will burn and heave even beneath that tremendous dynasty of the seven

mountains, the seventh world empire, which, when it cometh, is to "continue a while." America will be in existence, and the grand laws of thought and moral influence will be operative; and full surely will that able despot see that, unless he bridle democracy, and centralize in one common cause, not only all the civil, but also the ecclesiastical, dominion of the world, he must go down. Hence Rome must be his ally; and while he respects her claim of spiritual supremacy, because to deny it would be suicidal, he will diplomatically constrain her to concede all he can require. The two communions will be fused and centralized, the civil power of the world at Constantinople, the spiritual power at Rome. Thus the two-horned lamblike wild beast, and the leopard and sorceress rider, shall partition Africa, and sway the destinies of a revived final Roman empire.

Even while we pen these lines, "an exchange of views is actually proceeding between certain ecclesiastical personages at Rome and certain representatives of the orthodox church in Russia, on the subject of a *rapprochement* and union of the two churches." So says a recent correspondent of the *Evangelist*.<sup>1</sup>

"Up to the present," continues the writer, "the attitude of the Roman Catholic ecclesias-

<sup>1</sup> June, 1893.



ties has not been of a conciliatory character, notwithstanding that the Pope himself is showing a spirit more and more favorable to a policy which aims at bringing about an understanding with Russia, and a future re-establishment of the ancient unity.

“On the side of Russia numerous ecclesiastical and political personages, and professors of the universities of Moscow and St. Petersburg, and public opinion in general, manifest a most favorable disposition towards an understanding with Rome, on condition that the ancient privileges of the Greek Church are maintained.

“In several of these letters it can clearly be seen that Rome is the centre of the unity; and the reconciliation with the Holy See would raise the orthodox church to a higher intellectual and moral level, while at the same time the alliance with Rome would carry with it inestimable advantages for Russia in her diplomatic intercourse with foreign powers.

“At the Vatican closer relations with Russia would be hailed with considerable satisfaction, especially as it is believed here that Russia is seeking a friendlier understanding with Austria and England. Intimate relations between Russia and Austria . . . must result in the dissolution of the triple alliance — the *bête noir* of the Curia — in the near future; and with this

would disappear the greatest barrier to the restoration of the temporal power.”

Says a correspondent of the *Christian Union*:<sup>1</sup> “Ever since the eleventh century the church has been divided into an Eastern and a Western, or a Greek and a Roman Church. . . . It is reported that Leo XIII. is hopefully undertaking the closing of this breach, and the reunion of the Greek and Roman Churches, and that for this purpose an official representative of the Vatican has been appointed to attend a congress at Jerusalem, convened to study the diverse liturgies of the Eastern churches, and to endeavor to harmonize them. Apparently the Pope hopes to make this congress an occasion for securing liturgical harmony between the Greek and Roman Churches.”

<sup>1</sup> June 24, 1893.

## CHAPTER XXXI

## FIRST BATRACHIAN

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the wild beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits 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.”

FROM the greatness of the crisis and the solemnity of the warning, these emissaries must necessarily be of formidable potency. Yet they seem unaccountably incongruous. They surprise us. “Frogs,” we exclaim, “heralds of battle? Impossible! absurd! ridiculous!” The crisis is the greatest in the annals of war. It is referred to throughout Scripture as “that day,” the “time of trouble such as was not since God created man upon the earth.” And yet to assemble the militant nations three slimy batrachian monsters! Is that the way great military chieftains look to God? Have we here a species of exalted caricature? Is he that sitteth in the heavens laughing at the Alexanders, the Cæsars, the Marlboroughs, the Napoleons, of

the world, and at their so-called glory? The divine mind is not devoid of a stern irony. "The Almighty shall have them in derision!"

Virtue is never travestied in these cartoons of Patmos, but is not vice sublimely caricatured? Jerusalem above, mother of us all, is symmetrical, precious, spotless, ideally beautiful.

But despotism in all its forms, in church and state, however formidable on earth or in heaven, is grotesque, unsymmetrical, and even ludicrous. Even angels, in their pride and scorn, cannot escape the terrible satire of the divine pencil, limning the great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, lashing the sky with his tail, and hurling constellations to the earth. Much less the incarnate kings and captains and mighty men of this world. What are these "questionable shapes," these amphibia, these slimy batrachians from the swamps and fens of dried-up Euphrates? They are "unclean spirits," or ghosts; they are "demons," or dead men. What we see in the vision is three spectral or ghostly emissaries, one out of the mouth of each of the confederates, dragon, wild beast, false prophet, — gigantic spectral frogs, with their painted, spotted skin, their sprawling limbs, their agile leap, their human-like diving and swimming, their whistle and croak. They are politicians, these masqueraders, at home in

the slimy pool or in air or on solid ground; vociferous, obstreperous, foul. Of what are these uncanny masqueraders the emblem?

Not, of course, of mere individuals, but of organizations of some kind, organizations in some respects analogous to these, — one ecclesiastical, “out of the mouth of the false prophet;” one political, “out of the mouth of the wild beast;” and one necromantic, “out of the mouth of the dragon.” We will consider first that out of the mouth of the false prophet.

If there be on the face of the earth a live dead man, a walking corpse, an embodied ghost, it is the Jesuit,— a man who, by a fifteen years’ course of training, has extinguished humanity, and rendered himself up to his superior, “*perinde ac cadaver.*”<sup>1</sup> “The Jesuit,” says Isaac Taylor, “has passed through the most singular training which the wit of man ever devised, to annihilate whatever is individual in will or character in a human being. . . . For himself, he is nothing; for his order, taught to develop every power to the utmost. . . . The order compressed within itself all the personal life of the separate souls of which it was composed.” The professed object of this spectral order, Taylor shows, is different from its real object. Its professed object is pedagogic, its real object

<sup>1</sup> As a corpse.

military. Its professed mission is to be "school-master gratis to the world," its real object is dominion "to stretch over the human species a perfect domination . . . and at length rule the world from the centre of a single bosom." Yet what can be more ludicrous than the general of such an order mending pens, setting copies, and teaching the world its A B C's?

Suppressed by the Pope in 1773, it revived, ghostlike, in 1814. "Although spoken of as a sort of condensed Romanism, and although it has done much to preserve the Romish Church, it has yet an independent existence, is slenderly attached; and as it has been once and again detached from the church, or ejected by it, so probably it will at length detach itself, and will struggle for separate existence.

"The mission on which the society will then enter will be its true mission, which it has never yet fully attempted, and will be executed with powers augmented. . . . In times gone by, Jesuitism sought to rule the world by pushing itself near and nearer still to thrones, or by actually edging itself onto seats of power. But in times to come, . . . it will seek to compass the same design by shouldering the mob forward in every popular assault upon thrones. So long as monarchies rested solidly in their places upon the field of Europe, the Jesuit

society wished to stand upon the same *terra firma*; but now that the ground trembles beneath the foot, it will commend itself upon its own raft to the mighty deep, the 'many waters,' 'the people.' "

And yet never were sincerer men, probably, in the world than the founders of the institute, Loyola, Le Fevre, and Lainez, nor a better motto than "*ad majorem Dei gloriam.*"

"We must not admit," says Isaac Taylor, "the harsh conclusion that they were deliberately conscious that they were preparing a wicked and treasonable attempt against the liberties and welfare of mankind." <sup>1</sup>

Nor ought we to regard it as a thing of the past. Evil as Jesuitism has been in former years, disastrous as its effects on society, and dreadful as its power, it is but a weak ghost compared with its future mission to use the methods of party war, and of municipal corruption in the great game of world politics. The field is prepared both in the Old World and in the New. Never was there such an arena for supple, specious, unprincipled demagogism. Our great cities are specimens of kakistocracy, the rule of the worst. What will be the case when Mexico on the south, and Canada on the north, are absorbed? The Jesuit is here; he

<sup>1</sup> "Loyola and Jesuitism."

is waiting. He lies still. He is quiet, noiseless, dark, dead. But the chat of our breakfastables is audible in the chamber of the general of the Jesuits at Rome; and whensoever his hour arrives, our Tammany halls and pothouse politicians are his appropriate instrumentalities. That hour may be nearer than we suppose. When winter is almost gone, and Euphratean marshes at eventide shrill and trill and croak with batrachian music, spring is at hand.



## CHAPTER XXXII

## SECOND BATRACHIAN

Out of the mouth of the wild beast. — REVELATION xvi. 13.

THE order of the Jesuits, already considered, is to some extent a secret society, developed from an ecclesiastical standpoint, and working professedly on a purely evangelical basis, "*ad majorem Dei gloriam.*" There have always been secret societies, but never so many and so powerful as now. Society is honeycombed with them. They are a portent, a sign of the last times. Let us examine another specimen of the Euphratean swarm, developing from a secular standpoint, and working on a naturalistic basis. We select, for example, the order of the Holy Vehme, as it was called.

"In Germany," says Palgrave, "during the Middle Ages, there existed a singular jurisdiction, which claimed a direct descent from the pagan policy and mystic ritual of the Teutons. The name of the order, Vehme, or 'Holy Vehme,' signifies law, or holy law. Initiation

into the order could only take place in Westphalia, which was called the Red Land. The candidate swore by the Holy Law to conceal the secrets of the order from every being between earth and heaven, and was warned of the terrible punishment awaiting him if perjured."

From this source some of the features of certain modern secret societies seem to have been borrowed. The modern secret conclave is in a sense Vehmlic, i.e., legislative and judicial, in its genius and spirit.

Other features seem borrowed from a source still more ancient and venerable; viz., the ancient Roman Colleges of Architects. This secret fraternity of mechanics and artificers was borrowed from the Greeks, inherited by them from the older empires of Euphrates and Nile, under which they erected those —

“Temples and pyramids stupendous,  
Whose very ruins are tremendous.”

These Collegia and Corpora of practical builders, it is certain, were in active operation throughout the Roman Empire, survived its fall, and throve under German auspices during the Middle Ages. By them were erected the minsters and cathedrals of Britain and the Continent. In course of time many honorary members were admitted, and the operative character

of the association became less prominent, the speculative assumed pre-eminence. In 1717 the Grand Lodge of England was organized on the new speculative basis, and began to spread throughout the world as an imaginative system of symbolism. That this order has often been used for political or revolutionary purposes is not denied ; but it is claimed by its defenders that this has been in violation of its constitution.

In 1776 Weishaupt founded the order of Illuminati, taking the Holy Vehme, the Jesuit institute, and speculative Masonry as models, the highest grade of the order being military.

In these orders, also, many of the titles and emblems of feudal chivalry were preserved, the exuvie of a defunct knight errantry. The inferiors of the Illuminati did not even know their superiors personally. This heightened the invisibility of the spectral order. From this source came the Jacobin Club at Paris, the German Union, the "United Irishmen," the "Carbonari," and other secret political societies.

The tendency to operate in this way is widespread and increasing. Our colleges are pervaded by secret fraternities. Reform has its secret orders. Society is undermined.

There is an agency all over the world burrowing and digging at foundations, some of

them constructive, and some destructive, some with the trowel, and some with dynamite. Grouping them all together under the name of the Lodge, we see that it corresponds in a striking degree to the emblem. It is spectral, yet potent. There is a visionary unreality about them, yet their influence for some unknown end is incalculable. There is a shadowy semblance of ancient defunct realities, meetly symbolized by a ghost (*δαίμων*). They are amphibious, capable of acting on land or in water, i.e., in settled communities, or in revolutionary deeps and shallows. We need not impeach the motives of the lay membership in these secret societies, any more than the motives of the Jesuit institute. But with all charity we may affirm that they do not understand the ultimate adaptations of the machine they are using or its predestined results. There is a work waiting in the future which they do not dream of, a work of attempted social regeneration, but by means other than Christian, — means revolutionary and destructive, rather than reformatory and constructive, — in a word, by some phase of socialism. And what, then, is socialism?

Socialism we consider to be that philosophy concerning human society which rests on two main principles: first, that society is now wrongly, because selfishly, organized, and must

be reorganized in accordance with benevolence ; and, second, that this reorganization can be effected without repentance and faith, and restoration to communion with God. The first is, or contains, a great truth, and the second a great error ; yet the two are so closely blended in socialism that it is difficult to separate them, or prevent them from making war on the cause of Christ. It is true that society is corrupted and perverted from the divine ideal ; this the Bible everywhere teaches. It is also true that human society is to be reorganized on principles of right and benevolence, of which the New Jerusalem is type. In maintaining thus much, socialism has power.

But when socialism passes to its second principle, it becomes unsound and ruinous. What is the cause of human woes, it asks ? The cause is external, — society, nature, environment ; not internal, not innate guilt. The race is not fallen. There is no inborn sin. The soul enters life pure, and is corrupted by the general system into which it comes. The whole material system is so depraved and depraving that pure, unfallen spirits are corrupted and made sinful in every instance without exception ; hence it is our duty to reorganize society in all its parts, so that it will not corrupt the soul. This is socialism. And it goes forth through

press and pulpit, and by secret orders, to leaven the nations, and gather them to the great moral battlefield.

The cause that will triumph in that great day will be in substance this: that nature is pure and purifying; that the body is the shield of the soul; that the material world system was made by Christ and for Christ, both as a battlefield against hostile principalities and powers on high, and as a remedial system for the reconciliation of alienated souls to each other and to God, by repentance and faith, and cleansing by the Holy Spirit.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

## THIRD BATRACHIAN

“Out of the mouth of the dragon.”

NECROMANCY is very ancient. The spirit-world surrounds us like an atmosphere. It beats against the material environment by which our fallen race is shielded for redemption purposes as the ocean against the dykes of Holland. At the first Advent this pressure was manifest in numerous instances of possession.

The intrusive spirits called “unclean spirits,” “demons,”<sup>1</sup> were simply departed spirits of the human family seeking a quasi-reincarnation. As the time of the second Advent approaches, there is a similar increase of this outside pressure. Necromancy, or spiritualism as it is called, is by no means modern, except in some of its phenomena, but has existed in all ages, and been the foundation of polytheism. Hence it was, like idolatry, made a capital crime under the Mosaic law; and that characterization was

<sup>1</sup> Mistranslated in N. T. “devils.”

not repealed under the gospel dispensation, even in cases where the spirit communicating seemed to be a good one. Thus at Philippi a pythoness, or damsel possessed with a spirit of divination, followed Paul and Silas, saying, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation." Why, then, silence her? Why not accept this cordial indorsement from the next world? Yet Paul without hesitation said, "I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." Paul did not doubt the reality of such oracles from the unseen. He simply thought them unnecessary, and liable to abuse. They are not needed by one who can say, as Paul said, "We have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things." "The Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God."

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. We need not seek unto the dead when we have constant access to the living. The spirits that surround us, and are most accessible, are the least reliable. Their offer to give a needed demonstration of immortality involves a covert attack. It virtually says Jesus did not rise from the dead, and is not the "faithful and true Witness."

It is not uncharitable to affirm, what all acquainted with the facts concede, that there are



deceitful spirits in the stratum nearest to earth and most accessible.

“We discovered,” says a recent experimenter, “each of us who gave the most time to writing on the board, that other agencies were at work than those who professed to be writing. To describe it in the simplest way, it appeared that deceitful and mischievous spirits were writing to us in the character, and under the assumed names, of friends who had before written to us, and who were for some time supposed to be continuing; but the matter of the messages, and even the character of the psychic force, and the peculiar methods of writing, indicated to us that we were being imposed on. . . . It appears to me, as a conclusion from my own experience, that the greater amount of the frauds and falsities charged upon professional mediums may be attributed to base or tricky spiritual influences which obtain control of them, frequently without their knowledge or participation.”<sup>1</sup>

The majority of spiritualists are doubtless sincere, and unconscious of any hostility to Christianity. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that they may be swept on, as other denominations are, by a movement they do not understand, and whose ultimate results they cannot

<sup>1</sup> Winfield Smith, *Rel. Phil. Journal*, Aug. 5, 1893.

foresee, — a movement originated by high cosmocratic intelligences for a defensive struggle for world dominion.

The Holy Spirit is energizing to raise the mind of the race to judge of the true history, principles, and character of the great autocrat of the skies, whom Christ calls “the prince of this world;” while he and his angels are energizing to stave off that judgment, and to defend their administration. In every possible way they seek to preoccupy the public mind, and disqualify it for so sublime a function; a function in reference to which Paul significantly asks, “Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” The result is symbolized by the assembling of hosts to Armageddon, — to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, — a great logical crisis, shadowed forth by a great military crisis.

As the result of the agency of these emissaries, there is seen a mustering of nations towards the plain of Megiddo, but not the actual shock of battle. That is deferred. No battle is joined in the present vision. The mind is in painful suspense. Israel, the point of attack, is not seen, not even mentioned. There is simply a rallying of armies on the great Esdraelon plain, where of old “the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.”

But the spectacle is made more impressive by the announcement, "Behold I come as a thief! Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame!"

The coming of the Lord will be sudden, unexpected, but sublimely real; the winding up of the great intellectual and moral controversy of the ages; not with carnal weapons, brute force, or material fire, but with full revelation of truth and of the righteous judgment of God. It is the great day of which prophets have spoken since the world began.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

## VIAL ON THE AIR

THE atmosphere when at rest seems soft and light; yet it presses upon earth's surface with inconceivable weight, and when by electric and other causes set in rapid motion, becomes an agent of terrific destructive power. It is therefore a fit emblem of that spiritual world that surrounds the globe, of similar seeming quietness and similar resistless power.

The loud-voiced proclamation from the celestial throne —

“It is done!

seems to herald the last and greatest of catastrophes. Cities are falling, hailstones a talent in weight descending, earth and sea agitated by earthquake, islands and mountains engulfed, and great Babylon drinks “the cup of the wine of the fierceness of God's wrath.”

The emblems correspond in sublimity with those of the sixth seal, where it is said, “The great day of his wrath is come;” with those

also of the seventh trumpet, where we read, "Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged."

Three great trains of symbolization stretch downward with manifold significance over the anti-Christian era to one and the same pre-millennial judgment day.

The previous vials have been poured out on the earth, the sea, the rivers and fountains, the sun, the throne of the wild beast, and the great river Euphrates. This, the last and greatest, is poured upon the air; and there is "a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done."

What, then, is symbolized by the vial on the air? To answer this question, we must ask, Of what is the air the emblem? The whole of nature, as we have shown, is a great complex analogue or symbol. Of what is the atmosphere especially significant? And the answer is not difficult. If earth, sea, rivers, and fountains, the sun, etc., denote visible realities, the atmosphere may well symbolize invisible. If the former shadow forth incarnate realms, the latter shadows forth non-incarnate, or spirit, realms. And here we are helped by sundry hints of Scripture usage.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against

the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." This last expression is literally "against wicked spirits in the heavens" (Ephesians vi. 12). At the head of these principalities and powers stood, in Paul's day, not yet cast down, one whom he styles "the prince of the power of the air," according to whom flows the course of this world (Ephesians ii. 2), to dethrone and destroy whom, we are told, Christ became incarnate (Hebrews ii. 14).

The question, then, being of what is the air, or atmosphere, the symbol, we answer, it is the symbol of the non-incarnate world, or world of spirits, which surrounds us, like a great ocean, invisible, intangible, yet powerful. Dyked out by our incarnation, as the ocean is dyked out from Holland, it yet presses with inconceivable pressure, forcing its way through every crack and cranny. Or, to vary the figure, as the atmosphere presses with myriad tons weight on the surface, so this aërial world of spirits presses with inconceivable force against the barriers which exclude it from direct contact with the mind of man, and limits them to indirect and imperfect control of the course of this world. By freedom of the will, by prayer, by communion with God, by the indwelling of the Spirit, it is possible for our intrenched and

shielded spirits in the castle of the body to exclude and triumph over this alien, this invading force. Yet the ordeal is severe, and involves great suffering and patience, even that we drink our Master's cup, and share his cross.

What, then, we ask again, may be symbolized by the vial on the air? What but some direct agency of divine spiritual power on this invisible realm of spirits, this emblematic atmosphere of the globe? The precise nature of that agency we may look back upon from our thrones, and understand — more perfectly than is possible to us now by looking forward. Yet we can form some rational conjectures. The denizens of air, being students of prophecy, may foresee "the first resurrection" as at hand. As the resurrection of Christ dejected them from the higher heaven, so the resurrection of Christ's members may deject them from the lower heaven, or atmosphere. Thus it is written (xii. 12): "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you in great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

This, which was fulfilled in part on Christ's ascension, and through the whole dispensation, will be increasingly fulfilled at the close.

As the blood of Christ, brought home to Lucifer as murderer, cast him and his down from

heaven, so the blood of Christ's members, brought home to him as murderer, shall cast him down still farther from the atmosphere of human thought.

When the last drop of that martyr-blood has been shed in the great pre-millennial tribulation, the sublime word goes forth, "It is done!" just as when Christ's blood was shed on Calvary he cried, "It is finished!"

The "It is finished!"<sup>1</sup> of Calvary, and the "It is done!"<sup>2</sup> of the seventh vial, are virtually one, though remote in time. Their blood is his blood. They are "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Ephesians v. 30). His blood finished the great ordeal by which to cast down the accuser out of heaven; their blood completes the ordeal to cast him down out of earth. It is the blood of the one Christ, head and members, which is to purify the atmosphere of earth, as it has already purified the atmosphere of heaven (Hebrews ix. 23).

All this, too, we must bear in mind is recorded in the unsealed scroll which Christ holds in his hand, and causes to live again before the backward-looking eyes of saints and angels. Let us fly up, and sit enthroned with him; let us fly forward into eternity, and look back with them.

<sup>1</sup> τετελεσται.

<sup>2</sup> γεγονε.



## CHAPTER XXXV

## MYSTERY

WE have already (chapter xxiii.) shown the woman and city to be twin emblems of one and the same reality. The leopard and his rider we pronounced a symbol of church and state. We are now to consider that complex symbol at a later stage of development. The spotted hide of the leopard is now of a scarlet hue. The name of deity (called "name of blasphemy"<sup>1</sup>), formerly written on the heads, is now inscribed on the body, so that it is "full of the names of blasphemy." The ten horns, formerly crowned on the sixth head, now stand uncrowned on the seventh. The seven heads, of which five were withered, the sixth active, the seventh in embryo, are now all active together, though all marked with age and infirmity, as if in their dotage, yet partially rejuvenescent and co-operative, as for a last great crisis. The "image to the beast" is also changed. At first she moved a beautiful en-

<sup>1</sup> Blasphemy is self-deification (John x. 33).

chantress, all smiles and blandishments; now she appears hardened and remorseless, after a long career of tyranny and shame. In her hand is a golden cup, "full of abominations." She is "arrayed in purple and scarlet," "decked with gold and precious stones and pearls," and on her forehead, in a language neither she nor her adorers seem to understand, is written, "Mystery. Babylon the great, mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."

And here, again, the real breaks through the symbolic. "I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." It is the image of a corrupt, idolatrous, persecuting church, in alliance with the state under all the great world empires, especially the seventh; not as she appeared to men, but as she has appeared to God, and will appear to saints and angels when Christ opens the seal.

Observing the seer's wonder at the sight, the angel proceeds to explain; and as he speaks the symbols undergo a change, like dissolving views in a camera or like the changes in a dream.

The wild beast dissolves into "many waters;" the seven heads become seven hills, or mountains; the woman becomes a city. By a sort of verbal transubstantiation, "are" means "become." "The seven heads *become* seven

mountains on which the woman sitteth." It is so. You see it, two emblems of the same thing. The waters where the harlot sitteth are peoples, and nations, and kindreds, and tongues.

And now another transformation. "The woman which thou sawest is [becomes] that great city which reigneth over the kingdoms of the earth." So said, so done. It is so. You see the walls, gates, towers, of a great city. Woman and city are interchangeable emblems, not only in Scripture language, but in the language of the world. As the wild beast is world empire, political, so the woman or city is world religion, ecclesiastical. There has always been a woman, and always a city, — whether Memphis, Nineveh, Babylon, old Rome on the Tiber, or new Rome on the Bosphorus, it is the same spiritual metropolis; "for in her were found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all that were slain upon earth." The title ignorantly worn by the woman confirms the view. It is the great idolatrous enchantress of the ages, especially of the last. The great pontifical, sacramental system of modern times is virtually that which had subsisted in former ages under pagan names. In its latest form it is but a revival of the old priesthood and mysteries of Rome, Greece, Persia, Assyria, Egypt, and the Titans.

Such history shows to be the simple truth. Almost every ceremony of the Romish ritual was borrowed from older systems ; viz., incense, sprinkling of holy water, lamps, candles, votive offerings, canonization of saints, worship of the dead, shrines, relics, images, penances, vigils, fasts, flagellations, priestly orders, monks, nuns, shaven crowns, celibacy, etc. All were relics of old pagan systems. "Nay, the very same temples, the very same images, which once were consecrated to Jupiter and the other demons, are now reconsecrated to the Virgin Mary and the other saints." <sup>1</sup>

It is related that Dr. Middleton went to Rome to make classical researches. For a time he failed to find what he sought. At length his attention was called to the church. He betook himself to the study of the ceremonial ; and there he found what he came to study, "the rites of the pagan Rome embalmed and handed down unchanged, except in names, to the present hour."

But the mythology of Rome was borrowed from older systems, as already intimated. If, then, the leopard symbolizes world empire, past, present, and future, so does the woman-rider symbolize the world idolatry, past, present, and to come.

<sup>1</sup> Newton on the Prophecies.

What, then, is denoted by the difference of the wild beast here, in chapter xvii., and as seen at the slaying of the witnesses? We answer, the wild beast of Revelation xi., by whom the witnesses are slain, though earliest in the visions, is latest in signification. "He ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, and goeth into perdition." He symbolizes the eighth and last form of world empire. His appearance in Revelation xi. is very brief, his form is not described; no mention is there made of his rider; but both beast and woman are implied, as afterward more fully described (Revelation xvii. 8).

"I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and the wild beast that carrieth her; . . . the beast shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and goeth into perdition."

As a wild beast whose vitality had continued through a series of seven heads might be conceived at length to have that vitality diffused through the whole body and the seven heads at once, thus making an eighth period in his career; so the world, after being embodied in seven successive universal empires, might have its vitality diffused through the masses, or "body politic," thus making an eighth period of world empire. Thus that world empire, though the eighth, is "of the seven," including their territory, spirit, character, principles, and na-

tionalities. Nationalities may continue as subordinate foci of political influence; but they will be balanced and combined in a confederacy of popular institution, under constitutional law. The life of the system will be in the body, the masses, the people.

As the city sat on seven mountains, in the midst of many waters, so shall the final ecclesiastical confederacy be girt by the waves of the popular deep. Nations so widely unlike in blood and in manners as the extreme East and the farthest West may enter into the general religious compact, each retaining its manifoldness of local ecclesiasticism. But the character of that final politico-religious confederacy will still be the same. The body politic will be written full of the "name of blasphemy," or self-deification, — *vox populi, vox Dei*.

Now, that a world republic, or confederacy of some kind, is to be the result of the great game on the chessboard of nations, is but what political prophets are predicting every day. The whole swamp echoes with batrachian pipings, trillings, and croakings, like the din of a tropical evening. The mistake of our vociferous optimists is in thinking that that confederacy will be the millennium. They do not realize that it will be as despotic, its mammon-worship as idolatrous, as that of any pre-

vious world empire. Still, in their vaticinations of the fact of such a combination, they are not unsustained by prophecy, as well as by the omens of the times.

Russia already preponderates over Asia and Europe, and will ere long establish on the throne of Constantine the seventh and last great absolutist empire. Yet even while doing so, Russia herself will be republicanized. "Holy Russia" is the only nation in the Old World that is not infidel, and whose people have a religious enthusiasm, and a mission which they believe appointed of Heaven. It is their divine destiny to restore the faith of the early Greek Fathers, for ages insulted by Islam. It is their proud destiny to place the prince of Ross, Mosc, and Tobol (Ezekiel xxxviii. 39) on the throne of Constantine, and sweep the abhorred Turk from the earth; replacing the cross on the spires of Constantinople, and delivering Jerusalem, the holy city, from being trodden underfoot.

False as some of the principles and practices of the Greek Church may be, and infidel as Russian educated men and officers may be, the nation has a faith more childlike and implicit than any other nation, and in her religious enthusiasm, or fanaticism, may prove invincible.

Yet when Russia shall have won her way to

her predestined throne on the Dardanelles, the principles of international law will conquer her. Ideas will overleap the boundaries of diplomacy, and Russia herself will become democratic. The great agencies of Jesuitism, secret societies, and occultism will go out to reform the organization of society. The result will be some comprehensive scheme of representative administration. What that scheme will be, what the constitution of the world republic, what its officers, where its congress, its courts, its judiciary, we cannot foresee. We only know that we shall see when we look back from our golden thrones.

Of the fact only, in a general way, are we now informed, and of the moral character of such a confederacy. It will be like all preceding world empires, self-deifying. Under its auspices the slaying of the witnesses takes place, as already exhibited, in a former vision (chapter xvii.).

But, however painful such a prospect, we are consoled by the thought that the tribulation will be cut short (Matthew xxiv. 22). That last form of despotism must go down, and be replaced by the reign of Christ and his risen saints.



## CHAPTER XXXVI

## BURNING OF BABYLON

WE have in chapter xviii. the picture of a great commercial city in flames. The city is called Babylon, but it is not Babylon on the Euphrates which the eye beholds. It is a great commercial metropolis, centre of a world's traffic. It has been thought to be Rome on the Tiber, though there are some features of the description scarcely applicable to that inland site. "In the vision," says Dean Stanley, "there are features taken from ancient Tyre, which are vainly sought in the old Rome beside the Tiber. Constantinople alone unites them all. Few would pretend to say that she was designed in the prophet's vision. But . . . she and she alone in her union of traffic and ships and splendor, and her seat of seven hills, comes up to the highest local images of earthly grandeur as therein presented to our view. . . . It is impossible to look down from the Galata tower, on the complication of sea and land, island and mainland, peninsula and promontory, strait and continent, and not feel that the

spot is destined to be, what it seems more and more likely to be, both historically and politically the Gordian knot of the world."

It may not have been "designed in the prophet's vision," as Dean Stanley says, but it may have been seen in it. The object seen is one thing, the designed meaning another. In the structure of such great panoramic visions, the spirit takes lineaments from whatever source, Babylon, Tyre, Rome, Byzantium. The reality shadowed forth being coeval with the race, the emblem is in keeping; and, if special reference be had to the latest crisis of world history before the Advent, then Constantinople may furnish better analogies than Rome. Both are in volcanic regions, both liable to earthquake shocks and sulphurous conflagration. Conquest was the characteristic of old Rome, commerce of the new. If the object be to symbolize the commercial aspects of world-religion, especially in its mediæval and final forms, nothing could be more appropriate.

The human mind has never been competent calmly to judge the great religious systems of the world, metropolitan, splendid, wealthy, ambitious, associated with civil pomp and power; the nations have been intoxicated with the maddening elixir of the enchantress's cup, and will be to the end. Only by being carried up-

ward and forward, and made to look back with Christ and heavenly myriads, can we estimate the degrading influence of such a system by whatever name known among men.

Look for a moment at the clergy in France under the ancient *régime*. The curates and vicars were no doubt many of them good men, born under the system, and honestly supposing it divine. They were poorly paid, and in many cases almost starved. "The true pastors of souls," said Mirabeau, "scarcely obtain a subsistence."

"I pity," said Voltaire, "the lot of a country curate, obliged to contend for a sheaf of wheat with his unfortunate parishioner, to plead against him, to exact the tithe of peas and lentils, to waste his miserable existence in constant strife."

Meanwhile the superior clergy "held in their grasp a third of the territory, one-half of the revenue, and two-thirds of the capital of Europe. . . . The one hundred and thirty-one bishops and archbishops possessed in the aggregate 5,600,000 livres (\$1,120,000) of episcopal income, and 1,200,000 livres (\$240,000) in abbey. . . . A bishop thus, in the eyes of his contemporaries, . . . was a grand seignior, with an income of 100,000 livres (\$20,000)."<sup>1</sup>

"In all ages this system has been used as a means of accumulating immense sums of money,

<sup>1</sup> Taine, "Ancient Régime."

in return for the grace of God, of which it has the entire monopoly. This grace reaches not merely this life, but to an indefinite period beyond, in which the soul is neither in heaven nor in hell, but somewhere between, in a place of torment, called purgatory. . . . This gives the clergy great power at sick-beds, and over the wills of the dying, and the purses of living relatives. . . . They have also various other sources of profit, — scapularies, indulgences, masses, dispensations, medals, . . . and numerous other devices. . . . Here opens upon us the view of an immense commerce, carried on for ages, the statistics of which have never been reported. But it is well known that, at the time of the Reformation, this papal corporation and their agents had gained possession of half, and sometimes three-fourths, of the property of the various states of Europe. Nor is there any question that if the details were known, it would be found that the commerce of Tyre, of Carthage, of Venice, of the Hanse towns, of the East India Company, and of all other trading companies whatever, has been quite thrown into the shade by the traffic of this great corporation. Hence, in prophecy, its downfall is represented under the symbol of the ruin of an immense commercial city.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Edward Beecher, “Papal Conspiracy,” 134-136.

A similar statement might be made respecting the wealth, emoluments, and commercial character of the Greek and nationalized Protestant churches, though perhaps in a somewhat lower degree. Of the voluntary denominations it might be said that, although poorer, they are yet almost as costly, an unexpected, yet quite natural, result of sectarianism.

The aggregate wealth of Protestant sects may perhaps compare with that of the Roman or Greek churches; but it is so divided that each sect is straitened for means.

“The principal denominational divisions, which, if healed, would probably induce a number of the smaller ones to seek a place in the great reunion, are seventy-one in all. That is, there are twelve in the ‘Baptist’ family of churches, one constituting the ‘Disciples of Christ,’ twelve in the ‘Lutheran,’ twelve in the ‘Mennonite,’ seventeen in the ‘Methodist,’ twelve in the ‘Presbyterian,’ three in the ‘Reformed,’ two in the ‘Episcopal.’

“It is these seventy-one Protestant ecclesiasticisms, each of them regarded by all the others as substantially ‘evangelical,’ to whose coming together we must especially look when we expect a realization of the idea of church unity.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Church Union*, June 15, 1893.

Seventy-one "principal denominational divisions," each with its real estate, newspapers, colleges, church edifices, and often poorly paid ministers. Does not the struggle for existence between so many "ecclesiasticisms" introduce a commercial element as real, and as injurious, as that in the Roman and Greek communions? Voltaire pitied the poor curates of his day, — might he not with equal reason pity the poor Protestant pastors of thousands of churches all over the world, struggling for existence against each other and against the world? Is not each religious society impelled by the most potent motives to court the attendance of the wealthy, and silence the pulpit against fashionable wrongs? We will charitably suppose that such motives are struggled against, but are they not inevitably felt? And does not the rivalry between sects, and parties, and their institutions, lend acerbity to accusations of unsoundness in the faith? And may not a humble village pastor experience a martyrdom, less sharp, but more protracted, than that of the heretic chained to the stake? The latter ordeal is brief, and the martyr-soul goes in its chariot of fire to the presence of God: but the former, with its degrading accompaniments of slander, suspicion, unpopularity, disgrace, scorn, and poverty, may go on for years, for a lifetime;

while the sufferer, too deeply conscious of his own sinfulness and shortcomings, may at times feel misgivings, ask if he be not mistaken, if he do not deserve this and worse, — and, like his Master on the cross, cry, “My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?”

And are not our modern *autos da fé*, these heresy trials, sometimes of the nature of a commercial transaction? May there not be a competition between rival local churches, rival colleges and seminaries and newspapers, and even charitable missionary institutions? The thought is painful. Yet to entertain it may be salutary. There are certain aspects in which the “seventy-one principal denominational divisions” resemble streets in the great city, less central, more rural, suburban perhaps, extra mural, yet really parts of the great commercial metropolis.

Of what, then, is the conflagration of the city an emblem? We answer, the city, though “divided into three parts,” Roman, Greek, and Protestant, is one Christendom. The fire is historic fire, not volcanic, not material, but the full revelation of the righteous judgment of God upon the pride, avarice, sensuality, and cruelty of the visible church. “For, behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly,

shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Malachi iv. 1).

It is the day of which Christ speaks (Matthew vii. 22), "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out demons? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, all ye that work iniquity!"

"It is the day when the tares, long growing among the wheat, shall be gathered out, and bound in bundles to be burned" (Matthew xiii. 30). It is the day when "every man's work shall be made manifest, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is" (1 Corinthians iii. 13).

But since the time is long and the problems profound, and the controversies of the mother of harlots and her "seventy-one principal" daughters almost infinitely complex, only the intellectual omnipotence of God is adequate to that day, but — "strong is the Lord God that judgeth her."

It is the end of the great apostasy foretold



by our Lord and his apostles. That day it was foretold (2 Thessalonians ii. 3-8) "whom the Lord shall consume by the spirit of his mouth, and destroy by the brightness of his coming."

The intellectual and moral destruction of that great apostasy, when at the summit of worldly power, by a sudden intervention of divine revelation, is here vividly pictured forth. Not by thunderbolts, not by volcanic fire, not by material agencies of any kind, but by such a revelation of Christ's being, thoughts, feelings, and wishes, as will put an end to controversy, pacify, and reunite earth and heaven forever. It is immaterial whether that appearing be visible to the senses or not. It will be as unquestionable, and as spiritually efficacious, as if visible. It will be all that it ought to be to end discord, and usher in the full and final harmony.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

## COME OUT OF HER

WHEN the great warning cry goes forth, "Come out of her, my people," need we even ask the import of a summons so startling? We are reminded of one of our Saviour's parables, "About midnight there was a cry made, The bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him!"

The emblems seem to bear their analogic meaning so prominently blazoned that any explanation must be less clear than the symbols themselves. Yet the warning is too solemn, the alternative too fearful, to warrant neglect. "Come out of her, 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." This we must interpret. This we dare not misunderstand. What is great Babylon that we are warned to come out of? Are we in her? Are we captives? Can we be in any doubt?

It certainly is not the ancient city on the Euphrates, nor the "eternal city" on the Tiber,

nor yet new Rome on the Dardanelles; but something of which these are the divinely skilful emblems. It is something as prominent in religious history as either of these in political, something which all Christians can identify; for how can we come out of her if we do not know what she is? It would be strange if we could not know what that city is which we must leave, or share her plagues! A sorceress that made all nations drink of the maddening wine of her orgies! Admirable to human view, but vile and abominable in the sight of God! At the summit of earthly dominion, and able to touch the springs of motive in things temporal and eternal; and so powerful, that at the moment before her downfall, she is saying, "I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow!" So powerful, that to judge her is an exhibition of divine power, for "strong is the Lord God that judgeth her." Babylon then, both city and woman, are joint emblems of the same great reality, viz., persecuting spiritual despotism in all ages, yet with special analogic references to the age of her downfall, and the descent from above of the ideal church, free from all error and corruption.

Babylon, thus considered, is world-wide in time and space, "catholic" in a most emphatic sense. It includes all pagan systems from

Egypt down. Paganism or apostate patriarchy, essentially one and the same thing in Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece, Rome, is the oldest, most central, part of the great city. Babylon also includes all corrupt Oriental communions, together with apostate Judaism. In principle it includes also Islam, which was a strange hybrid reformation of apostate Judaism and Christianity. In the same sense Babylon may be said to include Mormonism, that strange parody of both, a vast, noxious, poisonous mushroom growth of a night. In short, Babylon includes all religious systems in proportion as they retain her false philosophy and persecuting spirit.

It may seem uncharitable to speak of the Protestant sects as being in Babylon. They are called Protestant, because they protest against the errors and corruptions of Babylon. They do indeed protest against some of her errors and corruptions, but not all. They have heard the call, "Come out of her," and have obeyed in part. They are in the city, not as going in toward the centre, but as coming out, their backs turned to the centre, and their faces to the olive-groves, vineyards, and laurels of the environs.

It has often been confessed that the Reformation was incomplete. There is nothing invid-

ious or uncharitable in such a position. Some sects may be more reformed than others, more progressive, but none can boast, or cast stones at the others.

The Church of England, for example, stands prominent among the reformed, or Protestant, bodies, venerable, in many respects admirable, yet by no means perfect. That church, under the reign of Henry VIII., had not gone far from the centre, and retraced her steps under Mary. What progress outward could she make under Froude's Elizabeth? True, there was the wreck of the Armada, but that was in spite of her parsimony and general meanness. One can hardly look upon James I., champion of the Protestant cause though he was, as a specimen of reformation, without a sardonic smile. How reformed could a church be under such a mendacious head and martyr as Charles I., or such a voluptuary as Charles II. How far out of Babylon did the Presbyterians and Independents win under Cromwell? The Westminster Assembly aimed at a hierarchy as real, and as illiberal, as that which it hoped to replace, and whose honors and emoluments to enjoy.

As a warrior, compared with other great military leaders, one cannot help admiring Cromwell. "His troops moved to victory with the precision of machines, while burning with the

wildest fanaticism of crusaders. From the time when the army was remodelled, to the time when it was disbanded, it never found, either in the British Islands, or on the Continent, an enemy who could stand its onset. In England, Scotland, Ireland, Flanders, the Puritan warriors, often surrounded by difficulties, sometimes contending against threefold odds, not only never failed to conquer, but never failed to destroy and break in pieces whatever force was opposed to them. They at length came to regard the day of battle as a day of certain triumph, and marched against the most renowned battalions of Europe with disdainful confidence. Turenne was startled by the shout of stern exultation with which his English allies advanced to combat, and expressed the delight of a true soldier when he learned that it was ever the fashion of Cromwell's pikemen to rejoice greatly when they beheld the enemy; and the banished Cavaliers felt an emotion of national pride when they saw a brigade of their countrymen, outnumbered by foes and abandoned by allies, drive before it in headlong rout the finest infantry of Spain, and force a passage into a counterscarp which had just been pronounced impregnable by the ablest of the marshals of France.

“But that which chiefly distinguished the

army of Cromwell from other armies was the austere morality and the fear of God that pervaded all ranks. It is acknowledged by the most zealous Royalists that in that singular camp no oath was heard, no drunkenness or gambling was seen, and that, during the long dominion of the soldiery, the property of the peaceable citizen and the honor of woman were held sacred.”<sup>1</sup>

That army was a kind of church militant. As compared with other visible churches of that day, it was far out from the centre of Babylon. But they were still within the limits of the great city. They were “coming out,” but not yet “out.” They thought themselves entirely extricated, entirely outside the great city, but they were not. They were a Protestant sect, a church-militant, but speedily disbanded; and the reformation went backward and disappeared.

“Oliver is gone, and with him England’s puritanism, laboriously built together by this man, and made a thing far-shining, miraculous to its own century, and memorable to all centuries, soon goes. Puritanism without its king is kingless, anarchic, falls into dislocation, self-collision; staggers, plunges into ever deeper anarchy; king, defender of the puritan faith,

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay, “History of England,” vol. i., p. 91.

there can now none be found; and nothing is left but to recall the old discrowned Defender, with the remnants of his four surplices, and two centuries of Hypocrisia, and put up with all that as best we may. The Genius of England no longer soars sunward, world defiant, like an eagle through the storms, 'mewing her mighty youth,' as John Milton saw her do; the Genius of England, much liker a greedy ostrich intent on provender and a whole skin mainly, stands with its *other* extremity sunward; with its ostrich head stuck into the readiest bush of old church-tippetts, king-cloaks, or what other sheltering fallacy there may be, and *so* awaits the issue."<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, in a free republic, the asylum of the oppressed, the home of liberty, the churches, Catholic and non-Catholic, puritan and impuritan, after a few generations and a great war for independence, are confronted with the system of American slavery, and locked in a Laocoön death-struggle, costing thousands of lives, and burdening the future with a war-debt of many millions. And now the faithful in all denominations are looking each other in the face, and asking, what next? Is this a free country, or are we serfs of Tammany, and similar vile organizations in our great cities?

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle, "Cromwell's Letters," etc., vol. ii., pp. 411, 412.



We are all of us at times dimly conscious that we are captives in Babylon. Thought-structures, asceticisms, mediævalisms, traditional philosophies and prejudices, hem us in, and imprison us in streets and lanes, with angles hard as adamant, high-towering, and shutting out heaven's light. Yes, we are breathing the miasms of the Pontine marsh! Some of us may do business in the city, and have sylvan retreats abroad; some, like Rahab of old, have a house on the wall; and some may kindle Protestant *autos da fé* in the public squares.

And what is to be the fate of this great spiritual city? We have already indicated the answer, in general, to the question. Not a gradual reformation of the corrupt churches into some final Catholic union. If we had seen in vision the city, like Paris under Napoleon III., re-edified street by street, with fine palaces and neat modern dwellings, the old walls pulled down, the fosse filled up, the wharves and quays of new Rome crowded with fleets of all nations; or the Pontine marshes of old Rome drained, the environs planted with vines, olives, and eucalyptus-trees, — we should have said, this is gradualism, progress, evolution. But this is just what we do not see. We see a volcanic overthrow, a Herculaneum, a Pompeii. The city quite vanishes, all its “three parts,” Roman, Greek,

Protestant, disappear ; and another city, cubic, golden, crystalline, descends, is not built up from beneath.

That great and cruel system of false religious education that has stunned and stultified and maddened the mind of mankind for more than twelve hundred and sixty years is to pass like an exhalation, like a dream. The iron compress that has distorted skull and brain, and hand and foot, is taken off. The cup that has intoxicated and infuriated the nations is dashed from the lip. And what are the ingredients of that cup of trembling that has passed round the nations ?

First represent God as infinitely unsympathizing, and man as infinitely unfortunate and hopeless. Teach childhood to feel its very substance intrinsically sinful ; fill youths' veins with elixir ; bid Cupid transfix young hearts with agonizingly delicious venom ; make sin sweet, oh, too sweet ! so sweet, that one will not know which is worse, to burn here with ungratified longings, or burn hereafter in penal fires forever, — then, for a consideration, sell him the privilege of sinning ; commend the red wine of passion to his lips for a piece of gold ; make merchandise of all that is purest, tenderest, most ideal, and of all that is lowest in him ; tax marriage-bed and cradle and bier, baptismal font and sacramental table ; and, when he

has lived his threescore and ten years of purchased sinfulness, terrify him by pictures of purgatorial fire into bequeathing you all his wealth, — and do this in the name of Christ; and so enslave the world, and make merchandise of the bodies and souls of men. Oh, the doom of such a system! There is indeed, we repeat, gradualism in human affairs; but there has been, is, and will be, catastrophism also, — crises of judgment, sudden and awful.

“Thus,” says the angel, hurling a millstone into the sea, “thus with violence shall great Babylon be thrown down and be no more at all! That whole base and debasing system in its “three parts” of Roman, Greek, and Protestant absolutism, which touches nothing that it does not defile, which bears false witness against God, and equally false witness against man, is to be utterly destroyed in a moment. As when one awakes from some terrible dream, and finds the sun shining and the birds singing, so shall mankind awake from the nightmare of ages, and find the sun risen and millennial songs begun.

We cannot interpret this all-comprehending emblem on the low plane of sectarian controversy. We cannot say to Rome, “Thou art Babylon,” or to the Greek Church, or to any one of the Protestant sects.

We fly up and look down on the city “divided into three parts,” from the heavenly plane. We fly forward, and out of the fastnesses of eternity look back on time. And as Christ unrolls the scroll, and causes all celestial minds to see the sin, sorrow, shame, and doom of that spiritual city, we cry, with the back-looking choir:—

“Alleluia! Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments.”

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

## BRIDAL

THE omnipotence of God in the material universe is manifest; in the moral universe it is still more manifest, or will be when our spiritual powers are fully unfolded.

When we look at the constellations of the nightly sky, and think that those stars are suns; that those suns with their attendant planets, seemingly fixed, are moving with immense velocity through inconceivable depths of space, — we are overwhelmed at the power manifested by the great and dreadful God, “ who calleth them all by their names; by the greatness of whose power not one of them faileth.” But when, in imagination, we people those countless planets with intelligent inhabitants, and think them governed by truth and moral influence, we conceive of a higher kind of power, a grander form of omnipotence, the omnipotence of law, of light, and of love. And when we begin faintly to conceive the possibility that on this small planet, a mere grain of sand, less

than the fine dust of the balance, there has been room for the cross, and for the exertion of a moral omnipotence capable of governing the entire universe of mind, then we gain an idea of moral omnipotence. Here, here in this small world, is the infinite abyss, the height and depth and breadth and length of the love of God that passeth knowledge. Hence, when the work of redeeming love reaches a certain illustrious stage, we hear the outburst of song, "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us rejoice and be glad, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Such was the song as heard by the seer in the vision. Subsequently, when writing the visions, he adds, by way of interpretation (the real again breaking through the emblematic), "and to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

The bridal is announced, but not yet witnessed. "*ἦλθεν* ('is come'), *ἠτοιμασεν* ('hath made ready'), are in a measure proleptic," says Alford. Things are often said to be done when they have begun; to be seen when they are foreseen, as when Christ says, "I saw Satan as lightning falling from heaven." The false church has been destroyed, the true church is

about to be established. "This figure," says Alford, "of a marriage between the Lord and his people is too frequent and familiar to need explanation. Indeed, it penetrates almost everywhere the thoughts and language used respecting Christ and his church."<sup>1</sup>

Of what, then, is this anticipated bridal the emblem? Does it shadow forth the installation of any existing sect, or of any conceivable union of sects, as the visible bride of Christ on earth? Or is the bride here the emblem of the risen and glorified church, the church of "the first resurrection," raised in incorruption, in glory, in power, and in a spiritual body (1 Corinthians xv. 43, 44)? We might, indeed, rashly think that, as the false bride has been removed, the true bride would take her place, as a visible corporeal organization in flesh and blood; but this would be heedlessly to repeat the very error which made the false church what she was. That was Israel's mistake when they rejected Jesus. They thought the crown must precede the cross. They did not understand that our incarnation and that of our Head is a humiliation; and that without regeneration, i.e., resurrection, no man can see the kingdom (John iii. 3). In vain Christ told them, "my

<sup>1</sup> Compare Isaiah liv. 1-8; Ezekiel xvi.; Hosea ii. 19; Matthew ix. 15; xxii. 2; xxv. 1; John iii. 29; Ephesians v. 25; etc.

kingdom is not of this world" (John xviii. 36), neither in spirit, nor in form; they could not, or would not, understand. The disciples to the last moment, even at the Passover supper, "disputed which should be the greatest" (Mark ix. 34; Luke xxii. 24); and after the crucifixion, on the road to Emmaus, mournfully said, "we trusted it had been he that should have redeemed Israel" (Luke xxiv. 21). And even then he had to exclaim, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Messiah to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luke xxiv. 24, 25.)

That was Israel's mistake, the crown before the cross; that also, in a measure, has been and is the church's mistake. The conditions of this life are for suffering, not reigning. It was only "through death" that Christ himself could "destroy him that had the power of death." The attitude of celestial orders with whom we wrestle, principalities, powers, world-rulers, is such, and the conditions of human society such where death reigns, that not reigning, but suffering, is in order. "Ye shall indeed drink of my cup and be purified with my purgation; but to sit on thrones is not mine to give," i.e., under the present dispensation. It was that great mistake, with the accompanying



spirit of pride, ambition, and avarice, that so early and deeply corrupted everything, and brought in the great predicted apostasy (2 Thessalonians ii. 3).

Let us not then, in these last days, make the same mistake, by disputing which of existing churches will be greatest in the millennium. They will neither of them reign, nor even exist, in the millennium. The bride, when united to her Lord, will be not only like him, meek and lowly in heart, fitted to care for the weak, ignorant, and erring, but also as beautiful, immortal, and glorious as he. Dwelling as he dwells, in the unseen, confined by no gravitative law to one poor spot of earth, but free of the universe, her inauguration, perceptible to the spirit, and at times, if needful, to the senses of mankind, will be hailed with alleluias above and below.

When Christ went up alone, first and only begotten from the dead, the anthem pealed forth: —

“Lo! his triumphal chariot waits,  
And angels chant the solemn lay —  
Lift up your heads, ye heavenly gates,  
Ye everlasting doors give way!”

But when the bride ascends, one with her Lord, a sweeter, tenderer strain will be heard: —

“ Loose all your bars of massy light,  
And wide unfold the ethereal scene.  
He claims these mansions as his right ;  
Receive the King of Glory in ! ”

Blessed then will be their wedding guests,  
the postponed non-elect of former generations,  
called by reincarnation to the millennial banquet,  
the marriage supper of the Lamb.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

## ARMAGEDDON

“The battle of the great day of God Almighty.”

REVELATION XXI. 14.

WHILE we are enraptured at the thought of a celestial bridal and of a wedding festival, there is a sudden interruption, an astonishing modulation in the movement. The emblems of a betrothal banquet disappear, and those of battle and carnage rush in. There is no wedding supper, or none visible; instead of the bridal *cortège*, we behold an advent of celestial horsemen and a world-wide battlefield. In a former vision we have seen the armies of the world gathered on the great Esdraelon plain. There the vision left them, no opposing force being visible. Now the same scene returns to view. On one side are the wild beast and false prophet, and combined armies of the nations; on the other side no army of Israel is seen or implied. The Holy Land appears to be wholly in the possession of the Gentile invaders.

Israel is either destroyed, or hid in dens and caves, and on the point of being annihilated.

On such occasions ancient legends delight to tell of celestial champions appearing, as when of old "they fought from heaven, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." So now, in the clouds above the dread arena appears the host of white-robed horsemen, moving to battle.

Shall we recoil in horror from the contemplation of that sanguinary battlefield? Has not literature and poesy ever delighted in the pomp and circumstance of war, especially in the cause of human freedom? Shall we study the Marathons, the Thermopylaes, the Waterloos, and Gettysburgs of history, exclaiming, —

"To warrior boune for battle-strife,  
Or bard of martial lay,  
'Twere worth ten years of peaceful life,  
One glance at their array!" —

and shall we shrink in horror from this decisive field, where the armies of despotism and cruelty perish forever, and the defenders of truth, liberty, and love are rescued from destruction, and made triumphant?

The leader in this campaign is "Faithful and True;" it is a warfare waged on other principles than those of force and fraud. "In righteousness doth he judge and make war." On his

head are many crowns, not of one world only, but of all worlds. He is fighting for the rights and liberties of the moral universe. His name and nature none but he himself could know. The depths of his genius and his love only he could fathom. He is clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, shed from the foundation of the world, and his name is called

*THE WORD OF GOD.*

Such are some of the features of the vision. Can we see them? "He that hath eyes to see, let him see." Let each reproduce the vision as he best may with those inward eyes of his, the eyes of imagination. Some features of the vision are emblematic, and others not. Some pertain merely to the setting of the stage, so to speak, the scenic effect of the panorama. We cannot, for ourselves, see a two-edged sword visibly proceeding out of the mouth of the leader of the cavalcade, as he descends on the field; nor can we imagine him smiting squadrons with iron mace, and trampling them down, while —

"Their hoof-beaten bosoms are trod to the plain."

But we can see something of which these dreadful emblems would be the appropriate symbol. We can see him speaking, and at the motion of his lips distant ranks are falling. The breath

of his lips slays the wicked like a sword. We can see him wave his iron rod over the sea of strife, and distant legions dissolving, as if dashed in pieces. We can see his steed "pawing in the valley," and the distant field of the dead assume the appearance of having been trampled by cavalry. By a series of emblematic hyperboles, we see effects, the results of his commands, and we conceive that he does all that he commands to be done. His voice is sword and iron rod, for he is "The Word of God."

The entire battle of the great day of God Almighty, to its remotest incident, emanates from his person, not from his physical prowess, but from his lips, his breath, his spirit. The summons to the ravens we regard as merely incidental, a poetic accessory of the awful panorama, a dramatizing of his own prediction, "Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

In asking the meaning shadowed forth by this great vision, by the law of analogy we observe in general, as such a field of battle in the natural world, so the final conflict in the intellectual and moral world.

The emblematic war is offensive-defensive; as natural Israel is defended in her extremity, and her invaders destroyed, so spiritual Israel

will be defended in extremity, when apparently on the point of logical defeat and surrender, and her assailants, the combined atheistic philosophy, science, literature, and irreligion of the world, utterly overthrown.

Israel is emblematically the embodiment of a supernatural redemptive system, reorganizing a universe convulsed by pride, fraud, and cruelty, and regenerating it through repentance, faith, forgiveness, and spiritual cleansing. The wild beast and rider, and false prophet, are the collective symbols of falsely organized society on opposite principles of pride, fraud, and force, and by false theology, false philosophy, false science, discrediting and exploding the entire supernatural system revealed in the Word of God. It is the final world-wide, decisive, logical battle of unbelief against faith, pride against meekness, craft against sincerity, selfishness against love, the world against heaven; but at the fatal moment of seeming defeat, the scales are suddenly turned. Israel is delivered, and the foe annihilated. How interpret this? Not by literal slaughter by dint of sword and mace, least of all by hurling captive leaders into lakes of literal fire and brimstone. What then? By a logical argument as decisive, as irresistible, in the arena of controversy, as these would be in the arena of war.

Such an argument the appearance of Christ would be. Such it was, as he appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus, as a specimen (*ὑποτύπωσις*) of the final conversion of Israel. That Epiphany was to Saul the highest of arguments. He knew when the light shone round him above the brightness of the sun, what it meant, what it was. This was the glorious Messiah of whom prophets had spoken since the world began. And when that divine apparition said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" and he, trembling and astonished, cried, "Who art thou, Lord?" and the vision said, "I am Jesus," it was enough; the case was closed. It convinced him in a moment of his entire mistake, and revolutionized his whole life. Everything was different. It was an argument of the most logical kind, addressed through the senses to the intellect, the sensibilities, and the moral nature. Just such an argument, though on a wider scale, and with inconceivably intensified cogency, will be the "manifestation of the Sons of God" in glory with their Head, in the first resurrection. Suppose they did nothing, and said nothing, but merely *appeared*, so that every eye of an unbelieving world could see Him and his counterparts,<sup>1</sup> his members, his bride; simply *see* them, a world-encircling con-

<sup>1</sup> Philippians iii. 21 (*συμμορφους*).



stellation of beauty and power; and after a sufficient time, withdrew behind the veil, appearing from time to time when specially needed. That would end the age-long conflict, and end it instantly and forever. That would reveal the whole poem of redeeming love. Then the whole antagonistic scheme of materialistic evolution would dissolve like the mists and miasms of the swamps and fens of the Pontine Marsh. The entire false organization of human society in church and state would stand logically defenceless.

The sight of the risen Christ in his own blood-stained vesture, and of the saints of the first resurrection, his joint heirs, would be an unanswerable argument. "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!"

Behold, O Israel, broken and scattered in all lands, a byword, and a hissing, and a proverb; behold! look on Him whom you pierced, and weep, and kneel! O nations of mankind, behold, and wail, for not Israel alone, but you, *you*, YOU, pierced him in the person of these his members, his symmorphis (*συμμορφους*), his other self.

It is indeed an outward vision of the risen saints, and their Head; but not that only, it is

above all a mental seeing of the true character of God, and of his infinite sympathy with the suffering meek through ages of persecution. Thus his righteous judgment will be fully revealed to mankind as to the systems of past ages, spiritual and temporal; and those systems could no more continue to exist in that infinite emotion of his than a wild beast in the crater of Kilanea.

All this, be it remembered, though future to us, is long past to the spectators on the empyreal plain. They from their thrones are looking back on time, while Christ opens every seal, and causes the panorama to pass before their eyes. He causes the scenes of the Advent to rise fresh in memory, as if they still saw them. He is causing them to see, not merely the events themselves, but their relation to redemption, and the reorganization of the universe, the winding up of ages. He causes them to see, as they could not in their incarnation, that this world was the Waterloo of the universe. It was built to be that. Here they will see the last great logical battle was fought, that the beloved city might descend with foundations of eternal peace.

## CHAPTER XL

## BINDING THE DRAGON

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, 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. — REVELATION XX. 2, 3.

IN a former chapter we have shown that the dragon is substantially the same emblem with the serpent in Eden (Genesis iii.). Indeed, the germs of the whole analogic or symbolic system of Revelation are present in Eden. Of Adam, Paul says, "Who is type of him that should come."<sup>1</sup> Of the formation of Eve, and her union to Adam, "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Ephesians v. 32). The whole typical system of Eden, more or less used throughout Scripture, reappears in Revelation. In that system the serpent is among the most prominent features. The details of form, size, color, locality, are varied, but the symbol is essentially the same. It is not a "myth," nor a "fable," but a type; i.e.,

<sup>1</sup> ὅς ἐστι τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος. — ROMANS V. 14.

a representative by analogy of a great historic reality. The identification of the great offender by all his aliases is very striking; "the great dragon, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world" (xii. 9).<sup>1</sup> The article *ὁ* is repeated seven times, as if we were to say, "The dragon, the great serpent, the ancient, the slanderer, the adversary, the deceiver of the whole world." A similar reduplication of the article appears here, xx. 2, "the dragon, the serpent, the ancient, who is slanderer and adversary."<sup>2</sup> The point we now make is that the emblem, or symbol, independently of its interpretation, is the same as that in Genesis. The enmity between the serpent and the woman, and their respective seeds, there predicted in words, is here exhibited in action. In Revelation xii. we have the "bruising of the heel," now, in chapter xx., the "bruising of the head." In Genesis the woman went out of paradise, the serpent stayed in; now just the reverse,—the serpent goes out, and the woman returns and stays in.

Of what, then, is the dragon the emblem? It is a most interesting, a most important question. In a large sense, we may say, it is funda-

<sup>1</sup> ὁ δράκων ὁ μέγας ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἀρχαῖος ὁ καλούμενος διάβολος, καὶ ὁ Σατανᾶς ὁ πλανῶν τὴν οἰκουμένην ὅλην.

<sup>2</sup> τὸν δράκοντα τὸν ὄφιν τὸν ἀρχαῖον ὅς ἐστι διάβολος καὶ Σατανᾶς.

mental to all right conceptions of the mediatorial system. The object of the incarnation of Christ was to destroy the Devil and deliver man (Hebrews ii. 14, 15 ; 1 John iii. 8). That which other Scriptures declare in the plainest, most literal language is here set forth by the most vivid emblems or symbols.

The dragon, then, is the emblem, or symbol, of no one earthly kingdom, but of those invisible celestial powers called cosmocrats, world-rulers (Ephesians vi. 12), and expressly distinguished from flesh and blood, according to whom the course of this world has flowed and flows.

Nor is the dragon the emblem or symbol of an infernal being. He is never spoken of as residing in Hades, nor as confined there till the millennium. Nor is he a felon, a convict, nor even a rebel, or revolted chief or outlaw, but a legitimate officer of the divine government, accusing men before God night and day, in heaven, his sway not taken away until after Christ's resurrection. To represent him as an escaped state-prisoner is to parody the entire drama of redemption. To belittle him, belittles Christ, who died to destroy him. To picture him as weak, brutal, unintelligent, destitute of genius, void of all noble aspirations, is to render ridiculous the divine government, as carrying

on a war of ages against an already defeated and imprisoned rebel permitted to escape from prison on purpose to levy war. On that hypothesis not even the genius of Milton could

“ Assert eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to men.”

By the ascension of Christ, and his disclosure of the facts of his own sufferings, the moral influence of the cosmocratic powers was destroyed in higher worlds, and the Accuser of the brethren cast down, not by

“ Thunder  
Wing'd with red lightning and impetuous rage,”

but by truth and holy emotion. Christ's blood cast the Accuser down, because the Accuser shed that blood. Christ's blood purified heaven, because it convicted the Accuser of having shed that blood. His moral influence was destroyed in other worlds, though intensified in this for a time, long to us, but short in comparison with past duration.

Had the cosmocracy, even then, chosen to rule on earth by Christ's principles and spirit, the remains of their power might perhaps have been accorded them. Possibly, as defeated parties will, they may have nominally accepted some of the principles of their victorious rivals. Though coming down in great wrath, they may

be supposed to veil that wrath behind a wise policy. Asceticism may have been an attempt to imitate and even rival Christ's self-denial. They retained much of their old spirit and maxims, while attempting to rule the church by asceticism, selfishness, diplomacy, and violence. To think that the chief cosmocrat consciously set out to do evil, *as evil*, to ruin as many souls as possible, to do as much harm and as little good as he could, — comes too near to the old idea of an uncreated Ahriman of essential malignity. Let us try the hypothesis we have suggested. We will form, they said, a great and splendid spiritual empire, intensely holy, strict, self-mortifying, with all in art, architecture, painting, music, and wealth that can appeal to the imagination and the senses, and the love of dominion, yet avoiding whatever errors and mistakes we may have made in former periods, in higher, wider realms. Indignant at our defeat and exile, we will still vindicate our principles on this lower plane of being. The result has been splendid indeed. The corruptions of the visible church have come in gradually, imperceptibly; and the blame of them the cosmocratic powers have thrown on man, on nature, and on God. But at the second Advent a further defeat awaits them, a deeper, closer incarceration. They reach their St.

Helena. Hitherto they have been celestial, aërial, never yet infernal. Now for the first time they descend to Hades. But how? There are three degrees of being mentioned in Scripture, *ἐπουρανίοι, ἐπιγείοι, καταχθονίοι*, — celestial, terrestrial, subterrestrial, or subterranean. Man has passed through them all. To redeem man the Son of man must do the same. Will the cosmocratic powers follow suit? Man became incarnate. Christ became incarnate. Will the great archangel become incarnate? Will the problems of social regeneration reach a crisis when he will be compelled to step on the stage, and dazzle the world with his beauty, his genius, and his organizing power? There are some passages in prophecy that look like it, especially 2 Thessalonians ii. 8, "Then shall that wicked be revealed" (*ἀποκαλυφθήσεται*). Some of the ablest expositors, men like Alford and Ellicott, so interpret this very remarkable passage. Be this as it may, something is to be done which shall make the being of Satan and of the whole angelic cosmocracy as palpable and certain as if they became incarnate; something which shall as effectually terminate their sway over the human mind, as if they were bound with a great chain, and shut down and sealed in the abyss.

We can conceive that there might be such a



revelation made to the human understanding of Satan's past history, and of God's infinite patience and long-suffering towards him after he began to corrupt his empyreal realm by pride and fraud, as would "convince the world of judgment because the prince of this world is judged" (John xvi. 11).

We can understand further, that as the holy place in heaven was purified by the blood of Jesus, so the sanctuary of earthly thought shall be purified by the blood of the Church, the bride. Heaven was purified by revealing to celestial minds Satan's treatment of Jesus at the moment when he was claiming to be the embodiment of justice on high. Earth will be purified by revealing to all terrestrial minds by the risen elect his treatment of them, not only during the world empires before Calvary, but especially in the succeeding era. We can conceive that such a revelation might be made, with or without his incarnation, as would exclude him from influential contact with the human mind as really as if chained with adamant, and sealed in the heart of the globe.

Moreover, we can conceive of something, an event of great relevancy to the problem in hand, which would be the occasion of this judgment and apparent sequestration of the god of this world, namely, the inauguration of an

elect order of human beings, specially trained by an ordeal like Christ's, to take the place forfeited by the principalities and powers now dethroned.

The saints of the first resurrection will be able to sympathize with and supply human needs, for they have sinned and suffered. They have been themselves redeemed through the patience of God, by an ordeal of temptations and trials and final victory. And as Christ's return home to glory furnished to other worlds a mind qualified to preside over the universe, so their return to their native place, state, and spiritual corporeity will furnish to Christ a bride morally suited to preside with him over all; and to all worlds a maternal order adapted to joint headship of the endlessly increasing family in heaven and on earth. Of unimaginable beauty, genius, and power, even "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," they will be gentle, meek, and lowly, like their Lord and husband. They will know how to touch all the springs of the heart, and develop among the living all the long-thwarted remedial influences of this mediatorial world, so that generation after generation shall be converted in early childhood, sanctified, and fitted for heaven.

Upon such minds and such public sentiment,

what could the proud prince of the air effect, even supposing him free to come and go, locally unimpeded, among the earthly sons of God? The high and holy environment of such a public sentiment would be an impalpable, but impregnable, barrier. The facts, the naked facts, of his whole past career, would be links of a chain harder than steel, fetters more durable than adamant. Christ and his saints will exercise a versatility in the organization of society, compared with which the craft and self-interest and diplomacy of the cosmocracy in premillennial ages is but wretched bungling. The cosmocracy have been limited to a narrow range of motives, chiefly of the lower emotions; Christ and his risen elect will touch with delicacy and tact the whole diapason. The heart of humanity will respond; and the tide of healthy public sentiment rise so high that the dethroned cosmocracy, instead of being "the spirit of the age," will be so low, so degraded, as that the age will ignore their existence as completely as if consigned to a St. Helena in the Atlantic, or locked and sealed in the hollow globe.

## CHAPTER XLI

## MILLENNIAL REIGN

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ. . . . And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it. — REVELATION xx. 4, 11.

OUR most material innovation upon conventionalism is in viewing the “thrones” (xx. 4), and the “great white throne” (xx. 11), as millennial and synchronous. Conventionalism supposes a great hiatus between xx. 4, “they sat on thrones, and judgment was given unto them,” and xx. 11, “a great white throne, and him that sat on it.” But that hiatus is wholly unauthorized, wholly needless. Chapter xx. 11 is simply a return of view to give additional details, as so often happens in the visions. In fact, all the throne-scenes coincide, to one who flies past them, and looks back from eternity. The four and twenty thrones of the earliest throne-pageant (iv. 2), are essentially one with the latest (xxii. 1), and with all intermediate throne-scenes (xx. 11, xxi. 5). They are all millennial thrones, all looking back on time past,

while Christ opens the scroll, and makes history live again. The enthroned saints (xx. 4) are living the resurrection life; the dead standing before the throne are the reincarnate dead, who live not again in the full sense of immortality till the thousand years are finished. They are "the dead, small and great," in the sense that living men were of whom Jesus said, "let the dead bury their dead," or to whom Paul said, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

Thus viewed, xx. 12 is an embodied fulfilment of the gospel Christ preached to the spirits in prison (1 Peter iii. 19), that is, "to the dead" (1 Peter iv. 6), "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh" (the dead, but reincarnate), "and live according to God in the spirit" by a resurrection of life during the thousand years.

This was the gospel, the good news that Christ preached to the dead. The vision before us sees it accomplished. We must needs dwell upon this correction of conventionalism with reiteration and emphasis. Our minds are apt to run in ruts and grooves. We become enslaved to old habits and superficial glosses. We cannot think new thoughts without pain. Our minds form calculi about the joints, and the prehensile faculties are lame and laggard

and painful. We cannot break through the quickset hedge of cosmocratic misinterpretation without many a scratch and tear.

We repeat it again and again, the great white throne (xx. 11) stands among the thrones of xx. 4. "He that overcometh," says Christ (iii. 21), "shall sit with me in my throne." We see it substantially when the great white throne is encircled by the four and twenty thrones. The emblems differ in minutiae of detail, but are analogically the same, modified symbols of the same immortal reality.

In the earliest throne-scene the cherubic throne-bearers are chanting, "we do reign on the earth;" and in the latest, he that sits upon the throne is saying, "behold I am making all things new." It is "the regeneration" of which Jesus spoke to the twelve (Matthew xix. 28), "Ye that have followed me in my trials shall in the regeneration sit on thrones." And lo, here we see them! It is one grand throne-scene repeatedly exhibited, one royal court with different paraphernalia. Why should "the thrones" of xx. 4 be supposed a thousand years removed from the "throne" (xx. 11)? Why sever the members from their head? Why enthrone the members *before* their head? Are they not all judgment thrones? Is not "judgment given unto them" as really as unto him? And what

is "judgment" but "reigning"? What is in that book he is opening, but the record of their sufferings and death for his sake? "For if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him," this vision is saying. Are they not "members of his body"? and does he not say "he that overcometh shall sit with me on my throne"? His throne shall stand close by my throne, as though one and the same with mine. Reigning is judging, and judging is reigning. Christ is judging (xx. 12), and they are judging (xx. 4), and they are reigning together (xx. 6). There is no hiatus; no interval between "the thrones" (xx. 4) and "the throne" (xx. 12). Their joint judgment is their joint reign, two stereoscopic photographs of one sublime millennial kingdom. The scene of xx. 11 is no more a "general judgment" than that of xx. 4, being, in fact, one and the same, though interrupted by a parenthetic account of the unloosing of Satan and the episode of Gog and Magog. That very episode confirms our view, for what is "the beloved city" which they "compass about" (xx. 9)? What but "the holy city," "the new Jerusalem"? And that holy city, the bride already standing there before Satan's unloosing, must have descended at the beginning of the thousand years, and been there throughout its whole course. The episode is thrown in, and

then the view returns again to the reign as a whole (xx. 11, 12), showing that it was over the entire race of past ages, historic, and pre-historic, but now reincarnate, and endowed with memory of their former life, or lives, all books being opened.

In accordance with this view, notice the explanatory clause thrown in by the seer of Patmos, as he is subsequently recalling and recording his visions.

*“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.” These remarkable words are almost verbatim the same which John heard from the Saviour’s lips years ago, while yet on earth.

“They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection<sup>1</sup> from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.” Our Lord’s words are very striking, — “the ex-anastasis, which is from the dead.” John simply quotes them as to their sense, saying the “first

<sup>1</sup> τῆς ἐξανάστασεως τῆς ἐκ νεκρῶν, LUKE XX. 35, 36.



resurrection," instead of "exanastasis;" "hath part in," instead of "obtain;" "second death hath no power," instead of "die no more;" "children of God," instead of *ισαγγελοι*, "equal unto the angels."

They are evidently the elect, royal, sacerdotal order, returned to the condition of immortality, incorruptible, spiritual, powerful, glorious; and their ordeal of rescue is ended, they are no longer liable to final apostasy and the second death. Of course, those over whom they reign, the reincarnate non-elect of former ages, are thus liable. It is yet an open question with them whether they will yield to or resist millennial remedial influences.

If it was necessary to the completeness of the ordeal of Christ and of his joint heirs that they should stand against world majorities, there must be world majorities for them to stand against: Yet those same majorities, however guilty in mass, are composed of salvable material, who do not commit the unpardonable sin, and will by reincarnation be subjected to the full remedial influence of the millennial dispensation.

Such, being free, and capable of resisting the Holy Spirit and good influences, will still be liable to the second death in the exercise of their free accountable agency. To that extent the sec-

ond death has some power over them. The risen saints are no longer in that category; they are confirmed in blessedness and holiness beyond danger of change; and their office, as *angelic* kings and priests, is to prevent that liability on the part of their subjects from becoming actual death. And to this the whole immense power of their order will be exerted from year to year and century to century. In this higher sense "the rest of the dead" lived not again till the end of the thousand years. They are reincarnate, but not yet immortal. The process which is to result in their immortalization is begun — but not complete till the thousand years are finished. As an army in review does not pass the grand stand till the last regiment has gone by, so it takes the main army (every man in his own *ταγμα*, order, division, regiment) a thousand years to march by. They do not all live again, in the full celestial sense, till the thousand years are past.

Of what, then, it is time to ask, have we in this millennial throne-scene and reign the complex symbolization? Not that Christ and his risen elect will sit on visible material thrones, in Jerusalem or elsewhere, as early Christians may have thought, but that they will do something of which that might be an emblem.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Ezekiel xl.-xlviii.

Existing in the invisible state, though not straitly confined thereto, in modes proper to their original native celestial condition, they will energize through the proper channels, so as to control the course of the world, in business, pleasure, education, art, and religion. They will supplant the cosmocracy, and become in their stead a true, benign, and glorious world regency of light, love, and joy. Yet they shall do this unobtrusively, from behind the veil, so that every problem shall seem to be worked out by the living themselves, — according to the operation of their own minds, through healthy brains no longer poisoned and maddened and narcotized by alcohol, — and by the full and healthful exertion of all their energies.

And yet those powers of the living will be greatly opened up. The books will be open, — the book of science, the book of history, the book of memory. Men will remember somewhat of their past life or lives. Something of their past existence on earth, something of their past existence before earth was, in the heavenly fatherland, will be opened by Christ, and will constitute one powerful remedial agency of that blessed estate.

At the same time there is reason to think that Christ and his elect, though of a spiritual mode of existence and generally invisible, will

from time to time *appear* among the inhabitants of earth wherever needed, more frequently, more confidentially, more blissfully, than of old in Eden or in the tents of Israel.

Conventionalism, with singular literalism, supposes this world is to be burned up in the great conflagration mentioned by Peter, before the millennium, and purified by fire. But the world is pure enough already. The crater of an extinct volcano is no purer than any other place. The curse on the ground is the curse of the selfish men that live on it, and the invisible cosmocracy that misgovern it. It is human sin, ambition, and folly that defile this fair creation. The globe may, indeed, plunge into the sun, and return to a nebulous state; but it will be millions of years hence, after the millennial reign, and not before.

Over whom, then, we ask conventionalism, will the saints reign? Over a kingdom without subjects? Does reigning consist in sitting idle on thrones, and wearing crowns in an empty world? Or ruling over beasts, birds, fish, and insects, without a single intelligent subject?

The generation living before the Advent will not be exterminated, however destructive the judgments of that day may be. Infants, children under age, irresponsible in the eye of law,

will survive ; and of such, in a sense not generally thought of, will be the kingdom of heaven. There will be a new influx of souls, in conditions of health and happiness, — war, intemperance, pestilence, and diseases of all kinds, unknown ; destroyers destroyed. In that rising generation all that have ever lived on the globe will reappear. And when the influence of proud and hostile spirits is withdrawn, when the influence of pure, humble, meek, and loving spirits flows in, there will be universal health of body and mind, repentance, faith, forgiveness, reconciliation, and rejoicing in redeeming love. This, this, is “the kingdom” so often mentioned, — the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God. For this our Lord taught us to pray “thy kingdom come !”

Amen. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly !

## CHAPTER XLII

## THE DRAGON RELEASED

THE history of redemption is not one of growth alone, but also of battle; not of progress in a straight line, but of marching and counter-marching, flanking and out-flanking; not of brute force, but of spirit, principle, and character. Christ rides prosperously by reason of truth, meekness, and righteousness; the prince of the power of the air works by pride, fraud, and selfishness.

The conflict began in higher realms of being. From other and higher battlefields the combatants marched through the Eden portal upon this planet, — a mere grain of sand among the amazing suns and systems of space, yet ample for a moral Waterloo, by which the universe of mind, grander than the universe of matter, was to be regenerated, and restored to holy love and harmony with God.

On that portal is chiselled in mystic archaic characters the proem of the mighty drama, a declaration of war. "I will put enmity be-

tween thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. Thou shalt bruise his heel ; he shall bruise thy head."

The bruising of the heel has been accomplished in the temptations and trials of the woman's seed through all time, but especially on Calvary. The bruising of the head has also had partial fulfilments in the judgments on the seven great world despotisms, but especially in the expulsion of the Accuser from heaven at the resurrection of Christ. Then our great High Priest entered the holy of holies, with his own blood to purify heaven. Then, by that blood feloniously shed by the accuser of the brethren, the accuser was himself accused, convicted, and cast down. Then first the great archangel ceased to be the official representative of God, invested with the power of death, i.e., of life and death. But his influence, circumscribed in other, higher realms, was intensified in this. Here he continued to sit in the temple of God, showing himself as God ; putting his own character, proud, deceitful, cruel, into the civil and religious systems of the era, as the character of Jehovah. That is why the great ecumenical confessions say nothing, or next to nothing, of Satan ; they have one on the throne, they do not need two.

Against this, the true character of God as

embodied in Jesus was to be exhibited in the life, sufferings, and death of his members. They loved not their lives unto death. They overcame the accuser by the blood of the Lamb. Members of Christ's body, his flesh, and his bones, their blood was his blood, and his blood theirs. This ordeal was to continue till the millennium; then the Holy Spirit should "convince the world of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

With miracle or without, with visible advent or invisible, by whatever means he saw to be necessary, the Holy Spirit should raise the mind of man high enough, and supply evidence full enough, to break Satan's power over the public sentiment of earth; on the same principle that at his resurrection he had broken his power over the public sentiment of heaven, and cast him down, and purified the empyrean of his presence.

Then rose the great civil and ecclesiastical despotisms of our era, which have well-nigh run their predicted course. The hour is approaching when the being, history, and principles of the God of this world are to be divinely judged, all fabulous, mythologic, monkish disguises stripped off; and to him it will be said, as anciently to the prince of Tyre, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy



brightness: I will cast thee to the ground." For the first time he is a convict, a felon, a state's prison criminal. The immense anachronism of Milton is swept away; for the first time he is bound, shut up in Hades, and a seal set upon him for a thousand years. Then first his real greatness and his real guilt will be disclosed. Not an uncreated evil principle. Not Ahriman. Not Mephistopheles. Not any fabulous or magical monster. What belittles him derogates from the victory of Christ. To destroy him the Son of God was manifested. Great was that power, sublime that indomitable pride, profound that genius, which only such a divine sacrifice could subdue. "The strong man armed holdeth his castle, till a stronger than he come upon him, and take away his armor of proof." Mazy and manifold his wiles, before whom to stand in the evil day demanded the whole armor of God. Specious and able to the highest degree his defence of his administration, as the best possible under such circumstances and with such material, casting all the blame on man and on God. But he is chained, and a seal set upon him. And now he is withdrawn from the stage, and all his allies with him. A thousand years of progress ensue, without his agency. No wars, with their infinite waste of blood and treasure. No intemperance, vice,

crime. No disease and death. “*Mens sana in corpore sano.*” Earth teeming with happy populations, beautiful as angels. Holy love and communion of mortals with immortals, who walk the earth not unseen, both when men wake and when they sleep.

If progress be even now so rapid, what must it be then? In the last fifty years there has been more advance than in fifty, yea, five hundred, formerly. What must it be after a thousand years acceleration?

But now the term of imprisonment expires, the seal is broken, and the captive released. On what principles can we explain that release? How can we, —

“To the height of this great argument  
 . . . . assert Eternal Providence,  
 And justify the ways of God to men”?

We come here to the most difficult point of all the visions of Patmos. We see the great captive incarcerated for a thousand years. At the end of that term we see him released. He does not escape like Napoleon from Elba. He is released, as if Great Britain had sent her fleet to St. Helena, and carried Napoleon back to France. He was sentenced for a thousand years, — the thousand years are past, and now he must be loosed; —

δεῖ λυθῆναι.

The same power that imprisoned him now releases him. Why is this, and how? If the imprisonment was by logical and moral means, the release must in some way correspond. It cannot be a flaw in the indictment, a weak link in the chain that bound him, and his with him. No new facts have been discovered in his past history entitling him to a new trial. The great facts which at Christ's ascension put an end to his influence in heavenly worlds are still on record; the disclosure of those facts by the Holy Spirit to mankind at the second Advent, which destroyed his influence on earth, and logically bound him in Hades, are not forgotten, and cannot be, — yet he is "loosed." It is necessary —  $\delta\epsilon\iota$  — it is an act of the divine government, which is now in the hands of Christ. Christ releases him. Such must be the fact stated. What is the object of that fact? It cannot be from any loss of skill and moral power on the part of Christ and his saints, nor from a decrease of interest; above all, it cannot be such a voluntary discharge as the poet describes, when, —

"On a sudden open fly  
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,  
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate  
Harsh thunder," —

and Satan is suffered to invade a new-created

world, and deceive an unfallen race. All such hypotheses are equally incredible.

May it not be, then, to afford him and his one last opportunity of amendment? Not that Hades has proved a better school than the air or the earth, but the contrary. This material world schoolroom is the best that could be made, the masterpiece of divine ingenuity for remedial as well as warlike purposes, made for Christ to subdue foes and redeem captives.

If there be remedial influences in Hades, they must be remote, and dependent on the promise of reincarnation. The good news preached to the dead by Christ was that they might, in the millennium, by reincarnation, be judged, i.e., reigned over, according to men in the flesh, in order to live according to God in the Spirit." Such for them was Paul's "hope toward God," that "there shall be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust."

"From that hope must we be excluded?" perhaps the fallen cosmocrats complainingly asked. "Is that right? Is it fair? Is it even just?"

Conventionalism has, in fact, now for two thousand years told their story so as to excite sympathy for them. They were upright, they had never corrupted their government, their banners —

“In their glittering tissues bore emblazed,  
Holy memorials, acts of zeal and love  
Recorded eminent.”

Yet for no fault of their prince he was suddenly dethroned, and another anointed in his room. Indignant at such treatment, they were cast down for a first offence, without opportunity for amendment. If such a specious tale could be believed on earth after all the disclosures of Calvary, might it not be listened to by other races, sung by other Miltons, in new-created worlds? Might it not be deemed wise to obviate the possibility of a plea like this, — “Redemption was never offered to us; if we had been as mercifully treated as mankind, we would have done differently.”

A thousand years incarceration of those proud cosmocratic Bourbons — some new-created race might think — may have taught them something; why not let them try the experiment? Whatever Ommiscience might foresee to the contrary on that point, the compassionate Christ might think it expedient to make the attempt, and let the universe see the result; see one more exhibition of the infinite patience and long-suffering of God, in putting even them to school in this mediatorial world, the best remedial system infinite wisdom could devise, and giving them for teacher the compassionate and

unrevengeful bride of Christ. Thus would the universe be taught the essential harmony of the wrath of the Lamb with the dying prayer of Jesus, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!"

There is no malignity in the divine vengeance, naught like what earth calls revenge. Holy love hates pride, but not the proud; abhors and condemns the whole age-long system and method of deceit, cruelty, and self-deification, and tones up the mind of the universe to be to that system a consuming fire, but hates not the individuals who composed that system.

The woman, whose worst enemy they have been, while she abhors their pride, fraud, and cruelty, pities them, and is ready to become their patient teacher. She does not persuade her Lord and husband. He taught her to love her enemies, and pray for them. He inspires and blesses her, while she teaches her persecutors the alphabet of truth, meekness, and love, of which Jesus is Alpha and Omega, offering them not indeed restoration to primeval station, which is now in other, safer hands, but amnesty, and the rewards of patient service in private life. There is infinite work for them to do, in world-building and other cosmic structures; and by incarnation they may quaff Lethe, the river of oblivion, —

“Whereof he who drinks  
Forthwith his former state and being forgets,  
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.”

Thus may they quench the otherwise unquenchable fire of remorse.

But what is the result described according to this hypothesis? During ten centuries, at least, all that have ever peopled this planet, re-enter, and repent. At the close of the tenth century the cosmocracy, with such human spirits as may have become most identified with them, become incarnate, and rise upon the stage as a new generation, and bring with them a new but gradual change.

No feeling is so deep, so subtle, so deceptive as pride, ambition, the love of power. Some sins seem to spring from the material organization. Pride is purely spiritual. The world, during the ten centuries, has become sublimated, etherealized, transfigured. It is full of riches, knowledge, arts, sciences; full of inhabitants; full of everything attractive to genius, aspiration, ambition. Gradually, imperceptibly, the deeply latent habits of the spirit begin to work, and rising to the height of that exuberant civilization, they begin to re-enact the old *rôle* of Pharisee and tyrant. The Pharisee is a play-actor who acts the part of asceticism and humility so well that he deceives himself, and does

not know that he is acting a part. Thus pride, scorn, and contempt of inferiors revive, and a new declension ensues on the same principles, substantially, that it originated anciently in heaven, and manifested itself in the dynasties of earth. The inevitable consequence is division. The wealth, science, art, numbers, and powers of that day, after ten centuries rapid development, offer a field to latent ambition. They grasp at social pre-eminence and the dominion of the globe, and the gradual re-enslavement of the relatively weak; all which is symbolized by the armies of Gog and Magog compassing the holy city, which descended at the Advent. Thus a new struggle would be inaugurated between the principles of pride, fraud, and force, and the principles of meekness, truth, and love, which are the inmost principles of the divine nature.

But that campaign has been fought through once. The universe is not to groan and travail in pain together to try it over again. They have had one ample final opportunity; all that the creature universe could demand, or even think of, to exhibit a proper character. So they are dismissed finally from the stage, and cast into the lake of fire.

And what, then, is symbolized by this which is described as "the second death"? Several



hypotheses may be formed ; and on a period so remote, and problems so vast, we cannot go beyond hypothesis.

1. The hypothesis of restoration after long-continued suffering, on due submission and the oath of allegiance.

But this is in direct conflict with all the emblems. Neither in these visions, nor in any parallel Scriptures, is there any intimation of such a result. The entire mediatorial system was to destroy Satan and his works. Christ must reign till he have put down all rule, authority, and power. Then cometh the end. There is never in Scripture the least suggestion of restoration in connection with Satan.

2. We have, then, the hypothesis of literal torment, both physical and mental,—Omnipotence exerting itself to sustain and increase the capacity for suffering by direct torture forever. This, which results from a too-literal interpretation of the emblematic language of Scripture, is felt by increasing numbers of Christians to be contrary to the divine perfections, as it is to the laws of analogic language, and will soon be outgrown.

3. We have the hypothesis of what may be called political destruction. Principalities and powers, world rulers, become mere ciphers, as far removed from the great affairs of the ever-

growing moral universe as Napoleon at St. Helena was from the affairs of Europe. This hypothesis encounters less reaction from a benevolent mind.

4. There is still a fourth hypothesis, namely, that of extinction of being. This is a possible theory, and entertained by increasing numbers of devout believers. On some accounts we would wish it might be true, though the evidence for it has never seemed quite conclusive. We might perhaps go so far as to say that, if the fallen cosmocracy wish for annihilation, it may be granted; but will they?

If the proud archangel wishes to exist, infinite benevolence may find him useful labor on the highways of space, harnessing comets, breaking up old planets, bombarding the globe with aërolites, and other cosmic industries. Or, if his indomitable pride still defends his past administration, let him incline to literary pursuits. The universe would like to see his version of history, especially his account of the life, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ. Fascinated by that impossible task, eternity would roll by; while, on brow and hand, in blood-red characters, ever stood out the fatal brand,—

χξσ' <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> χριστόν ξύλω σταυρώσας, "He who crucified Christ on the Cross."

But let us remember that, however vast these problems, however remote, it is the peculiarity of the method of these visions that we are made to look back upon the drama of time out of the fastnesses of eternity. We have the feeling that Christ has it recorded in that mighty scroll, on which none in heaven or on earth could so much as look; and that he is breaking every seal, and causing the scenes of time to re-enact themselves before the back-looking eyes of saints and angels. Instead of trying to look forward with dreamy eye out of the midst of the clouds and mists of earth, and disentangle the sublime and awful emblems that crowd about the dawn of day, we are summoned to ascend and look down, to fly forward and look back, — and we grow calm. We are those gold-crowned, white-robed elders; we are seeing our own past sorrows, our miraculous salvation. We are entering upon our eternal study of the breadth and length, and depth and height, of redeeming love. Eternity will roll away ere the mystery of godliness, triumphant over the mystery of iniquity, shall be fully disclosed to our souls. We are caught up; we are rapt; we seem to conjecture, to anticipate, what we shall know, though now we do not. What is this but an earnest, a first fruits, a foretaste, and seal of our redemption?

## CHAPTER XLIII

## THE BELOVED CITY.

And he showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. — REVELATION xxi. 10.

WE have already shown that the city descends at the beginning of the millennium, and not after its close. The division of the narrative into chapters may, unless we are on our guard, exercise a deceptive influence on our minds. Conventionalism thinks that xxi. 1, 2, begins a new era, as well as a new chapter; and that, to use a common but misleading expression, xx. 4 is "in time," and xxi. 2 "in eternity." Let us clear our minds from such fallacies. The city of xxi. 2 is "the beloved city" of xx. 9, which was compassed by Gog and Magog when Satan was unloosed. It is already standing in the millennium before the unloosing; and synchronizes with the "thrones and they reigned" (xx. 4), and with "the great white throne" (xx. 11, 12).

It is all millennial. As so often happens, the view returns to go over an important period

more minutely. The entire twentieth chapter is millennial; so are chapters xxi. and xxii. The view returns again and again to symbolize the same great day or epoch, with new details and greater minuteness, breadth, and wealth of imagery. It is the great day of the Lord, so often foretold in Scripture. It is the day of judgment, or right rule, for which a groaning and travailing creation has waited, and which Christ at the right hand has "expected." It is the "winding up of ages," not the end of the sublime work of redemption, but its new beginning in full dimension and power; and as this ought to transcend our highest flights of imagination, so the city surpasses all previous possibilities of symbolization. The seer is carried away in spirit "to a great and high mountain," like Ararat perhaps, or Sovran Blanc. We accompany him in thought, and as we gaze from that lofty, lonely observatory, exclaim, —

"Hast thou a charm to stay the Morning Star  
In his steep course? So long he seems to pause  
On thy bald, awful head, O Sovran Blanc!

For there, far, far away, we seem to see a new star, or heavenly body of singular effulgence.

A city? A world rather, so planet-like its lustre, so mysterious its motion, so vast its dimension. The imagination is but little as-

sisted by numbers, or by the mere outlines of map or chart. A city twelve thousand stadia<sup>1</sup> long and broad and high would be more like an asteroid than any metropolis yet known. How shall we conceive of an altitude of twelve thousand stadia? If one Mt. Blanc could inspire —

“The dilating soul, enrapt, transfused,  
There into a mighty vision passing,” —

what if a hundred Mt. Blancs were piled one above the other to —

“Rise like a cloud of incense from the earth.”

How shall we imagine such a height! It is inconceivable. The solemn altitudes of those battlements would be lost in the clouds, and the length and breadth of the quadrangular base stretch from Black to Caspian Seas, and embrace all Armenia. Suppose a crystal roof thrown over that primeval kingdom, — forests, lakes, rivers, cities, mountain ranges, — the eye at the centre, even on Ararat, could see no limit above or around. It would make the impression the sky makes of an overarching dome of azure. So, seen from within, it would be. But how seen from without, and from afar? This world in miniature, this distant portent, is not a fixed star, for it seems not altogether station-

<sup>1</sup> 375 miles.

ary. It moves. It is not a nebulous meteor or shooting-star, for its motion is gradual, scarce perceptible; nor is it a comet presaging disaster, for its light is most precious, and the whole horizon begins to brighten with its prismatic radiance. It is alive, the seer thinks; it is automatic, like the ancient cherubic chariot, —

“Self-moving it drives on its pathway of cloud,  
And the heavens with the burden of Godhead are bowed.”

And whither, oh whither, does the beautiful mystery come, like a bride adorned for her husband?

Upon no surf-beaten, wreck-strewn European shore incarnadine, do we see that far-off glory floating down, —

“Like some dark, beauteous bird whose plume  
Is sparkling with unnumber'd eyes,  
When night with wings of starry gloom  
O'ershadows all the earth and skies.”

Spirally it is wheeling lower and lower, scintillating brighter, more opaline at every gyre, and resting as clouds rest on or among or over the garden of Eden, blending its jasper and emerald foundations with the ruby and emerald bowers of paradise. O wonderful advent! Mysterious combination of opposites, colossal, crystalline cube, yet vital and feminine in beauty, adorned as a bride for her husband!

It is alive. Like the visioned cherubim on the banks of Chebar, which ran and returned like a flash of lightning, whose wheels were high as the firmament, and covered all over with eyes, and the sound of whose wings like the noise of a host, so this immense diamond projectile, this amazing aërolite, is alive, is voluntary; it floats, it rises and falls with graceful, gradual motion, like a butterfly over flowers. The movement of so vast a body must needs be almost imperceptible to sense. It settles slowly, softly down as a bird to its nest, and its jewelled foundations do not bruise the bloom of Eden, which they touch with the elastic tread of a bride's foot. Luminous, but not with reflected light; shining from within, but not by candle or by torch, but by the glory of the Lord, —

“For every soul shines as the sun,  
And God himself gives light.”

Cloudland above cloudland, thick sown with incandescent angel-forms, like fireflies in a tropic night! No frost in that electric city, even to the surface of the atmospheric sea, or hundreds of miles above and around in the mysterious ether. The delicate network walls of filmy gold, the diamond panes, shut out frost and shut in millions of spirit song-birds like embryo angels. The posts and bars and sash



of that aviary intangible but infrangible ; geometrical lines without thickness, mathematical points of force without magnitude ; planes of electric magnetic action, the continental cube ethereal, yet stronger than steel or adamant, sparkling, flashing, blazing, phosphorescent ; rimmed round the margin with a ribbon of gems, arched over above with wheels high as the firmament and full of eyes ; and in the centre the cherub-borne throne, with thunder-voices saying, "Holy, holy, holy !" and throned elders responding, "Thou has redeemed us by thy blood, and we are reigning on the earth !"

Eternal summer in that paradise city, even at sublimest altitudes, and airs fragrant and ambrosial. For here mind is creative, and sees and hears what it thinks to see and hear. Here imagination is prolific and productive, and summons a Zion or a Moriah to rise to view, and marshals the sealed army of the hundred and forty-four thousand harping with their harps, and ten thousand times ten thousand voices answering like the noise of many waters and of mighty thunderings, "Hallelujah ! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth !"

The acoustic properties of that stupendous *conservatoire* are supreme. The music rolls like an inundation ; the soul seems floating, swathed, saturated, with the harmony. It rolls

and rolls and rolls over the broad plains hundreds of miles wide and high, — the filmy walls, every fibre tuned like a harpstring, and keeping automatic time and tune, echo and pulsate with the chorus, rolling down upon the outside world the ever new old song of redeeming love.

O city of the Lord! how shall we see thee, or imagine thee, in this drear dream-life?

“ O how could these dim eyes endure  
That noon of living rays,  
Or how our spirits so impure  
Upon thy glory gaze!”

And yet our homesick souls are ever sighing and soaring and singing, —

“ Jerusalem, my glorious home,  
Name ever dear to me,  
When shall my labors have an end  
In joy and peace in thee!”

Even now, in imagination, we behold the earth baptized in splendor, overwhelmed with the down-rolling, out-swelling song, and all the nations, north, south, east, and west walking in the light, enraptured with the minstrelsy.

## CHAPTER XLIV

## ELECT

OF what, then, is this city the emblem or symbol? We answer, first, It is the same emblem, substantially, which has existed from the beginning; that is, it symbolizes the same reality which the tabernacle in all its successive forms symbolized. John hears 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."

That tabernacle — emblem of the divine presence — has appeared in various forms, progressive in complexity, symmetry, and beauty, to this the most complex and beautiful, including, as it were, all the others.

It is written, "He tabernacled<sup>1</sup> the cherubim on the east of Eden." That was visibly "the presence of the Lord" from which Cain was driven out. The camp of Israel in the wilderness was a sort of movable garden of Eden; and

<sup>1</sup> וַיִּשְׁכֵּן

the cherubic ark in the tabernacle was God's throne, or mercy-seat, where he dwelt among them, keeping house, as it were, eating bread with them as their father, king, husband, God. The same emblem, in more durable form, appears in the temple on Moriah, where the glory of the Lord filled the holy place, so that the priests could not stand to minister.

Now, this "beloved city," this camp<sup>1</sup> of the saints, is (not the reality) but the same emblem of the reality, made more expressive and complete as the embodiment of "the presence of the Lord." In short, the whole symbolic system of the Bible is summed up with augmented dimension, intensified meaning, and increased beauty, in this emblematic city. This is the first step in answering the question, Of what is this city the emblem? viz., it symbolizes the same reality that the tabernacle in all its forms from Eden down symbolized. Yet so vivid is the description, so bright and entrancing the spectacle, that we have to stop and repeat that it is an emblem or analogic image. No such material city will come down. No streets will be paved with metallic gold. No gates of single pearls will be visible and tangible to the senses. No such colossal cube will be held by gravity or otherwise on the surface of the planet. But

<sup>1</sup> παρεμβολή, xx. 9.

there will be a grander, more glorious, reality, of which this is a picture, or divinely ideal image. Of what, then, we repeat, is this out-flashing of the divine ideality the emblem?

We answer, It denotes the elect of God, risen at the first resurrection, and glorified and presiding with Christ over the millennial nations. It denotes an invisible spiritual order (*πολίτευμα*), inspiring the worship, illumining the science, controlling the legislation, idealizing the society, and perfecting the health, of the reincarnate race of man.

The doctrine of election, as commonly understood to imply the eternal perdition of the non-elect, is unspeakably mournful. It cannot be so stated as not to robe the universe in mourning. But the doctrine as presented in Scripture, as an election to office, is eminently joyful and inspiring. The Apostle Paul never speaks of it without rapture.<sup>1</sup> Why is this? It is because election exalts the elect, but does not doom the non-elect. The election is to the highest station benevolent minds can hold in all eternity, "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," and also to the ordeal necessary to fit men for that station.

Christ the heir was tried by the severest ordeal as to his truth, meekness, and self-

<sup>1</sup> See Romans viii. 28-39.

sacrifice. Principalities and powers had corrupted their government by pride, fraud, and cruelty. Christ sustained the severest ordeal on these points without fault. "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Hebrews i. 9). He was without guile. His love "many waters could not quench nor floods drown." And the key-note of the whole Revelation is, "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" (i. 5, 6). His joint heirs must drink of his cup. Their ordeal must resemble his. He preserved holiness under stress of temptation; they must recover holiness through repentance and faith under stress of temptation. Hence they are elect to holiness, not merely as holiness, but to holiness as prerequisite to joint heirship. The universe needs incorruptible rulers; and the Christ (both head and members) are so tried that the shout breaks forth from celestial myriads, "Worthy is the Lamb to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!"

The elect are those appointed to an ordeal so severe and protracted that they can bear

to receive power without becoming despotic, riches without avarice, wisdom without vanity, honor and glory without pride or deceit. This has been their history under all dispensations to the Advent, elect to stand against world majorities, that they might fitly reign; elect to a cross, that they might wear a crown.

They, then, the elect, are the city, are the bride. Our citizenship (*πολίτευμα*) is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour who shall metamorphose the body of our humiliation symmorphie with the body of his glory.<sup>1</sup>

“To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, elect, precious, ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood” (1 Peter ii. 4, 5).

They know “the fellowship of his sufferings, and are conformable to his death (Philippians iii. 10).

Here, again, that exquisite word *συμμορφούμενος* — made symmorphie, like golden medals struck by the same die, or golden balls run in the same mould. They are “heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” (Romans viii. 17). They are “the order of Melchisedec,”<sup>2</sup> destined above all

<sup>1</sup> Ὃς μετασχηματίζει τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ, Philippians iii. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews vi. 20.

other orders "to a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"<sup>1</sup> (2 Corinthians iv. 17).

We see them throughout all the visions of Patmos, in various exalted emblems. They are symbolized by "the living ones," or cherubim, who uphold the throne, and tire not chanting, "Holy, Holy, Holy!" They are imaged by the four and twenty gold-crowned presbyters, who say, "We are reigning on the earth!" They are the one hundred and forty-four thousand harpers whose harmony shakes Mount Zion above. They are the souls under the altar that cried, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood!" And they are the souls of confessors and martyrs on thrones, reigning side by side with Christ on his great white throne. In one word, they are "the city," "the bride," "the Lamb's wife."

Over whom, then, do they reign? We answer, Over the nations. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. They who reign are immortal; those over whom they reign are mortal. Mortals walk in the light of the immortal city. It is not the ending of the redeeming work, but its beginning as it were, — the beginning of its widest scope.

<sup>1</sup> Literally "from hyperbole to hyperbole weight of glory."



It is the commencement of the unrestricted, unresisted, unthwarted, uncorrupted, ministry of remedy, soul-cure, salvation. Nations born at once, converted, sanctified, translated, glorified.

And who are these nations? They are the reincarnate non-elect. They are the postponed, the deferred. They are those to whom in Hades Christ went and preached the good news, that they might by and by be judged or reigned over according to men in the flesh, by reincarnation under the ministration of the saints, and so "live according to God in the spirit" (1 Peter iii. 18; iv. 6).

That city will be to mortal senses invisible. The risen saints will not be subject to the bondage of gravitation. They will not dwell as mortals dwell in Jerusalem visible, or in any other visible locality; but their presence will be manifested in proper ways, and known and felt. The gates will be not ajar, but open wide, day and night. There will be free intercourse; and, whenever necessary, the glorified will appear to men, and hold visible and audible intercourse with them. There was no bondage to mortality when Christ walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, and made their hearts burn within them. There was no bondage when on the road to Damascus Christ shone out above

the brightness of the sun, and the mortal heard him say, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

Such free, unfettered intercourse there may be as often as needed, as often as asked for, — myriads of redeemed ones walking the earth unseen, yet capable of manifesting their presence at will.

What the effect of such an order must be on the reincarnate nations we are informed, and can partly imagine. We already know the effect of an invisible order of a contrary character, the angelic cosmocracy, symbolized by the dragon, and ruling the world by pride, fraud, and force. That order is removed, and the air purified, and occupied by beings of a different character, beings animated by meekness, truth, and love. The leaves of the tree of life will be applied to the healing of the nations. That is the office work of the elect. That is ruling. That is reigning. That is judging. That is "inheriting the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world." That is the real millennial day of judgment, not a day of doom and terror, but of coronation and triumph. Beautiful rhetorically as the "Dies Iræ" may be, it is not true, at least of the millennial reign of Christ and his saints. No —

“Tuba mirum spargens sonum,  
Per sepulchra regionum  
Coget omnes ante thronum,” —

But rather “he shall come down like rain upon the new-mown field, like showers that water the earth;” and new-born generations rise into life, healthy, wise, and loving; and “of such shall be the kingdom of heaven” on earth.

Nor need we limit the significance of the symbol to this planet. The very immensity and mystery of the emblem forbid. Its crystalline law, opposite of the law of resolution of forces, its outreach above and beyond the atmosphere, into ethereal depths, — all hint to us relationships to a wider universe; and from other Scriptures we know that Christ and his joint heirs reign over the entire universe. “He hath put all things under his feet.” He “left nothing that is not put under him” (Hebrews ii. 8). And for this “manifestation of the sons of God” the whole universe waits with earnest anticipation, groaning and travailing in pain together until now; and we also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, or sonship, in the resurrection of life (Romans viii. 22, 23).















