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RATIONALE APOCALYPTICUM.

VOLUME II.







# RATIONALE APOCALYPTICUM :

OR,

## A SYSTEMATIC EXPOSITION

OF

## THE APOCALYPSE ;

WITH

HISTORICAL PROOFS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

### THREE APPENDICES :

1. ON THE GENUINENESS AND AUTHENTICITY OF THE APOCALYPSE.
2. ON THE DATE OF THE APOCALYPSE.
3. AN ANALYSIS OF SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL MODERN COMMENTARIES FROM MEDE DOWNWARDS, INCLUDING A PARTICULAR EXAMINATION OF MR. ELLIOTT'S "HORE APOCALYPTICÆ."

BY THE

REV. ALFRED JENOUR,

AUTHOR OF A NEW TRANSLATION AND EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH.

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"DO NOT INTERPRETATIONS BELONG TO GOD?"—GEN. XL. 8.

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## CHAPTER XII.

*A woman is seen clothed with the sun, travailing in child-birth: a great red dragon stands before her ready to devour her child as soon as it is born: she brings forth a man-child, who is caught up to the throne of God: there is a war in heaven: the woman flees into the wilderness.*

AND there was seen a great sign in the sky;\* a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve  
2 stars. And she being with child cried out, suffering the pangs of labour, and travailing to  
3 bring forth. And there was seen another sign in the sky; and, behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns; and upon his  
4 heads seven diadems. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bring forth, that when she should  
5 be delivered he might devour her child. And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all the Gentiles † with a rod of iron: and her child was  
6 caught up to God and his throne. And the woman

\* This appears to me to convey a more correct idea of the meaning of the original than the A. V., "*And there appeared a great wonder in heaven.*" We almost instinctively associate with the word *heaven* the idea of the Divine presence, but nothing of the kind is here intended.

† The Greek is, πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.

fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that she should be fed\* there a thousand, two hundred, and sixty days.

- 7 And there was a war in the heaven : Michael and his angels fought against the dragon ; and the  
 8 dragon fought, and his angels, and they prevailed not ; neither was their place found any more in  
 9 the heaven. And the great dragon was cast out ; that old serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world : he was cast out unto the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.
- 10 And I heard a great voice in heaven saying, “ Now is come the salvation, and might, and kingdom of our God, and the power of his anointed : for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused  
 11 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  
 12 their lives unto death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them.” Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea ! for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a little time.
- 13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he pursued after the woman who had  
 14 brought forth the man child. And there were given to the woman two wings of the great eagle, that she might flee into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and

\* A. V. *that they should feed her*, which is strictly literal, and in accordance with the Greek idiom ; but as the pronoun *they* has no antecedent, the sense is, I think, better expressed in English by putting the verb in the passive.

15 half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the  
 serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after  
 the woman, that he might cause her to be carried  
 16 away by the flood. And the earth helped the  
 woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swal-  
 lowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his  
 17 mouth. And the dragon was enraged against the  
 woman, and went to make war with the rest of her  
 seed, who keep the commandments of God, and  
 hold the testimony of Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*Two wild beasts come up, one from the sea, the other from  
 the land: the name and number of the beast.*

AND I stood upon the sand of the sea: and I saw a  
 wild beast coming up out of the sea, having seven  
 heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten dia-  
 2 dems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy. And  
 the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet  
 were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth was as the  
 mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his  
 3 power, and his throne, and great authority. And I  
 saw one of his heads, as if it had been wounded to  
 death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the  
 4 earth wondered after the beast. And they worshipped\*  
 the dragon who gave power to the beast, and they  
 worshipped the beast, saying, "Who is like unto the

\* The Greek is, *προσεκνήσαν*, but neither this word, nor our English word *worship*, necessarily imply the giving Divine honour. To worship, according to its original meaning, is *to do obeisance to*, or, *fall down before*.

- 5 beast? who can make war with him?" And there was given him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue\*  
 6 forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and  
 7 his tabernacle, and those that dwell in heaven. And it was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over  
 8 every tribe, and tongue, and nation. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names have not been written in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world.
- 9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.  
 10 Whosoever leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; whosoever killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patient endurance and faith of the saints.

THE WILD BEAST FROM THE EARTH.

- 11 And I saw another beast coming up out of the

\* *To continue.* I here adopt the English version, which I am inclined to think gives the true sense of the word *ποιῆσαι*, although such is not its usual meaning. Mede has, however, clearly proved that it not unfrequently has this sense in the New Testament, and thinks it ought to be so translated in this place. He observes, "Videtur potius τὸ *ποιῆσαι durandi*, seu *permanendi* significatione adhiberi, ut alias solet cum vocabulis temporis. Sic enim Act. xv. 33, *ποίησαντες δε χρόνον*, *facto aliquanto tempore*; et xviii. 23, *ποίησας χρόνον τινα*, *cum egisset aliquod tempus*, seu, *aliquamdiu*; et xx. 3, *ποίησας τε μῆνας τρεῖς*, *cum fecisset menses tres*; 2 Cor. xi. 25, *νυχθήμερον ἐν τῷ βυθῷ πεποιήκα*, *noctem et diem in profundo egi*. Adde, Jacob. iv. 13. His ita se habentibus, quidni *Bestia fecit menses quadraginta duos*, sit, *vixit totidem*, *mansit*, blasphemando peregit? Cujus locutionis vim qui non intellexerunt illud (*πολεμον*) quod in quibusdam exemplaribus extat textui inseruisse videntur."—*Works*, p. 502. See my remarks on *The duration of the Seventh Head*, c. xvii.

earth ; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he  
 12 spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power  
 of the first beast before him, and he causeth the  
 earth and those that dwell therein to worship the  
 13 first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And  
 he doeth great signs, so that he makes fire come  
 down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.  
 14 And he deceives those that dwell upon the earth, by  
 the signs which he had power to do in the presence  
 of the beast ; saying to those that dwell upon the  
 earth that they should make an image to the beast  
 15 that had the wound of the sword, and lived. And  
 it was given to him to give breath to the image of  
 the beast, that the image of the beast should both  
 speak, and cause that as many as would not worship  
 16 the image of the beast should be killed. And he  
 caused \* all, both small and great, rich and poor,  
 free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand,  
 17 or in their foreheads ; and that no one should be  
 able to buy or sell unless he had the mark, or  
 the name of the beast, or the number of his name.  
 18 Here is wisdom. He that hath the mind, † let  
 him compute ‡ the number of the beast, for it is  
 a man's number ; § and his number is six hundred  
 and sixty-six.

\* Tr. *causeth*.

† Gr. ὁ ἔχων τὸν νοῦν. A. V., Let him *that hath understanding count*, &c.

‡ Gr. ψηφισατω. Let him *calculate*, from ψηφος, *calculus*, a little stone.

§ *i. e.*, a human number, a number which can be expressed in figures, and for which man has a name.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*A hundred and forty-four thousand are seen standing with the Lamb upon Mount Zion: three angels are seen flying in the mid-heaven: a voice from heaven pronounces the dead in the Lord blessed: the harvest of the earth and the vintage.*

AND I looked, and behold, a Lamb stood upon mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having his \* Father's name written upon  
 2 their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of loud thunder; and † I heard the sound of harpers  
 3 playing upon their harps: and they sang ‡ as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one was able to learn the song but the hundred and forty-four thousand that were redeemed from the  
 4 earth. These are they who were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes. These were redeemed from among men, the firstfruits  
 5 to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile, for they are faultless before the throne of God. §

*The angel with the everlasting Gospel, c. xiv. 6, 7.*

And I saw another angel flying in the midst of

\* Tr. *his name and his Father's.*

† Tr. *the voice which I heard was as that, &c.*

‡ Tr. *sing.*

§ Tr. *they are without blemish, omitting the words, before the throne, &c.*

heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to those that dwell upon the earth, and to every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people, saying  
 7 with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made the heaven, and the earth, and sea, and fountains of waters."

*Another angel proclaims the fall of Babylon, v. 8.*

And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon hath fallen, hath fallen, the great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

*A third angel gives warning of the danger of any man's allying himself with the beast, v. 9—12.*

And a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receiveth his mark upon his forehead, or  
 10 upon his hand, he also shall drink of the wine of the pure wrath of God, which is mixed in the cup of his anger, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in  
 11 the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment shall ascend up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night that worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

12 Thus far\* is the patient endurance of the saints; thus far do they endure who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

\* A. V. *Here is*, &c.; Gr. ᾄδε.

*The dead proclaimed blessed, v. 13.*

And I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write, Blessed from henceforth are the dead who die in the Lord." "Yea," saith the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labours; but their works do follow with them."

*The harvest and the vintage, v. 14—20.*

And I looked, and, behold, a white cloud, and one sat upon the cloud like the Son of man, having a golden crown upon his head, and in his hand  
15 a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat upon the cloud, "Thrust in thy sickle and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the  
16 earth is fully ripe.\* And he that sat upon the cloud thrust in his sickle upon the earth; and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came out of the temple, that which was in the sky,† he having also a sharp sickle.  
18 And another angel came forth from the altar, having power over the fire; and he cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe."  
19 And the angel thrust in his sickle upon the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into  
20 the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city; and

\* Or, is dried up; Gr. ἐξεράνθη.

† The original here is peculiarly emphatic, ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ.

there went forth blood from the winepress up to the bridles of the horses for the space of sixteen hundred furlongs.

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CHAPTER XV.

*The Seven Angels with the Seven last Plagues; the Song of those who had overcome the Beast.*

AND I saw another sign in the sky, great and wonderful, seven angels having the seven last plagues, because in them was accomplished the  
 2 wrath of God. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those that had come away conquerors\* from the beast, and from his image, and from his mark, and from the number of his name, standing upon the sea of glass, having  
 3 the harps of God: and they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty: just and true are thy  
 4 ways, the King of saints! † Who would not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest."

5 And after these things, I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony was  
 6 opened in the sky, and the seven angels having

\* A. V. *them that had gotten the victory over the beast.*

† Tr. *thou King of the nations.*

the seven plagues came out from the temple clothed in linen pure and bright, and girt about their 7 breasts with golden girdles. And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden vials\* full of the wrath of God, who liveth 8 for ever and ever: and the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power; and no one was able to enter into the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

*The six first vials are poured out in rapid succession, 1st, upon the earth; 2d, upon the sea; 3d, upon the rivers; 4th, upon the sun; 5th, upon the throne of the beast; 6th, upon the Euphrates: vers. 1—12.*

AND I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, "Go ye, and pour out the 2 vials of the wrath of God upon the earth." And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth. And there was a noisome and grievous ulcer among † the men who had the mark of the beast, and who worshipped his image.

3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon

\* *i. e.*, vessels used in making libations; not small bottles with narrow necks, but rather *bowls* or *basins*.

† Gr. *εις τους ανθρώπους*. A. V. *and there fell a noisome, &c.* But there is no word in the Greek for *fell*; and the ulcer, in fact, did not *fall* upon them, but broke forth among them.

the sea, and it became as the blood of a dead man, and every living soul died in the sea.

4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters: and  
5 they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "Righteous art thou, O Lord, who art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast  
6 judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and of prophets, and thou hast given them  
7 blood to drink; for they are worthy." And I heard another [angel] from the altar \* say, "Yea, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments."

8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun, and it was given to him to scorch the  
9 men with fire. And the men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, who had power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom became  
11 darkened,† and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

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

\* Tr. and I heard the altar saying.

† Gr. ἐγενετο ἐσκοτωμένη.

‡ τῶν βασιλέων τῶν ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν ἡλίου. Lit. the kings, those that are from the rising of the sun.

*Three unclean spirits like frogs issue from the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet; a caution respecting the unexpected coming of Christ; the nations are gathered together by the unclean spirits at Armageddon, vers. 13—16.*

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *going forth* from the mouth of the dragon, and from the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the  
 14 false prophet. For they are the spirits of dæmons, doing signs, which go forth to the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them together for the war\* of that great day of God Almighty.

15 BEHOLD, I COME AS A THIEF! BLESSED IS HE THAT WATCHETH, AND KEEPETH HIS GARMENTS, THAT HE MAY NOT WALK NAKED, AND HIS SHAME MAY NOT BE SEEN.†

16 And they ‡ gathered them together to the place called in the Hebrew Har-mageddon.§

*The seventh vial is poured out into the air.—*  
 vers. 17—21.

And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air: and there came forth a great voice from the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying,

\* A. V. *battle*. But the Greek is, *πολεμον*, which answers exactly to our English word *war*, as denoting a prolonged contest, rather than one decisive conflict.

† The literal rendering is, *that they may not see his shame*; but the sense is better expressed in English in the passive, as it would be in Luke xvi. 9.

‡ *i. e.*, the three unclean spirits. Neuter nominatives in Greek have a verb singular; the nominative, therefore, to *συνήγαγεν* is the *πνεύματα τρία* of ver. 13. The A. V., “and *he* gathered them,” is decidedly wrong.

§ *i. e.*, *Mount Megiddon*, or *Mount of Manifestation*.

18 "IT IS DONE." And there were voices, and  
thunderings, and lightnings, and there was a great  
earthquake, such as was not from the time that  
men were upon the earth, so vast an earthquake,  
19 and so great. And the great city was divided  
into three parts, and the cities of the Gentiles fell:  
and Babylon the Great was remembered before  
God, to give to her the cup of the wine of his  
20 fierce wrath. And every island fled away, and  
21 the mountains were not found: and there fell upon  
men great hail from the sky, every stone about  
the size of a talent; and men blasphemed God  
because of the plague of hail, for the plague of it  
was very great.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

*The apostle is called away into the desert, that he may see the harlot Church, which appears borne upon the back of a scarlet-coloured beast, the symbol of some great secular empire: both the harlot and the beast are particularly described, and the end of the latter specifically foretold.*

[This vision is manifestly retrospective, and carries us back to the period when the woman clothed with the sun (chap. xii.) fled into the wilderness, from which period the subject of this vision commences.]

AND one of the seven angels that had the seven vials of wrath came and spoke with me, saying to

me, "Come hither; I will show thee the manner\*  
 2 of the great harlot that sitteth upon the many  
 waters, with whom the kings of the earth have  
 committed adultery, and those that dwell upon  
 the earth have drunk of the wine of her adultery."  
 3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a desert,  
 and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured  
 beast, which was full of names of blasphemy, having  
 4 seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was  
 clothed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold  
 and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup  
 in her hand, full of abominations and of the unclean-  
 5 ness of her adultery, and upon her forehead a name  
 written,

"A MYSTERY:

BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS  
 AND THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

6 And I saw the woman drunk with the blood  
 of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses  
 of Jesus: and when I saw her I wondered with  
 7 great wonder. And the angel said to me, "Where-  
 fore dost thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery  
 of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, that  
 8 hath the seven heads and the ten horns. The beast  
 which thou sawest was, and is not, and is about to  
 ascend out of the bottomless pit, and to go away to  
 destruction; and they that dwell upon the earth,  
 whose names are not written in the book of life from

\* The Greek word *κρίμα* here seems evidently to be used by the apostle in the same sense as the Hebrew word *עֲוֹן*, with which it corresponds, and which signifies both *judgment*, and *manner*, *method*; or, which more exactly, perhaps, conveys the idea of the Hebrew in English, *character*.

the foundation of the world, shall wonder, seeing the  
 9 beast that was, and is not, and yet is. Here is the  
 mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven  
 10 mountains whereon the woman sitteth. And they  
 are seven kings :\* the five have fallen, and one is ;  
 the other is not yet come ; and when he is come, he  
 11 must continue a little. And the beast that was, and  
 is not, he is an eighth,† and is of the seven, and  
 12 goeth away to destruction. And the ten horns  
 which thou sawest are ten kings, which have not  
 yet received dominion,‡ but receive power as kings  
 13 one hour§ with the beast. These have one mind,  
 and shall give their power and strength to the  
 14 beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and  
 the Lamb shall overcome them ; for he is Lord  
 of lords, and King of kings ; and those that are  
 with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”  
 15 And he saith unto me, “ The waters which thou  
 sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are people, and  
 16 multitudes, and nations, and languages. And the  
 ten horns which thou sawest on the beast, these  
 shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate  
 17 and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn  
 her with fire : for God hath put into their hearts  
 to fulfil his will, and to agree,|| and to give their  
 dominion to the beast, until the words of God

\* Not, as in the A.V., *and there are seven kings*, but, *they, the mountains*, are, or represent, seven kings.

† Gr. *ογδοος*, *an eighth*, not, as in the A.V., *the eighth*.

‡ Gr. *βασιλείαν*.

§ Gr. *μίαν ὥραν*. This may mean, *during a short period*, or, *about the same period of time*.

|| Literally, *to do one purpose*. Gr., *ποιῆσαι μίαν γνώμην*.

18 shall be accomplished. And the woman whom thou sawest is the great city that hath dominion over the kings of the earth.”

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *The final destruction of the mystical Babylon..*

AND after these things I saw [another]\* angel descending from heaven, having great power, and  
 2 the earth was enlightened by his glory. And he cried mightily, with a loud voice, saying; “Babylon the Great hath fallen, hath fallen, and is become the habitation of dæmons, and the hold of every unclean spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful  
 3 bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her adultery.† And the kings of the earth have committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich through the abundance  
 4 of her luxury.” ‡ And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, my people, that ye may not be partakers with her sins, and that ye  
 5 receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.  
 6 Give back to her as she hath given to you,§ and repay her double according to her works; in the cup

\* The Alexandrine and other MSS. have ἄλλον.

† Gr. πορνείας. The word is used for the sin of a married woman, Matt. xix. 9.

‡ A. V. *her delicacies.*

§ A. V. *Reward her as she hath rewarded, &c.*

7 which she hath mixed mingle for her double. How  
 much she hath glorified herself and lived luxuriously,  
 so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith  
 in her heart, ‘I sit a queen, and am not a widow,  
 8 and I know no sorrow.’ Therefore in one day shall  
 her plagues come; death, and mourning, and famine;  
 and she shall be burnt up with fire: for strong is the  
 9 Lord God that judgeth her. And the kings of the  
 earth who had committed adultery with her and  
 revelled with her in her luxury, shall weep for her,  
 and lament over her, when they shall see the smoke  
 10 of her burning, standing afar off for fear of her tor-  
 ment, saying, ‘Alas! alas that great city Babylon,  
 that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment  
 11 come!’ And the merchants of the earth shall  
 weep and lament over her, because no man buyeth  
 12 of their merchandise any more: their merchan-  
 dise of gold and silver, and precious stones, and  
 pearls and fine linen, and purple and silk and scarlet,  
 and of all thyine wood, and every vessel of ivory, and  
 every vessel of most precious wood, and of brass,  
 13 and of iron, and of marble; and cinnamon, and  
 odours, and ointments, and incense, and wine, and  
 oil, and fine flour and wheat, and cattle, and sheep,  
 and horses, and chariots, and of the bodies\* and  
 14 souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul desired  
 are gone from thee, and all thy bright and shining  
 things are gone away from thee, and thou shalt find  
 15 them no longer; the merchants of these things  
 who were made rich by her shall stand afar off, for  
 fear of her torment, weeping and lamenting, and  
 16 saying, ‘Alas! alas the great city, that was clothed

\* Some MSS. read ἀδραπόδων, *slaves*, as in the A. V.

in fine linen, and purple and scarlet, and that was decked with gold, and precious stones and pearls; that in one hour so great riches should be made desolate!’

- 17 “And every shipmaster, and all the crews of the  
ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea,  
18 stood afar off, and cried out, beholding the smoke of  
her burning, saying, ‘Who is like the great city?’  
19 And they cast dust upon their heads, and cried out  
weeping and lamenting, saying, ‘Alas! alas, the  
great city, whereby were made rich all that had ships  
in the sea from her costliness, that in one hour she is  
20 made desolate!’ Rejoice over her, O heaven, and  
ye holy apostles and prophets, because God hath  
21 judged your cause\* out of her. And a mighty  
angel took up a stone like a great millstone and cast  
it into the sea, saying, “Thus with violence shall  
Babylon the great city be thrown down suddenly,†  
22 and shall be found no more. And the voice of harpers  
and of musicians, and of pipers and of trumpeters,  
shall no more be heard in thee; and no craftsman of  
any sort of craft shall be found any more in thee; and  
the sound of a millstone shall not be heard any more  
23 in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more  
in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the  
bride shall be heard no more in thee: for thy mer-  
chantmen were the great men of the earth, for by  
24 thy sorceries were all the nations deceived.” And in  
her was found the blood of prophets and of saints,  
and of all that had been slain upon the earth.

\* This is the literal reading of the Greek. The sense is, as given in the A. V., *hath avenged you on her.*

† Gr. *ὀρμήματι*, *with a rush.*

## CHAPTER XIX. 1—11.

*A great multitude celebrate with songs the destruction of the harlot church, the reign of God, and the marriage of the Lamb.*

- AND after these things I heard as the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Hallelujah! Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power be unto  
 2 the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great harlot who hath corrupted the earth with her adultery, and hath  
 3 avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.” And a second time they said, “Hallelujah!” and her smoke  
 4 ascendeth up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God that sat upon the throne, saying, “Amen; Hallelujah!”
- 5 And a voice came forth from the throne, saying, “Praise our God, all his servants, and ye that fear  
 6 him, both small and great.” And I heard as the voice of a great multitude, and as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent  
 7 reigneth! Let us rejoice and be glad, and give him glory; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and  
 8 his wife hath made herself ready. And it is given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen pure and bright.” For the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.
- 9 And he saith to me, “Write, Blessed are those that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”

And he saith to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

- 10 And I fell down before his feet to worship him, and he saith to me, "See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant and of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus."\*

*The manifestation of the Word of God as King of kings and Lord of lords: the armies of the beast and of the false prophet are gathered together against him: an angel standing in the sun calls upon all the birds of the air to come and devour the flesh of the mighty about to fall in battle, vers. 11—21.*

- And I saw the sky opened, and, lo! a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness doth he judge and make  
 12 war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and upon his head were many diadems; † and he had a name  
 13 written that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed in a garment dipped in blood; and his  
 14 name is called, THE WORD OF GOD. And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses,  
 15 clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he may smite the nations; and he shall rule them with  
 16 a rod of iron; and himself treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of the Almighty God:

\* A. V. *For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*, which means much the same thing, *i.e.*, that the end for which the prophets were inspired by the Holy Spirit was to bear testimony to Jesus Christ.

† Gr. *διαδήματα*, *kingly crowns*, not, as in chap. vi. 2, *crowns of a conqueror*.

and he hath upon his vesture and upon his thigh this \* name written: "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

- 17 And I saw one † angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice; saying to all the birds that fly in the mid-heaven; "Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God:
- 18 that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, ‡ and the flesh of the mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of those that sit upon them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great."
- 19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war with
- 20 him that sat upon the horse, and his army. And the beast was taken, and with him § the false prophet who did the signs before him, with which he deceived those that had received the mark of the beast, and those that worship his image: these both were cast alive into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.
- 21 And the rest were slain by the sword of him that sat upon the horse, the sword which proceeded out of his mouth; and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

\* Gr. τὸ ὄνομα.

† So it is in the Greek, not *an* angel.

‡ Or *chiliarchs*, *i.e.*, *commanders of thousands*.

§ Tr. *And the beast was taken, and he who was with him, the false prophet, &c.*

## CHAPTER XX. 1—6.

*The Millennial Reign.*

AND I saw an angel come down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great  
2 chain in his hand. And he took hold of the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan,  
3 and bound him a thousand years : and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no longer, until the thousand years should be fulfilled ; and after this he must be loosed a short space.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat down upon them ; and judgment was given to them : and *I saw* the souls of those that had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God ; and they who had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, and had not received his mark in their foreheads, and on their hands ; and they lived and reigned with Christ the \*  
5 thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were ended. This is  
6 the first resurrection. Happy † and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : on these the second death has no power ; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

\* *i.e.*, the thousand years that Satan was bound.

† Gr. μακαριος.

*Satan is again loosed; the gathering of Gog and Magog; the general resurrection and judgment.—c. xx. 7—15.*

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan  
8 shall be loosed out of his prison, and he shall go  
forth to deceive the nations that are in the four  
corners of the earth; Gog and Magog; to gather  
9 them together to battle, whose number is as the  
sand of the sea. And they ascended upon the  
breadth of the earth, and surrounded the camp  
of the saints, and the beloved city; and there came  
down fire from God out of heaven and devoured  
10 them. And the devil that deceived them was cast  
into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast  
and the false prophet are, and they shall be tor-  
mented day and night, for ever and ever.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat  
upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven  
12 fled away, and there was no place found for them.  
And I saw the dead, small and great, standing  
before God,\* and books were opened: and another  
book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and  
the dead were judged by the things written in  
13 the books, according to their works. And the  
sea gave up the dead in it, and death and the  
grave† gave up the dead in them; and they were  
14 each judged according to their works. And death  
and the grave were cast into the lake of fire:

\* Tr. *the throne*.

† Gr. *ἀδης*. *Hades*. But *the grave*, the common receptacle of both good and bad, is more familiar to the English ear, and conveys the sense with sufficient exactness. So in 1 Cor. xv. 55, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave (*ἀδης*), where is thy victory?"

15 this is the second death. And if any one was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

*The new heaven and earth ; God dwells with men ; the blessedness of the righteous ; the final portion of the unbelievers.*—vers. 1—8.

AND I saw a new heaven\* and a new earth ; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away ;  
 2 and the sea was no more. And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for  
 3 her husband. And I heard a great voice from heaven, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall  
 4 be with them, even their God. And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes ; and death shall be no more, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away.”

5 And He that sat upon the throne, said, “Behold I make all things new.” And he saith to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”  
 6 And he said to me, “It is done : I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I

\* Or, sky, *atmosphere*.

will give to him that thirsteth of the fountain of  
 7 the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall  
 inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he  
 8 shall be my son. But as for the fearful, and  
 unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and  
 fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all  
 liars, their portion shall be in the lake that burneth  
 with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

*The apostle is shown the New Jerusalem.*—c. xxi. 9—26 ;  
 xxii. 1—5.

And one of the seven angels that had the vials  
 full of the seven last plagues, came to me, and  
 spoke with me, saying, “Come hither, and I will  
 10 show thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” And he  
 carried me away in spirit to a great and high  
 mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy  
 Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,  
 11 having the glory of God, and her light was like  
 a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear  
 12 as crystal ; and having a great and high wall,  
 with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels,  
 and names written thereon, which are the names of  
 13 the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. On the  
 east, three gates ; on the north, three gates ; on  
 the south, three gates ; on the west, three gates.  
 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations,  
 and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the  
 Lamb.  
 15 And he that spake with me had a golden reed,  
 that he might measure the city, and its gates,  
 16 and its wall. And the city lies foursquare, and  
 the length thereof is the same as the breadth.

And he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs: the length, and the breadth, and the height thereof, are equal.

- 17 And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty-four cubits, *according to* the measure of  
18 a man,—that is, of the angel. And the foundation of its wall was jasper; and the city was pure  
19 gold, like clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all precious stones. The first foundation was a jasper; the second, a sapphire; the third, a chalcedon; the  
20 fourth, an emerald; the fifth, a sardonyx; the sixth, a sardius; the seventh, a chrysolite; the eighth, a beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a hyacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.
- 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each of the gates was of one pearl; and the street of  
22 the city was of pure gold, transparent as glass. And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof.
- 23 And the city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon, that they should shine in it, for the glory of  
God doth enlighten it, and the Lamb is the lamp  
24 thereof. And the nations of those that are saved shall walk in the light of it. And the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour into it:  
25 and its gates shall not be shut by day (for there shall be no night there); and they shall bring  
26 the glory and the honour of the nations into it:  
27 and there shall not enter into it anything that defileth, or that maketh an abomination and a lie, but those only who are written in the book of the Lamb.

## CHAPTER XXII. 1—9.

AND he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God  
 2 and the Lamb. In the midst, between the street and the river,\* on this side and on that, was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, and yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree  
 3 were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse; and the throne of God  
 4 and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and  
 5 his name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they have no need of a candle, nor of the light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light. And they shall reign for ever and ever.

6 And he said to me, "These words are true and faithful, and the Lord God of the holy prophets hath sent his angel to show to his servants things  
 7 which must shortly come to pass. Behold, I come quickly: happy is he who keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book."

8 And I, John, am he who saw and heard these things. And when I had heard and seen *them*, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel  
 9 that showed me these things. And he said to me, "See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant,

\* So, I think, we should translate 'Εν μέσφ τῆς πλατείας ἀντῆς καὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ, not, as A.V., *In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river.*

and of thy brethren the prophets, and of those  
10 that keep the words of this book: worship God.”

And he said to me, “Seal not the words of the  
11 prophecy of this book; for the time is near. He  
that doeth unrighteousness let him be unrighteous  
yet for a while;\* and he that is filthy, let him  
be filthy yet a while; and he that is righteous,  
let him do righteousness yet a while; and he  
12 that is holy, let him be holy for a while. And  
behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with  
13 me, to give to every man as his work shall be.

I am the Alpha and the Omega, beginning and  
14 end, the first and the last. Happy are those  
that do his commandments, that they may have  
right† to the tree of life, and may enter by the  
15 gates into the city. But without are dogs, and  
sorcerers, and fornicators, and murderers, and idol-  
aters, and every one that loveth and doeth falsehood.

16 “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify these  
things unto you in the Churches. I am the root  
and the offspring of David: the bright and morning  
star.”

17 And the Spirit and the Bride say, “Come thou.”  
And let him that heareth say, “Come thou.” And  
let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will,  
let him take of the water of life freely.

18 For I testify to every one that hears the words of  
the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add  
to these things, God shall add to him the plagues

\* A.V. *let him be unrighteous still.*

† Or, literally, *may have power over the tree of life, i.e., that they may have liberty of access to it.* Tregelles reads, *Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life.*—See Commentary.

- 19 that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his portion from the book of life, and from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.\*
- 20 He that testifieth these things, saith, "SURELY I COME QUICKLY." Amen. Even so: come, Lord Jesus.
- 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.† Amen.

\* Tr., God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and from the holy city, which have been written of in this book.

† Tr. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all [the saints. Amen.]

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN, ETC.

“ *And there was seen a great sign in the sky : a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars,*” &c.

IN considering the meaning of the series of visions upon which we are now entering, the first point to be determined is, as before, their chronological position. Now it has, I trust, been satisfactorily proved in the preceding volume that the details of the third woe are contained in the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters, and, consequently, that these three intervening chapters are *retrospective* and *supplemental*, *i.e.*, not a *continuation* of the prophetic history, but a fuller development of things and events already treated of, and running parallel in point of time with the preceding visions. This is evident from many considerations.

It will be remembered that the evangelist was told upon his having eaten the little book that he must prophesy *again* (or, from the commencement) “ concerning peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.” Now although the prophetic history of the two witnesses is in some degree retrospective, it can scarcely be regarded with any show of probability as comprehending the whole of the prophecy to which the symbolic act of

eating the little book was introductory. The renewed commission then given to the apostle was to prophesy concerning *people, and nations, and kings*. But that history is the history of Christ's witnesses, in which people and nations and kings are only incidentally introduced; and I think, therefore, we must certainly look for the subject-matter of the renewed commission in these three chapters which intervene between the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the third woe. But if so, then these chapters must be retrospective, and that too very far back, so that we might almost assume that they would begin again from the beginning, and resume the history of the Church and the world, so far as they are connected, from the commencement of the Christian era.

Another consideration which greatly confirms this view is, that the period of the woman's abode and sustentation in the wilderness, and of the reign of the wild beast from the sea, exactly corresponds with that of the treading down of the holy city by the Gentiles and of the prophesying of the witnesses in sackcloth,—twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days, forty-two months, and three years and a-half, the periods respectively assigned to these events, all representing the same duration of time. Now it is highly improbable that these various periods, each of them being of *the same duration*, should be *consecutive*. It is obviously more natural to suppose that they are synchronical, and represent, in fact, chronologically one and the same space. But if so, then these prophecies must go back and begin again from the beginning, for the events described as occurring previously to the flight of the woman into the wilderness could not very well be accomplished in a less space of time than must be

supposed to elapse between her flight and the commencement of the prophetic history.

On these grounds, then, we are fully warranted in assuming, *à priori*, that the symbols now under consideration are not a continuation of the narrative which closed at ver. 13, chap. xi., but the first of a new series of dramatical prefigurations relating to events contemporary with the former. The truth of this theory will appear almost to demonstration as we proceed.

But let us first realize what it was the apostle now saw. It must be borne in mind that he was no longer in heaven, whither he had been, in vision, transported when the door was opened in the sky (c. iv.), but standing upon the earth, probably the coast of Italy, where he had descended when he went by Divine command to go and take the little book out of the hand of the cloud-clad angel. Standing, then, we may suppose, in the spot where he had eaten the little book, and casting his eyes upwards, he saw in the sky a woman of a heavenly countenance, and surpassing beauty and majesty. Around this woman the sun shone so brightly that she seemed to be, as it were, clothed with it,\* whilst beneath her feet was the moon, shining wanly and dimly, as if eclipsed by the superior brightness of the greater luminary, and ready to vanish away; and about her head were twelve stars encircling it like a crown. This woman, moreover, appeared to be suffering the pains of childbirth, writhing and crying out in her pangs.

Whilst the apostle was contemplating this sun-clothed woman, there appeared from an opposite quarter in the

\* May there not be an intentional reference here in the way of contrast to the *cloud* with which the colossal angel was clothed?

sky another sign of a different character but no less remarkable. A dragon, or vast winged serpent, of a blood-red colour, having seven heads springing from one neck, each head being crowned with a diadem, and the last, or topmost head having ten horns growing out of it, was seen advancing towards the woman with open mouth, as if ready to devour her offspring as soon as it should be born. Moreover, this dragon as he moved along seemed to draw after him with his tail a third part of the stars and to cast them down upon the earth.

As the dragon was thus standing before the woman she was delivered of a male child, which as soon as it was born was caught up to God and his throne, *i.e.*, the loftiest part of the sky, and the woman being shortly afterwards supplied with two wings like an eagle's, fled from the face of the serpent into the wilderness.

In the meantime, however, previous to the woman's flight, there had been a great conflict in the sky. Michael and his attendant angels were seen fighting with the dragon and his angels; the subject of the contest was the possession of the sky, or place of authority and power. The battle, however, soon terminated. The dragon was obliged to give place, and being driven from the sky, came down upon the earth fretted with disappointment and rage, and breathing forth fury against the woman and her seed.

Such were the scenes in the symbolic drama which were now presented to the mental eye of the entranced apostle. And what, then, is their meaning? In contemplating this vision with a view to its historical interpretation, I think the best method we can pursue will be to consider, first, separately, the leading actors in it, and having ascertained, as far as the details of the prophecy

enable us, who they are, then to test the truth of our interpretation by a reference to history.

The leading characters in this vision obviously are the woman, the man-child, and the great red dragon. Let us contemplate, in the first place,

#### THE SUN-CLOTHED WOMAN.

The abstract meaning of this symbol is so plain that it can scarcely be mistaken. By almost universal consent this woman represents the Church of God, the spouse of Christ.\* There is, however, some difference of opinion as to the import of her symbolic accompaniments. Some expositors think that the *sun* is Christ, the *moon* sublunary things, and the *stars* the twelve apostles. Others, that the sun, moon, and stars symbolize rulers in Church and State, and that this vision therefore represents the Church and her ministers exalted to high places in the empire and invested with political power.† Both these interpretations appear to me open to objections. The first, on the ground that the moon as the emblem of sublunary things is not a scriptural metaphor. Besides, sublunary things are things *under* the moon, not the moon itself. The second, because it makes the exaltation of the Church precede, or at least coincide with her spiritual travail, which is contrary to the fact. The Church was not exalted to political power until after her persecutions (which are her travails) had ceased.

\* Some Roman Catholic expositors, however, suppose that the woman represents the Virgin Mary. In an English translation of the Vulgate, published *permissu superiorum*, I find the following commentary on the first verse of this chapter:—"A woman.—The Church of God. It may also by allusion be applied to our blessed Lady."

† This is Mr. Elliott's view; but although he puts it with his usual skill and ingenuity, it will not, I think, be found to stand the test of a careful examination. (See Appendix.)

A more satisfactory view it seems to me than either of the above is this :—I would regard this woman as the symbol of the primitive Christian Church in all its purity, beauty, and glory. The sun shining in brightness around her, and clothing her as with a garment, will then represent the shining of Divine truth, “the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ ;” just as in Isaiah, “Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee” (chap. lx. i.) ; and in Malachi, “Unto you that look for him shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” (Chap. iv. 2.) These prophecies confessedly refer to Gospel times, and although there is some difference in the phraseology, the metaphor essentially is the same with that in the Apocalypse. It is still the Church “clothed with the sun.” And thus St. John also speaks in his Epistle : “The darkness,” says he, “is past, and the true light now shineth.” (Chap. ii. 8.) And so St. Paul : “The night is far spent, the day is at hand.” (Rom. xiii. 9.) All these passages evidently imply that the coming of Christ was to the Church like the rising of the sun upon the benighted earth.

But was then the Church in a state of utter darkness from the creation until the coming of Christ ? No : she had a light, but it was “as the light of the moon compared with the light of the sun” (Isaiah xxx. 26) ; and this, I think, may suggest to us the meaning of that other emblem, *the moon under the feet* of the woman. If the sun be the Gospel, the moon will be the law, which, like that lesser luminary, shone with a borrowed lustre upon the Church until the coming of Christ, and prevented its being enveloped in that total darkness which covered the rest of mankind. Thus viewed, everything

will be found consistent. Clothed with the light of the "glorious Gospel," the Church no longer needs the comparatively imperfect light of the law, and, therefore, it is represented under her feet, and, like the moon sometimes seen in the opposite side of the horizon after the sun has risen, shining dimly, and ready, in the language of the apostle, "to vanish away." (Heb. viii. 13 ; see also 2 Cor. iii. 7—11.)

Nor is the meaning of the "twelve stars" less obvious. A star is the emblem of a minister. But the apostles were the most distinguished of all ministers. They stand, in fact, altogether by themselves, and constitute, together with Christ, the foundation of the Church. (Ephes. ii. 20.) They were the chosen instruments of communicating to mankind that light which he brought. "As my Father hath sent me, so," said he, "send I you." "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." (John xx. 21 ; Mark xv. 15.) Being then thus honoured and distinguished by Christ, they are *the glory* of the Church, and are fitly symbolized by a crown of twelve stars encircling her head.

It is no objection, as it appears to me, to this view of these symbols that it makes the sun and the moon mean *things*, and the stars *persons*. For the light of the Gospel is the light of Christ ; and the light of the law, we may say, is the light of Moses ; and if, therefore, it should seem incongruous to explain the two first symbols of things and the third of persons, we have only to change the phrascology and substitute the persons for the things, and the objection is obviated. Then the sun will be Christ, the moon Moses and the prophets, and the twelve stars the apostles.

Thus, I think, we get a sufficiently clear idea of the meaning of this symbolic picture. It is the primitive Christian Church illuminated by the light of the Gospel rising like the sun upon a dark world, and by the brilliancy of that light causing the dimness of the legal dispensation to vanish away.

But why is this representation of the primitive Church in her glory and beauty introduced now? Would it not have come in more appropriately at the commencement of the prophetic history? So we might think, but we shall find as we examine the details of the prophecy that the Divine arrangement is better, infinitely better, than any we could have devised. We shall find that there is a beautiful parallelism between the seals and trumpets, and the series of visions upon which we are now entering; and that whereas *they* exhibit the judgments of God upon the secular Roman Empire, first Pagan and then nominally Christian, these give the history of the true Church during the same period, and thus that they mutually throw light upon each other. This first vision is, in fact, but the opening chapter, if I may so speak, of the history of the true invisible Church of Christ (invisible at least for many centuries) as contradistinguished from that impure adulteress who for so long a season was destined in the mysterious purposes of God to usurp her name and place.

Viewed in this light, the travail and parturition of this woman are easily explained. Our Lord himself, in fact, has explained the meaning of these figures. "Verily, verily, I say unto you," said he to the apostles on the night previous to his crucifixion, "ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be

sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. *A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come, but as soon as she is delivered of the child she remembereth no more the anguish for joy that a man is born into the world.*" The travail of the Church, then, is the labours, persecutions, and sufferings which she endured in bringing into the world that manly vigorous offspring, the man-child, which was destined to rule all nations with a rod of iron. But who is this *man-child*? This is the next point for consideration.

#### THE MAN-CHILD.—(Ver. 5.)

Three explanations have been given of this man-child, neither of which, however, seem to me to satisfy the requirements of the imagery. Some expositors suppose that the man-child is Christ. But how can this be? Is not the star-crowned woman confessedly the Christian Church, and how then can she be the mother of Christ? Would not this idea involve the absurdity of the Church existing before him who is the author of its existence? Could the Church be clothed with the glory of Christ or his Gospel, and have on her head the apostolic starry crown before Christ was born? Others think that the man-child is Constantine; but this idea in my opinion is still more objectionable. Did the Church travail with Constantine? Was it to bring him forth that she endured that "great fight of affliction" which for nearly three hundred years rent and tore her frame, and made her cry out like a woman in her pangs? Besides, how in any sense could Constantine be said to be caught up to God and his throne *after* he was born *of* the Church, or *into*

the Church, seeing that he possessed the imperial dignity before he professed Christianity, and was not, in fact, baptized until the last hour of his life?

A third and apparently more probable explanation of the man-child is, that it signifies *Christ mystically formed in his members*. This is Mede's idea. But how in that case are we to distinguish between the Church and her offspring? For what are the mystical members of Christ but the true Church? And again, how on this hypothesis could the Church flee into the wilderness and her child be caught up to God and his throne? Surely the woman and her child must be two things entirely distinct from each other—so distinct that their histories may be separately considered; since, while the one is raised to a throne, the other is to be dwelling in a wilderness. And is it impossible then to find any explanation of this symbol to which none of these objections apply, and which at the same time answers all the requirements of the vision? I think not. I think if we will only keep in mind the enigmatical character of this book, and that one of the leading principles of its symbolizations is that persons are represented by *things*, and things by *persons*, we shall have got a clue which will easily guide us to the true meaning of the man-child. Why should not this man-child be CHRISTIANITY, or that system of religious truth which was brought from heaven by our Lord Jesus Christ, and committed by him to the apostles that they might introduce it into the world? Here, I think, we have found the thing we are in search of. Shut up, as in the womb of the Church, for nearly three centuries, Christianity was continually acquiring growth and strength, until at length, at the expiration of the period of human gestation, mystically expressed—

that is, at the expiration of two hundred and eighty years, a year in this case corresponding with a day—it was ushered into the world amidst the wrestlings and pangs of the last great Heathen persecution.\* Then it was that this strong and vigorous offspring, which the dragon from its first conception, so to speak, had watched with jealous suspicion, was separated from its mother. In other words, then it was that Christianity was *separated* from the community which gave it birth. The child and its mother henceforth became entirely distinct, and their fortunes altogether different. The history of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION is from this period blended with that of the Roman Empire, but the history of the CHRISTIAN CHURCH must be sought elsewhere; that is to say, in the simple annals of a few pious individuals, or small obscure congregations, buried in the secluded valleys of the Alps, who for more than ten centuries were scarcely ever heard of, excepting when they were dragged from prison to be tortured and burnt as heretics and schismatics.

Everything said of the man-child confirms this view. He was TO RULE ALL THE GENTILES WITH A ROD OF IRON. And is it not thus that Christianity rules over the majority of mankind? The Gentiles are all *unconverted* persons; all those in whom the enmity of the natural heart to holiness remains; all whose minds by the effectual operation of Divine grace are not brought into conformity with the law of God, whether they be Christians

\* Our Lord gave his last great commission to the apostles in the year 33, and it was in March, 313, exactly two hundred and eighty years afterwards, that Constantine published the famous Milan edict, by which the profession of Christianity was tolerated throughout the empire.—*Gibbon*, vol. iii., c. 20, p. 244.

by profession or not. (See chap. xi. 2.) Now to rule with *a rod of iron* is to exercise dominion over those who hate the power whereby they are restrained, and who submit to it therefore from fear, not from love. And is not this just that sort of dominion which Christianity exercises over the great mass of nominal Christians? Is it to them a law of liberty and love? Can it be said with reference to them, "Its commandments are not grievous?" No, they submit to its laws, to a certain extent, it is true; but their submission is not voluntary. Its holy, heavenly precepts ever have been, and ever must be, to the carnal mind "a rod of iron." They would fain get from under it if they could, but they dare not.

Again, this man-child, as soon as born, was to be "CAUGHT UP TO GOD AND HIS THRONE." Now the throne of God in the symbolical heaven is the seat of power, government, and honour. And if Christianity, therefore, be the man-child, this would imply not merely its toleration in conjunction with Heathenism, but its ascendancy and domination. How this was fulfilled in the history of Christianity after Constantine's edict of toleration will be shown immediately. But it will be proper previously to consider,—

3. THE GREAT RED DRAGON.—*And there was seen another sign in the sky; and, behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems upon his heads; and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth.*—That this dragon is a personification of the great enemy of God and man, that old serpent, called Satan and the Devil, we are expressly told in the ninth verse of this chapter. Nor is the general import of the symbol under which he is here represented at all

questionable. A dragon, as the representative of a great empire, hostile to God and his people, is a figure familiar to the ancient prophets. Thus Isaiah, "Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the *dragon*?" (li. 9); and so Ezekiel, "Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh, King of Egypt, the *great dragon*, that lieth in the midst of his rivers." (xlix. 3.) This dragon, therefore, is undoubtedly the impersonation of Satan, acting through the instrumentality of some mighty empire, by means of which he seeks to destroy both the woman and her offspring, both the Church and Christianity. And can the reader require to be told what empire? There is but one that in this instance can for a moment be thought of. By the general consent of expositors, this great dragon is Satan acting by the ancient Heathen Roman Empire, which, as the embodiment of Heathenism in the possession of the supreme power, stands opposed to the Church of Christ, and the religion of which she is the depository. But what, then, is the specific meaning of *the seven diademed-heads*, and *the ten horns*, and *the third part of the stars*, which the dragon's tail cast to the earth? This being the first time that mention has been made of these heads and horns, although the same emblems are twice again employed, first in the description of the wild beast from the sea (c. xiii.), and then of that from the abyss (c. xvii.), showing plainly some analogy and connexion between the dragon and those two beasts, I think it may be well here to examine into this subject a little more closely, in order to ascertain what that analogy and connexion is; for the having clear views on this point will materially assist us in

determining the true meaning and application of those two other symbolizations.

Let us first notice the points of agreement between the dragon and the two beasts, and then those of difference. The points of agreement are these: They are all three *wild beasts* (for the dragon is *θηριον*, a wild beast), and therefore fierce and cruel; they have all three also seven heads and ten horns: these are the points of agreement. The points of difference are—1st, In the beasts themselves: the one is a dragon; the second is a beast of a triplex form, partaking of the lion, the leopard, and the bear; the third is not called by any name, but is designated generally as a scarlet-coloured beast. 2dly, In their origin: the dragon has no beginning, but stands in the sky fully developed in all his proportions, showing that the power of which he is the representative was already in existence when the apostle wrote; the second beast arises from the sea; the third comes up from the bottomless pit. 3dly, The dragon has seven diadems upon his *heads*; the sea-born beast has ten diadems upon his *horns*, and none upon his heads; the other beast has *no* diadems at all, either upon his heads or horns. Lastly, The dragon draws with his tail a third part of the stars of heaven; the second beast has for his coadjutor a two-horned lamb-like beast; and the third is ridden by a harlot. Now, what may we infer from these circumstantial points of agreement and difference between these three symbolizations? It is obvious that there must be some relationship between the beasts—some respects in which they are essentially identical. The seven heads and ten horns on each of them put this beyond doubt. On the other hand, the differences are so marked and palpable,

that it seems no less obvious that, notwithstanding this essential identity, there must be circumstantial diversity. And how is this to be explained? It appears to me that it is to be explained in this manner: These three symbolizations represent, *locally* and *territorially*, one and the same empire,—here is the point of agreement; but they represent it in *different stages of its existence*, and under *different phases and aspects*, and hence the diversity of circumstances. The dragon is this empire, of which Rome is the centre, in its Heathen form. The beast from the sea is this same empire restored, after it had apparently been utterly destroyed, with a nominally Christian ruler for its head. The beast from the abyss is still territorially the same empire as the preceding, but it has no common head; it consists of ten separate dynasties, held together, not by one supreme ruler, but by a mysterious power, symbolized by a harlot who rides the beast, and, for a time, guides him at her pleasure.

This, it seems to me, is the most natural and satisfactory explanation of these three symbolizations. That the beast from the sea is the successor, and not the contemporary of the dragon, we are distinctly told. The dragon gives him his seat and his power. (c. xiii. 2.) And I think it is no less evident that the beast from the abyss is the successor, and not the contemporary of, or identical with, the seven-headed beast from the sea. The duration of the latter is limited to twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days, which expire with the slaughter of the witnesses, but the former is seen upon the stage long after the witnesses are slain, and, together with the false prophet, is engaged in the last great conflict at Armageddon. (c. xix. 19.)

As, then, the beast from the sea succeeds to the place of the dragon, so, I think, we may infer that the beast from the abyss takes the place of the former, and comes up at the expiration of the twelve hundred and sixty years appointed for his continuance.

To enter into further particulars now would be premature. I merely wish to give the reader a general idea of the light in which, as it appears to me, these three symbolical beasts are to be regarded. In few words, the dragon is the ancient Roman Empire, with Heathenism dominant; the sea-born beast, the revived empire under the rule of the Popes and the Emperors; the beast from the abyss, the ten kingdoms of the Papacy without a secular head, influenced and governed by the Romish Church, to whose direction, regarded purely as a spiritual power, they for a time submit themselves.

Thus viewed, the seven heads of this dragon will signify, as they are afterwards explained by the angel, (c. xvii. 9), the seven hills on which ancient Rome stood. And, perhaps, in this place, they are to be limited to this meaning.\* For although they are said by the angel also to represent, as seen on the beast from the abyss, *seven kings*, or forms of government, yet as these heads in the present instance have all of them *diadems*, the symbol of despotic power, upon them, it seems more consistent to suppose them to represent the unity and concentration, as it were, of the Imperial power in the seven-hilled city of Rome.† The *ten horns* are, of course, here exhibited anticipatively; they grow out of the seventh head, and

\* So Vitrina: "Duas res igitur in Apocalypsi notant Septem Capita: Populum Romanum in Septem montibus habitantem, et Septem Reges. Prior obtinet in hoc emblemate Draconis; posterius in emblemate *Bestiæ*."

† The fact that Rome was built upon seven hills, and was designated distinctively the city of the seven hills, is so well known that it scarcely

can have no existence at present; but they are shown upon the dragon just to mark the connexion before alluded to between him and the two other beasts. (See c. xiii. and xvii.)

With regard to the *third part of the stars* drawn by the dragon's tail, and cast by him to the earth, there is some difficulty. A comparison of this passage with Isaiah xiv. 12, and Daniel viii. 10, leaves no doubt, indeed, as to the general meaning of the figure. In the former, the King of Babylon is represented as saying, "I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;" which the context shows is simply a vain-glorious boast, that he would exalt himself above all the kings of the earth. In the latter, it is said of the little horn, "And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast some of the host and of the stars to the ground:" a plain prediction that this little horn, originally an insignificant power, would rise above other powers greater than itself, and subdue them. Hence, then, we gather beyond question the import of the imagery before us. The casting the stars of heaven to the ground is but a metaphorical way of expressing the subjugation and destruction of kingdoms. Divested of figure, the sense of the passage might be expressed thus: "And he drew after him a third part of the rulers (or kingdoms) of the world, and triumphed over them." The difficulty is as to the *third part*. Mr. Elliott's hypothesis, that it refers to the third part of the empire—first, under Maximin, as opposed

requires proof. The following line from Propertius, quoted by Vitringa, may suffice:—

"Septem Urbs alta jugis toti quæ præsidet Orbi."

"The lofty city on seven hills, which governs the whole world."

to the other two-thirds under Constantine and Licinius, and then, after Maximin's death, to the same third under Licinius, as opposed to Constantine,—is not, to my mind, satisfactory. For how could that comparatively small portion of the empire under Maximin be with propriety represented by the seven-headed dragon? Or what were the stars of heaven which either Maximin or Licinius cast to the earth? What kingdoms or princes did they subdue? I think, therefore, that in this instance we must understand by the symbolic heaven here alluded to, the whole political heaven then visible to men; *i.e.*, all the kingdoms of the *then known* world, and consequently, that the third part of the stars represent the kingdoms of the earth conquered by and subject to Rome. I am quite aware that this application of the symbol is open to objections, and, in particular, may seem inconsistent with my own explanation of the third part of the heavens smitten under the fourth trumpet. The cases, however, are somewhat different. In that instance the context shows that the *whole* to which the *third part* has reference is the Roman territory; but here the great dragon is himself the *whole empire*, and the third part of the stars, therefore, which his tail draws cannot be the third of that empire.

It appears, then, that this vision represents generally the early struggles of the Church with the Heathenism of Rome, and the triumphant establishment of Christianity on the Imperial throne. Let us now consider its particulars in detail, and endeavour to trace as we proceed their fulfilment.

## HISTORICAL FULFILMENT.

The first circumstance that calls for notice is that stated in the fourth verse. The dragon stood before the woman TO DEVOUR HER CHILD AS SOON AS IT WAS BORN. Now, if this child be Christianity, and its birth the introduction of the Christian religion into the Roman world by Constantine, then it would follow, according to the prophecy, that no sooner would Christianity be ushered, as it were, into life, than an attempt would be made, by that power of which the dragon is the impersonation, to destroy it. And what, then, are the historical facts connected with this subject? They may be given in few words. In 337, Constantine died, leaving the empire to his three sons, all of whom, like himself, professed and upheld Christianity. But at the expiration of twenty-four years, Julian, the nephew of Constantine, commonly called the Apostate, became sole Emperor. And now, then, it was that the seven-headed dragon sought to devour the new-born man-child which had been already caught up to the throne of God. The distinguishing feature in Julian's character was hatred of Christianity, and the one grand object of his brief reign, its extirpation. He warred not against *Christians*, but against their *religion*; he attacked not *persons*, but *a system*. Hence, instead of imitating his Pagan predecessors by putting Christians to death, he endeavoured to bring them over by argument, and the still more powerful persuasives of worldly honours and emoluments. Almost immediately upon his assuming the purple, he published an edict of toleration, the professed intention of which was to permit the free exercise of all religions, but the real object, the re-establishment

of Heathenism and the abolition of Christianity.\* The means employed by him for this purpose were of the most artful character, and savoured strongly of Satanic guile and subtilty. While pretending to the strictest impartiality, he discouraged in every possible way the profession of Christianity, and by holding out the promise of honours and power to those of the noble and wealthy, and of donations in money to the lower orders, who should return to the religion of their forefathers, endeavoured to allure them back to the Heathen temples. On the other hand, although avowedly disclaiming persecution, he subjected Christians to many hardships, and threw every obstacle he could in the way of their advancement. He deprived the clergy of all the immunities, honours, and revenues which had been bestowed upon them, and transferred them to the service of Pagan temples and priests; he forbade any Christian to lecture in the public schools of science or literature, or to teach the arts of grammar and rhetoric; he even imposed a direct tax on all persons who should refuse to sacrifice to the gods of the empire; and, finally, as if to verify the prophecy to the letter, he endeavoured to abolish the very name of Christianity, commanding, by a public edict, that Christians should no longer be called *Christians*, but *Galileans*.\*

\* The reader will do well to mark the correspondence between the proceedings of Julian in regard to Heathenism, and of James II. in regard to Popery. The first act of the reign of both princes was a pretended EDICT OF TOLERATION. What makes the parallelism the more striking is, that in both instances direct persecution had been previously tried. We would recommend this fact to the consideration of liberals of every description. "Surely in vain is the net spread *in the sight* of any bird."

\* Waddington, c. viii., p. 126. A full account of the arts employed by Julian for the restoration of Paganism will be found in the "Decline and Fall," c. xxiii. This, taken conjointly with the history of Constantine,

Thus, then, did this apostate emperor think to devour the offspring of the Church as soon as it was born. Vain, however, were his efforts. It was the potsherd contending with its maker. In the language of Dean Waddington,—and I would beg the reader to observe, how the historian unconsciously adopts the apocalyptic metaphor,—“the religion of Julian had long been held in derision by all reasonable men; its energy had long passed away from it, and its feebleness was the decrepitude of *old age*. The religion of Constantine was *young and progressive*,”—the only weakness which it acknowledged was that of IMMATURITY.” In other words, it was the *new-born* man-child.

Julian’s reign was brief. Before the expiration of two years he was killed in battle, fighting with the Persians. Under a series of Christian emperors his successors, Christianity rapidly spread throughout the empire, until at length, in 390, Theodosius published his celebrated edict, in which he forbad, under severe penalties, the worship of the heathen gods, and established Christianity as the religion of the empire, on a firm and immoveable basis.\* And thus, then, was the man-child “caught up to God and his throne!”

is perhaps one of the most subtle and dangerous attacks ever made upon Christianity. The author’s object is to infuse the poison of Infidelity by insinuating the superiority of philosophy to revelation, as exemplified in the two Emperors respectively. And if his history were in every respect *true*, the inference would be almost unavoidable. But it is *not* true. The characters and motives of both princes are misrepresented throughout. The account of the death of Julian, in particular, taken from Ammianus, is a manifest composition of the historian, and no more to be relied on than Xenophon’s narrative of the last hours of Cyrus. Instead of a true philosopher, Julian was a vain man, inflated with self-conceit, and addicted to the most absurd superstitions.—See *Mosheim*, cent. iv., c. 13.

\* “The last edict of Theodosius inflicted a deadly wound on the superstition of the Pagans. This prohibitory law is expressed in the most

But what now becomes of the sun-clothed woman? This is the next subject that claims attention. THE FLIGHT OF THE WOMAN INTO THE WILDERNESS. It will be observed that this circumstance is referred to twice; in the sixth verse, and again in the fourteenth. Combining the information given in both passages we get the following statement: “*And to the woman were given two wings of the great eagle that she might flee into the wilderness, to a place prepared for her by God, there to be nourished for a time, times, and dividing of time;*” or, as it is expressed in ver. 6, “*for twelve hundred and sixty days.*” Now assuming the woman to be the Church,—the true Church, the chaste and undefiled spouse of Christ,—there can be no mistaking the general import of this imagery. It can mean nothing less than this, that the Church regarded as composed of true believers, or spiritual persons, after having given birth to Christianity, would gradually disappear from the eyes of mankind, and ceasing to be sustained by the ordinary means of grace (which we may infer from hence would be withdrawn altogether, or be so perverted as to become unprofitable), would be nourished in secret by the spiritual food supplied to her directly from God himself; in other words, that the Church would become *invisible* to the world, and no longer stand out a distinct and separate body, but consisting of isolated individuals only, scattered here and there, be known to him alone who seeth not as man seeth, but looketh at the heart. And further, it is implied, that during the interval

absolute and comprehensive terms. ‘It is our will and pleasure,’ says the Emperor, ‘that none of our subjects shall presume in any city, or in any place, to worship an inanimate idol, by the sacrifice of a guiltless victim.’—*Decline and Fall*, vol. v., p. 116.

between the figurative parturition of this woman, and her withdrawal, *i.e.*, between the public introduction of Christianity into the empire, and the entire disappearance of the Church of Christ as a corporate body from human observation, she would be upheld and supported by some mighty secular power (symbolized by the wings of the great eagle), and thus be preserved from utter destruction by the flood of waters cast out after her, before she reached her retreat. How strikingly these prefigurations were verified in the history of the Church during the reign of Theodosius, the most justly, perhaps, of all monarchs surnamed the Great, will be shown immediately.

With regard to the period of the woman's continuance in the wilderness, the very nature of the case, as before remarked, forbids us to interpret it with strict arithmetical precision. I mean, that as her disappearance could not be instantaneous, neither, probably, would her re-appearance; and, therefore, that we must not attempt to fix the exact day or year for either one or the other. It seems to me that this period is purposely expressed in the second instance by the larger and less definite mode of reckoning of *a time, times, and the dividing of time*, to show that it is to be understood somewhat loosely; and, in fact, that the duration of the Church's retirement and invisibility, was to correspond in *a general sense* with the sackcloth prophesying of the witnesses, and the continuance of the power of the wild beast from the sea. Supposing, then, we date the commencement of those events somewhere in the sixth century, this also will be about the date of the woman's flight. And so, in point of fact, we find, as has been already shown, it was just at this time that the historian of the Church of Christ

began to look almost in vain for its characteristics amongst its professing members. "I am endeavouring," says Milner, writing of the close of the fourth century, and as if he had the very figure of the Apocalypse in his mind,—“I am endeavouring to *catch the features* of the Church wherever I can find her in this *obscure region*.”—(Chap. xii.) And, again, at the end of the twelfth chapter of Century Five, “But I am disgusted with the prospect: it grows worse in the East to the end of the century. Possibly in the view of some *private and obscure scenes* in the next chapter, the reader may find something more worthy of his notice.” Yes; the true Church was beginning to be found only in the wilderness.

But was there, then, to be no visible Church all this time? Assuredly there was. There was to be a *visible* Church, but not the sun-clothed woman, with her crown of twelve stars; not the Church “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone;”—but she, who is afterwards seen “with kings of the earth, in filthy whoredom joined.” “The harlot arrayed in purple and scarlet, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations, and drunk with the blood of the saints.” Let the reader carefully note the facts connected with these two symbolical women. The one flees *into* the wilderness, the other comes *out* of it (c. xvii. 3); the one hides herself in obscurity, the other thrusts herself forward to the observation of men. And what, then, is the inference, but that whilst the chaste spouse of Christ would for centuries be lost sight of, an adulterous counterfeit would usurp her place, and pass herself off

as “the sole representative of the Church of the living God?”

The next subject for consideration is,—

THE WAR IN HEAVEN.

Vers. 7—12.—“*And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels,*” &c. In considering these verses we must bear in mind that the apostle is still relating what he *saw*, and not what was told him. Attention to this circumstance will assist us in fixing the chronology of the war of which we have here an account. It could not have been *before* the birth of the man-child, because up to that period the dragon was standing before the woman, to devour her offspring as soon as it was born; nor could it have been *after* her flight into the wilderness, for previously to that the dragon had been cast to the earth, and he was then seen pursuing after the woman. This war, therefore, must have taken place between these two events. That is to say, some time between the year 313, when by the edict of Constantine, Christianity, the *man-child*, was born into the empire, and the commencement of the fifth century, when the woman began to flee into the wilderness.

But what was this war? The reply to this inquiry involves the consideration of two points,—The theatre of the conflict; and, the parties engaged in it. 1. The war was in heaven, *i.e.*, in the sky. Not in the heaven where the righteous are, and where God manifests his glory; but in the symbolical heaven, where the red dragon was seen; the political heaven of the Roman empire; the place of honour, dignity, and power. In

other words, it was a war in high places, between the great potentates of the earth, belonging to the same dominion. 2. The parties engaged in it were Michael,\* the prince of angels, and his followers, and the dragon and his agents, not immediately and personally, but as represented in the princes who at that time ruled over the Roman world. The representatives of Michael and his angels were those princes and their followers who contended for Christianity; the representatives of the dragon and his satellites, those who fought for the continuance of Heathenism. And was there, then, a conflict of this kind carried on in the early part of the fourth century, just after the publication of Constantine's edict in favour of Christianity? This question has been already in part answered in the commentary on chapter vi.; it may be proper, however, here again to take a brief survey of the history of that period.

It will be remembered that in the year 314 the Roman world was governed by two Emperors, Constantine and Licinius.† Connected as they were by family alliances,‡ and exhausted as we might suppose they would be with the civil wars carried on with their former colleagues, it was to be expected that they would have lived peaceably together. But to this,

\* Michael means in Hebrew, *Who is like to God?* Or it may be rendered not interrogatively, *He who is as God.* It is not quite clear whether Michael is the name of a created angel, or whether it is a title of the Great Angel of the Covenant, the Lord himself. (Compare Gen. xviii. 16; Dan. x. 13.)

† "The Roman world was now (*i. e.*, after the death of Maximin,) divided between Constantine and Licinius, the former of whom was master of the West, the latter of the East."—*Decline and Fall*, c. xiv., vol. ii., p. 244.

‡ Licinius had married the sister of Constantine.

independently of other considerations, there was an insuperable obstacle; they were of different religions. Constantine was a Christian, Licinius was a Pagan. Constantine's standard was the cross, and he proclaimed himself the patron and champion of Christianity. Licinius's standard was a DRAGON, and he declared himself to be the patron and champion of Heathenism. Whatever, then, might have been the private motives and personal feelings of these two men, ostensibly, the leading object of the one was the establishment of Christianity, of the other of Paganism. Under such circumstances they could not long continue to rule the world together. Accordingly, scarcely a year had elapsed from the death of their common enemy, Maximin, before we find them engaged in warfare with each other.\* That theirs was in part a religious war, is sufficiently evident from the address delivered by Licinius to his soldiers on the eve of the last great battle that was fought between them: †—

“Friends and companions,” said he, “these are our country's gods, which our ancestors taught us to reverence! He who is to join battle with us worships a strange god, whom he, having entertained a wicked opinion, conceives to be the true God. In confidence of whose assistance he brings forward his forces, and intends to make war *not only against us, but against our gods*. Now, therefore, it will manifestly appear which of us are in error, and *whether the gods whom we reverence, or those whom our adversaries adore, are to be*

\* “A year had scarcely elapsed after the death of Maximin, before the victorious emperors turned their arms against each other.”—*Decline and Fall*, vol. ii., 244.

† This address has already been given in the Commentary on the Sixth Seal, but it is here repeated to save reference. (See vol. i., p. 258.)

*preferred.* For if this strange God, whom we now despise, make our enemies victorious over us, we ought to acknowledge him, and to forsake those gods to whom we have lighted these tapers. But if our gods give us the victory, then let us make war against Constantine and his wicked adherents.”—(Euseb. “Life of Constantine,” b. ii., c. 5., Hammer.)

There can be no question, then, as to the ostensible grounds of this contest. Licinius avowed himself the champion of Paganism, and had he been victorious, would doubtless have attempted its restoration. But this was not to be; the dragon fought, and his angels, but they prevailed not. After several unsuccessful conflicts, Licinius at length resigned the empire of the East, and by his death, in 324, Constantine became sole Emperor. The words of the historian with which he concludes the narrative of these transactions, contain a striking commentary on the prophecy: “By this victory of Constantine, the Roman world was again united under the authority of one Emperor. The foundation of Constantinople, and THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, were the immediate and memorable consequences of this revolution.”\*

Thus, then, were “the dragon and his angels cast out into the earth, and” (after a few years) “their place was found no more in heaven.”† This victory is celebrated in a song of triumph.

\* “Dec. and Fall,” c. xiv., *sub fine*. The heading of the next chapter is full of meaning to the reflective mind. “THE PROGRESS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, AND THE SENTIMENTS, &C., OF THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS!”

† In commemoration of this great event, Constantine caused a statue of himself to be placed in his palace with A WOUNDED DRAGON lying prostrate at his feet: “To declare,” says Eusebius, “his victory over the persecutors of the Church.” (Ibid, b. iii., c. iii.) How remarkable a fulfilment was this of the prophecy!

Vers. 10—12.—*And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength, &c.* There is little here that requires explanation. The Church now delivered from her adversaries, and raised to the symbolical heaven of authority and power, ascribes the glory of her deliverance and exaltation to its proper source. Some of the expressions in this song may appear perhaps too strong for the occasion to which it is supposed to refer. But although in the largest sense of the words, “*the kingdom of God and the power of his anointed*” will not be come until the whole earth shall be entirely subject to Christ; yet in a restricted sense, this language might be used with reference to that partial triumph over the powers of darkness which was accomplished under Constantine. And, in fact, we learn from history, that this language, or something very similar, was actually used by the Christian Church at that period. Eusebius tells us how, after the defeat of Licinius and the establishment of the true religion on a solid foundation, “men celebrating the conqueror’s glory with hymns of praise, ascribed his preservation and success to God.” And how, “in the vastness of their joy, all former misery and evil was forgotten, while every one rejoiced in the present happiness, and looked forward with confidence to its continuance.”\* Nor did they omit to notice those holy and devoted men who had suffered death in the cause of their Redeemer. These also they celebrated in their triumphal songs; and almost in the very words of the sacred hymn now heard as by anticipation by the apostle, did they speak of their faith in the atoning blood, and of the ready devotedness

\* Life of Const., b. ii., c. xix.; Eccl. Hist., b. x., c. i.

with which they sacrificed their lives for his sake who laid down his life for them. Thus were the words of this prophetic song of triumph verified. It is added, "*For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, that accused them before our God day and night.*" Yes; so it was. The great adversary of the people of the Lord, he who dared by the instrumentality of Heathen persecutors to accuse Christians even in the presence of God of every species of wickedness, was put to silence. The malignity and falsehood of these charges was now made manifest; and being driven from those judgment-seats where he had by lies so long prevailed, he was deprived of his power to hurt. (Compare 1 Pet. ii. 12—15; see also vol. i., p. 247.)

Ver. 12.—"*Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a little time.*" Although under Constantine the empire became nominally Christian, and Satan was thus expelled in an official sense, if I may so speak, from the symbolical heaven, or high places in the state, Paganism still lingered for some time amongst the people in the provinces and towns at a distance from the seat of Government.\* Its continuance, however, even here was not of long duration. By a decree of the Emperor Theodosius, already mentioned, Paganism was totally and for ever abolished throughout the Roman Empire.†

\* The word *Pagan* is derived from the Latin *paganus*, which signifies an *inhabitant of the country, a rustic*, as opposed to an inhabitant of the city. The very name, therefore, by which the adherents to the old superstition were designated, is a verification of the prophecy.

† Yet the "little time" still remaining to the dragon did not expire with the abolition of Paganism. By the inscrutable arrangements of God's providence he is permitted to remain at large during the 1260 year-

This the subtle adversary of man foresaw would be the case, and therefore is he represented as "coming down to the earth having great wrath." Fretted and angry at his defeat, and foreseeing the destruction of that kingdom which he had established by means of Heathen idolatry near at hand, he determines to exercise the malignancy of his rage to the utmost as long as he is permitted to do so. The miseries which befell the inhabitants of the Roman territory during the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, may be regarded as the accomplishment of the woe here pronounced.

Vers. 13—17.—"*And when the dragon saw that he was cast to the earth, he pursued after the woman,*" &c. The principal subject of these verses, the flight of the woman into the wilderness, has been already considered in the commentary on ver. 6. This circumstance is again brought forward, and the details more fully given here, to enable us, I imagine, to fix the chronology of the war in heaven, and the events connected with it. For, as I before remarked, we may gather from hence beyond all dispute, that that war takes place between the act of parturition and the final withdrawal of the woman, and can therefore be nothing else than that contest between Paganism and Christianity, which has been already described. There are, however, several new circumstances now brought before us which demand notice. These are:—

1st. *The flood of waters from the mouth of the*

days of the treading down of the temple by the Gentiles, and beyond that period, even till the angel with the chain descends from heaven to bind him (chap. xx. 1); so that this "little time" is, in fact, a period of some centuries' duration.

*serpent.* These waters are explained by the generality of expositors to signify the various heresies which coming in like a flood about this period threatened the very existence of the Church. I have no hesitation in adopting this explanation. It is justified by analogy and confirmed by history. The fact that the waters proceeded out of the *mouth* of the serpent suggests at once their symbolic meaning. The mouth is the organ of speech, and has always been the great instrument employed as well for the propagation of error as for the diffusion of truth.\* It is not, therefore, a mere arbitrary assumption that this flood of waters from the mouth of the serpent prefigures those dangerous heresies which soon after the empire became Christian literally deluged the Church, and seemed ready to sweep it away from the earth. It is true heresies existed from the first. Even in the apostles' days there were heretics. But their number, compared with the great body of believers, during the three first centuries, was small, and their influence insignificant. It was not until after the conversion of Constantine that heresy assumed a formidable aspect, and not only disturbed the peace of the Church, but seemed to endanger its existence. To give even a brief sketch of the various sects into which at this time the nominally Christian body was divided, would be to write a volume.† I shall confine my remarks in the

\* The sword which proceeded out of the mouth of the Son of Man was the *Word of God*. (Rev. i. 16; xix. 21.)

† Volumes, in fact, were written upon the subject. The "Treatises" of Irenæus in the second century, and Epiphanius in the fourth, have come down to us. The latter enumerates, and treats of by name, eighty-five heresies.

way of historical illustration to Arianism, the most widely spread, and by far the most dangerous heresy of all.

It was in the year 318 that the spark was first struck which soon set the Christian world in flames. Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, being suspected of holding unsound doctrine concerning the nature of our Lord, was summoned by his bishop assembled in synod to give an account of his opinions. On being asked whether he believed the Son of God to be of the same substance with the Father? he replied, "I believe him to be of a *like* substance with the Father, but not the *same*." \* Such was the origin of the Arian controversy, a controversy which for sixty years rent the Church in twain, cost the lives of thousands of faithful men, and occasionally shook even the foundations of the Imperial throne. † To some persons the difference between the words *like* and *same* may seem so slight as to be scarcely worth contending about. But it is with error in doctrine

\* The Greek words are, *ὁμοούσιος* and *ὁμοιούσιος*. The former word was used by the orthodox in speaking of the Son, the latter by the Arians. The difference in the words consists in a single letter; but the difference in the sense is immense, as great as between the finite and infinite. If the Son were of only *like* substance with the Father, he would be a creature, which the Arians affirmed he was: if he be of the *same* substance with the Father, then he must, like him, be eternal and uncreated.

† For the history of the Arian controversy the reader may consult the "Decline and Fall," chap. xxi. Or, if he has the opportunity, he may refer with more satisfaction to the ecclesiastical history of Socrates, the 2d Book of which is almost entirely occupied with the details of this controversy. The writer states that the violence which the orthodox party suffered from the Arians was equal to what the Christians had endured at the hands of the Heathen. (L. ii., cap. 27.)

as with evil in practice. When once the boundary line is crossed which separates virtue from vice, or truth from error, men quickly pass on to the extremes of both. Thus it was in the present instance.

The flood-gate of error being opened, Arianism rapidly gained strength, and soon became a wide spreading torrent which threatened to sweep away everything before it. In less than six years a large number of the bishops and clergy of Egypt and Asia, together with multitudes of the laity, appeared disposed to support the cause of Arius.\* Synod after synod was assembled, and the controversy was carried on on both sides with a heat and fury ill becoming so sacred a cause. Some idea may be formed of the extent to which the Church was endangered by this dispute, from the following remarkable words of Hilary, addressed to Constantius about this time: "It is a thing," says he, "equally deplorable and dangerous, that there are as many creeds as opinions among men, as many doctrines as inclinations, as many sources of blasphemy as there are faults among us; because we make creeds arbitrarily, and explain them as arbitrarily. The Homousion is rejected and received, and explained away, by successive Synods: the partial or total resemblance of the Father, and of the Son, is a subject of dispute for these unhappy times. Every year, nay, every moon, we make new creeds to describe invisible mysteries. We condemn either the doctrine of others in ourselves, or our own in that of others; and reciprocally tearing one another

\* Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, declares, that in the ten provinces of Asia to which he was banished, there were very few prelates who had preserved the true faith concerning the person of the Lord.

to pieces, we have been the cause of each other's ruin." \*

Such is the representation given by a contemporary writer and eye-witness of the effects of that pestilential flood of heresy which the serpent now poured forth from his mouth after the woman. In reading such a passage we cannot but tremble. The Church itself, and with it the truth of God (just as is represented in the symbolic picture), seems ready to be submerged and lost in the troubled waters of religious controversy. And, in fact, it must have been overwhelmed and have perished, had not its Divine head interposed for its preservation. But this he did. "*The earth helped the woman, and swallowed up the flood,*" &c. Here is the next point which demands notice.

2d. THE HELP AFFORDED BY THE EARTH TO THE WOMAN. Let it be borne in mind that the leading idea here is that of *absorption*. The waters of heresy are *absorbed by the earth*. Now, the *earth* in this vision of the Apocalypse represents the remote and more distant provinces of the Empire, in contradistinction to the territories nearer the ancient seat of Government. (Ver. 12.) This would imply, therefore, that that flood of heretical opinions, by which the existence of the Church was now endangered, and especially the heresy of Arius, would be absorbed, as it were, by the inhabitants of the Eastern provinces, and wasting itself amongst them, would not reach Rome until its strength was almost spent. How exactly this was fulfilled in the events may be inferred from the

\* Hil. ad Const., l. ii., c. xlv., p. 1227, quoted by Gibbon, vol. iii., c. xxi., p. 338, who seems to have got it from Locke's Common-place Book, vol. iii., p. 470.

following statement: "The provinces of Egypt and Asia, which cultivated the language and manners of the Greeks, had deeply *imbibed* the venom of the Arian controversy. The inhabitants of the West were of a less inquisitive spirit; and having derived their religion from an orthodox source, they preserved with steadiness the doctrine which they had accepted with docility; and when the Arian pestilence approached their frontiers, they were supplied with the seasonable preservative of an orthodox creed, by the paternal care of the Roman Pontiff."\* Thus, then, "the earth helped the woman," and gave her time to prepare for her retreat into the wilderness. The greediness with which the ecclesiastics and laity of the Eastern provinces drank in the poison of Arianism, tended undoubtedly to the preservation of the Church; for this very circumstance put the Churches of the West on their guard against it, and prevented its spreading amongst them.

But the Church received assistance in another way. "*And there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might flee into the wilderness.*" And here, then, we have a third point demanding consideration.

3d. THE TWO WINGS OF THE GREAT EAGLE. It is well observed by Mr. Elliott, that the peculiarly emphatic manner in which the definite article is used in the original, † must have a specific meaning, and not merely signify generally the wings of the largest kind of eagle. And I agree with him in thinking that the protection afforded to the Church by the

\* Decl. and Fall, c. xxi.

† Του ἀετου του μεγαλου, *the eagle, the great one.*

Emperor Theodosius is especially pointed at. The representation of a great potentate under the emblem of an eagle is a common figure in Scripture. (Ezek. xvii. ; Dan. vii. 4.)

This great eagle, then, beyond doubt, represents the ruler of some powerful empire or kingdom. In fact, to make the symbol strictly accurate, it must signify the ruling power of the mightiest empire then on earth, and would imply some extraordinary and unlooked for help given to the Church by that power. Now, what are the facts of the case? In the year 380, Theodosius the Great became sole master of the Roman world. Both wings of the Empire, the eastern and the western, were united in him, and under his sole government and control. And how then did he use his power? Let it be borne in mind, that up to this time the Emperors who succeeded Constantine, with few exceptions, and those of short duration, had favoured Arianism, and thus had given additional strength and impetus to that flood of doctrinal error which the serpent had poured forth out of his mouth after the woman. In consequence of the encouragement thus afforded by the Imperial favour, the flood, we may say, to carry on the metaphor, was rising higher and higher; and although the earth (the remoter provinces) had helped the woman, by absorbing the waters (in part), and thus staying the violence of the flood, it still threatened to overtake the woman and bury her beneath it. Such were the circumstances of the Church when Theodosius became sole Emperor. And how, then, we ask, did he use his power? Almost the first act of his reign was an edict for the suppression of Arianism and every other heresy. "It is our

pleasure," says he, "that all the nations which are governed by our moderation and clemency should stedfastly adhere to the religion which was taught the Romans by St. Peter. According to the discipline of the apostles and the doctrine of the Gospel, let us believe the sole deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, under an equal majesty and a pious Trinity."\* The effects of this edict, as may be supposed under such circumstances, were great and manifest. The progress of Arianism was instantly checked; and in the course of a very few years, the Arians, once so formidable, had dwindled into an insignificant sect. Thus, then, were "the two wings of the great eagle" given to the Church in her hour of danger, and by them she was lifted up out of the reach of that flood of heresy wherewith Satan hoped to have carried her away, and time was given her to recover strength before she withdrew altogether from the eyes of men.†

One other point remains to be considered,

4. THE REST OF THE WOMAN'S SEED. The true Church of Christ having now become invisible, regarded collectively as a body, could be attacked only in its members, who, being scattered here and there through-

\* This edict was published Feb. 28, A.D. 380.—*Decl. and Fall*, vol. v. c. 27.

† It must not be inferred from what is said above that I am prepared to defend altogether the proceedings of Theodosius. How far the civil magistrate is justified in interfering in religious matters is a question of incalculable importance; but it is also one beset with difficulties, and the discussion of which would be entirely out of place in a commentary like this. I merely therefore state facts. That Theodosius was a really good man there can be little doubt; and that he was instrumentally the means of preserving the true doctrine to the Church in a time of great danger is equally certain. Beyond this we need not go.

out the mass of nominal Christians, must be persecuted and destroyed singly as individuals, and not as a corporate body. This, then, is the thing here intended. The remnant of the woman's seed, "who keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus Christ," are those few pious isolated individuals who, in the midst of the almost universal corruption, both in doctrine and practice, which prevailed in the visible Church from the fifth century downwards, led holy lives, and preserved the truth of the Gospel in unadulterated purity. They are identical, therefore, with the "few names in Sardis which had not defiled their garments" (c. iii. 4), and with those who worship in the inner temple, whilst the outer court is given to the Gentiles (c. xi. 1), and with the hundred and forty-four thousand afterwards seen standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion. (c. xiv. 1—5.) All these represent one and the same class of persons. The hidden servants of Christ in a time of general defection. The "remnant according to the election of grace," who, like the seven thousand in Elijah's days, though unknown to man, are known to God. With these it is that the dragon now returns to make war. How he makes war with them, and the issue of this warfare, form the subjects of the next vision, in which we have the instruments employed by him for this purpose drawn and described with a minuteness of detail truly wonderful.

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#### GENERAL REMARKS ON THE PRECEDING CHAPTER.

I cannot conclude my observations on this portion of the Apocalypse without directing the reader's attention

to the very remarkable display we have in it of the unsearchable wisdom of God, as manifested in the mode here adopted by him of communicating to his servants the future destinies of the Church. The vision we have been considering contains the history of the Church for five centuries, or more. In fact, it may be said to carry down its history to the Millennium. The events of the period, therefore, which this vision occupies, if written out, would fill volumes. But the substance of them is communicated to St. John in a moment, by a glance of the eye. He looks up, and in a symbolic picture painted in the sky he reads the history of the true Church of Christ for eighteen centuries; and, let me add, by recording what he saw he has also transmitted, with almost equal conciseness, that history to us. Now, could these results have been produced with like effect in any other way? Is it not obvious that these *pictorial prophecies*, if I may be allowed the expression, although they may sometimes provoke the sneer of the superficial sceptic, contain in them a depth of wisdom far beyond the reach of man's invention, and which demonstrates them to be from Him "whose ways are unsearchable, and whose judgments are past finding out?" Let it be our care to see that we do indeed belong to that Church which is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."

There is another circumstance connected with this vision of deep interest and importance. The Church of Rome glories in having been the only true visible Church of Christ for many centuries, and she asks Protestants, in a tone of contemptuous triumph, "Where was your Church before Luther?" Now we answer, "It was

where the woman clothed with the sun was. Having escaped from the bondage of Egypt, it had fled into the wilderness, and for more than twelve centuries was lost to the eyes of men." And if they ask us further, "What, then, do you say of the Church of Rome?" What can we answer but that she is that scarlet-attired harlot, sitting upon many waters, whom the apostle is afterwards carried into the wilderness to behold, and who, as the sun-clad woman withdraws from view, comes forward, and attracts by her meretricious arts the astonished gaze of mankind? This is no fanciful, arbitrary interpretation. It is the only interpretation that can be given consistently with the terms of the prophecy, viewed as a whole. The woman clothed with the sun is indisputably the true apostolic Church of Christ, and her concealment in the wilderness, therefore, for twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days, can signify nothing less than the disappearance of the true Church for that period. Instead, then, of being abashed by the question, "Where was your Church, before Luther?" we may retort it upon our adversaries, and ask, "Where was *your* Church whilst the true Church of God was invisible? Where was the Church of Rome during the twelve hundred and sixty years of the wilderness concealment? Where was the Church of Rome whilst the woman clothed in scarlet was riding upon the necks of kings, and drinking herself drunk with the blood of saints?" Do they answer, "It was where it now is, spread over the whole earth, with Rome for its centre, and the wonder and admiration of the world!" Yes, truly, we know it. And what other proof can we require that she is "the MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH?"

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE WILD BEASTS FROM THE SEA AND FROM THE EARTH.

THE vision of the preceding chapter closed with the return of the dragon from the pursuit of the sun-clothed woman, fretted with disappointment, and determinately bent upon the destruction of any of her seed that might yet remain. In other words, the true Church of Christ having now ceased to be visible as a corporate body, and existing only in the persons of a few isolated individuals, Satan meditates a new mode of attack, and prepares for the destruction, not ostensibly of the *woman*, that is, *the Church*, but of her *seed*, who being no longer united as a body, he seeks to destroy one by one. The vision we are now about to consider gives an account of the method adopted by him for this purpose. And truly wonderful is both the scheme itself, as displaying the deep subtilty and persevering malice of our great adversary, and the speciality with which it is described, as manifesting the exactitude and certainty of God's foreknowledge. Before proceeding to the consideration of particulars, I would ask the reader's attention to a few general remarks on this subject.

When Christianity was first promulgated, it was violently opposed by the Jews, who were the first persecutors of Christ and his people. After these had lost the power to injure, the Gentiles took up the sword of persecution, and for the space of two hundred and fifty years the Church was exposed to the attacks of Heathen malice. At length, however, the Roman Empire became

nominally Christian, and Christianity being protected by the State, persecution ceased. And now, then, it might be supposed that the people of God would have rest. Where was persecution to come from? Who are to be the persecutors? Will the Church herself become the persecutor of her own children? and will the State, now that it has allied itself with Christianity, and exalted it to the highest seat of power, and professes to honour Christ and his people, draw the sword against those individuals who, by strict adherence to his doctrine and by the sanctity of their lives, are alone entitled to the name of Christians? Such a supposition seems utterly improbable. And yet so it was. The Jews being disarmed and rendered powerless, and the Gentiles nominally converted to Christianity, Satan contrives to make the professing Church itself subservient to his purposes, and by uniting the temporal and ecclesiastical powers against the only members of Christ's mystical body who have in them spiritual life, "makes war with the remnant of the woman's seed who keep the commandments of God." This is, then, that marvellous combination of naturally antagonistic forces brought by Satanic subtilty and malice to bear upon the faithful servants of Christ, foretold in the symbolic prophecy we are about to consider. Now let us first endeavour to realize what it was St. John saw.

It must be borne in mind that the apostle has descended from heaven, whither he had been in vision carried, and is supposed to be standing upon the coast of Italy, in the same spot where he stood when he took the little book out of the hand of the mighty angel. "I stood upon the sand of the sea." Whilst here, he looks towards the *west*, and sees a wild beast of a strange and

terrific form, rising out of the sea. This beast partakes of the nature of the leopard, the lion, and the bear. It has the agility and swiftness of the leopard, the strength and courage of the lion, and the ferocity of the bear. It has also seven heads, rising one above the other, and out of the topmost head proceed ten horns, each one crowned with a diadem, or kingly crown. This beast having ascended from the sea, proceeds to the place where the dragon is, and receives from him his throne, his power, and his authority, and is acknowledged by all the inhabitants of the earth as his successor.

The apostle now turns towards the east, and he sees another wild beast rise up out of *the earth*. The peculiarity of this beast is, that he is to outward appearance like a lamb. He is a *wild beast* (*θηριον*), and yet his horns, in which consists his power to hurt, are like a lamb's horns, and therefore *apparently* innocuous. But he is far from being lamb-like in disposition, for he *speaks as a dragon*.

Now, these two beasts having risen up about the same time, meet together and act in concert, mutually supporting each other. The wild beast from the sea joins the wild beast from the land, and they two then proceed in their united strength to subdue the whole earth. The lamb-like beast goes before the other, and claims for him the dominion of the world. In support of this claim he seems to work miracles, and having thus awed the people, he persuades them to make an image of a beast they had formerly worshipped, that appeared to have been slain, but which he tells them is restored to life in the beast they now see. This they accordingly do; and the image being made, he, the lamb-like beast, gives life to it, and endues it with the

power of speech and motion, so that it, *the image*, is able to seize and put to death all those who refuse to give it reverence, and submit to its authority.

Now, in interpreting this vision, our first object should be to conceive accurately of the chief actors in it, and of the parts severally allotted to them. To do this, we must remember that *a wild beast* is the symbol not of *a person*, but of *a power*. And in contemplating, therefore, these wild beasts, we must put aside all idea of individuality and personality. We must regard the beasts as the representatives not of kings or emperors, but of kingdoms and empires, abstractedly considered, without any reference whatever to particular individuals who at any time may happen to be at the head of them. And I make this remark thus early to obviate an objection which may hereafter be made against the interpretation I am about to give of these beasts, viz., that there have been Popes and Emperors who did not resemble in their characters wild beasts. Supposing this granted, it would not affect the interpretation, since the beast in each case is the *power*, not the person, who exercises it. On this principle let us proceed to the interpretation of the vision before us.

The chief actors in this vision are the wild beast from the sea, the dragon, and the wild beast from the earth. My views in general of the two former have already been given in the commentary on the preceding chapter. The dragon, it will be remembered, was assumed to be the ancient Roman Empire in its Heathen form, the seven heads representing specifically the seven hills enclosed within the walls of the city.

But the beast from the sea takes the place and

the authority of the dragon; *i.e.*, the empire of which this beast is the symbol has for the centre of its dominion the same locality, and exercises the same despotic power as the empire of which the dragon was the symbol. This wild beast, therefore, must symbolize an empire about to arise after the ancient Heathen Empire had been destroyed, and which would be, as it were, that empire revived. It must represent, too, I think, obviously, a *secular* empire, not a spiritual or ecclesiastical dominion. There is nothing about it to indicate that it partakes in any degree of a spiritual or ecclesiastical character. And I cannot, therefore, but express my astonishment that so many commentators should have acquiesced in the interpretation which makes this sea-born wild beast the Papacy. There is not a single feature in the description of the beast itself that can with propriety be so applied. It is, as I have just said, a secular, not a spiritual power, we have here delineated; and I think it will be found that every circumstance of the prophecy has been exactly verified in that remarkable empire founded by Clovis about the commencement of the sixth century, and completed by Charlemagne in the eighth. Before, however, I proceed to the details of the history of this empire, and show their agreement with the terms of the prophecy, I must ask the reader's attention to a few remarks on the lamb-like beast from the earth.

There are three peculiarities in this beast: 1st, It arose from the earth; 2d, It had horns like a lamb; 3d, It spoke like a dragon. Now, the first of these shows in what quarter the empire symbolized by this beast would arise. As St. John was standing upon the sea-shore, and this beast appeared to arise from the

land, it is obvious that the power it symbolized must come from the opposite quarter to that from whence the power represented by the other beast would come. And if he were standing (as I imagine he was in vision) upon the Italian shore, then *the earth* must mean the land of Italy.

The second peculiarity in this wild beast indicates the nature of its power. Its two lamb-like horns clearly intimate it to be a religious or ecclesiastical power. That it is a power, in fact, which professes to act in the name and on the authority of Christ. For throughout this book a lamb never has reference to any but Christ. Now as the horn is the symbol of power, these two horns can signify nothing else but that the dominion symbolized by the beast professes to derive its authority from Christ.

But the third peculiarity shows that although ostensibly a Christian power clothed with the meekness of Christ, it would speak and act as a Heathen power, and treat the people of God as the dragon-like Pagan Empire had done before it.

Thus, then, it appears that this wild beast from the land is an ecclesiastical dominion destined to arise in Italy about the same time with another secular empire which would spring up in the West, and that the two combining together for that purpose would succeed in reviving the apparently extinct empire of ancient Rome.

Such is a general outline of the bearing of this prophecy. Let us now turn to the facts of history.

The ancient Roman Empire perished with Augustulus in the year 476.\* Then did that vast fabric which had

\* See "Decline and Fall," c. 36. One of the headings of this chapter is, "Total extinction of the Western Empire." The Eastern Empire, it

been centuries in rearing fall to pièces; the Roman territories were distributed among various barbarous nations, and Rome ceased to give laws to the world. Who could have foreseen that in a very short time it would again lift up its head and rule over mankind with even a more despotic sway than it had ever done before? Such, however, was the case. The following is a brief outline of the circumstances under which this wonderful restoration was effected:—

At the close of the fifth century the Western Empire was divided amongst the following nations: the Goths, the Ostrogoths, the Visigoths, the Heruli, the Burgundians, the Vandals, the Franks, the Huns, and the Saxons. Of these, the Franks were one of the most inconsiderable, the whole number of their forces not amounting to five thousand men. But Clovis, their king, was young, ambitious, and enterprising. In 496, he began his conquests, and in a reign of thirty years he subdued all Gaul, and laid the foundation of the French monarchy. This, I conceive, was the rising up of the wild beast from the sea. Then began that dominion in the West, which afterwards combining with the ecclesiastical power of Rome, consummated that remarkable empire, partly political and partly ecclesiastical, which succeeded to that of ancient Rome, and for many centuries domineered over the greater part of Christendom.

is true, still subsisted, and it has been objected on this ground, that one of the seven heads of the beast was not smitten to death on the deposition of Augustulus, seeing that the empire still lived in the Emperor of Constantinople. But although the Greek Emperor chose to retain still the old Roman title, it was really nothing but an empty name. The ancient Roman Empire did unquestionably expire, as above stated, in its last head, who was called originally Romulus Augustus, but afterwards in derision, Momyllus Augustulus.

The following account of the coronation of Clovis affords a striking confirmation of this view of the prophecy.

“After the success of the Gothic war (about A.D. 500) Clovis accepted the honours of the Roman Consulship. On the solemn day, the Monarch of Gaul, placing a diadem on his head, was invested, in the church of St. Martin, with a PURPLE TUNIC AND MANTLE. From thence he proceeded on horseback to the Cathedral of Tours, and, as he passed through the streets, profusely scattered with his own hand a donation of gold and silver to the joyful multitude, who incessantly repeated their acclamations of CONSUL AND AUGUSTUS !”\*

Here, then, we see plain indications of the approaching rise of that wild beast to which the dragon was

\* “Decline and Fall,” c. xxxviii. The following chronological table, taken from the “Encyclopædia Metropolitana,” shows the gradual progress of the dominion founded by Clovis, until at length it became deserving of the title of “The Western Empire revived :”—

## FRANCE AND GERMANY.

A. D.	A. D.
496. Rise of the Frankish Monarchy.	678. Thierry III., sole Monarch.
508. Conquest of Gaul by Clovis.	687. Pepin d'Heristal, Mayor of the whole Monarchy.
„ The Merovingian Monarchs.	717. Charles Martel, Duke of France.
511. Divided among the sons of Clovis.	732. Defeats the Saracens at Tours.
528. Their conquest of Thuringia,	741. Pepin le Bref rules the Monarchy, and founds, the II. Carolingian Dynasty.
534. And of Burgundy.	771. Charlemagne sole Monarch.
558. Clotaire I., sole Monarch of France and Germany.	774. Conquers Italy.
562. His death. Second partition of the Monarchy.	778. Conquers Spain, north of the Ebro, from the Saracens.
613. Clotaire II. Re-union of the Monarchy.	796. Subdues the Huns.
628. Rise of the Mayors of the Palace. Monarchy again divided.	800. CROWNED BY THE POPE EMPEROR OF THE WEST.

about to resign his seat and delegate his authority. Clovis, the Frankish Monarch, by profession a Christian, is crowned under the auspices of the Bishop of Rome, and saluted with the *revived* titles of CONSUL AND AUGUSTUS.

Passing over a period of three hundred years, let us now turn to the same historian's narrative of the coronation of Charlemagne. The title of this portion of the history is, "THE RESTORATION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE WEST," and the consummation of this great event, is thus related: "On the festival of Christmas, the last year of the eighth century, Charlemagne appeared in the Church of St. Peter, and to gratify the vanity of Rome, he had exchanged the simple dress of his country for the habit of a patrician. After the celebration of the holy mysteries, Leo suddenly placed a precious crown on his head, and the dome resounded with the acclamations of the people—'Long life and victory to Charles, the most pious Augustus, crowned by God, the GREAT AND PACIFIC EMPEROR OF THE ROMANS!' The head and body of Charlemagne were consecrated by the royal unction; after the example of the Cæsars he was saluted, OR ADORED, by the Pontiff; his coronation oath represents a promise to maintain *the faith* and *privileges* of the Church; and the first fruits were paid in his rich offerings to the shrine of the apostle." (Chap. xlix.)

The same writer, after having described the kingdoms and countries subdued by Charlemagne, proceeds thus: "If we trace the outlines of this geographical picture it will be seen that the empire of the Franks extended between east and west from the Ebro to the Elbe, or Vistula; between the north and south, from the Duchy of Beneventum, to the river Eyder, the perpetual

boundary of Germany and Denmark. TWO-THIRDS OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE OF ROME WERE SUBJECT TO CHARLEMAGNE, and the deficiency was amply supplied by his command of the inaccessible, or invincible nations of Germany.”

Thus, then, we see the Frankish monarch, he who came from *the West*, crowned by the Bishop of Rome, as the successor of the ancient Cæsars, and in that capacity receiving *the* TITLES, *the* POWER, and *the* TERRITORIES of the former emperors of Rome; and thus did the Heathen dragon resign his power and seat to the wild beast from the sea, and so was the apparently deadly wound which had been inflicted on his sixth head, by the extinction of the Western Empire, healed. (See the map.)

Having thus shown, by the most indisputable historical facts, that the empire of Charlemagne may be justly regarded as the ancient Roman Empire revived, reserving the explanation of the minuter details of the prophecy for consideration in the order in which they occur verse by verse, I must now direct the reader's attention to—

#### THE WILD BEAST FROM THE EARTH.

It will be remembered that this beast also represents a power that was to come into existence about the same time as the beast from the sea, only it would be of a different character, and take its rise from a different quarter. It was to be a religious or ecclesiastical power, as implied in its lamb-like horns, and it arose from the *land*, meeting the other beast as he came up from the *sea*. Such were the peculiarities in the symbolical prefigurations belonging to this earth-born beast. And

is it possible to conceive a more exact representation of the leading features in the character and history of the Papacy? Let us take a rapid survey of the rise and establishment of this mysterious power. This subject has, indeed, been already glanced at in the commentary on the tenth chapter, but the prophecy now before us requires that we should enter more minutely into the consideration of the essential elements and primary origin of the Papal domination.

The facts we have to establish by historical proofs, let it be observed, are, 1st, the simultaneousness of the rise of the Papacy and of the Frankish monarchy; and, 2dly, their conjoint acting for the re-establishment of the dominion of Rome, as being the metropolis of the world. Now we have seen that the Frankish monarchy (or, as it was afterwards called, the Latin Empire) began with Clovis, in the year 496. And what are the circumstances connected with the rise of the Papacy? To answer this question fully would be to write a volume; the leading facts, however, of the case may be compressed within a small compass, and for the satisfaction of those of my readers who may not be familiar with the subject, I will endeavour to convey all the necessary historical information in a few pages.

The rise and progress of the Papal power was gradual and imperceptible. It is almost impossible to say when it first came into being. From an expression in the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, it would seem as if even at that early period it had commenced its mysterious existence. "The mystery of iniquity," says the apostle, "doth already work." But however early may have been the embryo-formation of the Papacy,

it was not visibly seen, or, to use the metaphor of the prophecy, it did not *rise up out of the earth*, until about the middle of the fifth century.

The first public assumption and public recognition of Romish supremacy I can find specifically mentioned in ecclesiastical history, was in the Council of Chalcedon, in 451. By the twenty-ninth canon of that Council it was decided that "the See of Rome should retain its ancient privileges and take precedence of all other sees, and that the See of Constantinople, the New Rome, should rank next after it."\* It appears, also, that about the same time St. Leo, the second Pope of that name, was addressed by certain oriental bishops by the title of *Œcumenic*, or *Universal Patriarch*.† Here, then, we clearly perceive the germ of Papal supremacy just beginning to peep above ground. It was not, however, until more than a century afterwards that the pretensions of the Roman See were established upon a firm basis. In the first instance the Bishops of Rome disclaimed the title of *Œcumenic*, and Gregory the Great in particular declared, that whosoever should call himself "Universal Bishop," would thereby proclaim himself Antichrist. Yet Gregory himself was a strenuous upholder of the supremacy of Rome, and by asserting that the power of the keys was committed to the Bishops of that See as the successors of St. Peter,

\* The substance of the enactment is as follows:—"That the fathers did reasonably accord its privileges to ancient Rome *because it was the imperial city*; and for the same reason the hundred and fifty bishops here assembled have decided that New Rome, which is honoured with the empire and the senate, shall have the same advantages with Ancient Rome in the ecclesiastical constitution, *and be the second after it*."—*Fleury*, liv. xxviii., sect. 30, quoted by Dean Waddington, c. ix., p. 125.

† *Ibid*, p. 154.

and not to the Bishops of the Christian Church as a body, and also by attempting to establish an exact uniformity of worship throughout the Latin Church, he laid, in fact, the foundations of the Romish system.\*

Before, however, the time of Gregory, who died in 604, the claims of the Papal See had received great additional strength from the celebrated decretal letter of the Emperor Justinian. This decretal letter is dated March, 533, and is one of so much interest and importance, being regarded by many expositors as constituting the commencing epoch of the 1260 year-days of the beast's reign, that I think it may be well to put the English reader in possession of the substance of it. The following is a translation of the principal clauses relating to the Romish supremacy :—

*“Justinian perpetually Augustus, &c., to John, the most holy Archbishop and Patriarch of the cherished city† of Rome.”*

“Rendering honour to the Apostolic See, and to your Holiness, we have hastened to refer all things which pertain to the state of the Churches to your Holiness : since it hath always been our great desire to preserve the unity of your Apostolic See, and the state of the

\* “We may consider the system properly called Roman Catholic,” says Dean Waddington, “as having assumed its peculiar character at this time.”—*Hist.*, p. 154. Milner, perhaps, gives too favourable a view of the character of Gregory. He may have been a really good man, but his sanction of image and relic worship ; his adoption of heathen rites and ceremonies ; and still more, his numerous pretended miracles, cannot but make us stand in doubt of him. (See Bede's “*Eccles. Hist.*,” c. 29, 30, and 31.) Gregory was the first Pope who styled himself, “The Servant of the servants of God,” which has ever since been employed by his successors. Milner thinks it was true humility which led him to adopt this title, but I doubt whether St. Paul or St. Peter would have used it.

† *Almæ urbis Romæ.*

holy Churches of God, which hitherto obtains, and remains undisturbed, without any intervening opposition.\* Therefore we make haste *to subject and to unite* to the See of your Holiness all the priests of the whole eastern territories.† For we do not allow anything that pertains to the state of the Churches, even although the subject of discussion be plain and indisputable, not to be made known to your Holiness, who are the head of all the holy Churches. Therefore we beseech your paternal affection that by your letters addressed to us, and to the most holy Bishop of this beloved city, and Patriarch your brother (seeing that he also hath written by the same messengers to your Holiness, being earnestly desirous of following in all things the Apostolical See of your Blessedness,) that you may make it clearly known to us that your Holiness will uphold all who rightly confess the aforesaid things, and that you condemn the perfidy of those Judaizers who have dared to deny the true faith.” ‡

Such is the substance of the famous decretal letter of Justinian, which, as just remarked, has been supposed by so many commentators to constitute the precise epoch from whence we are to date the commencement of Papal supremacy. And it is undoubtedly a remarkable document, well deserving the attentive consideration of the students of prophecy. It does not, however,

\* *Nulla intercedente contrarietate.*

† *Itaque omnes sacerdotes universi orientalis tractus, et subicere et unire sedi vestre Sanctitatis properavimus.* The genuineness of this and the following clause, however, has been disputed; but Mr. Cuninghame, in the Preface to his “*Fulness of the Times,*” pp. 11—22, and Mr. Elliott, in the “*Horæ Apoc.,*” vol. iii., p. 147, have, I think, shown that there is no sufficient reason for rejecting them.

‡ The above translation is made from the original letter as given by Mr. Elliott in the place above cited. His reference is *Hard. ii., 1146.*

it seems to me, so much establish a new claim as recognise an old one. Justinian, indeed, declares his readiness to "SUBJECT AND UNITE to the See of Rome all the priests of the East," but then it is on the presumption that Rome had all along been the chief city, and her Bishop the metropolitan of Christendom. But however this may be, certain it is that this letter of Justinian was not final. In the year 588, the Emperor Maurice conferred the title of Universal Bishop on John, the Patriarch of Constantinople. Upon this a fierce and angry contest ensued between the two Patriarchs, and was carried on with great bitterness for eighteen years, until at length, in the year 606, the Emperor Phocas put an end to the dispute by a formal decree, in which he assigned the supremacy to the See of Rome; "and thus," says the learned historian Mosheim, "was the Papal supremacy first introduced."\*

From this time the Papacy made rapid strides. For although the Popes who immediately followed were not men of shining talents, the office itself continually grew in strength and importance by its own intrinsic vitality. At length, in 754-5, it became a temporal power by the celebrated donation of Pepin, who having conquered the Exarchate of Ravenna from the Lombards, made it over to the Popes. This is, perhaps, one of the most extraordinary transactions recorded in history, and is, I believe, without a parallel. The circumstances were briefly these: Pepin, the Mayor of the Palace to the

\* "The most learned writers, and those who are most remarkable for their knowledge of antiquity, are generally agreed that Boniface III. engaged Phocas, that abominable tyrant who waded to the Imperial throne through the blood of the Emperor Mauritius, to take from the Bishop of Constantinople the title of *Œcumenical*, and to confer it upon the Roman Pontiff."—*Cent. vii., c. ii., 1.*

King of France, was preparing to dethrone his master, and usurp the crown. To give some colour of justice to his proceedings, he despatched an embassy to the Bishop of Rome, to ask "Whether the Divine law would allow a generous people to dethrone a pusillanimous monarch, and substitute an efficient one in his place?" The answer of Zachary, the Pope, was such as Pepin desired, and he accordingly took possession of his master's throne. An opportunity soon occurred of showing his gratitude to the Papal See. The Lombards, who had long held the Exarchate of Ravenna, threatened to invade and conquer the whole of Italy. Stephen, who had succeeded Zachary, applied to France for help; and instantly, Pepin, with a large army, crossed the Alps, and having overthrown the Lombards, transferred the sovereignty of the Exarchate to the Bishop of Rome. This splendid donation was afterwards confirmed by his son Charlemagne, in 774. And thus the temporal power of the Popes was established upon a firm basis. From this time forth the Bishops of Rome became secular princes as well as ecclesiastical rulers; and whilst they thundered out their anathemas against all those who disputed their spiritual supremacy, like other monarchs, they collected taxes from their subjects, and defended their territories with arms and soldiers. All was done, however, in the name, and by the (pretended) authority of Christ. It was as his representatives that they united in their persons the regal and priestly character; and as such it was that they verified the strange and unnatural combination in the prophecy of the Lamb and the dragon.

The simultaneousness, then, of the rise of the Imperial and Papal powers, is clearly established. We come

now to their conjoint acting. This will be best explained and illustrated by considering—

THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST.

In fixing the meaning of this prophetic symbol, the first point to be determined is, what we are to understand by the beast itself. Now it is expressly said, that the image made was the image of the beast WHICH HAD RECEIVED THE DEADLY WOUND AND WAS HEALED. But this was the ancient Roman Empire, slain, apparently, in 476, in Augustulus, and revived, in 800, in Charlemagne. The image of the beast, therefore, must be an empire *something like* the ancient Roman. An empire, in fact, which should, to use a familiar phrase, *ape* that empire, and be a sort of copy of it. This *imitation empire*, moreover, was to be formed at the suggestion of the beast from the earth, that is to say, the *Papacy*, whose purposes it would be made eventually to serve. And how truly astonishing is the exactness with which this prophecy is verified in the facts of history! Let the reader attentively peruse the following extract:—

“ The resemblance of the new empire (that of Charlemagne), with that which had passed away, and the ancient reverence attached to the name of Rome, facilitated their connexion, and the *new* empire received the name of Roman. This combination of circumstances produced the idea of an empire whose temporal power and mode of formation should be A VIVID IMAGE of that of ancient Rome, and whose spiritual power should extend over the whole world, and fraternize all nations, by uniting them in one faith, and under one sovereign. Thus originated the Holy Roman Empire,

which contained within itself TWO SEPARATE POWERS, the Church and the State, each of which owned A VISIBLE HEAD, the *representative of God* upon earth ; the spiritual head being THE POPE, and the temporal head, THE EMPEROR.” (“Menzel’s Hist. of Germany,” translated by Mrs. Horrocks, vol. i., p. 248.)

Can we ask a better commentary on the prophecy before us than this? Can we doubt that that Empire which the historian calls “THE LIVING IMAGE” of the ancient Roman, is the image in the prophecy to which life was imparted? What makes this coincidence the more striking is, the manner in which this image of ancient Rome is described as having been formed. It was not the work of the French King, or of the Pope, alone and separately, but of the two acting conjointly ; just as in the prophecy, the image is made by the beast from the earth, who being assisted by the beast from the sea, gives life and energy to the image, so that it has power to put to death all who refuse to worship it. It is impossible, in fact, to conceive a symbol more exactly descriptive of the character of the empire as revived by Charlemagne, compared with what it was under the Cæsars, than that of an image endued with life. For an *image*, although it should be made to move and speak, is not, after all, the *living man*. It is *like* a man, but it is not a man. So the revived empire, although like the old one, was rather the living *image* than the living *man*. In confirmation of these remarks, I would ask the reader’s attention to the following extract from Gibbon :—

“It is in the fourteenth century that we may view in the strongest light the state and contrast of the Roman Empire of Germany. The German Emperor was no

more than *the elective and impotent magistrate of an aristocracy of princes*. His best prerogative was the right of presiding and proposing in the National Senate, which was convened at his summons. In the Cathedral of St. Ambrose Charles was crowned with the iron crown; in the Vatican he was again crowned with the *golden crown of the Empire*; but, in obedience to a secret treaty, the Roman Emperor immediately withdrew without reposing a single night within the walls of Rome. Let us now turn to THE APPARENT MAJESTY of the same Charles in the Diet of the Empire. A hundred princes *bowed before his throne*, and exalted their own dignity by the voluntary honours which they yielded to their chief. At the Royal banquet, the hereditary great officers, the seven electors, who in rank and title were equal to kings, performed their solemn and domestic service of the palace. Nor was the supremacy of the Emperor confined to Germany alone: the hereditary monarchs of Europe confessed *the pre-eminence of his rank and dignity*; he was the first of the Christian princes, the temporal head of the great Republic of the West: to his person the title of Majesty was long appropriated; and he disputed with the Pope the sublime prerogative of creating kings and assembling councils. The oracle of the civil law, the learned Bartolus, was a pensioner of Charles IV., and his school resounded with the doctrine THAT THE ROMAN EMPEROR WAS THE RIGHTFUL SOVEREIGN OF THE EARTH, FROM THE RISING TO THE SETTING SUN.”\*

These extracts require no comment. It is impossible, I think, to read them and not see in the revived, or Latin

\* “Decline and Fall,” c. xlix. It is a curious coincidence that the title of this chapter is, “Introduction and worship of Images.” It would seem as if the Image of the ancient Roman Empire were amongst the number.

Empire, as formed by the conjoint agency of the Emperors and Popes, the IMAGE OF THE BEAST.\*

Having thus shown the historical fulfilment of the more prominent points in this remarkable prophecy, I will now consider those minor details which have been left unnoticed, or only cursorily glanced at.

“*I stood upon the sand of the sea.*” (Ver. 1.)—I have assumed that this was the Italian shore, and on the western side. Now it may be asked, why the shore of Italy rather than of any other country? I answer, The circumstances of the prophecy indicate as much. The Dragon is admitted on all hands to be the Heathen Roman Empire. But the beast from the sea *comes* to the dragon, who resigns to him his seat of Government,—that is, Rome. What sea, then, can he come from but that portion of the Mediterranean which lies between Italy and France? From thence it was, therefore, St. John in vision saw him issue, and he must, consequently, have been standing on the sea-shore, not far, probably, from the mouth of the Tiber; and there also it was that, turning himself round, he saw the second beast rise from the earth.

“*And the wild beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion.*”—These characteristics of this beast are little noticed by commentators, yet they doubtless have a meaning, and that probably an important

\* It is, in fact, so called by the historian of the declining Empire himself. Let us hear his own words:—“In the eighth century the Roman Bishop became the temporal and spiritual father of a free people, and of the Western Empire, which was restored by Charlemagne; THE TITLE AND IMAGE still decorate the singular Constitution of Modern Germany.”—Vol. xii., p. 257.

one. Perhaps it might suffice to say, as has been done, that they imply merely that the empire symbolized by this beast would partake of the swiftness of the leopard, the ferocity of the bear, and the strength of the lion. I am inclined to think, however, that something more definite is intended, and that there is a specific reference here to the *three nations* of which the empire of the Franks was originally composed. It is a well-known fact that France, or, as it was anciently called, *Gaul*, was formerly divided amongst three nations,—the Belgians, the Aquitani, and the Gauls, or Celts.\* It is also an historical fact that the national device of the Belgians was a *lion*, and of the Aquitani a *leopard*.† Respecting

\* It seems scarcely necessary to adduce the well-known commencement of Cæsar's Commentaries, "Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres; quarum unam incolunt Belgæ; aliam Aquitani: tertiam qui ipsorum lingua Celtæ, nostra Galli adpellantur."

† This information I have gathered from the following note in the "Horæ Apocalypticæ," vol. iii., p. 500:—"Nous venons de voir que les armoiries de la Guyenne (*Aquitania*) sont un *leopard*, celles des Celtes, (surtout les Belgiques) étoient un *lion*, et celles des Francs un *crapaud*." And again: "La Cosmographie de Munster, liv. ii., nous a transmis un fait très remarquable dans ce genre. Marcomir, roi des Francs, ayant pénétré de la Westphalie dans le Tongre vit en songe une figure à trois têtes, l'une de *lion*, l'autre d'*aigle*, la troisième de *crapaud*. Il consulta la-dessus, ajoute-on, un célèbre Druide de la contrée appelé Al Runus. Et celui-ci l'assura que cette figure designoit *les trois puissances* qui auroient régné successivement sur les Gaules:—les Celtes, dont le symbole étoit un *lion*, les Romains designés par l'*aigle*, et les *Francs* par le *crapaud*, à cause de leur marais."—"Monde primitif comparé avec le Monde Moderne," by M. Court de Gobelin, (Paris, 1781), pp. 181, 195. This is interesting, as illustrating at least the fact that the distinguishing of nations by particular animals used as armorial bearings was a common and familiar idea. Mr. Elliott informs us further, that *three frogs* were the *old arms of France*, and gives a drawing of the Shield of Clovis, the device on which is, as he thinks, *three frogs*. But *crapaud*, the word employed by M. Court in the above quotation, means a *toad*, not a frog; and the three figures on the *armorial shield* of Clovis, as well as on his *banner*, as represented in the drawings, are, I think, evidently meant to represent

that of the Gauls or Celts we have not, that I am aware of, any certain information ; but as they came originally from the centre of Europe, emerging, as it were, from the vast forests that once covered those regions, there is nothing, to say the least, improbable in the idea that the *bear* may have been their national device, as the leopard and the lion were of the two others. Assuming, then, this to have been the case, we shall at once have got a clue to the solution of the enigma involved in the triplex form of this sea-born wild beast. It is an empire or power coming from the West, composed of three nations, having for their national devices respectively the three animals here named. And such an empire was that founded by the Frankish King, Clovis, which became eventually, as we have seen, the *image* of the ancient Roman Empire, and was the beast to whom the dragon resigned his throne and his authority. For the foundations of that empire were laid in the consolidation under one ruler of the three originally independent people of Gaul,—the Belgians, the Aquitani, and the Celts,—who being thus united together, formed a power fitly symbolized by a beast, combining in itself the national emblems by which, when existing in a state of independence, they were distinguished from each other. Here then, it seems to me, we have a satisfactory explanation of this hitherto unexplained mystery. And surely it is no slight confirmation of the view we have taken of this beast, to find it thus supported by agreements in minute particulars

*toads*, not frogs. A strange device certainly for the shield of a mighty conqueror. But is it impossible that these *three* toads may have been intended to symbolize as in derision the three ancient possessors of Gaul, whom Clovis conquered ? That they were his own arms appears to me doubtful, since on the other side of the shield we observe three *fleurs-des-lis*, the proper arms of the French kings.

which could hardly have been anticipated. I do not see how it is possible to explain the triplex form of this beast on the supposition that it symbolizes the Papacy; for what relation is there between an ecclesiastical or spiritual domination and any of the three animals of which this beast is composed?

“*Ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns.*”—These horns grew out of the highest, or seventh head. Now the head being the symbol of a kingdom or empire, the horns growing out of it must symbolize lesser kingdoms, into which it would eventually be divided. If, then, the seventh head be the Empire of Constantine revived by Charlemagne, these ten horns with crowns upon them must represent ten kingdoms or dynasties into which that empire would be divided, or, rather, in which its strength would consist; for the horns, although representing independent kingdoms, are said to “give their power and strength unto the beast.” (Chap. xvii. 13.) We must look for these ten kingdoms, therefore, not in the wide range of the ancient Roman Empire, one-third of which, at the time the beast arose from the sea, had been taken away by the Saracens, and another third of which was about to be taken away by the Turks, but within the boundaries of the revived Western Empire.

It is the kingdoms which “*give their power to the beast*” that are the ten horns on his head. Now, passing by the earlier periods of the history of the empire,\*

\* It is a remarkable circumstance that as the barbarous nations who dismembered the Roman Empire, taken in conjunction with the ancient Romans, were ten in number; so there have always been about that number of Christian kingdoms within its limits. I subjoin several lists of these kingdoms as given by different writers:—

what is the actual state of things at the present time? Let the reader refer to the map prefixed to this volume, and he will find that there are at this very moment ten kingdoms within the territories occupied by the Empire of Charlemagne, which at different times have given, or now give, their support to the Papacy. Their names are these :—

MEDE, A.D. 456.	BISHOP LLOYD.	Began
1. The Britons.	1. Huns . . . . .	356
2. The Saxons in Britain.	2. Ostrogoths . . . . .	377
3. The Franks.	3. Visigoths . . . . .	378
4. The Burgundians in France.	4. Franks . . . . .	407
5. The Visigoths in Spain.	5. Vandals . . . . .	407
6. The Sueves in Galicia and Portugal.	6. Sueves and Alans . . . . .	407
7. The Vandals in Africa.	7. Burgundians . . . . .	407
8. The Alemanes in Germany.	8. Herules and Rugians . . . . .	476
9. The Ostrogoths in Pennonia.	9. Saxons . . . . .	476
10. The Greeks in the remainder of the empire.	10. Lombards . . . . .	526

SIR ISAAC NEWTON.

1. The Vandals and Alans in Spain.	6. The Franks.
2. The Suevians in Spain.	7. The Britons.
3. The Visigoths.	8. The Huns.
4. The Alans in Gaul.	9. The Lombards.
5. The Burgundians.	10. Kingdom of Ravenna.

BISHOP NEWTON'S LIST IS AS FOLLOWS :—

*The Ten Kingdoms or Governments in the Eighth Century.*

1. The Senate of Rome, who revolted from the Greek Emperors.	5. The Alemanes in Germany.
2. The Greeks in Ravenna.	6. The Franks in France.
3. The Lombards in Lombardy.	7. The Burgundians in Burgundy.
4. The Huns in Hungary.	8. The Goths in Spain.
	9. The Britons.
	10. The Saxons in Britain.

- |              |                             |
|--------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. France.   | 6. Austria.                 |
| 2. Spain.    | 7. Sardinia.                |
| 3. Portugal. | 8. Naples.                  |
| 4. Belgium.  | 9. Switzerland (Catholic).* |
| 5. Bavaria.  | 10. Rome.                   |

Thus we in a manner see with our own eyes the ten crowned horns springing out from the head of the sea-born beast.

3, 4, 7, 8. “*And all the world wondered after the beast, and they worshipped the dragon, &c., and they worshipped the beast, saying,*” &c.—“WONDERED AFTER,” *i.e.*, looked at him with reverence, and awe, and admiration. The word is the same as is used in 2 Thess. i. 10, where St. Paul, speaking of the second advent of our Lord, says, “He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and TO BE ADMIRED (*θαυμασθηναι*) in all those that believe.” And so the other word here employed, WORSHIPPED, signifies much the same thing. It does not mean that they gave him divine honour, but that they bowed down before him and submitted to his authority. And this was to be done not by a few only, but by all kindreds and tongues and nations. How this was accomplished in the revived empire of the Latins we have already seen in the extract from Gibbon. The head of that empire was declared to be the rightful Sovereign of the whole earth, and “the contrary opinion,” adds the historian, “was condemned, not as an error, but as a heresy.” The language, therefore, of the prophecy was fulfilled to the letter.

5, 6. “*And there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies,*” &c.—To blaspheme is to

\* Of the twenty-two Cantons twelve are Protestant and ten Roman Catholic.

speak injuriously of any one. To blaspheme God, his tabernacle, and his people, is to speak words that are injurious to God and his Church. This the holy Roman, or Latin Empire did, when, in the name and as the representative of God, the head of it sanctioned, encouraged, and even commanded the persecution to death of those holy and devoted men who at the risk of their lives stood up boldly to vindicate the truth against the corruptions of the Romish Church. Let it be observed, however, that it is not the beast himself who speaks, but another who speaks for him. "There was given unto him a mouth," *i.e.*, one that spoke for him. Just as we read, Exod. iv. 16, God said to Moses, "Aaron thy brother shall be to thee instead of a mouth." Now, if we refer to chap. xix. 20, we shall find that this mouth is "a false prophet," an ecclesiastical person, who speaks, or pretends to speak, in the name of God. But did the Popes as the spokesmen of the holy Roman Empire ever speak in the way described? Let us hear their own words. The first document I shall quote from is a letter addressed by Pope Pius V. to the King of France on the subject of the St. Bartholomew massacre. It runs thus:—

"The public joy of this city hath very much augmented our pleasure, which at the first certain intelligence of so great a victory rejoiced, and does rejoice, as if some domestic slaughter and intestine calamity were removed. It now only remains that your Majesty in such prosperous circumstances should remit nothing of your usual diligence, application, and perseverance, nor afford our common enemies an opportunity of confirming their courage, and collecting again their forces. Moved, therefore, by our paternal care for your welfare, and by

our office, we admonish you not to be moved by any prayers so as *not to inflict just punishment* in those things which are ordained by law, lest, if thus influenced by private reasons, you should yield more to flesh and blood than to a just vengeance, the anger of God should burn against you, as it did against Saul, in proportion as he has imparted to you of his goodness. For what would this be but to make the blessings of God, that is to say, the victory obtained, of no effect, the first fruit of which victory consists in this, that by a *just animal-version the wicked heretics, the common enemies, being removed out of the way*, its former peace and tranquillity may be restored to that kingdom. Dated, St. Peter's at Rome, under the Fisherman's seal, the 20th day of October, 1559."\*

Thus speaks the Roman Pontiff, the *mouth* of the beast; and is not this to blaspheme God and his tabernacle, and those that dwell therein? Who were the subjects of that treacherous massacre which the Bishop of Rome thus speaks of in terms of approving exultation? Men of God; pious, virtuous, spiritually enlightened men, whose only crime was that they protested against the worship of saints and images, and other unscriptural practices. For this sole cause were they dragged from their beds in the dead of night, and, without notice or trial, slain in the open streets with horrible barbarities. Is not the calling an act like this a good and pious act pleasing and acceptable to the Almighty, blasphemy against God? And when the Pope charges

\* "Pii Quinti Pont. Max. Epistol," lib. 3, Epist. 45, Antwerpia, 1640. For this and many other quotations from Roman Catholic writers I am indebted to a useful work published by the Reformation Society entitled, "A Sketch of the Romish Controversy," by G. Finch, Esq. London: G. Norman, 27, Maiden-lane.

such men with being "*wicked heretics*," the "*common enemies*" of God and man, is not this to *blaspheme* his tabernacle and them that dwell therein?

5. "*And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.*"—This, as before observed, is manifestly the same period as that of the treading down of the holy city by the Gentiles (c. xi. 1, 2), and of the twelve hundred and sixty days sackcloth prophesying of the witnesses (ver. 3), and of the woman's abode in the wilderness (c. xii. 6, 14); for forty-two months is twelve hundred and sixty days, or, in the symbolical language of prophecy, twelve hundred and sixty years. We are not, however, I think, obliged by the terms of the prophecy to interpret this period with strict mathematical accuracy. As it was foretold of our Lord that he should rise from the dead after three days, although he actually lay in the grave but one whole day and part of two others, so the duration of the beast's power may be purposely foretold in this manner to intimate that it would be *about* the period of twelve hundred and sixty years. For as a prophetic month is thirty years, supposing an event to occupy the full space of forty such months and part of two others, its duration might with strict propriety be said to be forty-two months, although ten or even twenty years should be wanting to complete the exact number of forty-two multiplied by thirty. Calculating, then, on this principle, can we make it appear that the Franco-Latin Empire, founded by Clovis, and which I have assumed to be the wild beast from the sea, continued for the period here specified? I think we can. A circumstance which occurred at the commencement of the present century throws much light upon this point of the prophecy. In the year

1806 Francis, the reigning Sovereign of Austria, laid aside the Imperial dignity, and declared the ties dissolved which bound the various princes to him as Emperor and to each other as allies. This remarkable event is thus noticed by Menzel in his "History of Germany:"—

"On the 12th of July, 1806, sixteen princes of western Germany concluded, under Napoleon's direction, a treaty, according to which they separated themselves from the German Empire. On the 1st of August Napoleon declared that he NO LONGER RECOGNISED THE EMPIRE OF GERMANY! No one ventured to oppose his omnipotent voice. On the 6th of August, 1806, the Emperor Francis II. abdicated the Imperial Crown of Germany, and announced THE DISSOLUTION OF THE EMPIRE in a touching address, full of calm dignity and sorrow. The fall of the Empire that had stood the storms of a thousand years was, however, not without dignity. A meaner hand might have levelled the decayed fabric with the dust; but fate, that seemed to honour even THE FADED MAJESTY OF THE CÆSARS, selected Napoleon as the executioner of her decrees. The standard of Charlemagne, the greatest hero of the first Christian age, was to be profaned by no hand save that of the greatest hero of modern times." \*

Thus, then, it appears that the Empire of which Clovis laid the foundations, and which was the beast the apostle saw rising out of the sea from the west, ceased to exist on August the 6th, 1806. Now if we subtract 1260 from 1806, this will bring us to A.D. 546. But it

\* Menzel's "History of Germany," translated by Mrs. Horrocks, vol. iii., p. 235. See also Sir Walter Scott's "Life of Napoleon," vol. v., p. 277. He observes, "The Germanic League had subsisted since the year 800, when Charlemagne received the Imperial crown from Pope Leo the Third." (P. 273.)

was in the year 536 that Justinian formally conceded to the sons of Clovis the countries beyond the Alps, thus establishing the sovereignty of the Franks in the Western or Latin portion of the Empire at the precise period, within ten years, to which I consider the rise of the sea-born wild beast is to be assigned.\*

It must not, however, be supposed that the mighty fabric, begun by Clovis and consolidated by Charlemagne, was finally and for ever destroyed when Francis I. resigned the Imperial dignity. That Empire, of which he was the elective Sovereign, was of so extraordinary and unique a character, that although it then lost its *political* head, it still continued to exist, in a sense, as a corporate body in what its own members designate the Holy Roman Universal Church, and contains, perhaps, still within its politically headless trunk the elements of life and strength.† This subject, however, will be resumed and more fully considered in the commentary on chapter xvii., to which the reader is referred.

Ver. 10. "*He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity,*" &c.—This caution appears to have a twofold object. First, to warn the tyrannical, persecuting power symbolized by the beast, of the judgments which await it; and, secondly, to comfort the saints under the suffer-

\* "Twenty-five years after the death of Clovis, Justinian generously yielded to the Franks the sovereignty of the countries beyond the Alps, and established on a more lawful, though not more solid, foundation the throne of the Merovingians."—"Decline and Fall," vol. vi., p. 339.) This fact is thus announced in the table of contents:—FINAL ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FRENCH MONARCHY IN GAUL, A.D. 536.

† It is not a little remarkable that the Bible Society, by means of which the Scriptures, the two witnesses, have been exalted, as it were, to heaven, was instituted *the very year before* the Emperor Francis pronounced THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE dissolved. The Bible Society was instituted in 1805; Francis abdicated in 1806.

ings they would have to endure from that power. The persecuting character of the beast and his final end are distinctly pointed at in the words, *He that leadeth into captivity, &c.* This implies that the power symbolized by the beast would put men in prison and slay them with the sword, and thus think by the weapons of a carnal warfare to establish Christ's kingdom; but it intimates no less plainly that it would itself be destroyed by that very instrumentality it had employed for bringing men into subjection. And how strikingly has all this been verified to the letter in the history of that politico-ecclesiastical empire which arose in the west in the sixth century? It was established by the sword, and it fell by the sword. The swords of Clovis and of Charlemagne raised it up, and the sword of Napoleon levelled it with the ground. But how many thousands of Christ's faithful servants did that power during its continuance shut up in prison, how vast were the multitudes it slew! The prophecy intimates it would be so. "Here is the patience and faith of the saints;"—but where is their patience and faith? It is seen in the patient endurance of the persecutions of the beast, and in their patient waiting upon the Lord during the long period of twelve hundred and sixty years, not attempting to take the sword of vengeance into their own hands, but waiting his time until he should see fit to fulfil his promises and vindicate their cause.

Ver. 11. "*Two horns like a lamb.*"—In addition to the remarks already made on these two lamb-like horns it may be well to observe, as confirmatory of our interpretation of their meaning, that Papal writers themselves have discerned in them the two great pillars on which the strength of the Papacy rests, namely, its temporal

and spiritual powers combined. Thus Dante in the thirteenth century has these remarkable words :—

————— “ The Church of Rome  
Mixing *two governments* that ill assort,  
Hath miss'd her footing, fallen into the mire,  
And there herself and burden much defiled.”

Caryl's *Dante*,—*Purg.*, cant. 16, l. 314.

And again :—

“ Ah, Constantine ! to how much ill gave birth ;  
Not thy conversion, but that plenteous dower,  
Which the first wealthy Father gained from thee ! ”

*Ibid.*, *Hell*, c. 19, l. 167.

It seems clear from hence that Dante plainly saw the evils resulting from the union of the temporal and spiritual, or, rather, ecclesiastical and civil, powers in the person of the Pope. That these are the two powers signified by the lamb-like horns, I cannot entertain a doubt. No other interpretation fully satisfies all the requirements of the symbol. The Pope claims obedience as a civil magistrate, and supreme authority as an ecclesiastical ruler, in virtue, as he pretends, of his being the vicar or representative of Christ ; and it is in this character, not as a temporal prince, that he exercises all his power. Therefore is he described as having “ two horns like a lamb.”

Ver. 11. “ *And he spoke as a dragon.* ”—The dragon was the symbol of the ancient Heathen Roman Empire. The language of that Empire was, “ Away with the atheists,” (so they called the followers of Christ,)—“ the Christians to the lions.” And has not this also, strange to say, ever been the language of the Papacy ? Denouncing all who refuse to submit to its usurped authority as heretics, impious and accursed, its speech concerning them has always been, “ Away with them to

the flames ; they are not fit to live.” Let one specimen suffice. “ Let those Catholics who, taking up the cross, have armed themselves FOR THE EXTERMINATION OF THE HERETICS, enjoy the same indulgence and be furnished with the same holy privilege as is granted to those who go to the Holy Land.”\* Thus spoke Pope Innocent III. by the fourth Lateran Council, and are not these the words of the dragon ? For who were these “ Heretics ” that were to be thus exterminated without mercy from the earth ? Who were they but the Savonarolas, the Wicklifs, the Luthers, the Melanethons, and others like them ; holy men of God, and faithful followers of Christ, who by the innocency of their lives and the fervency of their piety adorned Christianity and honoured their Saviour ? These were the men whom the fourth Lateran Council, with the Roman Pontiff at its head, speaking in the name and on the authority of Christ, declared ought to be “ exterminated.” Is not this the lamb-like beast with the dragon’s voice ? †

\* “ Labbæi et Coss.,” tom. xi., p. 147. See “ Sketch of the Romish Controversy,” p. 340.

† The Bull of Pope Pius VII. against Bible Societies may be adduced as another exemplification of more modern date to the same effect. This Bull is addressed to the Archbishop of Gnetzn, Primate of Poland, and in it we read as follows :—“ In our last letter to you we promised to return an answer to yours in which you have appealed to this Holy See respecting what are called *Bible Societies*. We have been most truly shocked at this most crafty device, whereby the very foundations of religion are undermined, &c. According to the rules prescribed by the Church, Bibles *printed* by heretics are numbered among prohibited books, by the rules of the Index (No. ii. and iii.) ; for it is evident from experience that THE HOLY SCRIPTURES WHEN CIRCULATED IN THE VULGAR TONGUE have, through the temerity of men, produced MORE HARM THAN BENEFIT.

“ Given at Rome, at St. Mary the Greater, June 29, 1816, the seventeenth year of our Pontificate.”

Is it not something like blasphemy against the name of God to speak thus of his Word ?

Ver. 13. “*And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down,*” &c.—That is, he makes pretensions to miraculous powers, and assumes to himself authority to denounce the wrath of God against all who presume to oppose him. That this is the sense, and not that he really works miracles and does actually call down the fire of Divine wrath, is obvious from hence, that he is said thereby to *deceive* those that dwell upon the earth; but if the miracles were real and the fire the actual manifestation of the wrath of God, there would be no deception in the case. The sense, therefore, clearly is, as I have said, that he *pretends* to work miracles and to call down fire from heaven. Now it is notorious that pretensions to miraculous powers in proof of the truth of her teaching have characterized the Church of Rome in all ages. Roman Catholics themselves do not deny the fact, although, of course, they maintain that the miracles were and are real. But who that knows anything of the character of those miracles can regard them in any other light than as gross impostures? We have heard in our own days of the miraculous coat of Treves, and of images of the Virgin that move their eyes, and other similar puerilities; but the following story, related by an ecclesiastic of eminent learning and high rank, affords perhaps the best illustration of the fulfilment of the prophecy in the principles and proceedings of the Papacy.

“St. Anthony being engaged in a dispute concerning the truth of the Lord’s body in the Eucharist with a certain heretic in the neighbourhood of Toulouse (for at that time the Albigenses *vexed* the Church), the heretic demanded of Anthony, whom he knew to be endued by God with the gift of miracles, a sign of this sort. ‘I have a horse,’ he said, ‘to whom for the space of

three whole days I will give no food. When the third day is finished, do you come with the sacrament, and I will come with the horse and will pour out before him some corn; if the horse, leaving the corn, goes and venerates the sacrament, I will believe.' It was done as he desired, and when the third day was finished, Anthony, accompanied by a crowd of the faithful, and holding in his hand the venerable sacrament, addressed the horse. 'In the virtue and name of *thy creator, whom I truly hold in my hands*, although unworthy of it, I command and enjoin you, O animal, immediately to come with humility and to reverence him, that this heretical wickedness may hence learn that every creature is subject to the Creator whom the *sacerdotal dignity continually handles* on the altar.' Having uttered these words the horse, unmindful of the corn and his hunger, ran to the saint, and inclining his head and bending his knees, he adored his Lord in the best manner he could, *and confuted the heretic.*"—(Bellarmine "De Sac. Eucharis.," lib. iii., c. 8.) \*

Now when it is considered that this miracle, which is

\* "Sketch of the Romish Controversy," p. 343. Accounts of numerous miracles reported to have been wrought in favour of the Church of Rome will be found in Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English nation. One in particular deserves notice as bearing upon the subject in hand. The ancient British Christians, the historian tells us, having refused to submit to the authority of Rome, Augustine, who had come as a missionary to England, proposed that they should test the truth of their respective tenets by miracle. "The adverse party (I quote the writer's own words) unwillingly consenting, a blind man of the English race was brought, who having been presented to the priests of the Britons, found no benefit or cure from their ministry. At length Augustine, compelled by real necessity, bowed his knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying that the lost sight might be restored to the blind man. Immediately he received sight, and Augustine was by all declared the preacher of the Divine truth."—Bede's *Eccles. Hist.*, edit. by Dr. Giles, p. 81.

only one of many of a similar character, is related by a grave divine, and that no less a man than Cardinal Bellarmine, it surely may be adduced as an incontestible proof of the pretensions of the Papal Church to miraculous evidence in favour of its claims, and of the groundlessness and absurdity of those pretensions.\*

With respect to "the fire from heaven," this, as I before said, is a figurative expression for *the wrath of God*, and the beast's causing it to come down may signify simply his pronouncing his opponents accursed, and his calling down the Divine vengeance upon them. That the Papacy has always done this is a notorious matter of fact. Take the following as a specific exemplification. It is part of a brieve addressed by Pope Adrian to the Elector of Saxony, who had shown himself favourable to the doctrines of the Reformation:—

"We command and intreat you, beloved son, to separate yourself from this Martin Luther, and to take away this rock of offence. But if you shall say, We will not walk in the good old paths; we will not hearken; we denounce against you, on the authority of God and the Lord Christ, whose Vicar we are, that your impenitence *shall not pass unpunished in this world*, and that in the next *the burning of eternal fire* awaits you. Adrian the Pope, and the very religious Emperor Charles,

\* It is but fair to state that some Roman Catholic writers themselves speak contemptuously of many of the miracles said to have been wrought in favour of their Church. Thus Dr. Lingard calls Osbert, the biographer of St. Dunstan, "an injudicious biographer, whose *anile* credulity collected and embellished every fable." Dr. Milner also, in his "End of Religious Controversy," admits that many of the miracles ascribed to the saints were fables. He contends, however, for the possession of miraculous powers by the Romish Church, and that those powers have at different times been exercised in confirmation of its doctrines; thus admitting the *gravamen* of the charge and verifying the prophecy.

my dear pupil and son in Christ, are both alive, and we the Pope and Emperor, will not allow the Saxon children of our predecessors to pass through the contagion of heresies, &c. Repent, or expect to feel both *the Apostolic* and *Imperial* sword of vengeance.”\*

Here we have, then, the wild beast from the earth, the Papacy, calling down fire from heaven. And let the reader mark how strictly the style of this letter corresponds with the terms of the prophecy. The *second* beast in the prophecy performs those wonders whereby he deceives the inhabitants of the earth, *in the presence*, and, as it were, under the protection and patronage of the first beast. And so, accordingly in this letter, the names of the Pope and the Emperor are joined together, and the *Apostolic* and *Imperial* vengeance are denounced against the obstinate recusant. Nor should it be forgotten that these denunciations of wrath, however nugatory in reality, were believed in and dreaded by the major part of Christendom at that time. The men of those days believed generally that the Pope of Rome had power to call down the fire of God’s wrath upon the heretical and disobedient.

Ver. 15. “*And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast. . . . and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.*”

The image of the beast being that politico-ecclesiastical empire formed by the conjoint operation of the Popes and the Kings of the Franks, subsequently called the “Holy Roman Empire,” the very title showing it to be an “image” of the ancient empire; the power here

\* Labb. Con. xiv. 402, quoted in “Milner’s Church Hist.,” vol. v., p. 573.

ascribed to the beast from the earth of causing all to be killed who would not worship the image, amounts to this, that the Papacy would be able to accomplish the death of all persons who should refuse to submit to the authority of the Pope and the Emperor. For this worshipping of the image, is only another mode of expressing homage and obedience to the politico-ecclesiastical power signified by the image, the refusal of which would be punished by death. How all this was fulfilled in the history of the Papacy and the Empire, has, in part, already been shown. And, in fact, what reader of ecclesiastical history can require any proofs of a thing so notorious? Why were Jerome and Huss put to death? Why were the Albigenses and Waldenses slaughtered by thousands, and tens of thousands? Because they would not worship the beast and his image; because, in other words, they would not submit to the authority of the Holy Roman Empire. This was their real offence. It was not that they had committed any crimes; it was not that they denied the Scriptures;—but it was that they refused to yield implicit obedience to the decrees of the Holy Roman Empire. For call those decrees by what name we will, whether we ascribe them to Emperors, Popes, or Councils, this is their true and proper designation. Never would those decrees have been received, or have had the slightest authority, had it not been that they emanated from that power which had its seat in Rome, “that great city which reigned over the kings of the earth.” Yes; it was the head of Papal Rome, the *Pontifex Maximus* of Christendom, that caused those who would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. Let the reader consider attentively the

following remarkable words of one who was by no means disposed to take too favourable a view of men charged with being "righteous overmuch:"—

"We shall conclude this chapter by a melancholy truth, which obtrudes itself on the reluctant mind, that even admitting, without hesitation or inquiry, all that history has recorded on the subject of martyrdoms, it must still be acknowledged that the Christians, in the course of their intestine dissensions, have inflicted far greater severities on each other, than they had experienced from the zeal of Infidels. During the ages of ignorance WHICH FOLLOWED THE SUBVERSION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE WEST, THE BISHOPS OF THE IMPERIAL CITY EXTENDED THEIR DOMINION OVER THE LAITY AS WELL AS CLERGY OF THE LATIN CHURCH. The fabric of superstition *which they had erected*, and which might long have defied the feeble efforts of reason, was at length assailed by a crowd of daring fanatics, who, from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, assumed the popular character of Reformers. The Church of Rome defended by *violence* the empire which she had acquired by fraud; a system of peace and benevolence was soon disgraced by *proscriptions, wars, MASSACRES*, and the institution of the Holy Office. And as the Reformers were animated by the love of civil, as well as of religious freedom, the Catholic princes connected their own interests with that of the clergy, and enforced by fire and the sword the terrors of spiritual censures. IN THE NETHERLANDS ALONE MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND of the subjects of Charles the Fifth are said to have suffered by the hand of the executioner; and this extraordinary number is attested by Grotius, a man of genius and learning, who composed the annals of his

country at a time when the invention of printing had facilitated the means of intelligence, and increased the danger of detection.”\*

Can we desire a better commentary on the words before us than this? Here we have the testimony of an accurate historian that more than a HUNDRED THOUSAND persons were put to death in one small province alone, because they refused obedience to the Papacy and the Empire. We want no other proof that the beast from the earth could cause those who would not worship the image of ancient Rome which it had made, *to be killed*.

Ver. 16. “*And he caused all . . . to receive a mark;*” &c.—It was customary in ancient times for the subjects of despotic monarchs to be distinguished by certain marks branded upon the hand or forehead. A remarkable instance of this is related by Herodotus, who tells us that Leontiades, and some other Thebans, having gone over to the Persians after the battle of Thermopylæ, were received by them as allies. “Yet,” says the historian, “their defection was not altogether unattended with disastrous circumstances. For the barbarians killed some of them as they were approaching the camp, and the rest, by Xerxes’ order, were branded *with the Royal marks*, beginning with Leontiades, the General.” (L. vii., c. 233.) St. Paul, too, speaks of his “bearing in his body *the marks* of the Lord Jesus.” (Gal. vi. 17.) It appears also from Ezekiel ix. 4, that it was usual for the followers of particular deities to be distinguished by marks in the forehead. And, in fact, to this day the different religious sects among the

\* “Decline and Fall,” c. xvi., vol. ii., p. 495. Grot. Annal. de Rebus Belgicis, l. 1, p. 12, edit. fol.

Hindoos are thus distinguished. There is an evident allusion to these practices here. The power symbolized by the two beasts, not content with mere non-resistance, would compel men openly to acknowledge its authority and to receive a mark which would be a badge of subjection. Now, assuming that that power is the power of the Empire and the Papacy acting conjointly, what shall we say is ITS MARK? This, indeed, is a hard question, yet not, I think, altogether unresolvable. Let it be borne in mind that *the mark* is a badge of subjection by which all the subjects of the Holy Roman Empire are distinguished from the rest of mankind, and that this badge was originally imposed by the Bishop of Rome, the head of the spiritual power in the State. And is not, then, THE LATIN LANGUAGE such a badge? Are not the subjects of Rome distinguished and marked out from all other men by the use of this language in the public services of the Church? To show that this is no mere gratuitous assumption, I would ask the reader to consider attentively the following extract:—"St. Bonifacius distinguished himself above all these apostles by his energy, zeal, and success. Zealously imagining that the temporal and spiritual rule of the Church ought to be universal, and that the power of the *Romish-Frankish* Church might consistently blend with the Christian zeal and brotherly love of the Anglo-Saxon monks, he no longer contented himself, like his predecessors, with converting the heathen. THE UNITY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD UPON EARTH, the fraternization of all mankind gathered beneath the care of ONE SHEPHERD, THE POPE, Christ's Vicar upon earth, was his visionary scheme, and, in his enthusiasm, entirely overlooking the diversity of nations and languages, he sought to obviate that

difficulty by rendering THE LATIN TONGUE THE ONLY ONE AUTHORIZED BY THE CHURCH. This new and unnatural tyranny met with vehement opposition, but Boniface condemned his opponents *as heretics*, and supported by Pepin and the Pope, he succeeded in his hierarchical schemes." (A.D. 742. Menzel's "Hist. of Germany," vol. i., p. 228.)

Thus it appears that the use of the Latin language in public worship was now beginning to become an essential condition of communion with the Roman Catholic Church. In the eleventh century this was established by Gregory the Seventh as a universal rule, and from that time the use of the Latin liturgy was peremptorily required of all Churches in communion with Rome. "It was the will of Hildebrand," says Dean Waddington, "that the liturgy of the Universal Church should be delivered in Latin only; and having once adopted that scheme, he neglected no imaginable means to carry it into effect. The motive of the Popes for this vexatious exertion of ecclesiastical tyranny was undoubtedly their ardour for the unity of the Church, as one body under one head; and to this end it certainly conduced, that she should speak to all her children in one language only. It was also necessary that that language should be Latin, because it thus became a chain which not only united to each other the extremities of the north and the west, but also *bound them in universal allegiance to a common sovereign.*"\*

Here, then, we have, I think, *the mark* of the beast. I know of no other mark which at all corresponds with the terms of the prophecy. The imposition of the Latin liturgy upon men of all nations and tongues, was,

\* "Hist. of the Church," vol. i., p. 296.

indeed, branding all, high and low, rich and poor, with a mark of subjection, and that of so palpable and public a nature, that it was like putting it in their foreheads. Those nations or individuals who submitted to it, publicly acknowledged themselves to be the vassals of Rome, and to this day it may be regarded as the grand outward mark of distinction between Roman Catholics and Protestants.\*

Ver. 17. "*And that no man might buy or sell,*" &c.—That this part of the prophecy has been literally fulfilled in the proceedings of the Papacy towards those whom it calls heretics, the following extracts sufficiently prove. In a decree of the fourth Lateran Council against the Albigenses and Waldenses, we find these words:—"Let no man receive them into his house, or harbour them on his lands, neither let any one presume to transact business with them." And Pope Alexander III., in a Synod held at Tours in 1163, published a decree against them to this effect:—"Whereas a damnable heresy has for some time lifted its head in the parts about Toulouse, and has already spread its infection through Gascony and other provinces, concealing itself like a serpent within its own folds: as soon as its followers shall have been discovered, let no man afford them a refuge on his estates, neither let there be any communication with them in buying or selling."† Upon which Mede well remarks: "And does not the FALSE PROPHET

\* The following striking fact from an eloquent modern historian, may be added by way of confirmation to the above: "It is a most *significant circumstance*, that no large society of which the tongue is not Teutonic has ever turned Protestant, and that wherever a language derived from ancient Rome is spoken the religion of modern Rome to this day prevails."—*Macaulay's History of England*, vol. i., p. 68.

† Waddington's "Hist. of the Church," p. 356.

here speak as the dragon? For that dragon Diocletian put forth a like decree, commanding that no one should buy or sell to the Christians, until they had first burnt incense to the gods. Of which decree Bede thus sings in a hymn of Justin Martyr:—

“ Non illis emendi quidquam,  
Aut vendendi copia ;  
Nec ipsam haurire aquam  
Dabatur licentia,  
Antequam thurificarentur,  
Detestandis idolis.”\*

THE NAME AND NUMBER OF THE BEAST.

“ *Here is wisdom. Let him that hath the mind reckon the number of the beast (for it is a number of man) ; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.*” —Ver. 18.

We come now to the consideration of what may be called the grand Apocalyptic enigma, upon the solution of which so much depends. For if we can only determine the name of the beast, we shall have obtained at once a certain clue to guide us in the explanation of the whole prophecy concerning him. The importance of this inquiry, indeed, is evident from the manner in which the subject is introduced. The words, *Here is wisdom*, imply not only that the discovery of the name demands wisdom, that is, the wisdom which is from above, that wisdom which the Holy Spirit alone can impart, but that it is a discovery worthy of the exercise of the highest wisdom to which man can attain.

Before, however, entering upon the discussion of this interesting, though difficult question, I think it may be

\* See Mede's Works, b. iii., p. 589, fol.

well, for the sake of the general reader, to explain what is meant by the *number* of a name. It is obvious, that in English, or any modern language, the phrase would have no intelligible meaning. To say, for example, What is the name of the apostle whose number is eleven hundred and nineteen? would sound very oddly to an English ear. Not so, however, to an ancient Jew or Greek. He would understand at once what was meant, and would immediately set about solving the enigma, by adding up the letters in the names of the apostles, until he came to that which made the required sum. The reason of the difference is, that in the Greek and Hebrew *every letter is a number*. They had, in fact, no other figures. Consequently, in these languages, not only every name, but every word, contains a number, that number being the sum of the letters of which the name or word is composed added together. Supposing, therefore, the above question to have been proposed to an ancient Greek, after trying other names, that of John (*Iωαννης*) might occur to him, and he would then test the correctness of the conjecture by computing its number thus:—

<i>I</i>	.	.	.	.	10
<i>ω</i>	.	.	.	.	800
<i>α</i>	.	.	.	.	1
<i>ν</i>	.	.	.	.	50
<i>ν</i>	.	.	.	.	50
<i>η</i>	.	.	.	.	8
<i>ς</i>	.	.	.	.	200
					1119

Here, then, he would have the required number, and

not a shadow of doubt could remain upon his mind that he had hit upon the right name, and that John was the apostle intended.

Now this example not only shows what is meant by the number of a name, but it illustrates also the use of thus designating a person or thing which we wish to be concealed from general observation, but yet intend to point out with precision to certain individuals. A person or thing may be so described, that the description may suit many different persons or things, and many different names may be proposed as answering to the description, but it is highly improbable that those names will any of them amount to the same sum, and if, therefore, in addition to the description, the *number* of the person or thing be given, this will, in most cases, fix the name, and furnish an infallible test by which to try any conjectures that may be made. And hence the distinction between *a name* and *the number* of a name. The name of a person or thing is the appellation written out *in full*, the number is *the sum* of all the letters added together. It should be observed, however, that the number of a name, whether, *i.e.*, it be great or small, does not depend upon the number of letters in it. A name may consist of many letters, and the amount notwithstanding be small, and *vice versa*. As, *e.g.*, the number of our Lord's name (in Greek, *Ιησους*), although consisting of but six letters, is 888, whilst that of one of his progenitors, Aminadab (*Αμιναδαβ*), with eight letters, is only 109. Hence, then, it is obvious, how in Greek or Hebrew a name might be expressed numerically in letters, without any of the letters composing the name being employed. And, in point of fact, this

is known to have been a common way of expressing names, especially when any mystery was connected with them.\*

With these preliminary remarks, let us now proceed to the investigation of the question before us.

Now, it is obvious, that the first thing to be determined is, what *the beast* represents,—whether a man, or a city, or a nation, or a kingdom. For how is it possible we should find out the name of the beast until we have ascertained of what he is the symbol? And here it is, I think, commentators have so generally erred. They seem to have sought for the name *from* the number, instead of the number *in* a name.† In other words, their object appears to have been to find a Greek name which should contain the number 666, instead of first determining from the description previously given, the probable name of the beast, and then testing the correctness of the name they may have fixed

\* Thus, *e.g.*, we are told that the sun, who, regarded as a deity, was signified by the number 608, was represented by the two numeral letters X H. (See Kitto's "Biblical Cyclopaedia," Art. "Forehead.") A curious instance of the extent to which this practice of counting the numbers of words and names was carried, is given by Aulus Gellius, in his "Noctes Atticæ," who tells us, that a man once came to him with the offer of a book, which contained, amongst other learned trifles, A LIST OF ALL THE LINES IN HOMER OF EQUAL NUMBERS,—*i.e.*, the words of which being added together, amounted to the same sum. "Id etiam istic scriptum fuit, qui sint apud Homerum VERSUS IOSSEPHÆ."—*Noct. Att.*, l. xiv., c. 6.

† Thus that learned, and generally judicious, commentator, Vitringa, having come to the conclusion that the name is to be sought in Hebrew, rather than in Greek, sets about computing the number of twenty Hebrew names, or words, and at length fixes upon Adonikam as the most probable, principally because his family consisted, as we read in Ezra ii. 13, of six hundred and sixty-six persons! In like manner, Irenæus, the most ancient of Apocalyptic commentators, evidently *guessed* at the name from the number, suggesting names as probable, without considering what the beast represented, and his example from that time to this has been too generally followed. (See the extract from his writings hereafter given.)

upon, by *computing it*, or adding the letters composing it together, in order to ascertain whether or not they make the prescribed number. This latter is clearly the right mode of proceeding. For it would perhaps be easy to find a hundred names the letters of which amount to the specified sum; but what would this avail, supposing none of them should answer to the description of the beast? What, then, does the beast represent? Now, it has been shown, and it is, I believe, generally admitted, that it represents, not a person, but a kingdom—a tyrannical, persecuting power, opposed to the dominion of Christ, and hostile to his people. Such, in fact, is the meaning which this symbol has everywhere in the Bible. I am not aware that there is a single exception. Thus the four beasts of Daniel (c. vii.) are explained by God himself to symbolize four kings, or kingdoms. And so again, c. viii., it is said, “No beast shall stand before him;” *i.e.*, no kingdom. I think, then, we may assume, that the beast here spoken of is a kingdom; and, consequently, that *the name of the beast* is the name of a *kingdom*. No other word, therefore, or words, but the true, proper, and *usual* designation of a kingdom can be the name of which we are in search. It has been shown, further, that this beast symbolizes a kingdom of a very peculiar character—a kingdom partly secular and partly spiritual, partly owing its strength to political and partly to ecclesiastical power. A kingdom, moreover, that was to rise up out of the ruins of the ancient Roman Empire, whose place it would occupy, and of which it would be a sort of image. Finally, it has been shown, that one such kingdom, and one only, did arise somewhere about the commencement of the sixth century, when the

foundations of a politico-ecclesiastical empire, such as has been described, were laid by Clovis, which empire was fully consolidated and completed in the year 800, by Charlemagne.

But now comes the grand question—"What was the *proper, usual, and distinctive* name of this new empire?" Now I think this question may be answered in the very words of history: "After the restoration of the Western Empire by Charlemagne and the Othos, the names of FRANKS AND LATINS acquired an equal signification and extent; and these haughty barbarians asserted, with some justice, their superior claim to the LANGUAGE AND DOMINION of Rome."\* It is, then, an historical fact, that the Franco-Roman Empire, established by Charlemagne and his successors, claimed the title of *Latin*, and in contradistinction to the eastern portion of the ancient Roman world, was called THE LATIN EMPIRE. The head of this empire was called the LATIN Emperor, to distinguish him from the Greek Emperor; and the Church, which was co-extensive with the empire, was called the LATIN Church; and, as a consequence, every dominion springing out of this new-formed politico-ecclesiastical empire, took the name of its parent, and was called also LATIN.†

Now if these premises are correct, and being founded on historical evidence of the highest authority I see not how they can be disputed, it follows, that the true and proper designation of that very remarkable ecclesiastico-political dominion established by Charlemagne and the

\* "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," c. liii. See also the extract from Menzel's "History of Germany," before given. (P. 111.)

† See, as an exemplification, the heading of chap. lviii., which runs thus: "Origin of the First Crusade. Characters of LATIN Princes. Institution of the French, or LATIN, Kingdom."

Pope of Rome is, THE LATIN EMPIRE, OR KINGDOM.\* And will this name then answer the other conditions of the enigma and give the required number? Here is the next thing we have to do. Having found what we *suppose to be* the name of the beast, let us now compute its number.

But before doing this, another point must be considered, namely, in what language the name of the beast is to be expressed, whether Greek or Hebrew. For although St. John wrote the Apocalypse in Greek, it is a remarkable circumstance that he frequently uses Hebrew proper names. In fact, in almost every instance where names are mentioned, both the Greek and the Hebrew are employed. Thus in chap. ix. 11, "And they have a king over them, the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is *Abaddon*, and in the Greek he hath his name *Apollyon*." † So in chap. xii. 9 we read, "That old serpent, which is called the Devil and Satan," *i.e.*, the Devil in Greek, and Satan in Hebrew. (See also chap. xx. 2.) ‡ Although, therefore, we might be disposed at a first glance of the question to assume that the name of the beast would be a Greek name, certainly no valid reason can be assigned why it should not be a Hebrew one.

\* The only other name by which it is ever designated in history is that of *The Empire*, or *The Germanic Empire*. But this title does not convey so truly and accurately the character and extent of that dominion represented by the symbolical wild beast of the Apocalypse as the above mentioned. It is, in fact, too restrictive, inasmuch as it embraces the civil or political empire only, whereas the name of the beast ought to comprehend both powers concerned in the formation and establishment of that compound dominion of which it is the symbol.

† Both names have the same meaning, and signify DESTROYER.

‡ In c. xvi. 16, however, we have a Hebrew name alone: "He gathered them together unto a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon."

But why should it not be both Greek and Hebrew? I think this highly probable. For, since in three other instances—the only others in which a characteristic proper name occurs—we have the name given in both languages, we might almost conclude that the name of the beast also would be enigmatically given in both languages. But is it at all likely that any name both in Hebrew and Greek would answer to the numerical condition of this name? That is to say, that any name should be found the letters of which both in Greek and Hebrew being added together would make the number six hundred and sixty-six? It is not at all likely. It is highly improbable; and, in fact, apparently impossible, since the Greek and Hebrew letters do not represent the same numbers. But if such a name should be found,—if a Greek and Hebrew name containing the number 666, and at the same time being a suitable designation for the kingdom symbolized by the beast, should be forthcoming, this circumstance would certainly go very far towards establishing the correctness of the conjecture. Let us, then, now proceed to compute the number of the name,—THE LATIN KINGDOM.

In Greek this name is,—

Ἡ Λατινὴ Βασιλεία.

(He Latine Basileia.)

In Hebrew,—

\* המלכות הלטינאין

(Ha-malcuth ha-Latinain.)

\* The learned reader will perceive that I assume the name that is to be sought for would be expressed in the *Syro-Chaldaic Hebrew*, not in the Mosaic. And this, I think, no one who is qualified to form a judgment upon the subject will dispute. This was the Hebrew our Lord and his apostles spoke, and is the only Hebrew we meet with in the New Testament. *Talitha cumi* (Mark v. 41); *Ephphatha* (Ib. vii. 34); *Aceldama*

We now place the letters of these names one under the other, and add them together :—

GREEK.			HEBREW.		
<i>H</i>	(H(e) . . .	8	ה	(Ha) . . .	5
<i>A</i>	(L) . . .	30	מ	(m) . . .	40
<i>a</i>	(a) . . .	1	ל	(al) . . .	30
<i>τ</i>	(t) . . .	300	כ	(c) . . .	20
<i>ι</i>	(i) . . .	10	ו	(u) . . .	6
<i>ν</i>	(n) . . .	50	ת	(th) . . .	400
<i>η</i>	(e) . . .	8			
<i>B</i>	(B) . . .	2	ה	(Ha) . . .	5
<i>a</i>	(a) . . .	1	ל	(l) . . .	30
<i>σ</i>	(s) . . .	200	ט	(at) . . .	9
<i>ι</i>	(i) . . .	10	י	(i) . . .	10
<i>λ</i>	(l) . . .	30	נ	(n) . . .	50
<i>ε</i>	(e (short) . . .	5	א	(a) . . .	1
<i>ι</i>	(i) . . .	10	י	(i) . . .	10
<i>α</i>	(a) . . .	1	ן	(n) . . .	50
		<hr/>			<hr/>
		666			666
		<hr/>			<hr/>

Thus it appears that both these names being correctly and grammatically spelt, without the alteration, addition, or omission of a single letter, give the prescribed number. Is there not something irresistibly convincing in this?

(Acts i. 19); *Abba* (Rom. viii. 15); and *Maranatha* (1 Cor. xxi. 22); as also *Abaddon* and *Harmageddon* (Rev. ix. 11; xvi. 16) are all of them Syro-Chaldaic Hebrew; and I think, therefore, we may without hesitation conclude that, if the name of the beast is to be found in Hebrew, it will be in that dialect of the language; that is, in other words, in the Hebrew of the New Testament. In this dialect a kingdom is either מלכות, or מלכותא. (See Dan. ii. 37; iv. 17, &c.) But the plural is expressed by א"י, as, e.g., כשדא"י (c. iii. 8), *the Chaldeans*.

Something almost amounting to mathematical demonstration? Let us briefly recapitulate the argument.

The beast is a kingdom.

The name of the beast, therefore, is the name of a kingdom.

This kingdom was to be one of a very peculiar character, being formed by two great powers,—the one political, the other ecclesiastical—acting in concert and combining together to support each other.

Such a kingdom arose in the eighth century, and was established by the co-operation of the King of the Franks and the Bishop of Rome.

This kingdom is frequently called by historians the Latin kingdom, and such is, in fact, its distinctive and appropriate designation.

But this name, when expressed in Greek or Hebrew, is a number, and that number, when the letters of the name in both languages are added together, is six hundred and sixty-six—the number of the name of the beast! Have we not here, I again ask, something like mathematical demonstration? Can we doubt that we have found the solution of the enigma?

What makes this result the more remarkable is, the number of letters in the names, and the difference in the mode in which the same name is expressed in the two languages. In the one case, there are fifteen letters in the name, in the other fourteen; in the one case, according to the Greek idiom, the name is, *The Latin Kingdom*; in the other, according to the Hebrew idiom, THE KINGDOM OF THE LATINIS; and yet, notwithstanding this variation, *the number* of both names is the same. Every person must admit that this is a most remarkable and curious coincidence. To my mind it is much more.

It is a clear demonstration that the true name of the wild beast from the sea is *this and none other*.\*

In conclusion, I would suggest the importance and propriety of treating this subject with seriousness and reverence. The name of the beast has not unfrequently been made the occasion of much unbecoming levity, and that not only by Infidels, but even by men professing to believe in the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures. This is manifestly wrong. Nothing that is written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit can be a fit topic for ridicule. But what is there here, indeed, to give even a shadow of ground for such profanation? On the contrary, is there not much to awaken a feeling of profound reverence and to fill the mind with wonder and admiration? It has been well observed, that "the discoveries of the microscope display the infiniteness of the knowledge and wisdom of the Divine mind no less than the discoveries of the telescope,"† and that "the more we know of the extent of nature, the loftier the conception we have of him who

\* It may be proper to state that this solution is not altogether new, although, as far as I am concerned, it is original. It first occurred to my mind about fifteen years ago, and I was not a little surprised and gratified shortly afterwards to find it adopted by Dr. Adam Clarke in his Commentary, to whom it was suggested by another person of the same name. He considers it almost the only point of Apocalyptic interpretation in regard to which there can be no doubt. Neither of these writers, however, were aware that the Hebrew name gives also the required number. Had Dr. Adam Clarke been acquainted with this fact, it would doubtless have greatly strengthened his conviction.

† "The one led me to see a system in every star, the other leads me to see a world in every atom. The one told me of the insignificance of the world I tread upon, the other redeems it from all its insignificance, for it tells me that in the leaves of every forest, and in the flowers of every garden, and in the waters of every rivulet there are worlds teeming with life, and numberless as are the glories of the firmament."—*Discourses on the Christian Revelation*. By T. Chalmers, D.D. Disc. iii., p. 80. Glasgow Edition.

is the God of nature;" and, therefore, that "it is adding to the bright catalogue of his other attributes to say, that while magnitude does not overpower him, MINUTENESS cannot escape him, and VARIETY cannot bewilder him; and that, at the very time while the mind of the Deity is abroad over the whole vastness of creation, there is not one individual principle of rational or animal existence that his eye does not discern as constantly and his hand does not guide as unerringly, and his Spirit does not care for as vigilantly as if it formed the one and exclusive object of his attention." Assuredly so it is. And if this be true of natural things, is it not equally true of spiritual things? If the wisdom and knowledge of God be manifested in the discoveries he has made to us of his foreknowledge of great things, are they not equally manifested in the discoveries he has made to us of his foreknowledge of little things? Are not the *minutiæ* of prophecy, the filling up of the grand outline, equally wonderful with the grand outline itself? If it would have been a stupendous proof of God's foreknowledge to foretel the revivification of an empire which seemed in all human probability to be hopelessly destroyed, shall we regard it as a less stupendous proof of the perfection of his foreknowledge, and of the immensity of his mind, and of the attention which he gives, even to the minutest details of human affairs, that he has foretold, not only the revivification of the empire, but its very name under this its new form, and the number of the name? Is there anything in this to provoke a smile? What mean, then, those men of little minds—or shall we call them, as they would call themselves, men of capacious intellect—who smile at the very mention of the name of the beast, and look down

with contempt upon any one who can think the subject worth a moment's consideration? Truly, "God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways." Fools make a mock not only at sin, but at things most sacred. But "with the lowly is wisdom." The greatest of all follies is to ridicule what is either too high or too pure for us, and thus to endeavour to hide our ignorance or narrow-mindedness under the veil of contempt. That avowed infidels should act thus in regard to the enigmatical name we have been considering, is not surprising; but what shall we say to men calling themselves Christians who profess to venerate the Scriptures, doing the same thing? Such conduct is, indeed, utterly inexcusable. Let us at least have seriousness in everything connected with the Word of God. Certainly, if there be any one verse in Scripture which demands the concentrated exercise of all the powers of the understanding, and the most earnest and undistracted attention, it is this. "HERE IS WISDOM. LET HIM THAT HATH UNDERSTANDING COMPUTE THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST."

*Other Names of the Beast.*

It may interest those readers to whom the subject is new to know what other names have been proposed as answering to the prescribed conditions.

The following are some of the principal :—

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Λατεινος. (Lateinos.)<br>2. Τειταν. (Teitan.)<br>3. Ο Νικητης. (The Con-<br>queror.)<br>4. Γενσηρικος. (Genseric.) |  | 5. Μαομετις. (Mahomet.)<br>6. Ιταλικα Εκκλησια. (The<br>Italian Church.)<br>7. Λουθηρανα. (Luther.)<br>8. Αποσατης. (An Apostate.)<br>9. ρομιατ (Roman.) |
|---|--|--|

Of these names, the first and the two last are alone deserving of notice. No one now will be disposed to adopt *Teitan* (although it is as old as Irenæus, who greatly preferred it to his other conjecture, *Lateinos*); nor will the words *The Conqueror* or *Genserich* meet with any advocates. Of *Mahomet* and *Luther* it is sufficient to observe, that neither of these names when correctly expressed in Greek give the prescribed number. *Λουθηρανα* and *Μαομετις* are both of them feminine, and, consequently are no more the names respectively of the great Reformer and the false prophet, than Caroline is the same name as Charles, or Henrietta as Henry.

*Ιταλικα Εκκλησια* (The Italian Church) is specious; but every person acquainted with Greek will see in a moment that, in order to make out the required number, an *α* is changed into an *η*. The feminine of *Ιταλικος* is *Ιταλικη*, not *Ιταλικα*, and the conjecture, consequently, is worthless.\*

With regard to *Αποσατης*, which has the high sanction of Mr. Faber's name, there are three strong, and, in my opinion, insuperable objections against it. In the first place, *it is not the name of a kingdom*. Now it has been proved that the beast is the symbol of a kingdom, or at least, of a *power* or dominion of some kind or other, and its name, therefore, must be the name or appellation of a kingdom or dominion.

Secondly, the name of the beast must, I think, be definite and designative, *i.e.*, it must be a name which, when known, points out the particular power or dominion of which it is the appellative, and can properly be

\* In the Doric dialect, indeed, the *α* is used for *η*; but St. John wrote in the Attic, and I can see no reason for supposing that he would adopt a different dialect only in this instance.

applied to no other.\* But ἀποστατης, AN *apostate*, is not designative. It may belong to any Church, any nation, or any individual; and, consequently, when we have got it we have not made a single step in advance towards determining who or what the beast is. This objection seems to me to be fatal.

But, thirdly, it is very doubtful whether, in computing the number of a name, it be allowable to join the letters σ and τ together, and make of them the literal numeral episemon (ς). This compound letter is, we know, now used separately as a number; but the question is, whether a Greek in computing the number of a word would ever have thought of reckoning the two letters σ and τ as one; and if not, then the number of ἀποστατης instead of 666, is 1160. Upon these grounds then we must, I think, put this word aside, notwithstanding the high authority by which it is supported, as untenable.

There remain, therefore, only Λατεινος (*Lateinos*) and רומיית (Romiih). These being the two names which have been most generally adopted, they will require more particular examination.

The first was originally suggested by Irenæus in the second century, and is the most ancient conjectural name on record. It is remarkable, however, that Irenæus himself was not satisfied with it, and no sooner proposes it than he virtually rejects it, and suggests another as preferable, although to us, that his second conjecture has not even the slightest appearance of truth.† Now Irenæus

\* This is Mr. Faber's own idea. For he himself says, "Let the precise name be what it may, it is a name *descriptive* of the secular Roman Empire."—*Recapitulated Apostasy*, Preface, p. vii. 1833.

† The whole passage is as follows:—"Certius ergo, et sine periculo est, sustinere adimpletionem prophetiæ quam suspicari et divinare nomina

must have had some reason for thus immediately giving up a word which he had just before pronounced to be *very like the truth (valde verisimile)*; he must have felt that there were some strong objections against it, or he would not have said, "Nevertheless we will not say much about it;" or, "We will not boast of it." What the specific objections to the word in Irenæus's mind were, it is impossible for us to say; but it is very clear that objections did exist, and that he by no means felt that confidence in this name which most subsequent commentators who have adopted it appear to have done. But the truth is, there *are* objections, and these so

quælibet, quando multa nomina inveniri possunt habentia prædictum numerum: et nihilominus quidem erit hæc eadem questio. Si enim multa sunt quæveniuntur nomina, habentia numerum hunc; quod ex ipsis portabit qui venit, quæritur. Quoniam autem non propter *inopiam nominum habentium numerum* nominis ejus dicimus hæc, sed propter timorem erga Deum et zelum veritatis: *Evavθas* enim nomen habet numerum de quo quæritur: sed nihil de eo affirmamus. Sed et LATEINOS nomen habet sexcentorum sexaginta sex numerum: et valde verisimile est, quoniam novissimum Regnum hoc habet vocabulum. Latini enim sunt qui nunc regnant: sed non in hoc nos gloriabimur. Sed et TEITAN, primâ syllabâ per duas Græcas vocales ε et ι scriptâ, omnium nominum quæ apud nos inveniuntur, magis fide dignum est. Etenim prædictum numerum habet in se, et literarum est sex, singulis syllabis ex ternis literis constantibus, et vetus, et remotum; neque enim eorum Regum qui secundum nos sunt, aliquis vocatus est Titan: et divinum putatur apud multos esse hoc nomen, ut etiam sol Titan vocetur ab his qui nunc tenent: et ostentationem quandam continet ultionis, et vindictam inferentis; quod ille simulat se male tractatos vindicare. Tale autem et antiquum, et fide dignum, et regale, magis autem et tyrannicum nomen. Cum igitur tantum suasionum habet hoc nomen Titan, tantam habet verisimilitudinem, ut ex multis colligamus ne fortè Titan vocetur, qui venit. Nos tamen non periclitabimur in eo, nec asseverantes pronuntiabimus, hoc eum nomen habiturum: scientes, quoniam si oporteret manifeste præsentis tempore præconari nomen ejus, per ipsum utique editum fuisset, qui et Apocalypsim viderat."—Irenæus, "*Adv. Hæres.*," l. v., c. 30, p. 448, fol., Oxf., 1702.

palpable and manifest, that it is surprising so many men of sound judgment and accurate minds should have been able to get over them.

In the first place, *Λατεινος* is *not* correctly spelt. It is most true, that the long *i* of the Latins is a contraction of the diphthong *ei*, and in old Latin writers it is so written; but in no instance is *LATINUS* spelt by any Greek writer with the diphthong,\* although the name is found even in so ancient an author as Hesiod. We have, therefore, no authority for the insertion of the *ε*, and I cannot but think that it was solely on this ground Irenæus so readily gave the word up. He felt, that when correctly spelt, it did not give the required number, and that the *ε* was inserted merely to make up the deficiency; and therefore, although, as far as the ruling power pointed to was concerned, the conjecture seemed to him *very probable*, he renounces it with the significative words, “*sed non in hoc nos gloriabimur.*” †

But, secondly, *LATINUS* is not designative of the beast. It is either the name of a particular person, or it signifies, generally, *a Latin, a man of Latium*. But it has been proved that the beast is an empire, or kingdom, and, consequently, that the name of the beast must

\* See this abundantly proved by Mr. Faber, in his letter in the “Protestant Magazine,” on the untenableness of the name *Latinus*, Feb., 1849. He quotes the following line from Hesiod:—

“*Ἄγριον ἠδέ Λατινον ἀμόμονα τε κρατερὸν τε.*”

*Theogony*, l. 1013.

† Nothing can show more strikingly how much the judgment may be warped by a preconceived opinion than Bishop Newton’s gloss on these words of Irenæus:—“But in this we will not glory; *i.e.* (says the Bishop), as it becomes a modest and pious man, in a point of such difficulty, he will not be too confident of his explication!” Surely the learned Prelate could hardly have read the words of Irenæus which immediately follow.

be the *name*, the distinctive and proper designation of a kingdom. Now, as *Lateinos* is not, and cannot be, the designation of a kingdom, neither can it be the name of the beast.

It is curious that the very same objections lie against the supposed corresponding Hebrew name, רומיית. This is assumed by most commentators to be the Hebrew feminine of *Roman*, and is supposed to signify either *the Roman beast*, or *the Roman kingdom*. But the fact is, that the proper feminine of *Roman* is not רומיית (*Romiith*), but רומית (*Romith*); just as the feminine of *Aram* is ארמית (*Aramith*), and of *Jew* יהודית (*Jehudith*). (See Isaiah xxxvi. 11.) Consequently the real number of ROMITH is 656 instead of 666, a י having been inserted to make up the ten deficient.\*

But independently of this objection, ROMITH is really not a *name*. It is no more a name than the word *English*, or *French*, standing by itself, is a name. The British Empire is a name, and the French Republic is a name; but an adjective standing alone can never be a name.

It appears, then, that none of these words answer to the required conditions. To say the least, they are none of them quite satisfactory. I believe it may be safely affirmed that the warmest and most decided advocates of LATEINOS always have had, and ever will have, their secret misgivings. Whether any similar assertion will be made hereafter of those who adopt the solution now proposed, time will show. For myself, I entertain not the slightest doubt that the name of the beast is in the Hebrew tongue,—

\* Besides, if *Lateinos* be the name of the beast, it is clear *Romith* cannot be. For *Lateinos* means a *Latin (man)*; *Romith* a *Roman (woman)*.

המלכות הלטינאין (Ha-Malcuth Ha-Latinain.)

(THE KINGDOM OF THE LATIN.)

But in the Greek tongue he hath his name,—

Ἡ Λατινὴ Βασιλεία. (He Latine Basileia.)

(THE LATIN KINGDOM.)

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *General remarks on the contents of this chapter.*

THE visions of this chapter are not a continuation of the prophetic narrative, but retrospective and supplementary. This is evident from the proclamation of the third angel (ver. 9), who denounces the wrath of God upon any man who should worship the beast and his image. The beast, therefore, is still in existence when this angel goes forth to make his proclamation; and, consequently, the period of the visions of the former part of the chapter must be contemporaneous with that of the two beasts of the preceding. In fact, the visions of this chapter are placed side by side with that vision in the way of antithesis, in order to throw light upon it. We were there called upon to contemplate the outward visible Church oppressed and deceived by two tyrannical powers, the one political, the other ecclesiastical, working conjointly, and subjecting all Christendom to their dominion. What, then, it might be asked, becomes of the true Church during this season of darkness and oppression? Is it wholly

annihilated? Does it cease altogether to exist? No; even in the hour of Satan's greatest apparent triumph he is not really conqueror. The promise of Christ still holds good, and the gates of hell do not prevail. This is that cheering truth which is now by a sublime dramatic representation set forth before the apostle. Turning away his eyes from the contemplation of worldly kings and potentates, he looks towards the promised land: the land endeared to him by a thousand tender recollections; the land which had been trodden by the feet of the Son of God; the land where he had walked by his side, and held him by the hand, and leaned upon his bosom, and had heard from his lips such words as man never before uttered: thither it was that the beloved apostle was now in vision transported, and looking towards Mount Zion, he saw there, instead of wild beasts, and names of blasphemy, and all the ensigns and accompaniments of tyranny, falsehood, and hypocrisy, A LAMB, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand chosen ones standing on the mount, having the Father's name in their foreheads, harping with their harps, and singing a song of praise and triumph.

St. John could not well mistake the import of this vision. He could not but see in this select company, so distinctly marked out as the children of God, the representatives of the true Church, "the remnant according to the election of grace," who, during the twelve hundred and sixty years of the reign of the beast, would separate themselves from the communion of a corrupt Church, and follow Christ. And here, then, we have the key to the meaning of all the visions in this chapter. If this company represent "the few

amongst the faithless faithful found” during a time of corruption and apostasy, the visions which follow must relate to events belonging to the close of the same period, and which would occur either during the course of the twelve hundred and sixty years’ reign of the beast, or immediately after their termination. And so, in fact, we shall find it to be. Let us now proceed to the examination of details.

The contents of this chapter may be divided into five portions, each of which will demand a particular consideration :—

1. The hundred and forty-four thousand.
2. The three angels flying in the mid-heaven.
3. The voice from heaven.
4. The angel of the harvest.
5. The angel of the winepress.

THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND REDEEMED ONES. Vers. 1—5.

Most modern commentators identify this company with the hundred and forty-four thousand sealed ones of chap. vii. I have already expressed my doubts upon the subject; and, in fact, the only strong ground for this opinion is the sameness of the number in the two cases, whilst there are many things decidedly against it. The hundred and forty-four thousand of the seventh chapter are sealed from among *the tribes of Israel*; but here, there is no allusion to Israel. *They* were sealed in their foreheads; *these* have the name of God *written* in their foreheads. *They* were associated with a great multitude from every nation and kindred; *these* are a distinct company standing by themselves, aloof from all the rest of the world. And lastly, what

is the most important distinction of all, *they* were before the throne of God in heaven; *these* stand upon Mount Zion, and are therefore on earth. I cannot think, then, that it necessarily follows that these two companies represent the same individuals merely because they are numerically the same. This single point of resemblance is not, surely, sufficient warrant for assuming their identity, seeing that there are so many points of difference.

In fact, to make them identical is, I should say, to destroy altogether the order and force of the prophecy. The hundred and forty-four thousand sealed ones of the seventh chapter are "the remnant according to the election of grace" from amongst the Jews, after the Jews, as a body, should have been utterly cast off; these are a similar elect remnant from among the Gentiles, after the Gentile Christian Church should, by its corruptions and apostasy, have incurred a similar judgment. The great apostle of the Gentiles, in his Epistle to the Church of Rome, had plainly hinted at the possibility, not to say probability, of such a result. "If God," says he, "spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he spare not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, *if thou continue in his goodness*: otherwise, thou also shalt be cut off." (Rom. xi. 21.) Here, then, we have a clear intimation that the like thing to what had happened to the Jewish Church might happen to the Gentile Church. And so it proved. The Gentile Church did not "continue in God's goodness." That is to say, it did not continue to hold fast the great foundation-truth of the Gospel, "The just shall live by faith."

(Rom. i. 17.) But forsaking the righteousness of God, it went about (like the Jewish Church of old) to establish a righteousness of its own, and thus inevitably brought down upon itself the threatened judgment. It “also was cut off.” But though cut off as a whole, there still remained some living branches, which being united to the true vine by faith, continued to bring forth fruit to the glory of God. This, then, is that chosen remnant now symbolically exhibited to the eye of the apostle,—the few enlightened, spiritually-minded men who, from the days of Vigilantius to the period of the Reformation, lamented the corruptions of the professing Church, and protested against them. Everything that is said of these hundred and forty-four thousand will be found to admit of a satisfactory explanation on this hypothesis.

1. *The number.* It has already been shown (c. vii.) that this number implies *limitation* and *paucity*, not plenitude and multitude. Taken absolutely, indeed, a hundred and forty-four thousand is a large number; but out of all the tribes of Israel, as was before observed, it would be but a fraction, and when compared with that great multitude seen by the apostle, which no man could number, it is manifestly small. And thus it must be regarded here. *All the world* wonder after the beast; but the followers of the Lamb are few in number, as but a hundred and forty-four thousand to the millions of the human race who walk in the way of error.

2. *They stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion.* That is, they stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free, and do not suffer themselves to be “again entangled with the yoke of bondage.” “For

the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Of this grace and liberty Mount Zion is the typical representation, as Sinai is of the law.\* And, therefore, do this small elect remnant stand with the Redeemer upon that holy mount. Casting aside the traditions of men, and every slavish bond which the pride and self-righteousness of the natural mind have formed, they hold fast by Christ, and rejoice in the glorious liberty of the children of God.

The great quarrel of Protestantism (I use the word in its largest sense) with the Church of Rome has ever rested mainly on this ground. When Luther first began to preach free justification by faith in the atonement and righteousness of Christ, he did but proclaim in a louder voice what Vigilantius, and Savonarola, and Wickliff, and Huss, and others like them, had said long before. He stood with them on Mount Zion, and looking towards Sinai with its fiery terrors and awful denunciations, he proclaimed, in the words of the apostle, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

3. "*Having his Father's name written in their foreheads.*"—They are, then, the children of God and the brethren of Christ. In contradistinction to the worshippers of the beast, who compels his followers to receive his mark in their right hands and in their foreheads, these have the name of their heavenly Father inscribed in legible characters upon them: that is, his image is seen in them, and they reflect his likeness.

\* "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire; but ye are come unto *Mount Zion*, and unto the city of the living God," &c. (Heb. xii. 22; compare also Gal. iv. 21—31.)

They so cause their light to shine before men, that “they see their good works,” and are compelled to acknowledge “that God is in them of a truth.” This was strikingly accomplished in the Waldenses. Even their enemies admitted that their lives were irreproachable and exemplary. “Of all the sects that arose in this century (twelfth),” says Mosheim, “none was more distinguished by the reputation it acquired, by the multitude of its votaries, and the testimony which *its bitterest enemies bore to the probity and innocence* of its members, than that of the Waldenses.” And again: “The purity and simplicity of that religion which these good men taught, THE SPOTLESS INNOCENCE THAT SHONE FORTH IN THEIR LIVES AND ACTIONS, and the noble contempt of riches and honours which was conspicuous in the whole of their conversation and conduct, appeared so engaging to all such as had any sense of true piety, that the number of their disciples and followers increased from day to day.”\* Thus, then, they had indeed the name of their heavenly Father, as it were, written in their foreheads; so manifestly did the holiness of their lives prove them to be “the sons of God.”

4. (Vers. 2, 3.) “*And they sang, as it were, a new song,*” &c.—Not really a new song, but *as it were* “new.” It seemed to be a new song, because it had been long forgotten by the professing Church, and had become in a manner obsolete. For this song was really as old as Christianity. It was the very song which had been sung by the Church from the

\* Eccles. Hist., cent. xii., c. xi. Gibbon bears a similar testimony: “A confession of simple worship and BLAMELESS MANNERS is extorted even from their enemies.” (Vol. x., c. liv., p. 187.)

beginning, when the Lamb opened the seven-sealed book, and the whole company of the redeemed gave him glory. (Chap. v.) Then it *was* a *new* song. For until Christ had suffered on Calvary the song of redemption could not be sung. This song, however, for many centuries had not been heard in the professing Church; or if heard at all, it was in a low distant whisper proceeding from the embosomed valleys of the Cottian Alps, scarcely audible to the greater portion of Christendom, and which when heard was stifled in a loud murmur of scornful disapprobation. But now that the glorious theme is about to be again revived in the Church, the voices of the small remnant, which had been heard only as in a distant whisper, wax louder and louder; the harps are tuned, and the symphony is begun; and at length the full chorus of praise bursts upon the ear of the apostle as “the voice of many waters, and as the sound of great thunder.”

This was fulfilled at the commencement of the sixteenth century, when so many Churches threw off the Papal yoke, and virtually casting in their lot with the despised heretics of the valleys, joined with them in giving the sole glory of man's salvation to Christ.

“*And no man could learn that song but—the redeemed.*”—None can sing of Christ's love but those who have experienced it. Therefore, the song of redemption cannot be taught. A man may get it by rote. He may repeat the words, “Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood;” but none can learn that song, to sing it with the heart and the understanding, but those who know the blessings of redemption; who are “washed, sanctified, and

justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of their God.”

5. (Ver. 4.) “*These are they which were not defiled with women,*” &c.—That is, who have not been contaminated by the corruption prevailing around them, and have not joined in the idolatrous practices of the professing Church; but have maintained the unadulterated truth of the Gospel, and the worship of God through Christ, in all its primitive simplicity and purity. That this was strikingly fulfilled in the Waldenses, and others like them, all history testifies. One of the charges brought against them by their enemies was, that they refused to honour the Virgin Mary and the saints, and despised their images. In this respect, then, they were virgins. For the worship of images and the invocation of saints, as practised in the Church of Rome, involve spiritual pollution just as much as the idolatries of the ancient Jewish Church. The two things in principle are the same. Whether prayers are offered to Ashtaroth and Baal, or to the Virgin Mary and St. Peter, makes little difference. In both cases, the creature is unduly exalted, and the Creator dishonoured. In both cases, the members of the Church who do such things are guilty of unfaithfulness to their God, and become in his sight degraded and polluted.\*

To understand this verse literally would be contrary to all analogy. The language here employed is manifestly figurative, as it is in the next clause; and we might as well interpret that to imply the literal following of a lamb, as deduce any argument from this in favour of monastic vows and constrained celibacy.†

\* See Ezek. xvi., xxiii.

† Yet there may be an indirect allusion here to the practices of monks

6. "*These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.*"—This is another characteristic of this small remnant of true believers. In contradistinction to the rest of the world, who submit themselves to the dominion of the beast, and follow where he leads, (c. xiii. 3, 4,) these acknowledge the authority only of the Lamb, and taking him for their guide they tread in his steps. And how strikingly was this fulfilled in those small congregations of pious men who in the dark ages of the Christian dispensation separated themselves from the despotic rule and spiritual tyranny of Rome! "Give us," said they, "the commandments of Christ, not the traditions of men. The words of the Lord Jesus, as they are recorded in the New Testament, are the standard of our faith, and the rule of our lives. Whatever doctrines you can prove to us from them, we will believe; whatever things they direct to be done, we will do. These are our principles. According to them, by God's grace, we will live, and for them we are prepared, if so it must be, to die." Such, in substance, was the language ever addressed by the early witnesses to the truth of the Gospel, to their Romish adversaries. Nor were they mere words of course. They *did* follow Christ, even to prison and to death. Although he led them often to the cold dungeon with its clanking chains, and to the stake with its blazing faggots, they did not

and nuns, and the actual results of the monastic system. How that system worked (and still works) has been already shown in the commentary on c. ix. 20; and I think, therefore, we are warranted in assuming that one of the characteristics of these hundred and forty-four thousand redeemed ones, as distinguished from the corrupt mass of professing Christians around them, would be, freedom from those detestable vices to which, while pretending to superior purity, the followers of the Papacy were addicted.

shrink back. They drank of the bitter cup of which their Master had drunk, and cheerfully submitted to be baptized with that baptism of fire and of blood where-with he had been baptized. Dreadful, indeed, and almost incredible, is the record left us of the sufferings of those who in the days of Rome's pride and triumph dared to set at nought her decrees, and to keep the commandments of Jesus Christ. No mercy was there showed to age or sex. "Kill them all!" was the reply given, when the soldiers asked how they were to distinguish heretics from Catholics. "Kill them all," said the abbot to whom the question was proposed; "God will know his own."\* No one can read the history of that dark period with an unprejudiced mind, and not be struck with the resemblance between the characters and sufferings of those simple-minded disciples of Jesus, and the primitive Christians. Both trode in the steps of their Divine Master in their lives, and were made conformable to his death. The world hated them, as it hated him; and they, like him, "endured the cross, despising the shame."

And let us not forget that we also must still "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," if we would hereafter share his glory. If we would reign with him, we must also suffer with him. If we would wear his crown, we must bear his cross. He has left to all his disciples an example that they should tread in his steps; nor can we hope to follow him to his throne in heaven, unless we first follow in that track of self-denial, and patient endurance, and active benevolence, which by his life on earth he has so clearly marked out for us.

7. "These were redeemed from among men, the first

\* "Waddington's Hist.," p. 338.

*fruits to God, and to the Lamb.*”—How the “first-fruits?” I see not how those commentators can answer this question who identify this company with the hundred and forty-four thousand sealed ones of the seventh chapter. For they are associated with a great multitude whom no man could number, *all* of whom stand before the throne of God, and how then can they with propriety be called *first-fruits*, seeing that the first-fruits were but as a handful compared with the full harvest? But if we regard this virgin company as representing those few sincere Christians who in the middle ages maintained the faith and worship of the Gospel in its purity, in opposition to the corruptions of the Romish Church, then the explanation is easy. They are the “*first-fruits*,” not of that harvest of Jews and Gentiles, the seed of which was sown by Christ himself in person, and the apostles, and which was reaped during the three first centuries;—but they are the first-fruits of that second, and still more abundant harvest, which was to be reaped and gathered in, when “the everlasting Gospel should again be preached to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people;” and the in-gathering of which forms one of the subjects of the latter part of this vision. These “first-fruits,” then, are those small bands of protestants, (protestants in heart and principle, though not in name,) who in the valleys of Piedmont, in France, in Bohemia, and in England, before the period of the Reformation, held the truth of the Gospel in its primitive purity, and were an earnest of the plentiful harvest which would be reaped in after-times, when the Reformation sun should shine in full splendour on the earth.

8. Ver. 5. “*And in their mouth was found no guile,*

for they are faultless before the throne of God.”—Guilelessness and sincerity ever have been, and always will be, the distinguishing characteristics of the people of God. “Blessed,” says David, “is the man in whose spirit is no guile.” (Psalm xxxii.) And the testimony of our Lord himself concerning the true Israelite is, that he is guileless. “Behold,” said he, “an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.” (John i. 47.) On the other hand, deceit and hypocrisy ever have been, and will be to the end, the characteristics of Satan and his emissaries. (John viii. 44; Rom. iii. 13.) And is it speaking uncharitably to say, that these last, deceit, hypocrisy, and fraud, have from the first been the foundation and pillars of the Romish system? Did it not begin with a falsehood and a forgery?\* and has it not ever since been upheld by lies? Do not the priests themselves, as a body, despise the mummery by which they delude the people?† This, then, I imagine, is the reason why guilelessness is the characteristic here particularly mentioned as belonging to the redeemed remnant from apostate Christendom. Such, in point of fact, *was* their peculiar characteristic. “They were,” says Milner, speaking of the Cathari, which was a generic name for all who on scriptural principles renounced the prevailing errors of the Latin Church, “*a plain, unassuming, industrious race of Chris-*

\* The falsehood was, that Christ appointed Peter the visible head of the Church on earth, and that the Bishops of Rome were his successors. The forgery was, the false decretals, and the pretended donation of Constantine. (See vol. i., p. 390.)

† It is asserted by Blanco White, in his work addressed to Roman Catholics, that to his certain knowledge a large majority of the priests in Spain were Infidels. This may be an exaggeration, but such an assertion would hardly be made by a man who was once himself a Spanish priest, without some foundation.

tians, condemning, by their doctrine and manners, the whole apparatus of the reigning idolatry and superstition.”\* (Cent. xii., c. iii.) Such also, as we have seen, was the testimony even of their enemies. And who will deny that guilelessness and truth were the characteristics of the men who took the chief part in the Reformation? It is sufficient to mention the names of Wicklif, of Huss, of Ridley, of Luther, of Zwingle, of Knox,—who will deny that these were men without guile?

“*Faultless before God.*”—Faultless, *absolutely*, we know none can be. “If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” But the sincere believer in Christ is faultless in two respects: he is faultless, as clothed in the imputed righteousness of Christ; and he is faultless, as being free from those sins which his enemies often lay to his charge. And it is in this latter sense, I conceive, that the word is here used of this redeemed remnant, and is true of the Waldenses and other early protesters against Romish corruptions. Their adversaries charged them with being heretics, and rebels against God and Christ; but the charge was *false*. They were not heretics; they were not rebels; in the sight of Him who searches the reins and the heart, they were guiltless of these charges, and they stood before his throne, “sanctified and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of their God.”

\* “In a piece entitled, ‘The Noble Lesson,’ written in the twelfth century by one of the Cathari, we have some beautiful illustrations of their Christian simplicity. ‘If a man,’ says he, ‘love those who desire to love God and Jesus Christ; if he will neither curse nor swear, nor act deceitfully, nor live in lewdness and injustice,—they presently say, “The man is a Vaudes; he deserves to be punished.”’”—*Milner’s Hist. Church*, Cent. xii., c. iii.

Thus, then, it appears that everything that is said of this chosen remnant of redeemed ones,—redeemed from the midst of a corrupt and apostate Church,—agrees well in all respects with the history and character of those simple-minded Christians in the Valleys of Piedmont and the South of France, who from very early times denounced the corruptions of Rome, and maintained the truth of the Gospel in its purity. I shall now conclude these remarks with an extract from Milner, strikingly confirmatory of the foregoing views:—

“Such was the provision of Divine grace,—to take out of a corrupt and idolatrous world of nominal Christians, a people formed for himself, who should show forth his praise, and who should *provoke the rest of mankind by the light of true humility and holiness*; a people *singularly separate* from their neighbours in spirit, manners, and discipline; rude, indeed, and illiterate, and not only discountenanced, but even condemned by the few really godly men who adhered altogether to the Romish Church—condemned, because continually misrepresented. Nor do I know of a more striking proof of that great truth of the Divine Word, that, in the worst of times, the Church shall exist, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (“Church Hist.,” cent. xii., c. iii., *sub fine*.) We could hardly have a better commentary on the words before us than is contained in this extract.

#### SECT. II.—CHAP. XIV. 6—12.

##### THE THREE ANGELS FLYING IN THE MID-HEAVEN.

“*And I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel,*” &c.—The farther we advance in this Divine book, the more nearly we

find ourselves concerned, and the more deeply interesting, in consequence, it becomes. The prophecy is now approaching to the events of our own times, and is thus invested with a personal importance and interest peculiarly great. May the Spirit of wisdom and truth still be our guide!

The last symbolic vision having exhibited to the apostle a select remnant of true believers, reserved by God to himself during a period of almost general apostasy, he is now privileged to see indications of brighter and more glorious days. Three angels flying in the midst of the sky follow one another in quick succession, each of them bearing an important announcement to the inhabitants of the world. The first brings with him the everlasting Gospel to proclaim to every nation upon earth; the second, announces the approaching fall of the mystical Babylon; the third, warns men of the danger of identifying themselves with the beast and his image.

Now the first point to be determined here is, the chronological position of these angels. Supposing them all to belong to about the same period, as they manifestly do, when does the first angel go forth? It must strike every considerate reader that there is an apparent difficulty in this. For how comes it to pass that an angel is *now* seen going forth to proclaim the Gospel as if for *the first* time, to all mankind? Had not the commission for its universal proclamation been given long ago? Had not our Lord charged his apostles, ere he left the earth, to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature? Why, then, this new commission? What means the appearance of this angel at so late a period in the prophetic history,

charged afresh, as it were, with the proclamation of the self-same Gospel in almost identical terms? This anomalous circumstance admits, I think, of but one explanation. It implies that there had been AN INTERRUPTION to the preaching of the Gospel. That the Church had been unfaithful to its trust, and had ceased for an indefinitely long period to proclaim that Gospel which had been committed to its care. On no other ground can we account for the appearance of an angel charged with such a commission at this period of the prophecy. And this consideration explains also the meaning of the epithet given to the Gospel. It is called the "EVERLASTING GOSPEL," because, although it now appears to be a new thing, so long had it been hidden and lost sight of, being buried beneath the traditions of men, yet it is the same unchangeable Gospel as was preached from the beginning, and such will ever continue. This epithet would imply also, that another spurious Gospel, *like* the truth, but not the truth, had been proclaimed in the interval, and that this proclamation of the everlasting Gospel would only be a return to the faithful preaching of the Word of God.

And to what period, then, shall we assign the commencement of this renewed commission? Did this angel appear alone, I should be inclined, I confess, to date his commission from the beginning of the present century; for at no period in the history of the Church since the days of the apostles, has the missionary spirit been more universally and strongly developed than within the last fifty years. But as this angel is followed by two others, one of whom proclaims the fall of Babylon, and the other of whom forewarns men of the judgments about to come upon the worshippers of the

beast and his image, we must, I think, assign an earlier date to this first angel, and ascribe his going forth to the period immediately antecedent to the Reformation. And in point of fact, it was then that the everlasting Gospel began again to be publicly proclaimed. The true Gospel has, indeed, all along been preached more or less. But it was, as it were, in a corner. But when Luther lifted up his voice, and proclaimed that man is "justified by faith, and not by the deeds of the law," then did that more public and general announcement of the Gospel commence, the sound of which gradually waxed louder and louder, and spread itself more and more widely, until at length, as we now see, it "has gone out into all the world, and its words have reached to the ends of the earth."\* The preaching of Luther, therefore, and the early Protestants, is not to be considered as the complete fulfilment of the commission given to this angel, but rather as the commencement of it. The angel then went forth as in the sight of all men, bearing the everlasting Gospel. From that time to this he has been seen, as it were, flying in the mid-heaven. The proclamation of the glad tidings of pardon and life by the grace of God in Christ has been open, public, and general, and "all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of God."

Nor should we omit to notice the peculiar terms in which this angel proclaims the Gospel. It is not,

\* "Luther," says D'Aubigné, "was the first who boldly and publicly raised the standard of truth against prevailing error, and invited general attention to the fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, *salvation by grace*; thus introducing his generation to that path of knowledge, faith, and life, from which *a new world has arisen*, and commencing a real and saving change."—*Hist. of the Reformation*, vol. ii., p. 394. (Walther's edition.)

“Believe, and be saved.” But it is, “Fear God, and give him glory, and worship him who made heaven and earth.” And why does the messenger of the everlasting Gospel speak thus? It may be said, “Because he is supposed to be addressing Heathen, and he thus exhorts them to turn from idols, and to serve the living and true God.” Yes; this would be a satisfactory answer had the Gospel never before been preached, and were this angel now going forth for the first time to proclaim it; but, as we have seen, this is not the case. This angel is commissioned to preach to those “that dwell upon the earth,”—*i.e.*, the Roman world (as I believe the word always means in the Revelation), and he goes forth many centuries after the empire has become professedly Christian. It is, then, with Christendom that his commission commences; and it is nominal Christians, in the first instance, who are exhorted “to worship him who made heaven and earth.” And why, then, we again ask, this exhortation? We answer, because it was needed. Christians by name had virtually, although not avowedly, forsaken the worship of the only true God, through the one Mediator, Jesus Christ, and, like the Jewish Church of old, had turned to idols. This is no libel. Let any man go at this day into a Romish Church, and he will see every devout Catholic falling down upon the knees and bowing the head with reverence to the image of the Virgin Mary. Is not this worship? And who does not know that the number of saints in the Roman calendar, each and all of whom have their votaries, equals, if not exceeds, that of the demi-gods of Heathen mythology?

Well then, when such things universally prevailed, might men be exhorted to worship Him only “who made heaven and earth.”\*

Vers. 8—11. “*And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen,*” &c.—The manner in which these angels are introduced, shows, as before intimated, that they all three belong to about the same period. And it should be observed, that they are rather the precursors of the events to which their proclamations severally relate, than the agents of their accomplishment. They declare what *shall be*, but they do not themselves fulfil the prophetic announcements of which they are the bearers. Nor are we to infer that these three angels necessarily imply three distinct and separate agents. The distinction is to be referred rather to the *subject* of the messages than to the *messengers*. I mean, we are not to infer that the appearance of these three symbolic angels, or messengers, one after the other, implies that different individuals would appear, at several times, and in different countries, proclaiming the things ascribed to them, but only that such pro-

\* In addition to the testimony already adduced (c. ix. 20) on the subject of saint-worship, I would request the reader’s attention to the following translation of part of two hymns in the Hours for the use of Salisbury, printed in 1520:—

“O Holy Mother of God, who justly hast deserved to conceive, whom the whole world could not comprehend, wash away our faults by thy pious intervention, that being redeemed by thee we may be able to ascend to the seat of eternal glory, where thou abidest with thy Son for ever.”—Fol. 4.

“Illustrious Martyr George, praise and glory become thee! endued with skill in arms, by whom the royal damsel, when in distress before the vile dragon, was preserved: we beseech thee, with our inmost heart, that with all the faithful we may be joined to the citizens of heaven, and being washed from all our filth, may be with thee in glory,” &c.—See *Burnet’s Hist. of Refor., Collection of Records, No. 29.*

clamations would successively be made at the period to which the vision belongs. That is to say, contemporaneously with the renewed preaching of the true Gospel, there would be prophetic announcements of the approaching fall of the mystical Babylon,\* and denunciations of the wrath of God upon all who should submit to the dominion of the beast. How accurately and how wonderfully all this was fulfilled in the preaching and acts of Luther, the following extracts sufficiently attest. Let the reader observe especially the *publicity* of what he said and did. It was indeed as an angel flying in mid-sky, and speaking to all the world :—

“On the 17th of November (1520), a notary and five witnesses assembled, at ten o'clock in the morning, in one of the halls of the Augustine Convent, in which Luther resided. There the public functionary, Sarcitor von Eisleben, being in readiness to take a minute of his protest, the Reformer, in a solemn tone of voice, spoke as follows :—

“ ‘ I, Martin Luther, an Augustine, &c., do appeal from His Holiness, Pope Leo, to a general Council.

“ ‘ I appeal from the aforesaid Pope Leo : first, As an unjust, hasty, and oppressive judge ; secondly, As a heretic and apostate, misguided, hardened, and condemned by Holy Writ ; thirdly, As an enemy, and ANTICHRIST, an adversary of the Scriptures, and an usurper of their authority, who presumes to set up his own decrees against all the declarations of the Word of God ; fourthly, As a contemner, a calumniator, a blasphemer of the Holy Christian Church, &c.

\* It will be observed, that I assume for the present that Babylon means Rome. This will be proved hereafter. See c. xvii.

“ ‘Wherefore I most humbly beseech the most serene, illustrious Charles, the Roman Emperor, the Electors, &c., to adhere to this my protest, and unite with me to resist the Antichristian proceedings of the Pope, &c., and Christ our Saviour will richly reward them with his grace. But if there be any who set my entreaties at nought, preferring obedience to the Pope, an impious man, rather than to obey God, I do hereby disavow all responsibility on their account, having given a faithful warning to their consciences; and I leave them *to the final judgment of God*, together with the Pope, and all his adherents.’ ”

Such was Luther's protest against the Bull of Leo X. Thus publicly in *the sight of the world*\* did he proclaim the approaching fall of Babylon, and denounce the adherents of the beast and his image. But he did not stop here. The prophecy was to have in him a still more palpable and remarkable fulfilment. “Luther, however,” continues the historian, “though this recent act might have seemed the very extremity of daring, had another and still bolder measure in contemplation. He was determined that in nothing would he be behind Rome. On the 10th of December, a placard was affixed to the walls of the university of Wittenberg. It contained an invitation to the professors and students to repair at the hour of nine in the morning to the west gate, beside the Holy Cross. A great number of doctors and youths assembled, and Luther, putting himself at their head, led the procession to the appointed spot. A scaffold had already been erected. One of the

\* “This protest,” adds the writer above quoted, “was circulated throughout the whole of Germany, and found its way into most of the Courts of Christendom.”

oldest among the Masters of Arts now set fire to it. As the flames arose, the dreaded monk approached, clothed in his monk's garment, and holding in his hands the *Canon Law*, the *Decretals*, the *Clementines*, the *Extravagances* of the Popes, together with the *Pope's Bull*. The *Decretals* being first consumed, Luther, lifting up the *Pope's Bull*, said aloud, 'Since thou hast afflicted the Lord's Holy One, may fire unquenchable afflict and consume thee!'—and thereupon he threw it into the flames. He then with much composure bent his steps towards the city. On the following morning, the hall of the academy was more than usually crowded. A deep solemnity prevailed. Luther proceeded with a portion of his commentary on the Psalms, which he had begun in the month of March in the preceding year. Having finished his lecture, he paused for a few moments, and then he said, with great vivacity, 'Be on your guard against the laws and statutes of the Pope. I have burned the Decretals, but that is mere child's play. *It is time, and more than time*, that the Pope himself were burned,—I mean,' he immediately subjoined, 'THE PAPAL CHAIR, WITH ALL ITS FALSE DOCTRINES, AND ALL ITS ABOMINATIONS.' Assuming then a more solemn tone—'If you do not with your whole hearts resist the impious usurpations of the Pope, YOU CANNOT BE SAVED. Whosoever takes pleasure in the Popish doctrine and worship, WILL BE LOST TO ALL ETERNITY IN THE WORLD TO COME.' '\*

How striking a fulfilment of the prophecy have we here! For what was this public declaration of Luther to the doctors and students at Wittenberg but an echo

\* See "Hist. of the Great Reformation," vol. ii., pp. 177—182. (Walther's edition.)

of the words of the angel, who said with *a loud voice*, "If any man worship the beast and his image, he shall drink of the wrath of God for ever." Yes, it was indeed with *a loud voice* that this great champion of the truth of God proclaimed, not only "the everlasting Gospel," but the downfall of Babylon, and the judgments prepared for all who should cleave to her. By a strange fatuity, the enemies of the truth took the most effectual means they could adopt for spreading far and wide that light which they desired to extinguish. Shortly after the scene at Wittemberg, Luther was summoned by a solemn decree to appear at Worms before the diet of the Empire, with the Emperor at its head. It was on that occasion, after he had finished his defence, and declared his determination not to retract anything he had written, unless it could be proved to be contrary to Scripture, that he ended his address with this brief but noble peroration: "HERE I STAND; I CAN SAY NO MORE; GOD HELP ME! AMEN."

The effect was wonderful, and the results glorious to the cause of truth. "Thus," says the historian, "did Luther pronounce the sublime words that, at the distance of three centuries, still make our hearts bound within us. God had gathered together these kings and prelates to bring PUBLICLY TO NOUGHT their wisdom. In their desire to overawe this poor monk, they had raised him on a *platform in sight of a whole nation*: the attempt to give publicity to his defeat had only served to enhance his victory over his enemies."\*

"The day of the Diet of Worms," says Matthesius, "is one of the most glorious given to the earth before its great catastrophe." "The conflict at Worms," adds

\* "Hist. of the Reform.," vol. ii., p. 318. (Walther's edition.)

the historian whom I have been quoting, “RESOUNDED FAR AND NEAR, and as the report of it traversed Europe from the northern countries to the mountains of Switzerland, and the towns of England, France, and Italy, many seized with eagerness the mighty weapons of the Word of God.”\*

These extracts require no apology, and need little in the way of comment. They establish beyond contradiction the three points following: 1st, That the public preaching of the Gospel, which has since become so general, extending literally to all nations, began with Luther and other Reformers in the sixteenth century; 2dly, That the approaching fall of Rome, the mystical Babylon, was then publicly proclaimed; 3dly, That the wrath of God was denounced upon those who should join with the Emperor and Pope in persecuting his people, and upholding a corrupt Church. And that, too, just in the order of the prophecy, the Gospel first, and then the denunciations against Babylon and her abettors. May God give us grace still to listen to that voice, the echoes of which, at the distance of three centuries, yet warn us that, “WHOSOEVER TAKES PLEASURE IN POPISH DOCTRINE AND WORSHIP, AND DEFENDS THE IMPIOUS USURPATIONS OF THE POPE, WILL BE LOST TO ALL ETERNITY.”†

\* “Hist. of the Reform.,” vol. ii., p. 345.

† See above. Do we affirm, then, it may be asked, that every member of the Church of Rome will eternally perish? God forbid. Luther, I imagine, never meant this: and far would I put away that narrow-minded sectarianism which would entertain such a thought. In speaking of the Church of Rome and its members, we must make a distinction between belonging to its communion and *partaking of its spirit*. That there have been, and are, Roman Catholics who may justly be called holy and pious men, is unquestionable. But then, these men—such, for example, as Paschal, Quesnel, and Fenelon—did not worship the beast and his

Ver. 12.—“*Thus far is the patient endurance of the saints,*” &c.—The sense of this verse is, “Up to this period the faith and patience of God’s people will be severely tried. As long as the apostate Church, aided by the secular arm of the civil governor, shall continue dominant,—*i.e.*, whilst the beast and the false prophet reign (see c. xix. 20), the saints will have to endure persecution and affliction, but when their dominion shall have come to an end, then will the afflictions of the Church cease, and the faithful servants of Christ enter into that rest which he has prepared for them.”

Ver. 13.—“*And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, ‘WRITE, BLESSED FROM HENCEFORTH ARE THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD,’*” &c.—There is something startling in an announcement like this at such a juncture. At first sight, it seems to have no connexion either with the visions that go before or those which follow after, but to stand an isolated apophthegm, containing, indeed, an important truth, but, we might almost think, out of its proper place. What can the blessedness of the dead in the Lord have to do with the fall of Babylon, and the judgment of the beast? Or, to divest the question of metaphor, with the destruction of the Latin Church and Empire? Upon closer examination, however, we shall find that this announcement is not only in its proper place, but is to us at this present moment full of meaning and

image. They professed to reverence, it is true, the Roman See, but they were, notwithstanding, men of altogether a different spirit from that which characterizes the blind worshippers of Papal authority. More especially, they did not approve of the persecution of, so called, heretics, nor of any of those tyrannical and unjust measures by which the Church and Court of Rome has endeavoured in all ages either to enslave the minds of men, or destroy their bodies.

solemn interest. Let it be borne in mind, that the vision of the three angels flying in the mid-heaven, although it begins at the Reformation, carries us forward to a period far beyond it, and brings us, in fact, to our own times. For the flight of these three angels lasts until the Son of man appears sitting on the white cloud, and until the angel also with the sharp sickle, to reap the clusters of the vine, appears; which events, as I shall endeavour presently to show, are near at hand, if not already in progress. So that this announcement, coming in between the two visions, belongs, if our theory be correct, to our own days, and is addressed specifically to the Church at the present time. But this is not all. There are other considerations which render it peculiarly deserving of our most attentive consideration.

In the first place, the speaker is God himself. The voice which uttered these words was the same as at the beginning had testified of the coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven. (c. i. 8.) The very voice which had borne witness to Jesus when he was baptized in Jordan, saying, "This is my beloved Son," &c., and had also borne a similar testimony, when he was transfigured on the mount, in the hearing of John, who would doubtless recognise the voice as the same which he had then heard. This is that voice which here speaks to us. It is, therefore, the witness of the Father, accompanied by the witness of the Spirit, to the certainty of the resurrection, and of the believer's blessedness. For we must not confound the two testimonies together, as if all that is here written was uttered by the voice from heaven. It was only the first sentence that was so uttered. The latter clause is the response of the Spirit, speaking in and through St. John, to the heavenly

voice. So that we have here, as in the baptism of Christ, a clear intimation of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead. The Father bears witness by an articulate voice from heaven to the blessedness of those who die, being united by a living faith to the Son, and the Spirit confirms this testimony. Just as St. John says in his epistle, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," and that record is, "That God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life." (3 Epis. v. 7—11.) All this shows how deeply interesting and important a truth that is which is here announced. But is it a new truth? Why, then, is it here introduced, and that with so much solemnity? Here is a question of grave consideration. There must be a reason for this solemn republication of a truth which was familiar to the Church from the beginning. Let us try and search out the reason of it. Now, I think three reasons may be assigned why we are thus solemnly reminded of this truth at this period of the prophetic history.

First, because an erroneous opinion directly opposed to it had crept into the Church, and had been made the occasion of much superstition, and the most shameless abuses on the part of the priesthood. I allude to the doctrine of purgatory, joined with the practice of saying masses for the dead to deliver them out of purgatory. This doctrine, which is notoriously that of the Church of Rome, is here most clearly refuted and condemned. The dead in Christ are pronounced blessed, that is, happy,\* and it is declared that they

\* The word in the Greek is not *ευλογητοι*, but *μακάριοι*, which means strictly the same as our English word *happy*, and implies a state of actual present enjoyment.

*rest* from their labours; which is manifestly inconsistent with the idea of their suffering the pains of purgatory after death. To affirm that this applies only to a select class of Christians who have attained to an extraordinary degree of holiness, is a perfectly gratuitous assumption. There are really but two classes of persons in the world, those who are in Christ, and those who are not in Christ. According to the words of the apostle, "He that hath the Son hath life; but he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." Those, therefore, that die *in the Lord* are all, without exception or limitation, happy after death. They cease from their sufferings for ever, and their works follow with them. This consolatory and cheering truth the Church had for many centuries lost sight of, and, in fact, had positively contradicted by its invention of the doctrine of a purgatorial fire. And therefore was it necessary that this great and cheering truth should be proclaimed by a direct voice from heaven, that it might come home to the hearts of God's people with all the freshness and all the power of a new communication from the fountain-head of wisdom and knowledge. But,

Secondly, another reason why this announcement is here made, may be, to show the connexion between the fall of the mystical Babylon, and the second coming of Christ and the glorification of believers. "Blessed," it is said, "are the dead that die in the Lord from HENCEFORTH:" from *now*, from *this period*; *i.e.*, from the time that the fall of Babylon commences. Their final reward and eternal glorification will then be so near, that their death will be but as a short repose from labour and suffering, from which they will soon wake up to receive from the hand of Christ that recompense of grace which he will bestow upon his

faithful servants. This, it appears to me, is the force of the word *henceforth*. It is intended to convey, I imagine, the idea of *nearness* in point of time. As if it had been said, "When Babylon shall begin to fall, then shall the blessedness of the righteous be at hand." Just as our Lord says, "When these things begin to come to pass, then lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." \*

3. There is, however, a third reason perhaps, and that an important one, why this announcement is made at this particular juncture. It may be intended to intimate that the encouragement contained in it will be needed at this period. That before the final destruction of the Romish Church and Empire, the sword of persecution will again be drawn, and the upholders of Gospel truth will once more be called upon to lay down their lives in its defence. Just as the charge to the Church of Smyrna, "Be thou faithful unto death," involved in it a prophetic warning that they must be prepared to die, so may this announcement involve in it a similar prophetic warning. Should this be the case—and may God avert from the Church such a calamity!—we have at least the consolation of knowing that this persecution will be the last, and of short continuance. If there is to be another era of martyrs, its duration will be very brief, and it will

\* This also is Mede's view. "That word," says he, "*ἀπάρτι*, from *henceforth*, is used, not with reference to the subject of the preceding vision, but of the following." As if he had said, "Now we have arrived at that event which alone remains to be fulfilled; at that time when the dead in the Lord shall be raised to a life of blessedness." He likewise thinks that those that die in the Lord, means specifically those who suffer martyrdom for Christ's sake, and he would render the words, as Beza does, *qui propter Dominum, seu Domini causâ, moriuntur*, "who die for, or in the cause of the Lord." (See Mede's Works, p. 519.)

soon be followed by the advent of Christ and the resurrection of the righteous; and then will commence that period of glory and blessedness to which the Church has been looking forward for nearly two thousand years. (See 1 Thess. iv. 13; 2 Thess. i. 7.)

“*But their works do follow with them.*” That is to say, as *evidential*, not as *meritorious*. Their works follow them as proofs of their faith and love, and of their meetness for the enjoyment of the presence of their Lord, not as deserving a recompense. As if it had been said, “They die, indeed, and disappear from the eyes of men: but let not any one think that their works die with them, and are forgotten by God; they follow them to the grave, and will appear with them when they stand before the judgment-seat of Christ “to receive the things done in the body.”

Let us deeply ponder these solemn announcements. If there is something of the awful in them, there is far more that is cheering. Whilst the voice from heaven proclaims the dead in Christ blessed, we seem to hear the harpers tuning their harps and preparing to join in the song of Jubilee, the chorus of that great multitude whose voice is as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, “Hallelujah! the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” (Chap. xix. 6.)

#### THE ANGEL OF THE HARVEST, vers. 14—16.

“*And I looked, and behold, a white cloud,*” &c.—Most commentators regard both this and the succeeding vision as visions of judgment. This opinion is supported chiefly by a parallel passage in Joel, where the same images are employed, and manifestly signify the judg-

ments of Jehovah upon the enemies of his people.\* I cannot, however, consider this argument as conclusive. It does not follow, because both images in that place prefigure judgments, they must do so here. The circumstances of the case are different; and there are many considerations connected with the present vision which clearly prove, to my mind, that it is a vision of mercy rather than of judgment. Or, perhaps I should say, a vision relating to the glorification of the Redeemer, not to the destruction of his enemies. Let us attend to the particulars. "And I looked, and, behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle." Now, there is nothing here indicative of wrath and judgment, unless it be the epithet given to the sickle. A *sharp* sickle may seem to imply that the harvest for which it is destined is a harvest of tares for destruction, not of wheat for preservation. But this does not follow. The sword which proceeds out of the mouth of Christ in the first vision is a *sharp* two-edged sword, and yet we know that that sword, which is the "Word of God," is employed fully as much as an instrument of salvation, as it is of condemnation. It is as sharp to pierce the heart of the awakened man, and produce conviction of sin and "repentance unto life," as it is to slay the hardened and impenitent. There is no sufficient reason, then, for concluding that this is a vision only of judgment, merely because the chief actor in it has in his hand a *sharp* sickle. This epithet may be

\* "Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great." (Joel xiii. 13.)

intended to signify, as I think it does, the *rapidity* with which the predicted harvest will be gathered in.

And I am the rather disposed to take this view, because every other circumstance of the vision favours it. The *white* colour of the cloud, the *golden* crown upon the head of him who sits upon the cloud, and the very attitude of *sitting*, are all of them accompaniments suitable rather to an act of mercy than of judgment. I conclude, therefore, that this vision prefigures that plentiful ingathering of souls which shall take place in the latter day, and to which the preaching of the angel with the everlasting Gospel to all nations would be preparatory. Regarded in this light, there are three points that demand a more particular consideration.

First, the chief subject of the vision, *the harvest of the earth*. What is meant by the words, "the harvest is fully ripe," may be gathered from a similar expression of our Lord in the Gospel of John, who, seeing the Samaritans flocking to him in multitudes, with minds prepared to hear and receive the truth, said to his disciples, "Say ye not, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest." (John iv. 35.) Now, here the *ripeness* consisted in *the state of mind* of these Samaritans, *i.e.*, a predisposition, the result of the woman's report accompanied by the secret workings of Divine grace, to believe in Jesus and receive the Gospel from his mouth: and this predisposition, let it be observed, is expressly ascribed by himself to the labours of others: "Other men have laboured, and ye have entered into their labours." So then in the case before us, *the ripeness* of the harvest

of the earth signifies, I imagine, a *preparedness* in the minds of its inhabitants generally to receive the Gospel as the Word of God; which preparedness will be the result of its previous universal proclamation to the whole human race. The minds of men will be brought into something like the same state as that of the nations of Canaan, when they had heard of the drying up of the waters of the Red Sea and the river Jordan, "whose hearts," we read, "melted within them." Only the melting of heart preparatory to that harvest of which we are speaking, will be in the hope of salvation, not in the fear of destruction. For the consequence of this preparedness will be, as already intimated, an ingathering of souls from all nations of the earth. I mean, not that all men will be converted. This, I think, we must not anticipate. But only an immense multitude, a multitude so vast that it will bear the same relative proportion to those converted on the day of Pentecost, as the harvest does to the first-fruits. And this great ingathering, it should be remarked, is to take place previous to the treading of the winepress of God's wrath, or the destruction of the antichristian secular and ecclesiastical empire symbolized by the beast and the false prophet. And hence it would seem that this harvest is not that spoken of by our Lord in the parable; for that, we are expressly told, is the end of the world, and will be a harvest for separation and judgment, not of ingathering of souls to be saved into the Church, as this, I think, manifestly is.

The second point requiring consideration is the reaper of the harvest. There is a peculiarity in the mode of expression which makes it doubtful whether Christ

himself be intended. It is said, "One sat on the cloud *like* the Son of man." Now, may not this way of speaking be purposely employed to intimate that it was not Christ whom the apostle saw, but only his representative? The person of our Lord was so familiar to St. John, that had it been He himself who was now in vision presented to him sitting upon the cloud, he would at once have recognised him, and would hardly have said, "one *like* to the Son of man." May not this word, then, be purposely used to signify, that this angel of the harvest is not Christ himself, but, as it were, a semblance of him, or his deputy and representative? And if so, if this angel be not Christ himself, but one bearing a near resemblance to him, may he not be the symbol of the Jewish people, now converted, and changed into preachers of that Gospel which they once sought to destroy? Many considerations favour this view. We have every reason to believe that the Jews will be the great preachers of the Gospel in the latter day. "For if," says the apostle, "the casting of them away were the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but as life from the dead?" (Rom. xi. 15.) See also that remarkable passage in Zechariah, in which it is said, "ten men out of *all languages* of the nations shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you" (cap. viii. 23). They also, as being the kinsmen of Christ, of whom as concerning the flesh he came (Rom. ix. 2), may with peculiar propriety be regarded as his representatives, and as *more like* him in respect of his *humanity* than any others. Nor are "the white cloud," and "the golden crown," according to this view, without

their specific meaning. For the *white cloud* may be the symbol of God's grace and mercy, now again extended to his ancient people; and the *golden crown* may signify the honour about to be put upon them, and their exaltation in the sight of all nations. This last-mentioned emblem, indeed, assuming that the Jews, now converted and about to be sent forth as missionaries to the Gentile world, are symbolized by him who sits upon the cloud, would be peculiarly appropriate. For we learn from Ezekiel (c. xvi. 12), that it was customary to put an ornamental crown upon the head of the bride when she was adorned in her bridal attire.\* And of David going forth in the confidence of victory, it is said, "Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head." (Ps. xxi. 3.) Now, if we put these two ideas together, that of a bride adorned for her husband, and of a warrior going forth to victory, we shall perhaps have a just conception of the meaning of this symbol, which will then signify the Jewish nation received again into union with Christ, and thus crowned by him as a bride, and also about to go forth in his name to subdue the world to him, and gather in a harvest of souls from all mankind. This view of the passage is greatly strengthened by what follows, and which is,

3. The third point deserving consideration. An angel comes forth from the temple, and in a tone of authority

\* The whole passage is deserving of attention, as illustrative of the clause under consideration. The 67th Psalm also bears upon the subject. The lifting up of God's countenance upon the Jews is connected with "his way being known upon earth, and his saving health among all nations." And the conversion of the Gentiles is, in fact, foretold under the image of a harvest. "God be merciful to us, and bless us"—(it is Jews who are supposed to utter this prayer)—"then shall the earth yield her increase."

bids him who sits upon the white cloud, thrust in his sickle, and reap. Now, the temple here is the Christian Church, and the angel who comes out of it is, probably, the representative of its ministers. If, therefore, the angel on the cloud be Christ, we have the servant speaking in a tone of authority to his Lord, and commanding him what to do.\* But is there not a want of congruity and propriety in this? Can we conceive of any created being, even an archangel, much less a man, addressing the Lord of glory thus? On the other hand, if we regard the angel with the sickle as the representative of converted Israel, the kinsmen of Christ according to the flesh, nothing can be more appropriate than the whole imagery. The ministers of the Church call upon them to arise and fulfil the office assigned them, and gather in the harvest which the labours of others have prepared. Just as our Lord said to the apostles, "Lift up your eyes; behold the fields, are white already to harvest. I send you to reap that whereon ye have bestowed no labour."

Such appears to me to be a probable interpretation of this vision, the accomplishment of which is yet future.

\* Vitringa, who never, like too many commentators, slurs over difficulties, although he may not always be happy in his solutions of them, saw this objection to the common interpretation, and suggests that this *angel* reaper may represent those princes and commanders who, about the period of the Reformation, favoured the cause of truth, and whom God employed in the execution of his purposes. His words are, "Interpretes passim hic cogitant de *Christo*: quorum etiam aliqui ut suam hanc sententiam tanto adstruant fortius, abutuntur phrasi *filiï hominis*, quam *Christo* propriam putant: etsi satis constet, eam hic indefinite usurpari.—Nego circumstantias hujus emblematis huic sententiæ favere. Imo, Quia hic *angelus*, *mandatum* accepit metendi at alio *angelo*, quod minus commode ad *Christum* refertur, &c. Quare nihil commodius videtur, quam sub hoc emblemate intelligere *Heroes* et *Principes* quorum opera *Deus* in exequendis suis illis judiciis utetur."—*Comm.*, p. 666.

I would not, however, speak dogmatically. If the angel sitting upon the cloud be Christ himself, then we must understand the call upon him to arise and reap rather as an invitation than a command; or, as Vitranga remarks,\* it may be meant to intimate, that Christ, as man, does nothing without an express direction from his heavenly Father.

Vers. 17—20. THE TREADING OF THE WINE-PRESS.—“*And another angel came out of the temple, that which was in the sky, he having also a sharp sickle,*” &c.—This is unquestionably a vision of judgment; but who are to be the subjects of the predicted judgments, and who the executors, is not so clear. There can, however, I think, be little doubt but that *the vine* is the emblem of the professing Church, and, consequently, that it is upon nominal Christendom that these judgments, foretold in such terrific imagery, will fall. The figure of a vine is constantly employed, both in the Old and New Testament, to represent the visible Church. Thus in Psalm lxxx. 8, “*Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the Heathen, and planted it.*” (See also Deut. xxxii. 32; Isa. v. 2; Jer. ii. 21; Ezek. xv. 2.) This VINE OF THE EARTH, then,—not the *true* vine, the vine which is of a heavenly origin, and bears heavenly fruit, but the vine *of the earth*,—is a type of the outward Christian Church, now by her sins and iniquities become ripe for God’s judgments. It is a fearful picture, and may well excite much anxious inquiry on our part, to whatever section of the Church we may belong. It

\* Si per *angelum messorum* intelligamus ipsum Christum Regem, quæ hic dicuntur, significabunt, Christum Regem nihil agere earum rerum quæ ecclesie ejus spectant, nisi secundum *prescriptum mandatum*, sive, qua ipse phrasi passim usus est, *voluntatem Patris*.—Comm., p. 667.

is generally assumed by Protestant commentators, that the threatened judgments will fall exclusively on the Church of Rome. And there is one circumstance in the symbolic drama which makes it highly probable that Rome and the Roman territory will be the principal scene of their execution. I allude to the terrific figure by which the immensity of the slaughter is represented. The blood which flowed from the wine-press formed a stream so deep that it reached *to the bridles of the horses*, and extended a distance of *sixteen hundred furlongs*, or *two hundred miles*. Now, it is not to be supposed that this is a mere figure of speech—a definite number put indefinitely for a *very great* distance. It may be readily admitted, that the flowing of the blood up to the horses' bridles, is an hyperbole;\* but the mention of the specific number, *sixteen hundred*, is altogether a different thing, and must, I think, have a definite and specific meaning. The territory on which this tremendous manifestation of God's displeasure against his professing Church will take place will be sixteen hundred furlongs in length. This seems to be the natural and obvious import of the circumstance. Let the reader, then, take a map of Italy, and measure the extent of that portion called the "STATES OF THE CHURCH,"—he will find it to be exactly TWO HUNDRED MILES. There is surely something ominous in this. It would be impossible, perhaps, to fix upon any other

\* We meet with the same sort of hyperbole even in history. What is more common, *e.g.*, than the phrase, "the streets flowed with torrents of blood?" And Bishop Newton, in commenting on this passage, says, "The Jerusalem Talmud, describing the awful slaughter which the Roman Emperor, Adrian, made of the Jews at the destruction of the city of Bitter, saith, 'the horses waded in blood up to the nostrils.'"—*Diss.* iii., Rev. xiv. 20.

territorial boundary which so accurately corresponds with the given measurement.\* I think, therefore, we are warranted in assuming that the territories of the Papal See will be the central locality on which this awful display of God's wrath will take place.

But what, then, mean the words, "WITHOUT THE CITY?" This clause appeared to me at first sight, I confess, to involve a great difficulty. For if the treading of the wine-press takes place *without* the city—that is, Christendom,—how, I asked myself, can Rome and its neighbourhood be the appointed locality, seeing that it is in the very centre and heart of the city? Upon further reflection, however, this difficulty vanished. For the mention of the *sixteen hundred furlongs* shows that the word *city* here is to be taken in a literal, not a figurative sense, and therefore that the phrase, "without the city," means without the walls of the particular city referred to. But if so, it may be asked, and Rome be the city intended, are we to infer that the predicted slaughter will take place only in the Roman territory, and not within the walls of Rome itself? Such, I should say, is certainly the obvious import of the prophecy. Nor is there anything improbable in the supposition that this may be the case. On the contrary, if Italy, and the States of the Church in particular, are to be the theatre

\* The dimensions of Palestine, or the Holy Land, indeed, are about the same; and hence some have supposed that the vicinity of Jerusalem, not of Rome, will be the scene of these judgments. And if by the city is meant Christendom,—and I would not say positively that this may not be its meaning,—then, in all probability, Palestine will be the territory on which this tremendous conflict will take place. In that case, the locality of the wine-press-treading and of the battle of Armageddon will be one and the same. And there are passages in the Old Testament which favour the idea that Judæa will be the theatre of that last great conflict.—See Joel iii.

of the last great final war, it is highly probable that the chief slaughter will be *without* the city, and that the decisive battle will be fought in the territories of Rome, not within its walls. It seems, however, to be intimated, that the adherents of Rome, after their defeat, will be enraged with her, and turn their arms against her, and having burnt her with fire, destroy her altogether from the face of the earth (c. xvii. 14, 15; xviii. 9, 10). But here we get into the region of unfulfilled prophecy, and it is safer not to speculate. Events will shortly show what these awful prefigurations mean, by their accomplishment. In the meantime, let us not overlook the instructive lesson which this prophecy conveys, in whatever way it is understood. There is a solemn warning addressed to us all in the words, "HER GRAPES ARE FULLY RIPE." These words remind us, that there is a point of iniquity beyond which the long-suffering of God will not permit any one to proceed—a fixed period for the endurance of the Divine mercy which cannot be extended,—and that when that point is reached, and that period is expired, whether nations, or churches, or individuals are concerned, their doom is sealed, and their destruction becomes inevitable. Thus it was with the antediluvian world (Gen. vi. 6),—thus it was with the nations of Canaan, of whom God said, negatively, "For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Gen. xv. 16),\*—thus it was also with the Jewish Church in our Lord's day (Matt. xxiii. 32),—and thus we fear it will be with the professing Christian Church: it will fill up the measure of its iniquity, and then will its destruction come.

\* See a striking sermon of Saurin's on this text.

## CHAPTER XV.

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES ; THE SONG OF THE CONQUERORS  
OF THE BEAST ; THE TEMPLE OF GOD IS OPENED.

*“And I saw another sign in the sky, great and wonderful ; seven angels having the seven last plagues,”* &c.—  
Vers. 1—4.

THIS vision is introductory to the third and last woe. In order to get a clear understanding of its meaning, and of the chronological position it occupies in the Apocalyptic history, it will be necessary briefly to advert once more to what is said in other places concerning these woes. The word woe, the reader will remember, is first used in chap. viii. 13. After the sounding of the fourth trumpet, which announced the fall of the Western Empire, an angel was seen flying through the midst of heaven, crying with a loud voice, “WOE, WOE, WOE, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound.” The fifth trumpet then sounds, and when it has ceased sounding, we have the following announcement: “One woe is past: behold, there come two woes more hereafter” (c. ix. 12). The sixth trumpet then sounds, but when it ceases there is no announcement similar to that in the former instance, but the supplementary visions of the angel standing on the land and sea, and of the two witnesses, bringing us to the period of the French Revolution. When these details are finished, mention is again made of the woes, and the speedy approach of

the third woe is thus announced: "The second woe is past: behold, the third woe cometh quickly" (c. xi. 14). The seventh trumpet then sounds, but instead of a woe we have songs of rejoicing, and the kingdoms of this world are declared to have become "the kingdoms of the Lord." Yet this also is a woe trumpet, for it had been expressly said, "Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the voices of the trumpets of the THREE angels which are yet to sound." The third angel's trumpet, therefore, contains the *last* woe. Where, then, is this woe to be sought? It must be identical with the *seven last plagues*, "for in them is filled up the wrath of God." This is clear beyond dispute. The seven plagues of the seventh trumpet, therefore, constitute the one woe which gives it the title of a woe trumpet, and the glorious things which occur on the sounding of this trumpet come after the woe, and are not the immediate results of its sounding. Let it, then, be borne in mind, that the prophecy on which we are now about to enter relates to events subsequent, not only to the conquests of the Saracens and Turks, who were the agents of the first and second woes, but to the prophesying of the witnesses and the great earthquake, in which a tenth part of the city fell. So that, if we have been right in our interpretation hitherto, the events symbolized by the vials are events which take place immediately after the outbreak of the first French Revolution in 1789, and fill up the interval between that epoch and the full and final establishment of Christ's kingdom upon earth.

Having thus fixed the chronological position of these vials, let us consider the details connected with them.

Now the reader will observe that the first four verses of this chapter are purely introductory. They are a sort of prelude, or overture, to the symbolic drama which follows; or, to vary the figure, they are as a table of contents prefixed to the chapter of the book to which they belong. The first verse informs us, that the seven angels, about to be more fully described (v. 5, 6), are the bearers of the seven last plagues; and the three following verses contain a song of triumph, sung in the way of anticipation by the conquerors of the beast and his image. Or, rather, it is the rehearsal of the song to be sung *after* the vials have been poured out, and the antichristian power symbolized by the beast and his image has been destroyed. But what means THE SEA OF GLASS MINGLED WITH FIRE, and who are they that stand upon it? These two points demand consideration.

1. It is obvious that the word *sea* here is not to be understood in its usual sense, as signifying a large collection of waters. It means rather an immense vessel, like that of brass made by Solomon, and used by the priests and Levites for the purposes of ablution. (1 Kings vii. 23.) This sea the apostle saw was clear and transparent like glass, and fire was mingled with the waters which it contained. The conquerors over the beast stood upon its edge, or rim, as if they had just emerged from the mingled water and fire beneath their feet. The symbolic meaning of which things seems to be this: The sea of glass mingled with fire, like the burning bush seen by Moses, is an emblem of the condition of the Church in this world. Abstractedly considered, the Church is pure and free from flaw, like fine glass (Ephes. v. 26, 27),

but it is continually exposed to the fiery trial of afflictions (1 Pet. iv. 12); the afflictions, in fact, which it goes through are the means of its purification. In this place, however, *the fire* has probably a definite specific meaning, and signifies those peculiar trials to which the true Church of Christ, that Church the members of which are not known to man, but whose names are written in heaven, will be exposed in its final contest with the apostate Church of Rome. The mention of fire in connexion with the sea, implies a baptism with fire as well as with water; or, in other words, the cleansing effect of persecution and suffering combined with the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit.\* So that the leading ideas here are still those which run through the whole book of prophecy from the beginning, the bruising of the *heel* of Christ in his people, and the crushing of the *head* of the adversary: the sufferings of the Church first, and then the glory. The mention afterwards of "the Song of Moses," reminds us of the Israelites standing upon the borders of the Red Sea, and looking upon their enemies as they lay dead upon the shore, whilst they themselves were in safety; and perhaps this is meant to signify that the Protestant Churches of Europe, which shall continue faithful to their principles, and maintain the truth of the Gospel in opposition to the corruptions of Rome, shall thus stand, as it were, in a place of security, whilst the judgments of God are being executed on the adherents of the Papacy. (See the epistle to the Church of Philadelphia, c. iii. 10.)

2. But is no particular Church or nation designated

\* Thus our Lord: "Ye shall indeed be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with." (Matt. xx. 22.) And again, "For every one (*i.e.*, every disciple of mine) shall be salted with *fire*." (Mark ix. 49.)

by the conquerors of the beast and his image? Perhaps not. They may mean, generally, as already intimated, all the members of evangelical Churches, as distinct from the Church of Rome. If any particular Church be intended, it is not perhaps presumptuous to hope it may be our own. Indeed, there are some circumstances in the vision which may justify us in indulging this pleasing anticipation. Separated by a narrow sea from the continental nations, it is possible that we may be privileged to behold "the desolations which the Lord hath made in the earth," whilst we ourselves are exempted. Yet, on the other hand, our national sins almost forbid our entertaining such an expectation. All will depend, doubtless, upon our continuing, both ecclesiastically and politically, both as a Church and a State, to maintain our Protestant principles. If we do this—if we hold fast that which our ancestors nobly won with their blood, and bequeathed to us as the most valuable of blessings, freedom of thought, liberty of soul, and, above all, the unrestricted circulation of the Bible in our own language, then may we hope that the fire which is mingled with the waters in the sea of glass will not reach us, but, like the waters of the Red Sea, consume our enemies, while we stand upon the sea-shore, singing, as the Israelites of old, songs of triumph and deliverance.

Ver. 5—8. "*And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple . . . was opened,*" &c.—This is not a new vision, but a more detailed account of the seven angels mentioned in the first verse, the circumstances of whose appearance are now related.

After the anticipatory song of victory had ceased, the apostle looked upwards, and saw the inner part of the temple, in which was the ark of the testimony, opened,

and the seven angels of whom he had before spoken, in the attire of priests, issuing from the temple; one of the living creatures then gave them each a golden bowl, or basin, filled with the wrath of God; upon which a cloud of smoke came over the temple, and no one could enter into it until the angels had poured out the vessels of wrath upon the earth. The meaning of which things appears to be this: the seven angels, who are the ministers of God's judgments, come out of the temple and are attired as priests, to signify that the judgments of which they are about to be the executioners are *retributive* judgments, inflicted as a just punishment on those who have "blasphemed God, and his temple, and those that dwell therein." The opening of the temple and the discovery of the tabernacle of the testimony, identifies this vision with that of chapter xi. 19, of which it is the development, and indicates, that the outpourings of the Divine wrath upon the adversaries of the Gospel, will be attended by manifestations of peculiar mercy and favour towards the spiritual Israel, the true Church of the living God. But the covering of the temple with a cloud of smoke, so that no man could enter in during the time that the vials were being poured out, implies, that until God's judgments are executed there will be no open manifestation of his mercy.\* His people will be safe, but it will be *within* the temple, hidden, as it were, beneath the clouds and darkness that surround the Divine majesty when his judgments are in the earth. (See Isaiah xxvi. 20.)

\* Thus we read in Numbers xvi. 42, that before the breaking forth of the plague, "a cloud covered the tabernacle, and the glory of the Lord appeared."

Such appears to be the import of the symbols employed in this introductory vision, which, like all the other introductory visions, carries us forward to the end, and contains a comprehensive summary of the more minute details which follow.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

THE FIRST VIAL, OR BOWL, VERS. 1, 2.

“*And I heard a great voice,*” &c. . . . “*And the first went and poured out his vial on the earth,*” &c.

BEFORE entering upon the details of this chapter I would recal a few leading points to the reader’s recollection. Let it be remembered, then, that these vials are the *third woe*, the second woe being that of the Ottomans or Turks, which ceased towards the close of the last century ; and, consequently, the commencement of this vial-woe cannot be dated before that period, nor much after it. Let it also be remembered, that the earth is *the ancient Roman world*, now divided into ten kingdoms, and which form the theatre of the symbolic drama. In order, therefore, fully to realize what the apostle saw, we must imagine ourselves, as in a former instance, looking down from the sky upon the south of Europe, with its several modern kingdoms of France, Spain, Italy, &c., with their seas, rivers, and *inhabitants* spread out before us, and visible to the eye.

Further, let it be borne in mind, that the vessels employed for the outpouring of God’s wrath were not

what we mean by vials, but *bowls*, or *basins*, which would therefore be discharged not slowly and gradually, but rapidly and at once, indicating the comparative rapidity with which the predicted judgments would be accomplished.

Having made these preliminary general remarks, we will now proceed to the consideration of details.

The first angel poured out his vial upon the earth, and the effect was, the appearance of an offensive and painful ulcer upon the men who had the mark of the beast. Now the men who have the mark of the beast are, as we assume to have been proved, the members of the Romish, or Latin Church. What, then, may this offensive and painful ulcer signify? It is generally supposed by modern commentators to mean that gross species of Infidelity which showed itself in so revolting a form in Roman Catholic countries, and especially France, towards the end of the last century. And this is, I conceive, the true interpretation of the symbol. No one can suppose that the ulcer is to be understood literally. But if it be a figure, what can represent more accurately and forcibly the moral evils of modern Infidelity, particularly as exhibited in the schools of French philosophy? A running ulcer is a sore occasioned by corrupt humours of the body which, having been for some time circulating in the veins, are at length concentrated in a particular spot, and bursting the skin, discharge themselves with much pain to the afflicted party, making him at the same time loathsome and offensive to others. Now how striking and accurate an emblem have we here of that moral ulcer with which the kingdoms of the Papacy have for the last fifty years and more been afflicted? The corrupt humours, the

cause of the ulcer, had long been circulating in the members of the body politic subject to the dominion of Rome, but being widely diffused they did not show themselves, nor was their existence generally perceived, until the period of the French Revolution. Then the moral poison became, as it were, concentrated in a particular part of the body, and bursting through all restraints by the additional force which it had thus acquired, it showed itself in all its malignity and offensiveness. And surely never was there a system of morals (if such it may be called) which more justly deserved to be characterized as "a noisome and grievous sore," than that of modern Infidelity. To show that this application of the prophetic symbol is not a mere arbitrary assumption, I would ask the reader's attention to a few extracts from a sermon \* of an eloquent writer and preacher of the above-named period, who, without intending any reference to the prophecy, has used precisely the same imagery as that here employed, and in tracing up the history of modern Infidelity has furnished us, in fact, with a lucid exposition of this first vial.

Speaking of the origin of modern Infidelity, he says: "Has *real* Christianity anything to fear? Have not the degenerate manners and corrupt lives of multitudes in the visible Church been, on the contrary, the principal occasion of scandal and offence? Infidelity, without intending it, is gradually removing this reproach; possessing the property of attracting to itself THE MORBID HUMOURS WHICH PERVADE THE CHURCH, until the Christian profession on the one hand is reduced to a

\* "Modern Infidelity considered with respect to its influence on Society," a Sermon by Robert Hall, M.A. 1801.

sound and healthy state, and Scepticism on the other exhibits nothing but A MASS OF PUTRIDITY AND DISEASE.” (P. 81.)

Again; “Infidelity has no individual subsistence given it in the system of prophecy. It is not a beast, but a *mere putrid excrescence* of the Papal beast: *an excrescence which though it may diffuse death through every vein of the body on which it grew, yet shall die along with it. Its enormities will hasten its overthrow.*” (P. 72.)

Once more, speaking of the fruits of French Infidelity, he says: “Settle it, therefore, in your minds, as a maxim never to be effaced, or forgotten, that Atheism is an *inhuman, bloody, ferocious* system, equally hostile to every useful restraint and to every virtuous affection; leaving nothing above us to excite awe, nor round us to waken tenderness, it wages war with heaven and with earth: its first object is to dethrone God, its next to destroy man.” (P. 51.)

Then, as to the bursting forth of this moral virus, its showing itself, as it were, on the social body generally, how striking is the same writer’s language. “The efforts of Infidels,” he observes, “to diffuse the principles of Infidelity among the common people, is another alarming symptom peculiar to the present time. Hume and Gibbon addressed themselves solely to the more polished classes of the community. Infidelity has lately grown condescending; bred in the speculations of a daring philosophy, and the stagnant marshes of a corrupt Christianity, and afterwards nursed in the lap of voluptuousness and of courts; having at length reached its full maturity, it boldly ventures to challenge

the suffrages of the people, solicits the acquaintance of peasants and mechanics, and seeks to draw whole nations to its standard." (P. 69.)

These undesigned testimonies from a contemporary witness of such unquestionable power as a writer, are, to my mind, satisfactory and conclusive. They prove beyond dispute, that there is nothing forced or unnatural in that interpretation which makes this "noisome and grievous sore," the atheistical Infidelity of the Continental school; but, on the contrary, that it was indeed, in its effects on the body politic, a noisy and grievous sore, occasioning intense suffering to the nations themselves among whom it prevailed, and making them an offence and a nuisance to others.

But it may be objected, that the Infidelity of the French Revolution was not confined to the Papal kingdoms. It spread its poison, it may be said, far and wide, and even Protestant and scripturally enlightened England did not escape,—how, then, was the prophecy fulfilled which confines the breaking out of the sore to the men that have the mark of the beast? Now we admit the fact affirmed. We admit that Infidelity did show itself in a revolting form at the close of the last century in England, as well as in other countries. But we cannot allow that it ever became that "noisy and grievous sore" in this country which it did in France and Spain, and other Papal kingdoms. The boil never broke forth, so to speak, upon the social body generally. The poison may have been in the veins, but it was neutralized and over-mastered by an antidote more powerful than itself. And here lies the great difference, as regards the results of Infidelity, between Roman Catholic countries, and our own, and other Protestant

countries. In them, it is “a noisome and grievous sore” breaking out, like the boils on the Egyptians, all over the body, and affecting the whole population; but in Protestant countries, where the Gospel is fully preached, and the Scriptures are freely circulated, this moral virus loses its power, and instead of corrupting the whole social body, is gradually absorbed, and eventually thrown off by the healthy vigour imparted to the mass of the population by the word of truth. Infidelity never has flourished, and never will flourish amongst a people thoroughly imbued with scriptural knowledge. But where the Scriptures are withheld from the laity, and the authority of the Church and of the priest is substituted for the authority of the Word of God, there it meets with a congenial soil, and, accordingly, both history and experience testify that Popery and Infidelity ever go hand in hand together.\* It is a part of the just retribution of God, that those who, under the veil of truth, “speak lies in hypocrisy,” shall themselves be tormented by the greatest of all lies, the pretended philosophy of Atheism!

Vers. 3—7. “*And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea,*” &c.—The attentive reader will, doubtless, have observed a general analogy between the first four vials and the first four trumpets. In both

\* This may appear to some persons an unjust and groundless calumny. But if the reader be disposed so to view it, just let him consider what has been the actual practice of the two parties, the Papal and the Infidel, in our own country, and especially in the Houses of Parliament, for the last fifty years. Have they not banded together? In every question affecting religion, has not the Infidel supported the Papist, and the Papist the Infidel? And how is this to be accounted for unless we admit some sort of inexplicable relationship between them? *Simile agit in simile*; and on no other principle can this singular but indisputable fact be explained.

cases, the earth, the sea, the rivers, and the sun, are successively affected. But although the same parts of the political universe are affected respectively by the trumpets and the vials, there are some marked points of difference in the results in each instance, and it is important to the right understanding of the prophecy that these points of difference should be noticed. The effects of the sounding of the first trumpet were hail and fire mingled with blood cast upon the earth, and the burning up of every green thing; the effects of the outpouring of the first vial are, "a noisome ulcer among the men that have the mark of the beast." Now here is a plain and striking difference. The one implies the devastations of war; the other is manifestly the symbol of a moral evil: and it would be absurd to argue against such an application, because in the former instance the earth and its productions must have a more literal interpretation given to them.

The same difference is also observable between the results of the *second* trumpet and the *second* vial. Both affect the sea, and in both instances the sea becomes blood; but in the one case it is simply *blood*, in the other, it is the *blood of a dead man*. Now this difference is not accidental. The blood of a *living* man, *flowing in red streams*, is a different emblem from the blood of a *dead* man, *black, coagulated, and stagnant*. The one denotes great slaughter in war, and destruction of human life by the sword; the other, I imagine, is rather to be understood in a more spiritual sense, as denoting, *i.e.*, moral death, a total stagnation of all the powers and functions of man, regarded as a moral and religious being.

In like manner there is a difference between the

results of the *third* trumpet and the *third* vial. Both affect the rivers, but in the one case they are *made bitter*, and those who drink of them die ; implying, as I have endeavoured to show in commenting upon the passage, corruption in doctrine ; in the other, they are *turned into blood*, and the men of the earth drink of the waters mingled with blood, and the retributive justice of God is commended in thus giving those blood to drink, who had shed the blood of saints and prophets. Which plainly seems to signify that this conversion of the rivers into blood, is symbolical of an immense destruction of human life by the shedding of blood.

I cannot, therefore, agree with Mr. Elliott and some other interpreters, who explain the second vial of the destruction of the maritime forces of the Papal kingdoms by Great Britain, adducing, in the way of proof, the victories of Hood, Howe, and Nelson. It is unquestionably true that the naval strength of France and Spain was by these victories almost annihilated. But that is not the point in question. The real question is, whether, admitting the fact just stated, the sea's becoming as the blood of *a dead man* is a suitable prophetic symbol of such fact. I think not. I cannot see why a sea of black, coagulated, stagnant blood should symbolize the destruction of navies. But what then does it signify ? It seems to me that it must have a purely figurative meaning, and that it signifies, therefore, *a state of moral, or spiritual, death* prevailing generally amongst the mass of the people. The blood is the life. The health of the body depends upon the circulation of the blood. Stagnation of the blood involves in it disease and death. But a sea is a symbol of people, and nations, and tongues. (Chap. xvii. 15.) And what then can a sea changed as

into the blood of a dead man as a symbol signify, but the cessation of all the functions of spiritual life amongst the people to whom the emblem refers? I would interpret this vial, therefore, of that general stagnation of religious feeling amongst all classes in Roman Catholic countries, especially France, Spain, and Italy,\* which succeeded the French Revolution, and was consequent upon the breaking forth of the moral ulcer of the former vial; or, in other words, of the diffusion of those atheistical opinions of which that ulcer is the symbol. That there was at that time an extraordinary *deadness* as to religion in all Popish countries, is a matter of fact too notorious to require any proofs. The people generally were indifferent to spiritual things, or, in other words, to whatever was connected with the knowledge of revealed truth, the worship of God, and the salvation of the soul. The whole social body was, in short, in a state of spiritual torpor, and could be likened to nothing better than a vast collection of stagnant waters, resembling, in outward appearance, "the blood of a dead man," "exhibiting," to use the words of the writer before quoted, "nothing but *a mass of putridity and disease.*"

With regard to the third vial, the language employed in describing its effects seems to point, as already intimated, to the plentiful shedding of blood by the sword of war. The phrase "rivers of blood" is familiar to our ears, and is constantly employed by historians in describing the field of battle. And perhaps, therefore, this vial may have had its fulfilment, as many modern com-

\* Countries *bordering upon* the sea are sometimes in Scripture called the sea. Thus Isaiah lx. 5: "*The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee.*" This vial, therefore, may be supposed with some probability to have especial reference to the countries above named.

mentators think, in those terrific and sanguinary conflicts which were fought by the French armies on the rivers of Italy, Germany, and Austria. The destruction of life in these conflicts was immense, and it has been truly observed, that there was scarcely a river of any note in the countries just named which was not tinged with human blood. I am inclined, however, to think that the imagery may have a yet more specific bearing, and relate more particularly to the slaughter of the clergy of the Romish Church during the prevalence of the revolutionary frenzy. My reasons for supposing that the rivers and fountains of water symbolize the clergy have already been given (see vol. i., p. 295), and there seems to be peculiar propriety in this application of the emblem here. For assuming that *the ulcer* of the first vial represents infidelity breaking out and showing itself in its most virulent form amongst certain individuals, from the rationalistic character of their minds peculiarly susceptible of its influence, and that the sea of stagnant blood represents the people at large brought by the influence of infidel principles into a state of *death-like torpor* as regards all the feelings and exercises of religion, then will the rivers and fountains of water naturally symbolize the clergy, and their becoming blood will indicate the shedding of their blood by violence. Now it is notorious that the Popish clergy were the especial objects of attack to the revolutionary mobs both in Paris and elsewhere; it is also an indisputable fact that they have ever been the chief instigators of persecution, and that it is at their suggestion that temporal magistrates have shed the blood of saints and of prophets. Whilst, therefore, we cannot read of the sufferings of the French clergy without feelings of horror mingled with com-

passion, it is impossible not to see in them an example of the retributive justice of God.

Vers. 8, 9.—“*And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun,*” &c.—The sun, as a political symbol, represents a principal state or kingdom. And as these prophecies have reference to the territory occupied by the revived Western or Latin Roman Empire subsisting at this period under its ten horns or dynasties, this sun will signify the greatest and most conspicuous of those dynasties. It will be observed, however, that the effects of this vial upon the symbolic sun on which it is poured out, are not such as we should have anticipated. Instead of extinguishing it, or in any degree diminishing its brightness and heat, as in the case of the fourth trumpet, it *increases* them. “*And power was given unto him to scorch the men \* with fire.*” Now there can be no mistake as to the import of this imagery. The sun ordinarily diffuses a genial light and heat over the earth, imparting a healthy, acceptable warmth to the animal and vegetable kingdom; but if the strength and number of its rays were to be greatly increased, the heat would become intolerable, and mankind and all living things would be literally “scorched with fire.” Applied, then, to a symbolic sun—that is, a principal kingdom—this imagery implies such an increase in the power and resources of that kingdom as shall make it a scourge to the neighbouring nations, enabling it to scorch and burn them up, as it were, by the superior strength imparted to it.

And where, then, shall we seek for the fulfilment of this prophecy? The reader will probably have anticipated the reply to this inquiry. Any person acquainted with the history of Europe during the seventeenth and

\* *i.e.*, the men who had the mark of the beast.

eighteenth centuries, if asked, which of the Papal kingdoms shone forth most conspicuously about this period, so as to be entitled to be called by way of distinction *the sun* in the political firmament, would instantly name France; nor have I a shadow of doubt that France under the imperial rule of Napoleon is the sun on which this vial is poured out. Independently of the general consideration just mentioned, the pre-eminence of France amongst the continental kingdoms, which would itself entitle it to this distinction, there are two others of a more particular and definite character which appear to me to be conclusive. The one is, that France by her reigning monarch did at one period of her history assume to herself this distinctive title. It is an historical fact that Louis XIV. bore upon his banners A SUN as an emblem of France, with this inscription, "*Nec pluribus impar.*" And incredible as such a thing may appear, it is stated on good authority that the principal reason alleged by him for going to war with Holland was, that Van Beunning, a Dutchman, had caused a medal to be struck, representing himself and a sun, with these words subscribed, "*In conspectu meo, stetit sol,*" "At sight of me the sun stood still." \* Now this is one of those remarkable coincidences between the language of prophecy and the facts of history which furnish a clue to the meaning of the former, and put a stamp of probability, not to say certainty, on that scheme of interpretation which brings such coincidences to light. That the French monarch should have assumed as his device *a sun*, taken in connexion with the fact that France did unquestionably at the period to which the prophecy belongs shine forth as by far the most conspicuous of all the ten kingdoms

\* Siècle de Louis XIV., cap. 9.

of Papal Christendom, are circumstances which, to say the least, favour very strongly the above application of this prophetic symbol.

This view is still further corroborated by events. France did become a sun to scorch the nations her neighbours. The French Empire under Napoleon fulfilled the prophecy almost to the letter; and what deserves especially to be noticed is, that it was *the men who had the mark of the beast* that felt most severely the scorching heat of its fiery rays. Spain, Italy, and Austria were the countries in which the sun of Imperial France shot forth most fiercely its tormenting and destructive fires. To show in detail the fulfilment of the prediction would be to write a history. Let the reader who may have any doubts upon the subject peruse Alison's, or almost any other writer's narrative of the campaigns of Bonaparte from the year 1796, when he gained his first victory at Monte Notte, to 1814, when he abdicated at Fontainebleau. This I conceive is the period occupied by the fourth vial. It was during this period that France, like a consuming fire, burnt up the nations round about her, and it was at the close of this period that she herself was consumed by the fire which she had kindled, and the vial of Divine indignation, which in the first instance, like oil poured upon burning coals, had caused her to blaze forth with destructive fury on all around her, proved also to herself a vial of wrath. Instead of occupying the reader's time by extracts from the history of that period, the events of which are fresh in the memory of many living, I shall content myself with transcribing the following passage from the eloquent writer before quoted; and coming, as it does, from one who lived in the midst of the desolating effects of a war

he so well describes, it possesses peculiar claims to our interest and attention:—

“If ever we are expected to *be still and know that he is God*,” observes the preacher, “it is on the present occasion, after a crisis so unexampled in the annals of the world, during which scenes have been disclosed and events have risen, so much more astonishing than any that history had recorded or romance had feigned, that we are compelled to lose sight of human agency, and to behold the Deity acting, as it were, apart and alone.

“The contest in which we have been lately engaged is distinguished from all others in modern times by the number of nations it embraced, and the animosity with which it was conducted. MAKING ITS FIRST APPEARANCE IN THE CENTRE OF THE CIVILIZED WORLD, LIKE A FIRE KINDLED IN THE THICKEST PART OF A FOREST, it spread during ten years on every side; IT BURNT IN ALL DIRECTIONS, GATHERING FRESH FURY IN ITS PROGRESS, TILL IT INWRAPPED THE WHOLE OF EUROPE IN ITS FLAMES; an awful spectacle not only to the inhabitants of the earth, but in the eyes of superior beings! We are met to express our devout gratitude to God for putting a period to a war the most eventful, perhaps, that has been witnessed for a thousand years.”\*

Can we desire a better exposition of the prophecy before us than this? “The centre of the civilized world,” in the retrospective view taken by the preacher, what is it but another form of expression for “the sun” of the Apocalyptic universe? And when it is added that “a fire kindled in this centre, spread in all directions until it inwrapped all Europe in its flames,”

\* See a sermon preached on Tuesday, June 1, 1803, being the day of thanksgiving for a general peace, by Robert Hall, M.A., p. 18.

what is this but saying in other words that "power was given to him to scorch men with fire?"

"*And men blasphemed the name of God,*" &c.—History has hitherto, alas! abundantly verified this melancholy prediction. The miseries inflicted upon the Papal kingdoms by the republican and imperial armies of France, have not had a salutary effect. They continue what they were. They still "blaspheme the name of God," by associating with his name, "who is jealous, and will not give his glory to another," the names of men and angels, invoking their aid, and asking their mediation and intercession, to the dishonour of the one only true God, and the one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. This is blasphemy. To put the creature thus on a level with the Creator,—to say, in one and the same breath, "Lord, have mercy upon us," and, "Holy Mary, pray for us! Holy Mother of God, pray for us! We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God! Despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O thou ever blessed and glorious Virgin!"\* — this, I say, is blasphemy; and this is what the members of the Church of Rome have done for centuries, and still do to this very hour.† They have not, therefore, yet repented "to give him glory."

\* See "The Litany of the Blessed Virgin," contained in the "Catholic Christian's Manual," published by James Duffy, Dublin.

† The very last official document of the Papacy relating to this country, is sufficient proof of this. The Apostolical Letter of Pius IX., appointing bishops in England, concludes thus: "We again INVOKE, AS OUR INTERCESSORS WITH GOD, the Most Holy Mother of God, the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, with the other heavenly patrons of England, and especially St. George the Great, &c. Given at Rome, this 29th day of September, 1850."

## THE FIFTH VIAL.

Ver. 10. "*And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the throne of the beast,*" &c.—Before entering upon the consideration of this vial, I would direct the reader's attention to an important chronological difference between these vials and the trumpets. After the sounding of the fourth trumpet, an angel is heard in the mid-heaven, proclaiming three distinct woes to the inhabitants of the earth, "because of the other angels who were *yet* to sound,"—implying a pause in the prophetic history, and plainly intimating, that the three woes proclaimed would be consecutive, not simultaneous, and follow each other at distinctly marked intervals. But we meet with nothing of the kind here. These vials, or bowls of the Divine wrath, are poured out upon *different parts* of the symbolic universe without the slightest pause, until we come to the sixth; and as the effusion of a liquid from a shallow open vessel is the act of a moment, we may, I think, infer, not only that the judgments prefigured by these six vials are to be almost, if not altogether, simultaneous, but also that they are to be of comparatively short duration. Assuming these principles to be unquestionable, we now proceed to the interpretation of this fifth vial.

The fifth vial is poured out upon the *seat*, or rather *throne*, of the beast. Now the beast is the revived Western Roman Empire, that politico-ecclesiastical dominion which was established by the Popes and the kings of France, during the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries. The seat, or throne, of the beast, therefore, is Rome. For it is said of this beast that the dragon gave him "his power, and THRONE, and great authority."

(c. xiii. 2.) The outpouring of this vial, consequently, must in an especial manner affect Rome and the Roman territories. Its glory is to suffer a temporary eclipse, and all the states and kingdoms connected with it are to undergo at the same time, as a necessary consequence, a like temporary obscuration. So that at the very time that the chief of the Papal kingdoms is blazing like a meteoric sun with an unnatural and hurtful splendour, scorching the neighbouring states by the intensity of its heat, the Papal dominions generally are to be involved in darkness, and their inhabitants are to "gnaw their tongues with pain." Now, at first sight, these things seem almost contradictory. It seems almost impossible that the light and heat of the sun, in a political firmament, should be increased, and the consequence be the darkening of that firmament. Yet so it was; and the exactness with which this apparently self-contradictory prophecy has been accomplished, is truly wonderful.

The effusion of this vial began, I conceive, almost simultaneously with the first, in the year 1796, when the French armies under Napoleon entered Italy. From that hour the obscuration of the Papacy, and the several kingdoms connected with it, commenced. As the sun of France arose and increased in dazzling splendour, Rome and all its satellites faded away; and just in proportion as the glory (falsely so called) of the one shone forth, were the others involved in darkness. Italy, Naples, Spain, and Austria, were the countries at that time most closely connected with the Papacy. They were the stars in its firmament. But how did these one by one fade away before the Imperial sun of Napoleon? First of all, the Pope was obliged to

purchase an ignominious peace by the payment of a million pounds sterling, the sacrifice of a hundred of the finest pictures and statues in the Papal gallery, and the cession of Ancona, Ferrara, and Bologna, with their respective domains.

On the 10th February, in the following year, the French entered Loretto, and despoiled that celebrated shrine of all the treasures that remained in it; the most valuable articles having been previously sent to Rome. The Papal troops fled in every direction, and the Pope in despair confirmed the terms of the treaty he had before made, but had not fulfilled, agreeing to pay a million and a half sterling, instead of the million originally stipulated.

On the 10th February, 1798, a French army entered Rome. On the 13th of the same month, Rome was declared a Republic, and Pope Pius VI. formally deposed from the temporal sovereignty. Having refused to sign his abdication, he was forcibly removed from the capital, and died a year afterwards at Valence, on the Rhine, a prisoner in the hands of the French. The short period of the republican government was one of indescribable distress to the people of Rome. "Death, suspension of commerce, and consequent poverty, military despotism, and unrestrained licentiousness, attended by a general confusion of society," says the historian, "were the characteristics of that time."

Upon the death of Pius VI., the Romish Church was for six months without a head. At length, the Cardinals having assembled at Venice, a new Pope was elected, on the 14th of March, under the title of Pius VII.

In 1805, this Pope, at Napoleon's bidding, reluctantly repaired to Paris to be present at his coronation, as Emperor of France and King of Italy.

On the 17th of May, 1809, Napoleon issued a decree, in which he united all the estates of the Church to the French Empire, leaving the Pope only his palaces, and an income of two millions of francs (80,000*l.* sterling); thus depriving the Roman Pontiff of all temporal sovereignty. In reply, the Pope issued a bull of excommunication against him and his abettors, dated June the 9th, 1809. On the 6th of July, the Pope was again seized in his palace, and carried as a prisoner, first to Grenoble, and then to Fontainebleau, where he remained, under circumstances of great indignity,\* till the abdication of Napoleon, when he was restored to his capital and his kingdom.

And here, therefore, this fifth vial probably ends, its effusion having occupied the space of nearly twenty years.

It should be observed, however, as before intimated, that all the states and kingdoms connected with the Papacy underwent during this period a temporary eclipse. Spain, Portugal, and all the kingdoms of Italy, were deprived of their hereditary Roman Catholic sovereigns, and Napoleon; or his nominees, occupied their respective thrones. On the 2d of December, 1806, the sun of Austerlitz, as it has been called, arose, and one of the consequences of that disastrous battle was the withdrawal of the princes who composed

\* It is asserted by some writers, that Napoleon, in one of his conferences with Pius, lifted his hand and struck him on the face; but this has been denied, as it is said, on the authority of Pius himself. See Pacca's "Memorie Storiche," part iii., c. 1.

the Confederation of the Rhine from the influence of Austria, whose Emperor, finding himself deserted by his principal supporters, resigned in 1806 the Imperial dignity.\* Thus, one by one, "the lights" of the imperio-papal dominion were extinguished, and the outpouring of this vial upon the throne of the beast, was followed by the "darkening of his kingdom."

*"And they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the name of God, and repented not,"* &c. This is strong language; too strong, it may perhaps seem to some persons, to be applicable to the followers of the Papacy under the chastisements inflicted upon them by the French armies. It will be found, however, upon examination, to have been fully verified. To "gnaw the tongue for pain," is a figurative mode of expressing the impotent rage of despair. Unable to retaliate upon his tormentors, a man vents his hatred and rage upon himself and gnaws his own tongue, thus giving himself bodily pain to relieve his mental anguish. And did not the adherents of the Pope, and the Popish clergy in particular, thus "gnaw their tongues for pain" when they saw the princes who upheld them fall one after another before the victorious troops of Napoleon?—when the shrines were despoiled of their richest treasures, the fairest provinces of the Papacy laid waste, and the roar of the Infidel-republican artillery was heard at the gates of Rome itself?—when the sacred blood (as was pretended) of their patron saint was made to flow, by the threat that if it did not flow within twenty-four hours the city would be bombarded? †—

\* See, for the particulars here related, Sir Walter Scott's "Life of Napoleon," Alison's "History of Europe," and Botta's "Storia d'Italia."

† The story is, that whereas at a certain festival the blood of the saint, which was kept in a vial, was accustomed to flow; upon this not taking

when even their images shed tears,\* as they affirmed, at the impious sacrileges committed by the invaders, and priests in despair came with halters about their necks begging to be led at once to the gallows? That such events as these must have filled them with madness we know; but what could they do? They could but look on in despair, and “gnaw their tongues.”

And did they repent? No; to this hour they have not repented. They continue still to blaspheme the name of God and to do the same deeds. Do we not still hear of weeping Madonnas and images that move their eyes? And will any man affirm that the priests who manage these things believe them? And if they do not believe them, what are they but daring hypocrites who, under the mask of religion, deceive the people and dishonour God. Does not the Pope still claim to be the “ruler of the universal Church?” Does he not to this hour affirm that this universal sovereignty was committed to him by Jesus Christ, and does he not blasphemously style himself his vicar upon earth? † And whilst “the prophets thus prophesy

place as usual, the priests affirmed that the cessation of the miracle was owing to the presence of the French armies, and that the blood would remain stagnant until they were withdrawn. When the French General heard of this, he sent a message to the effect above stated; upon the receipt of which the blood began instantly to flow.

\* The priests had an image of the Virgin Mary at this place (Ancona), which they exhibited to the people in the act of shedding tears, the more to stimulate them against the impious republicans. On entering the place, the French were amused with discovering that the Madonna’s tears were a string of glass beads FLOWING BY CLOCKWORK within a shrine which the worshippers were too respectful to approach very nearly.”—*Family Library—Napoleon*, vol. i., 91.

† See, for example, the commencement of the last Apostolical Letter of Pius the IXth. “THE POWER OF RULING THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH, committed by our Lord Jesus Christ to the Roman Pontiff, in the person

falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means," do not "the people love to have it so?" What effect, then, have all the evils inflicted upon Papal Christendom by the noisome sore of French infidelity, and the scorching heat of French artillery, had, but that of hardening them in their sins?

SIXTH VIAL. THE DRYING UP OF THE EUPHRATES.

Ver. 12. "*And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates,*" &c.—Before entering upon the exposition of this vial, let me request the reader to bear in mind that St. John actually *saw* what he here describes. It was not with him as with us, who merely *read* the apostle's narrative of the vision, and who are apt to imagine in consequence that he saw no more than we do; and that he is, therefore, rather writing a prophetic allegory than giving an account of a symbolic drama which was acted before his eyes. It was not, I say, thus with the apostle. He is not writing, like Bunyan, an allegory of his own imagining, but he is describing scenes which really passed before him in vision, "falling into a trance, but having his eyes open." Consequently, upon the effusion of this sixth vial, he *saw* the river Euphrates, that great river which, rising to the south of the Euxine, had overflowed its banks, and forsaking its natural channel, had shot its waters across the Sea of Marmora, until they reached even to the Danube: he saw, I say, the waters of this great river gradually

of St. Peter," &c. Have we not here falsehood and blasphemy combined? Does the Pope really believe in his heart that the power of ruling the universal Church was committed by Christ to the *Roman Pontiff* in the person of St. Peter?

dried up, and its channel left bare; so that what had hitherto been an impassable watery barrier to the intercourse of the nations on either side, became easy of access, and men might pass over dry shod. This was what St. John saw. And what then might these things mean? Taking the Euphrates to be the symbol, as it undoubtedly is, of an empire, there cannot, I imagine, be a shadow of a doubt as to what empire it represents. In fact, there is an almost universal agreement among commentators upon this point. An hundred and fifty years ago Mede wrote thus: "What then shall we say that this Euphrates, whose waters are to be dried up, is? It is, in my opinion, the Ottoman Empire, which will then (*i. e.*, just previously to the drying up of its waters) be the only barrier to these new enemies from the East, and the defence of the beast on that side." ("Mede's Works," fol., p. 529.)

About the same period Fleming also writes to the same effect, as follows: "The sixth vial will be poured out on the Mahommedan Antichrist, as the former was on the Papacy; and seeing the sixth trumpet brought the Turks from beyond Euphrates, *from the crossing which river they date their rise*, this sixth vial dries up their waves and exhausts their power, as the means and way to prepare and dispose the Eastern kings and kingdoms to renounce their Heathenish and Mohammedan errors, in order to their receiving and embracing Christianity." ("Rise and Fall of the Papacy," p. 54. Johnstone, Edin., 1846.)

Now, when it is considered, that at the time these writers lived, the Turkish Empire was in the height of its power, and showed no symptoms of decay,

it must be admitted that their speaking so decidedly as to its removal out of the way being symbolized by the drying up of the waters of the Euphrates, is no slight proof that this application of the prophecy, the fulfilment of which we are now witnessing, is correct, and not a mere arbitrary assumption, founded rather on a fancied agreement between it and passing events, than on any intrinsic evidence derived from the prophecy itself. But, indeed, the grounds for this application and interpretation of the symbol are clear and satisfactory. For the Babylon of the Revelation is not only the *city* of Rome, but it is the revived Western Roman Empire. (See ver. 19 of this chapter.) And as, then, the Euphrates ran through the ancient Babylon, thus forming a boundary on either side, so must that Empire of which it is the symbol, be some Empire bordering upon the territories occupied by ancient Rome.\* And what Empire can this be but that of the Ottomans or Turks? They, as we have seen, were the four angels bound on the river Euphrates; and the loosing of them was, in fact, only expressing by a different metaphor the same thing as would have been signified by that river's overflowing its banks. Nor is this application of the emblem a mere modern conjecture; it is as old as Isaiah,

\* This view of the meaning of the symbol was taken by Roman Catholic writers, and seems to have been almost proverbial, three hundred years ago. For in a poem by Fracastoro, written in honour of Leo the Xth, we find these lines:—

“ Now greatly just, he rushes on to arms,  
As patriot ardour or religion warms;  
BACK TOWARDS HIS SOURCE EUPHRATES ROLLS HIS TIDES,  
And Nile his head in secret caverns hides.”

—Quoted in *Roscoe's Life of Leo X.*, vol. ii., c. xvii.

Euphrates is here the Turkish Empire, as the Nile means Egypt.

who, in foretelling the invasion of Judæa by the Assyrians, makes the Euphrates the symbol of that people and their king. "Now, therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of THE RIVER, strong and many, even the King of Assyria; and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks." (Isa. viii. 7.) The bearing of these words of Isaiah on the passage under consideration is obvious, and they appear to me to fix its meaning beyond dispute.

The great river Euphrates is, then, the Ottoman Empire, which, rising like a small stream in the thirteenth century, flowed onwards and onwards, still deepening and widening in its course, until at length it overwhelmed the Eastern Empire of the Cæsars, and nearly swept away all vestiges of Christianity, proving thus an almost insuperable barrier to the progress of the Gospel in that direction.

But if the Euphrates be the symbol of the Turkish Empire, the drying up of its waters can signify nothing else but the gradual diminution of its internal resources, and the contraction of its territorial limits; the waters in this case being the symbol of the population, and the banks of the river of the boundaries of the Empire.

That this vial thus interpreted is in the course of fulfilment, is abundantly evidenced by the most indisputable facts. It is a matter of notoriety that the population of the Turkish Empire is continually decreasing. The births do not exceed the deaths in the ordinary course of nature; whilst a variety of causes combine to make the number of deaths *out* of the ordinary course far greater than in other

countries. In proof of the correctness of these statements the following may suffice:—

“That the human race in Turkey does really fade away, and perish beneath the eye of the observer,” says Mr. Hartley, “may be further evidenced by the circumstance that Constantinople is supposed to have diminished in population by 300,000, since the year 1812.” (“Researches in Greece and the Levant,” p. 9.)

The same writer states, that “recently a large Mahomedan population was diffused throughout the Morea: they filled its towns and its villages, and were even residing in the open country. Now, the whole of that population has been swept away from the surface of the soil.” (Ibid, p. 17.)

“Within the last twenty years,” says Mr. Walsh, “Constantinople has lost one half of its population. It will be considered no exaggeration to say that within the period mentioned, from *three to four hundred thousand* persons have been prematurely swept away in one city of Europe, by causes which were not operating in any other—conflagration, pestilence, and civil commotion.” (Dr. Keith’s “Signs of the Times.”)

The evidences of the diminution of the territorial extent of Turkey are still more conclusive. In 1822 the Greeks declared themselves free, and in 1829 their independence was acknowledged, and thus Greece was severed from the Ottoman Empire.

In 1827, the battle of Navarino was fought, in which the Turkish fleets were destroyed, and the command of the sea in those parts taken from them.

In 1828, Russia declared war against Turkey, and, after a succession of victories, obtained the cession of Moldavia and Wallachia, whilst at the same time not a

Turk was permitted to reside to the north of the Danube.

In 1829, the French took possession of Algiers, and thus converted a province of Turkey into a French colony.

About the same time Mehemet Ali, the Pacha of Egypt, rebelled against the Sultan, and Egypt also virtually ceased to be a part of the Ottoman dominions. Thus the outspread waters of this mystical Euphrates receded, or rather were driven back in every direction, and obliged to return to their proper channels. And what is the actual condition of Turkey at this moment? It owes its existence to the intervention of England and Russia; by the latter of which powers it is destined, probably, to be one day overthrown.\* It is curious, indeed, to observe how the conjectural language of uninspired politicians of modern times accords with the infallible declarations of ancient prophecy. "The fall of the Ottoman Empire," says M. De Lamartine, "is at hand. Constantinople awaits new decrees of fate. I discern from hence the Russian fleet, *daily pressing near and more near* to the city and the port. The Greeks are returning under the name and in the costume of the Russians; and Providence has marked the day when the last assault made by them upon the walls of Constantinople will reduce that splendid city to a

\* Nothing can be more striking than the change which has taken place of late years in the condition of the two nations. In 1711, Russia seemed to lie at the mercy of the Sultan. The Czar, Peter the Great, surrounded by an army of Turks, was saved by the address and presence of mind of his wife Catharine, who, when he had given himself up in despair, proposed and obtained a treaty of peace on honourable terms. (See Voltaire's "Charles XII.," b. 5.) But now what is Turkey? A prostrate foe lying at the feet of its giant rival, waiting to receive its death wound as soon as may be judged convenient.

mass of flames, smoke, and ruins." ("Pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1832, 1833," vol. iii., p. 16.)

"*That the way of the kings that are from the East might be prepared.*" These words inform us of the design of Providence in the weakening, if not total abolition, of the Ottoman power. It is to prepare the way for the admission into the Church of "the kings from the East." Now the grand question here is, who these "kings from the East" may be. Mede, and most modern expositors consider that they are the Jews, whose conversion and restoration to Palestine they suppose to be thus foretold. And, undoubtedly, the restoration of the Jews to their native land would be greatly facilitated by the removal or subjugation of the Turks. But I cannot find that we have the slightest ground for such an application of the words. The Jews are nowhere in Scripture called by this title, nor can any reason be assigned why they should be so designated. In fact, the expression "from the East," is used with reference to Judæa, which was at the time when the Revelation was given the centre of Christendom, and it cannot, therefore, denote its own inhabitants. On these grounds, I incline to the opinion of Fleming and Archdeacon Woodhouse, who explain "the kings of the East" to mean *the kingdoms* of the East, whose conversion to Christianity they think is here foretold. This interpretation appears to me to be natural and satisfactory. Throughout the Apocalypse kings are put for kingdoms, the person for the thing. (See next chapter.) But if this be the meaning here, it is clear that "the kings from the East" will signify the eastern nations and their rulers. And who that looks around upon the state of those nations, but must perceive

evident indications of their approaching conversion? India and China have already begun to “stretch out their hands to God;” and I think we may infer from this prophecy that the destruction of the Turkish Empire will be followed by the conversion of the Arabs and Persians, and all the other kingdoms of the East. And viewed in this light, how striking a proof have we here of the Divine inspiration of the Apocalypse? This prophecy assumes that the kingdoms of the east will not be converted to Christianity until towards the end of the present dispensation, thereby implying that the kingdoms of the West will have been previously converted. And what are the facts of the case? Whilst the Gospel has diffused its light steadily and widely in the western hemisphere, reaching even to the most distant coasts of America, it has not only not spread to an equal extent in the eastern world, but even in those countries where its light once shone brightest it has been extinguished, and, until very recently, all attempts for the conversion of the nations of the East have failed. What but the prescience of him to whom “all his works are known from the beginning of the world” could have foreseen these things?

#### THE THREE FROG-LIKE SPIRITS.

Ver. 13. “*And I saw three unclean spirits, like frogs,*” &c.—The going forth of these three unclean spirits is manifestly contemporaneous with the drying up of the Euphrates; and if, therefore, the interpretation above given of the sixth vial be correct, these three unclean spirits must at this very hour be engaged in the execution of their mysterious and hateful mission. This consideration invests the prophecy now before us with

peculiar interest. We are living in momentous times. The world is upon the eve of a contest and convulsion such as has never yet been witnessed. We must take our part in that contest; we must be prepared for that convulsion. It behoves us, therefore, to study the prophetic announcements God in mercy has given us in relation to these things, that that day may not come upon us unawares, but that like good and faithful servants we may be found fulfilling the respective tasks assigned us. Let us, then, enter upon the consideration of this deeply interesting subject with that solemn earnestness which its importance calls for.

These three unclean spirits go forth from the mouth of the Dragon, and the Beast, and the False Prophet. Not *one* spirit only from the mouth of each, but an immense multitude of three classes of unclean spirits; one class from the mouth of the dragon, another class from the mouth of the beast, and so on.

Now the first point to which I would direct attention here is, the sudden and somewhat abrupt introduction of the designation, the FALSE PROPHET. No mention has been previously made of such a person, at least under this title; yet the use of the definite article, in connexion too with the dragon and the beast, implies that this is not the first time he has been spoken of in this book. Where then are we to look for him? A comparison of chapter xiii. 11—14, with chapter xix. 20, will enable us at once to answer this question. "And I beheld," says the apostle, "another beast coming up out of the earth . . . and he *deceiveth* them that dwell on the earth *by means of those miracles* which he had power to do *in the sight of the beast.*" But in chapter xix. we read, "And the beast was taken and

with him the FALSE PROPHET that *wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them* that had the mark of the beast." Hence it is obvious that there is some relationship between the beast from the earth of chapter xiii. and the false prophet; and, in fact, that if they are not absolutely identical, (as I do not think they are,) they symbolize, in some respects, one and the same thing. But it has been shown that the beast from the earth represents the Papacy as an ecclesiastical temporal power, in contradistinction to the purely secular dominion of the emperors. Consequently the false prophet is the Pope, regarded abstractedly, *i. e.*, not as a person, but in his official capacity as the pretended head of the Church, and the infallible teacher of the true doctrine. In this capacity he sustains the character of a prophet, that is, a teacher of religion. But inasmuch as he does not teach the pure, everlasting Gospel of Christ, but a Gospel adulterated and corrupted with human inventions, he is a *false prophet*, and like those of old, proclaims lies in the name of God.\*

Having thus determined who the false prophet is, let us now turn our attention to the dragon and the beast. With regard to the dragon, there can be no demur or difficulty. The dragon is the impersonation of Satan, the old serpent in his undisguised form, the avowed enemy and adversary of God and man. The

\* As an illustration and exemplification, we may take the fifth article in the creed of Pope Pius IV., which says, "I profess that in the mass there is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead." This is an essential article in the doctrine of the Bishop of Rome. But it is an article directly opposed to the great and fundamental truth of the Gospel, namely, that Christ by *one* offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whoever, therefore, teaches such doctrine is a false prophet.

spirit which proceeds out of his mouth can be none other than a spirit of blasphemy and open hostility to Christ and his people. It is a God-denying and Christ-denying spirit; a spirit animated with hellish enmity against the Bible and the God of the Bible; against the Church, and the Sabbath, and all religious ordinances;—against everything, in short, that is not like itself, “earthly, sensual, and devilish.”

But what of the beast? Here, as it appears to me, there is more difficulty. I have already stated my reasons for not acceding to the views of those expositors who identify the beast from the sea with the beast from the abyss. (See chapters xi. and xiii.) But if they are not identical, from the mouth of which of them does this frog-like spirit proceed? In regard to this question, the thoughts which have presented themselves to my own mind are as follows.

I admit, then, that at first sight it seems most natural to suppose that the reference is to the beast from the sea, since it was to him the dragon resigned his seat. But to this hypothesis, it strikes me, there are two objections. The duration of the sea-born beast is limited to forty-two months, or the twelve hundred and sixty years of the sackcloth-prophecy of the witnesses. Now, has not that period already expired? Have not the witnesses ceased to prophesy in sackcloth? And has not the beast, in fact, in that specific form at least in which he rose up out of the sea, ceased to exist? It has, I trust, been satisfactorily shown that he did cease to exist when, in 1806, the head of the holy Roman or Latin Empire, Francis of Austria, publicly renounced the Imperial dignity, and declared the Empire dissolved. (See p. 98.) But if so, then it is

very certain the beast in this place cannot be that from the sea, seeing that at the period when these frog-like spirits are supposed to go forth he would be no longer in existence.

Another objection, it seems to me, is this : the false prophet is not so called until he appears associated with the beast and his army in chapter xix. ; but that beast is unquestionably the beast from the abyss, and I think, therefore, we must assume that it is from his mouth, as the associate of the false prophet, that the second class of frog-like spirits proceed, and not from the mouth of the sea-born beast.\*

But this being admitted, what shall we say is the class of spirits specifically symbolized as issuing from the mouth of the beast from the abyss ? The reply we give to this question must, of course, depend upon the view we take of the beast itself. I have already stated my conviction that this beast is the embodiment of the Infidel-democratic principle as exhibited in the French Republic of 1789. (See chap. xi.) This point, however, will be more fully discussed in the next chapter, particularly in the analysis of ver. 10. Assuming for the present that this idea is founded in truth, the class of spirits which proceed from the mouth of the beast is at once determined.

It appears, then, supposing the foregoing views of the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet to be correct, that these three unclean frog-like spirits are the spirit of ATHEISM, the spirit of DEMOCRACY (as opposed to all *restraints of law* both human and Divine), and the spirit of POPERY. And are there, then, any clear indications

\* Of course, if we make the two beasts absolutely identical, this objection does not apply.

that these three spirits have gone forth in our days? With regard to the first and the last there can, I think, be no question. That the spirit of Atheism and the spirit of Popery are at this hour exercising a great and unwonted influence over the minds of mankind, is rather a matter of fact than of opinion.

When we speak of Atheism, we mean Infidelity in general, or the denial of revealed religion. It signifies little what form, or name, this denial may assume. Whether it be called Deism, or Rationalism, or Socialism, essentially it is the same thing. It is the old lie revived, "Yea, hath God said ye shall die? Nay; ye shall not die." This is the basis, the very essence, of all Infidelity. And whatever men may pretend, however they may attempt to conceal their denial of a Deity under the specious names of Pantheism or Deism, to deny the truth of his Word, is to deny God himself. If there be but one living and true God, and that God is Jehovah, the God of the Bible, then to deny the Bible to be his Word, or to deny its testimony, is Atheism.

We cannot, then, but see this class of unclean spirits going forth into all the world in the multifarious forms, and under the several names before mentioned.\* Nor

\* Few persons, perhaps, are aware of the extent to which Infidel principles are silently (that is, by the instrumentality of the press) being diffused amongst us. The simple fact that twenty-six Sunday newspapers (besides various blasphemous and immoral publications) are printed in London alone, the sale of which is said to amount to forty-five thousand numbers weekly, speaks volumes. A Sunday newspaper, as its very name implies, must almost necessarily be the vehicle of Infidelity in some form or other. The circulation of Infidel tracts amongst the lower orders is also another powerful engine of evil. The character of some of these tracts is blasphemous beyond conception. Take the following specimens: "It is most monstrous blasphemy to attribute to the all-wise Creator of this glorious universe the foolish and obscure records of a small, remote,

is their operation confined to Christendom and European nations. It appears, from authentic accounts, that the same spirit is at work amongst the population of India, and I think we may discern indications of a similar agency in operation in China. The inhabitants of the Heathen countries where Christianity is preached, are made to see the absurdities of their own religion, but instead of becoming Christians, they too many of them become Infidels. There is a manifest tendency in mankind to pass from the extreme of superstition to the extreme of indifference, and from believing any and all religions to believe in no religion at all. This is that spirit of Atheism now abroad, and which is the more dangerous because it often cloaks its real character under the specious covering of philanthropy and liberal Christianity.\*

As to Popery, it surely needs no reference to written statements and testimonies to prove that it is sending

and barbarous eastern tribe." "Religion of all kinds is hurtful to the happiness of most amongst those who entertain it." "When we consider the vice, crime, and misery that prevail in the world, the idea of an intelligent Creator is chimerical!" (From tracts circulated in Islington.)

\* I allude particularly to the system of the German Neologists, which, as far as it is intelligible, appears to be nothing more or less than a refined and subtle Atheism. It is well described by one of their own countrymen in the following striking apostrophe: "Is the god of the Bible-hating and froward generation of the present day—is the god of most of our philosophers and poets, of our politicians and journalists, of very many of our seminaries and universities, of our modern scientific institutions—is the god of our polished circles and fashionable assemblies,—is such a god any better, anything more real, than the deity of Baal of old? What mean those fashionable expressions, 'heaven,' 'fortune,' &c.? And is this indeed the god of our rationality, and so many of our literary men and illuminated dreamers? It is; and the belief of no better a god than this spreads from them through all ranks; and no marvel; for a god such as this, that does not concern himself about the affairs of men, is the very thing they want."—*Krummacher's Elijah*, p. 82. R. T. Soc. Ed.

forth its emissaries into all parts of the earth to disseminate its peculiar tenets, and gather in members into the bosom of the Romish Church. Recent events and transactions in our own country are sufficient evidence of this as far as we are concerned, and the statistics of our colonies, and of other countries, prove that the agents of the Papacy are as actively engaged in every other part of the world as they are in England. Where are they not to be found? Where is the nation upon earth of any importance, amongst whom some of these distinctly-marked representatives of the false prophet are not to be met with? We see them with their long robes, close-cut hair, and sombre impenetrable countenances, walking our own streets. We hear or read of them in the crowded cities of Hindostan, and in the wilds of Africa; in North America and China; in Australia, New Zealand, and the islands of the Pacific. Everywhere are these emissaries of Rome at work,—and that in a specific and peculiar character. Not as the ministers of Christ—not as evangelists—not as the messengers of God, proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation in the name of Jesus. It is not in any of these characters they appear amongst us. But as the servants of the Pope, and the opponents of Evangelical religion\*—as the upholders and defenders of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, of which the Bishop of Rome is, as they say, the divinely-constituted ruler and head;—this is the character under which they

\* It is a remarkable and striking fact, that the Papists unite with the Heathen, just as the Jews did of old (see Acts xiv. 19), in opposing the Gospel. In proof of this, I adduce the following extract from the conclusion of the Report of the Church Missionary Society for 1851: “In the missionary field Popery appears in juxta-position with Pagan idolatry, and the *close alliance* and *kindred sympathy* between the two is every-

appear. They preach under the authority, and for the honour, of the Roman Pontiff. They are his mouth, and he speaks by them; and however they may attempt to deceive us by the occasional introduction of the name of the Saviour, their real objects are the establishment of the universality of the Romish Church, the exclusive authority of the Romish priesthood, and the spiritual supremacy of the Roman Pontiff. These, therefore, are the unclean spirits which proceed out of the mouth of the false prophet.

In regard, then, to the spirits of Atheism and of Popery, the case is clear. We see them with our own eyes, flitting about everywhere in their proper, undisguised, and unmistakable forms. But is the case less clear as regards the democratical Spirit? Has not that also gone forth within the last half-century in, as it were, a palpable, tangible shape? And that, too, as the avowed and determined opponent of Christ and the Gospel? Where do we meet with a Chartist or a Radical who is not also an Infidel? Republicans, we know, there have been in all ages, nor would it, perhaps, be easy to prove that there is any necessary and essential antagonism between Democracy, abstractedly considered, and Christianity; but that the principle of modern Democracy, as held and disseminated by modern Chartists and Socialists, is opposed to Evangelical truth, there cannot surely be the shadow of a doubt. And how widely that principle is being diffused through-

where apparent. In South India is witnessed the interchange of idol cars between Romanists and Hindus for their religious processions; and the train of attendants is made up of both parties. In China, the symbols of the Christian name are mingled with the idol-dragon on the so-called Christian altar. But more frequently is this alliance manifested in *their united persecution of the Gospel, and of all who embrace it.*"

out Europe, and especially the Papal kingdoms, at this moment, is matter of too great notoriety to require any laboured proof. According to the testimony of the most keen-sighted and experienced politicians, the prevalence of the democratical (I would say, antichristian democratical) spirit is the characteristic feature of the day. In confirmation of this statement, I adduce the words of two of the once leading men in France: "Nations, like individuals," says M. Lamartine, "have different ages. The principles which rule have different phases. Monarchical, aristocratical, constitutional, republican governments, are the expression of these different degrees of the maturity of the genius of nations. They demand more liberty as fast as they feel themselves capable of supporting more; they demand more *equality and democracy* in proportion as they are inspired by more justice and love for the people."\*

Such were the sentiments expressed by the most distinguished man of the Revolution of 1848. Let us now hear the words of another distinguished man belonging to the same period—M. Guizot. After explaining at some length the causes which have led to the empire which the term democracy has acquired over the public mind in France, the author closes his first chapter with the following reflections: "Such being the fact, the empire of the WORD DEMOCRACY is not to be regarded as a transitory or local accident. It is the development—others would say, the explosion—of all the elements of human nature throughout all the ranks and all the depths of society, and, consequently, the open, general, continuous, inevitable struggle of its good and evil instincts, of its virtues and its vices,

\* Manifesto of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1848.

whether to improve or to corrupt, to raise or to abase, to create or to destroy.”\*

Thus we have the concurrent testimony of these two eminent men as to the fact of the new and unparalleled power which the democratic principle—by which, if we would call things by their right names, I think we must understand a spirit of lawlessness and insubordination—has acquired of late years in France. And it is surely not a little remarkable that the latter writer should speak of it as the power of a word. It would seem almost as if he had the Apocalyptic image in his mind, and were illustrating the issuing of the frog-like spirit from the *mouth* of the beast. Let it be observed, also, that it is in France that this word originates, and is supposed to have such magic power. Yet its influence is not to be confined to that country. The events of the last four years have shown that the democratic, anarchical principle, is widely spread and deeply rooted throughout Europe, not excepting our own country; and although its more violent actings have for the present been suppressed, it is not for a moment to be supposed that it is altogether extirpated and destroyed.

Such, then, as it appears to me, is the explanation we must give of these unclean, frog-like spirits. But why are they likened to frogs? Many reasons might be assigned for the selection of this unsightly symbol, but perhaps the three points of resemblance principally intended are these: 1st, The places where they live and procreate; 2dly, Their numbers; and, 3dly, The time of their coming forth.

Frogs are bred in stagnant waters: and so Infidelity,

\* Guizot on Democracy.

to use the metaphor of the writer before quoted, is “a noxious spawn, bred in the stagnant marshes of corrupt Christianity.” And it is from the same *stagnant marshes* that the emissaries of Rome issue. Romish doctrine would never have found so numerous a body of advocates actuated by one spirit, as the Jesuits,\* for example, had not the living waters which spring from the Scriptures of truth ceased to flow. Those waters were stopped and thrown back by the opposing current of human tradition, and thus the Church becoming, in a manner, a stagnant marsh, brought forth plentifully these unclean frog-like spirits of Infidelity and corrupted Christianity.

Again, frogs are exceedingly prolific. When they find a suitable locality, and are suffered to remain undisturbed, they multiply to an incredible extent. And is there not reason to fear that these three unclean spirits are casting their “noxious spawn” throughout the length and breadth of the earth at this very hour, and that already the stagnant waters are filled with their loathsome progeny coming into life?

Lastly, the time when frogs move about and croak

\* Vitringa thinks that the Jesuits are specifically and exclusively meant by these unclean spirits. “Any one,” says he, “accustomed to judge of things, not by the outward appearance, but according to truth, may see a strong resemblance between these spiritual frogs (*Ranas spirituales*) and seducing monks, the servants of the beast, and those especially who have sprung up in these last times of the Church,—that is, the followers of Loyola. For it is clear, that both they themselves (*i.e.*, Loyola and Francis Xavier) and their first followers were involved in detestable error and superstition, and that their disciples grew into an immense multitude, and filled all *the marshes of the Romish Church*, and that they diffused their pestiferous doctrines, which even Romanists themselves shrink from with horror through the whole of Europe, and even carried them to the utmost bounds of the earth, to the great dishonour of the Christian name.”—*Com. on Apoc.*, p. 725.

is during the darkness of night. As soon as the sun arises they are silent, and flee away and hide themselves. And thus also it is with the upholders and disseminators of falsehood in every form. The Infidel, the Socialist, the Jesuit, cannot stand before the light of the Sun of Righteousness. They dare not encounter a scripturally-enlightened people. But it is when the light of Scripture is withdrawn, or when, if it shines in a land, the people do not open their eyes to it, that they have power, and coming forth inflated with an absurd idea of their own importance, fill the air with the sound of their vain jangling.

Thus, then, may the emissaries of philosophic Atheism, and Popish superstition, and lawless democracy, be compared to frog-like, unclean spirits. And viewed in this light, we may entertain a hope that as long as the Bible is freely circulated amongst us, and scriptural truth made the foundation of the education given to the people at large, we shall not, as a nation, sink down into that stagnant state of moral corruption which engenders these unclean spirits and favours their growth and increase.

“*The spirits of demons doing signs.*”—The origin of Infidelity and of Jesuitism\* is one and the same. Both are alike opposed to the truth of God; although so different apparently in outward form, both equally spring from hatred of the truth, being the offspring of him who

\* The spirit of Romanism and the spirit of Jesuitism are identical. Yet there may be Romanists, like Paschal, who, as was before observed, are not actuated by a Jesuitical spirit. These men see and admit the evils of Jesuitism as strongly as any Protestant, although they do not see the evils of Romanism. The fact is, they are not essentially Romanists, and as I would willingly except such men, I should prefer always, if it could be done without causing misapprehension, calling the system peculiarly Romish,—*Jesuitism* rather than Romanism.

was a liar from the beginning and is the father of every lie. Hence the men who are actuated by a Jesuitical spirit, as well as those who are actuated by an Infidel spirit, are the embodiment of a dæmoniacal influence, and may, therefore, rightly be called “the spirits of dæmons.”

That the Romish priests “do signs,”—that is, pretend to perform miracles (for that the pretence, and not the actual doing of miracles, is meant is obvious from the very nature of the case),—that the priests of the Church of Rome, I say, pretend to miraculous powers, is almost too much a matter of notoriety to require specific proofs. Dr. Milner, one of the apparently most candid and impartial defenders of Romanism, not only admits the fact, but glories in it. His statement of the case is well deserving of consideration, as showing that the claim to the possession of miraculous powers in the Church of Rome is precisely what it was in ages of the darkest superstition. “The Catholic Church,” says he, “being always the beloved spouse of Christ, and continuing at all times to bring forth children of heroical sanctity, God fails not in this, any more than in past ages, to illustrate her and them by unquestionable MIRACLES. Accordingly in those processes *which are constantly going on* at the Apostolical See for the canonization of new saints, fresh miracles of *a recent date* continue to be proved with the highest degree of evidence.” He then proceeds to adduce, amongst other examples, the following:—“Joseph Lamb, of Eccles, near Manchester, on the 12th of Aug., 1814, fell from a hayrick four yards and a-half high, by which accident the spine of his back appears to have been broken. Certain it is, that he could neither walk nor stand without crutches, down to the 2d of October. On that day, having prevailed upon

his father, who was then a Protestant, to take him in a cart with his wife and two friends to Garswood, near Wigan, where THE HAND OF F. ARROWSMITH, one of the Catholic priests who suffered death at Lancaster for the exercise of his religion in the reign of Charles I., is preserved, and *has often caused wonderful cures*, he procured himself to be conveyed to the altar rails of the chapel, and there to be signed on his back with the sign of the cross by that hand, when, feeling *a particular sensation and total change in himself*, as he expressed it, he exclaimed to his wife, ‘*Mary, I can walk!*’ This he did without any help whatever, walking first into an adjoining room, and thence to the cart which conveyed him home.”\*

Such are the powers to which the Church of Rome lays claim, and such are the miracles her saints perform. Armed with such incontestable proofs as these (as she affirms) that God is in her of a truth, she sends forth her ministers to bring in new recruits, and to collect her forces for the day of the great battle. It is a subject of deep and solemn interest. That this mustering of antagonistic forces is at this moment going on, that these three unclean spirits are now abroad in the earth busily engaged in carrying on the work assigned them in their respective spheres, what man who knows anything of the social and moral condition of Europe and the world at large can doubt? In corroboration of these views I will now adduce the sentiments of a philosophic historian and a Christian statesman, and perhaps I cannot better

\* Milner’s “End of Religious Controversy,” p. 248, Sm. Ed. Derby, 1844. Dr. Milner was a Roman Catholic Bishop, and wrote the above work in 1816. In the same place he relates as a fact *the restoration of the amputated breast* of a woman who was at the point of death from a cancer, at the intercession of St. Alfonso Liguori.

conclude this subject than in the words of the latter :—  
 “To what this state of things may lead the future alone can show. Were we to look only at the efforts of the hierarchical party and of its opponents, we should be led to fear that A DEADLY WAR was ready to burst out between them afresh, *to convulse* the world and to revive the old animosities in all their bitterness.” Such are the sentiments respecting the coming future expressed by Ranké towards the close of his “History of the Popes.” The statesman to whom I refer is Lord Shaftesbury (better known as Lord Ashley), who, on March 18, 1851, thus addressed the House of Commons :—“A struggle is now begun which the youngest man in this House will not live to see terminated. It is the quiet though, perhaps, final conflict of antagonistic principles. Can any one doubt it? Look at the state of the Continent and of the great powers. Everywhere there is preparation for a *religious war*. This realm of England may stand alone, but it will not give way by submission, no, not for an hour. What may be the issue to the empire, no man can foretel; but for ourselves, happen what may, we will, by God’s blessing, stand immovably on our immortal faith, which we have neither the right nor the disposition to surrender.”

THE CAUTION.—CHRIST COMES AS A THIEF.

Ver. 15. “*Behold I come as a thief,*” &c.—There is something peculiarly solemn and awakening in the manner in which this hortatory caution is introduced. It comes in as a parenthesis uttered by Christ himself between the going forth of the frog-like spirits to the kings of the earth, and the actual assembling of the combatants. But if our view of the prophecy be correct,

these frog-like spirits are even now abroad, and we are living at that very point of time to which the parenthesis belongs. *We* are the men to whom this caution is addressed. How solemn the thought! And yet how joyful and full of glorious hope! The coming of Christ is probably not far distant; that glorious advent when we shall see him as he is;—when he shall descend from heaven with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God (1 Thess. iv.); and he “will change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Phil. iii. 21); and so shall we be for ever with him. But this coming will take the men of this world by surprise; it will be like the coming of a thief, and when they are saying, “Peace and safety,” this stupendous manifestation of the glory of the crucified Nazarene will burst upon them! (1 Thess. v. 2.) And will this coming, then, be a mere figurative spiritual coming—nothing more, in fact, than the gradual though universal prevalence of Christianity all over the world, just as we now see it in those countries which are nominally Christian? I cannot think it. Is there anything terrible in such an idea even to the most irreligious? Supposing that our Missionary and Bible Societies, by the instrumentality now employed, should at length succeed, under God’s blessing, in evangelizing the whole earth, would such a consummation be like the coming of a thief in the night? Would it be attended with the “sudden destruction” of the adversaries of the truth? (Compare Matt. xxiv. 43, 44; 2 Thess. i. 7, 8; 2 Pet. iii.)

These considerations appear to me almost conclusive in regard to that much contested question, the premillennial advent of Christ. It is certain that the millennium will follow immediately *after*, not *precede*, the

events of the seventh vial. But this cautionary announcement belongs to the *sixth* vial, or, at least, it comes in between it and the seventh vial. Is it then to be supposed for a moment, that the thousand years' reign will, notwithstanding, intervene between the fulfilment of the seventh vial and the thief-like coming here announced? Is not this caution obviously intended to awaken in our minds a sense of the nearness of that coming when the events of the sixth vial shall be accomplished, and thus to set us on the watch that we may be prepared to meet the Lord when he comes? That, as St. Peter expresses it, we may be "looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God?" All these cautions, warnings, and exhortations, would surely be nugatory and superfluous, were that "blessed hope and glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ," of which we read so much in the New Testament, nothing more, as some affirm, than a figurative spiritual advent. (See c. xx.)

"*Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments,*" &c.—The preceding clause reminds us of the nearness of the Saviour's advent; this intimates a season of peculiar danger about the same period to his professed disciples. That danger is, lest their garments should be taken from them, or be soiled, and they "should walk naked, and their shame appear." Now "the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." (Chap. xix. 8.) The garments of the believer, wherewith his soul is clothed, and in which he hopes to appear in the presence of God without fear, are the imputed righteousness of Christ, and the imparted holiness of the Spirit. Deprived of these, he is naked and miserable. (Comp. chap. iii. 17.) "All his righteousnesses are filthy rags." He is spiritually without clothing, and unfit to appear before

Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. To keep our garments, therefore, is to keep fast hold by faith of Christ's righteousness, and to keep ourselves also unspotted from the pollutions of the world. It is to maintain the faith of the Gospel with the lips, and the holiness of the Gospel in the life. It is to be witnesses for Christ in the midst of much sin, without being contaminated by the moral pollution with which we may be surrounded. And is not this caution peculiarly needed at the present period? Yes; if ever there was a time when it behoved the Christian to be especially on his guard, it is the present. The spirit of Infidelity, of false Christianity, of Latitudinarian indifference, and Antinomian profession is widely spread amongst us. It is almost impossible to avoid being infected in some degree by the prevalence of these evils. The doctrine of imputed righteousness is explained away, and that holiness, the fruit of the Spirit, "without which no man shall see the Lord," has insensibly melted away into worldly conformity. Christians are no longer a peculiar people. There is no longer a broad line of demarcation and separation between the Church and the world; between the spiritually-minded and the carnally-minded. But as it was in the days before the flood, "the sons of God mingled indiscriminately with the children of men," so it is now. Well, then, does it become every earnest Christian to "watch and be sober." Whilst we may hope that as the world and the Church become more and more amalgamated together, the latter will impart of its purifying salt to the former; there is much greater danger, it is to be feared, lest the world should communicate the taint of its corrupt leaven to the Church, and all the peculiarities of Christian doctrine and Christian morality

be destroyed. The season of ease and security is never the season of safety. And as we live in such a season, we stand in need of peculiar watchfulness. The attentive reader cannot, indeed, fail to observe a remarkable correspondence between the language here used and that addressed to the Church of Laodicea. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire and *white raiment that thou mayest be clothed*, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Thus does the Lord address the Laodicean Church; and then he immediately adds, "Behold, I stand at the door." So here, we have the announcement, "Behold, I come quickly," followed by the beatification, "Blessed is he that keepeth his garments," &c. These correspondences in the subject-matter of the two addresses point to a correspondence also in respect of time, and show that both belong to the same period.

Ver. 16. "*And they gathered them together,*" &c.—The Authorized Version in this place, as was before remarked, is unquestionably incorrect. The proper translation is, not "*he gathered,*" but "*they (i.e., the unclean spirits) gathered them.*"

Much has been written on the subject of the name *Armageddon* (or, rather, *Harmageddon*),\* and many conjectures have been hazarded as to the particular spot intended. But since there is not, and never has been, any place called by this name, it is evident that it has respect rather to the event itself, than to its locality. *Harmageddon* means, *Mount of Manifestation*, and the

\* It is a Hebrew name compounded of two words *הר*, a *mountain*, and *מגידון*, which latter word, although not found in the Old Testament, signifies, I imagine, *manifestation*, being derived from *הגיד*, *he revealed*, or *announced*, as *Abaddon* is derived from *אבד*, *he destroyed*.

import therefore of the name here seems to be this, that when the enemies of Christ and his people shall be gathered together as one band intent upon their destruction, and fully determined in all the confidence of victory "to root out the remembrance of them from the earth," he will show himself visibly to them to their utter amazement and confusion, and then accomplish on *them* that destruction which they had thought to inflict upon his Church. The battle of Armageddon, therefore, will probably be a conflict in which the Lord Jesus himself will be personally engaged. I say *probably*, because I think it would be presumptuous to speak with dogmatic positiveness in such a case. The *manifestation* may not be a personal manifestation, although I am inclined to think it will. But whether it will be personal or not, this we know, that the conflict will not be with the weapons of man's warfare, nor the result doubtful. "The kings of the earth may set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed ones," but "he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision. Then will he break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (See more on this subject chap. xix. 17—21.)

THE SEVENTH VIAL.—XVI. 17—21.

"*And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air,*" &c.

If we have hitherto proceeded upon a right principle of interpretation, the effusion of this vial must have already commenced; or if it has not commenced already, it cannot be far distant. I am inclined to think that its effusion has commenced, and that we are at this moment

witnessing its accomplishment. This consideration, whilst it invests this part of the revelation with additional interest, makes the business of the expositor the more difficult. It is seldom that contemporary interpretations of prophecy prove correct. The grasp of prophecy is grand and comprehensive. It seizes upon prominent, analogous events, distant from each other, it may be, in point of time, and makes one of them. And their oneness and correspondence is perceived when viewed from a distance, although when seen separately and close at hand, this correspondence may not be discernible. Hence the difficulty of interpreting prophecies which relate to events of our own times. We stand, if I may so say, too near the picture to form a correct idea of it. We see, as it were, but one object in the landscape, and although we may perceive an exact resemblance between that one object and the thing it represents, to judge of the picture as a whole, we must stand farther off, and take a more comprehensive view. In interpreting this seventh vial I would wish to keep in view the principle just laid down, and I would ask the reader to do the same. Let it be borne in mind, that if the events of this vial are now in progress (1852), we can only see them, as I may say, one at a time; and it is impossible, therefore, for us at present to view the prophecy, and the whole of its historical accomplishment, at one glance.

The first thing that deserves notice is the element in the symbolic universe affected by this vial. It is poured out into THE AIR. Now the idea which this circumstance at once conveys, as regards the operation of this vial, is that of *universality*. The air surrounds the whole mystical city, and is breathed by every inhabitant alike;

the effects of this vial therefore will be co-extensive with the boundaries of the city, or empire of the beast, every part of which will be involved in the judgments it announces.

2. Upon the effusion of this vial there came a great voice out of the temple in heaven from the throne, saying, "IT IS DONE," and there followed "voices, and thunders, and lightnings." This vial, therefore, completes the prophetic narrative. In it, the mystery, the *hidden purpose*, of God is finished. The voice from the throne, proclaiming, "It is done," implies, that under this vial, everything is comprehended which is to take place previously to the coming of Christ and the establishment of his kingdom. I see not what other meaning can be ascribed to this remarkable announcement. And this is, therefore, a point deserving the attentive consideration of those persons who are disposed to doubt concerning the pre-millennial personal advent of Christ. The "*It is done*," (γεγονε) must have reference to some great event, or epoch, the completion of which is thus announced. Now, in the Acts (c. iii. 19), we find St. Peter addressing his Jewish brethren thus: "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, and the times of refreshing may come\* from the presence of the Lord; and he may send Jesus Christ, who was before preached unto you, whom the heavens must receive until the time of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all

\* This translation is in exact accordance with the Greek ὅπως ἂν ἐλθῶσι καιροί. I do not think it necessary to enter into a laboured argument to prove that ὅπως here means *that*, or *in order that*, not *when*. Let any one who disputes it adduce a single instance in which, with the particle ἂν and a verb in the subjunctive, ὅπως has any other meaning.

his holy prophets since the world began." THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS, therefore, by the advent of Christ, is the completion of all the prophecies. This, consequently, is the epoch to which these words have reference. When the contents of the seventh vial shall be fully poured out, then will the wrath of God against this sinful and rebellious earth be exhausted. Then will his tabernacle again be with men, and man, as Adam did in Paradise, will again hold familiar converse with his Maker. Then will "sinners be consumed out of the earth, and the ungodly come to an end." (Ps. civ. 35.) This blessed consummation, however, so full of glorious promise, will not take place immediately. The announcement, "It is done," like the song on the sounding of the seventh trumpet, is anticipatory. It looks to the end, and leaping over the intervening judgments under this vial, speaks of the events belonging to it as accomplished as soon as its contents are poured out. But the "voices, thunders, and lightnings," show that judgments yet remain to be executed. They are the harbingers of God's wrath, and imply that this vial, like its predecessors, will bring with it mourning and woe to the members of a corrupt Church, and the inhabitants of nominal Christendom.

"*And there was a great earthquake,*" &c.—In a pamphlet published in 1848, I endeavoured to show that the Revolution which took place that year in France was the first shock of the earthquake here foretold. I am still inclined to be of the same opinion. It does not follow, because the commotion occasioned amongst the nations of Europe by that great political earthquake has in some degree subsided, that the

earthquake is at an end. It often happens in natural earthquakes, that the last great and most destructive shock is preceded by movements and tremblings of a less terrific character. Days sometimes intervene between the first indications of the approach of the awful visitation and its arrival. So it may be in the present instance. I cannot, indeed, but regard the events which took place in France in 1848 as the precursors of a greater revolution in the political and social aspect of Europe than has ever yet been witnessed. For this earthquake is to be "such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great." Now, it would be a manifest exaggeration to affirm that the Revolution of 1848 answers to this description. It was not greater than that of 1789. In fact, taken in all its bearings, it was not equal in importance with that first great revolution. Either, therefore, that great political convulsion, the effect of which was felt throughout the Continent,—for it made all Europe heave convulsively and tremble,—was only the first shock of this mighty earthquake, or its heavings have not yet commenced. If that *were* the *first shock*, the *second* probably will not be long in coming. But as days are reckoned for years in this mystical book, it may be yet some time before that second shock is felt. When it does come, it will be attended probably with a shaking of the Papal kingdoms such as the world has not yet seen. What may be the precise nature of the changes and accompanying events which will then take place, no man can say; their general character is, however, exhibited in the prophecy. They are, it will be

observed, five in number: 1. The division of the great city into three parts; 2. The fall of the cities of the Gentiles; 3. The judgment of Babylon; 4. The disappearance of the islands and mountains; 5. The descent of hail-stones of unexampled size. Whether these events will occur exactly in the same order in which they are here placed, may admit of doubt. They may be all nearly contemporaneous, or the order may be reversed, and the last may be the first, and the forerunner of the rest. We will consider them, however, in the order in which they stand.

1. *The division of the great city.*—The great city, it must be borne in mind, is Papal Christendom in Europe, or that portion of the ancient Roman Empire which acknowledges the spiritual supremacy of the Pope. (See c. xvii.) This “great city” consists at present of the kingdoms and countries contained in France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Austria, and Germany. The division of this city into three parts, would seem to imply, that the several nations composing it will be formed into three great kingdoms, or republics, the lesser which now exist, being swallowed up in the greater. It would be presumptuous to pretend to determine beforehand how this division will be effected, but it seems highly probable that the two leading powers concerned in it will be Austria and France, between whom, as the champions of different religious principles, and different systems of government, there will perhaps be a long and terrific contest. As England formed no part of the Empire of Charlemagne, and as she is, besides, separated geographically from the Continental nations, she will not perhaps be

a party concerned in this tripartite division,\* although whether she will be involved in the conflicts and judgments connected with it will depend, I imagine, entirely upon her maintaining her distinctiveness as a Protestant nation, and not identifying herself in any degree with Rome in her principles and practices. For the "great city" is *Roman Catholic Christendom in Europe*; and if, therefore, we hold fast our Protestant principles, and keep aloof from Rome, we shall not be "partakers of her plagues." But if we unite ourselves with her, and thus become a part and parcel of the great Babylon, destined to drink the cup of his wrath, we shall assuredly partake with her of that cup. We may hope, however, and it is allowable to indulge the pleasing anticipation, that England will *not* ally herself with Rome, but still continue to be, as she has been for the last three hundred years, the defender of Evangelical doctrine, and the upholder of the Protestant cause against all the open and concealed attacks of the Romish Church.

2. "*The cities of the Gentiles fell.*"—As the "great city" is Papal Christendom, "the cities of the Gentiles" must signify, I imagine, Heathen countries or kingdoms. If so, this falling of the cities of the Gentiles is only another way of announcing the destruction of Heathenism, or that "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of the Lord." So that, at the very time

\* Dr. Cumming supposes that the three great leading Powers will be England, France, and Russia. ("Apoc. Sketches," p. 427.) But Russia never formed any part of the "great city," and it is very doubtful whether England, even before the Reformation, ought to be considered as contained within its boundaries.

that a political revolution of unparalleled violence is shaking the kingdoms of Europe, we may look for something like a general conversion of the Heathen nations.

3. “*And Babylon the Great was remembered,*” &c.—“Babylon the Great” is the city of Rome itself (see c. xvii. 5—18), and we must conclude, therefore, that the destruction of Rome—its utter destruction, its annihilation from the face of the earth, after the example of ancient Babylon,—will be one of the accompaniments, or effects, of the great earthquake of the seventh vial. But this subject will be more fully considered in the remarks on chap. xviii., which chapter is only a dramatic enlargement and exposition of this clause of the prophecy.

4. “*And every island fled away,*” &c.—Islands and mountains, as standing out from the land and water and raised above the general level, represent rulers and potentates; kings, princes, and magistrates; their entire disappearance seems to imply the total abolition of all distinctions of ranks and classes, and, consequently, the overthrow of all existing social and political systems, excepting those only which are founded on the chimerical idea lately adopted in France, of *liberty, equality, and fraternity*, in its wildest and most dangerous sense. If this view of the prophecy be correct, all the Papal States of Europe, (for it is to them, I imagine, the prophecy exclusively belongs,) are destined ere long to become republican in their constitution; and perhaps this “fleeing away of the islands,” &c., may be connected with the division of the great city into three parts, in which case the Continental nations will form

themselves into three vast republics, the two great Powers before mentioned taking the lead.\*

It will be remembered, that in chap. vi. 14, we have the same imagery, only there the islands and mountains are merely *moved out of their places*, here they disappear altogether.

5. "*And there fell upon men great hail,*" &c.—Hail is a symbol of the devastations of war proceeding from the north. (See c. viii. 7.) And hence it would seem that the northern nations are destined once more to pour down their semi-barbarous hordes upon the fertile plains of the south of Europe. The enormous size of the hailstones plainly signifies, that this last northern tempest will exceed in violence any that have preceded it, and be more terrific in its results. The immense resources of Russia, with her half a million of cavalry at her command, all united under one head, who is looked upon as a god upon earth,† point to that country as the probable instrument destined ere long to accomplish this part of the prediction. Nor can even the worldly politician fail to see in the existing circumstances of the Russian Empire

\* M. De Lamartine, in his "France and England; or, A Vision of the Future," supposed to be written in 1843, assumes that Spain, France, and Italy, will then constitute a republic, resembling the United States of America, the deputies of which will meet in congress at Marseilles. It is curious to observe how the views of this visionary writer accord with the announcements of prophecy. If the countries above mentioned should ever form one united republic, it is not difficult to foresee which will make up the other two.

† "The Emperor of Russia, if he could feed them, might unite half a million of horsemen."

"The peasant and the soldier are taught always to associate the name of God and of the Emperor; and the soldier, in *the regulation prayers*, is made to call the Emperor, 'Our God upon earth.'"—*Revelations from Russia*, Introduction, pp. 12 and 27.

the gathering of the dark storm which will assuredly one day burst with unexampled fury upon those nations and kingdoms "who blaspheme God and the Lord Jesus Christ," by acknowledging the Roman Pontiff to be his vicar and representative upon earth.

The reader will observe, that the foregoing verses contain only (as in the case of the seventh trumpet) *a programme* of the events of the seventh vial, which are exhibited in detail in the three following chapters, the continuity of the prophetic narrative being first broken off to introduce a graphic representation of the harlot Church sustained by the secular power.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE HARLOT BORNE UPON THE SCARLET-COLOURED BEAST.

IN the preceding chapter mention is made of "great Babylon," and in chap. xiv. 8, an angel is seen flying in the midst of heaven, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city." But although Babylon has thus been twice named, nothing definite has been said respecting it. No clue has been given by which to determine what particular city is thus designated. The apostle, however, would naturally feel great interest on this head. Babylon was a name associated in the mind of a Jew with captivity, servitude, abominable idolatry, and blasphemy, and the fall and destruction of any city, or polity, to which this name could be rightly applied, would therefore involve an era of

much glory and blessedness to the Church. The preceding announcements, then, concerning Babylon must have excited an anxious desire in the mind of St. John to understand the mystery hidden under this name—to know what particular city, or polity, or Church, was intended by this mystical appellation. Nor was he to remain long in ignorance. One of the angels with the vials is sent to give him the desired information, and that, with a minuteness and particularity so exact, as to remove all doubt and obscurity from the subject. Indeed, the vision now about to be presented to the apostle, whether we regard the grandeur and comprehensiveness of the outline, or the minuteness of detail in the filling up, is perhaps one of the most wonderful of the many “wondrous things” contained in the Bible, and carries with it the clearest internal evidence of its Divine origin. At the same time, it must be admitted that this portion of the Apocalypse is not without its peculiar difficulties, and demands the most patient and accurate investigation on the part both of the commentator and his readers. May the Spirit of truth guide us in the interpretation of it!

We have here two principal subjects presented to us for our contemplation, the WOMAN and the BEAST THAT CARRIETH HER. Let us consider first, the symbolical meaning of the former.

It may be as well to observe in the outset, that there is no difference of opinion between ourselves and Roman Catholics as to the city represented by this woman. They admit it to be Rome; only they maintain that Rome Pagan, not Rome Papal, is

intended.\* This circumstance very much narrows the field of inquiry, and materially diminishes the number of proofs required to establish the Protestant interpretation of the prophecy. For it being admitted on both sides that Rome is that great city which, at the time the apostle wrote, “reigned over the kings of the earth,”† the only question to be determined is, whether the description here given belongs to Rome as an idolatrous Heathen city, or as a nominally Christian city. Let us then now, with a view to the determination of this point, consider this description in detail.

1. To behold this harlot the apostle was “*carried away into the wilderness.*” Now, how shall we explain this circumstance on the supposition that the city of Pagan Rome, or Rome regarded as a Heathen religious community, is signified? Need the apostle, in that case, have been carried into the wilderness? Was not Rome at that time a flourishing city standing in a rich and fertile neighbourhood? It is impossible to give any satisfactory account of this circumstance on the above supposition. But what then does it mean, supposing Christian Rome to be intended? In that case

\* Certissimum est nomine Babylonis Romam urbem significari. *It is most certain that the city of Rome is signified by the name of Babylon.* (Baronius ad Ann. 45.) Johannes in Apocalypsi passim Romam vocat Babylonem. Et aperte colligitur ex cap. xvii., Apocalypseos. *John in the Apocalypse everywhere calls Rome Babylon. And this is clearly collected from c. xvii.* (Bellarmin. de Rom. Pont., l. iii., c. xiii. Quoted by Bishop Newton in his “Diss. on the Prophecies.” Rev. xvii.)

† This is so manifest that it scarcely requires any proof. Independently of other considerations, the fact that the Jews were accustomed to call Rome Babylon is almost sufficient in itself to identify the two names. (See Schottgen. Hor. Heb., i., p. 1125, as quoted in Dr. Kitto’s “Biblical Cyclop.,” Art. Babylon.)

the import is obvious. This city, viewed in the character in which she is now about to be exhibited, that is, as the counterfeit head and representative of the true Church, the spouse of Christ, has as yet no existence. She is not, therefore, visible to the world. She cannot be seen but by our being carried, as it were, *out* of the world into a desert. And just as the apostle had seen the woman clothed with the sun, the symbol of the chaste spouse of Christ, flee into the wilderness, and thus become invisible to the world, so is he now carried into the same wilderness to behold her counterfeit, the apostate adulterous Church, prepared to come forth from her place of concealment, and show herself to the eyes of mankind adorned with all the meretricious ornaments of an abandoned woman. Such, I think, is obviously the import of this carrying away into the wilderness. For this symbol, in the case of the woman clothed with the sun, undoubtedly signifies a place of concealment; and consistency requires that we should give it the same symbolical meaning here. In St. John's days the apostate Church, although even then "*the mystery of iniquity had begun to work*," was unseen; the true Church was the *visible* Church; but the time was coming when they were to exchange places: the true Church would flee away, the adulteress would sit in her seat and assume her name.\*

\* This seems to me a more satisfactory explanation of this circumstance than that given by Mr. Elliott and some other commentators, who suppose that the wilderness refers to the change which took place in the condition of the country in the neighbourhood of Rome, after the incursions of the northern invaders had made it desolate. It is quite true that the *Campagna*, or territory around the city of Rome, is represented as having been converted in the sixth century into a wilderness. But this woman is not represented as reigning over a wilderness, or dwelling in one. On the contrary, she rides upon the necks of kings, and sits upon many

2. The apostle then, being carried in spirit into a desert place, saw there the vision here described. A woman with a bold immodest countenance appeared sitting upon a scarlet-coloured wild beast having seven heads rising one above another, like the heads of the beast before seen ascending from the sea, and upon the topmost head ten horns. This woman was splendidly attired and richly adorned, her garments being of purple and scarlet, and her arms and neck covered with a profusion of pearls and diamonds, and other precious stones. Further, she held in her hand a golden cup filled with a luscious intoxicating wine, which made those who drank of it enamoured of her, so that they were blind to her grossness and lewdness, and fired with impure passion, became her devoted slaves, being led about by her at her will. Furthermore, this woman had her name inscribed in large letters upon her forehead, as follows :—

A MYSTERY :

BABYLON THE GREAT :

THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS  
OF THE EARTH.

Finally, this woman trembled and tottered as one intoxicated ; and she was in fact drunken, but not with wine or strong drink, but with the blood of holy men, witnesses for the truth of the Gospel, whom she caused to be slain.

Such was the description (or *manner*, κριμα \*) of this

waters, which are people. The wilderness, therefore, simply signifies her place of present concealment at the time when the vision was granted.

\* See the translation and note.

strange woman now presented to the mind's eye of the entranced apostle, who stood gazing upon her in silent amazement, not unmingled with sadness and awe, being utterly unable to comprehend the meaning of the vision.

Now let us here pause, and consider how far these things can be explained on the Roman Catholic hypothesis, that this woman is the symbol of Pagan Rome. Did Pagan Rome make men idolaters? Did she entice men away from the worship of the living and true God by meretricious arts and appliances, and persuade them by subtilty to adopt her religious rites and ceremonies? No; she never did anything of the kind. So far from it, so far from making men idolaters, and thus being the mother of their abominations, she found them idolaters; all the nations she conquered, with the exception only of the Jews, were essentially of the same religion with herself; and so far from forcing upon them, or persuading them by subtilty to embrace her own religious rites and ceremonies, she in many instances adopted theirs; and in every case, not excepting even the Jews, she allowed each nation to worship the gods of their respective countries according to their own customs. How, then, could she be said to have made the inhabitants of the earth "drunk with the wine of her fornication?" Or, with what propriety could she be called "the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth?"

Furthermore, this woman's name was, MYSTERY; does this apply to Pagan Rome? Was there any mystery about *her*? Did she conceal her real character? Did she profess to worship Jehovah the one true and living God, and veil her idolatrous practices under specious names and hair-breadth distinctions between

the worship which may be given to the creature, and that which is due only to the Creator? In what sense, then, was she *a mystery*? It is impossible to give a satisfactory explanation of these things on the hypothesis that this woman is the symbol of Pagan Rome. But how easy and how clear is the explanation of them on the Protestant hypothesis? We affirm that this woman is both the *city* and the *Church* of Rome, and that the beast that bears her is the *secular power*, that politico-ecclesiastical empire known ordinarily by the name of the Holy Roman Empire,\* which at the same time that it supports the Church, is ruled and guided by her, and is at once her champion and her slave. Such is a general summary of the interpretation we would give of this vision. Let us now descend to details, and see if they do not bear us out in this view.

First of all, then, as to the leading feature in the character of this woman, she is evidently a personification of AN IMPOSTURE. She is not what she appears to be. She wishes to pass herself off for a chaste matron, whereas she is really a wanton adulteress, living in sin, and corrupting others. The name on her forehead, and the cup in her hand, imply this. For her name, MYSTERY, shows that she hides her true character; and her having this cup in her hand points her out, according to the ordinary use of such symbols,† as one

\* For a particular account of the rise and formation of this empire, see c. xiii.

† In the ancient allegory entitled, “Κεβητος Πωαξ,” or “The Picture of Cebes,” written by a disciple of Socrates about 300 years before the Apocalypse, there is a symbolical representation of *Deceit* very similar to this, the explanation given of which shows how these things were then understood. The picture is a votive offering laid up in the temple of

whose object is to impose upon men and deceive them. She "makes men drink of the wine of her adultery." And can we have a more exact portraiture of the Church of Rome than this? Ostensibly and avowedly she is the holiest and purest of Churches. - She is, in fact, according to her own showing, the *only* holy and pure Church. The name she gives herself, and the title she claims is, "The Holy Roman Catholic Church, the Mother and Mistress of all Churches."\* Thus she arrogates to herself the honour of being the only true Church of Christ, and shuts out from the pale of salvation all Churches that do not call her "Mother," and acknowledge her supremacy. But what is she really? Is she not an impure, adulterous Church? A Church which, by her example, her exhortations, her commands, and her anathemas, has for centuries corrupted all Christendom, and infused the leaven of self-righteousness and idolatry into the great mass of professing Christians? Has she not, in short, made the inhabitants of the earth "drink of the wine of her fornication"? This, I grant, is strong language, and it may seem a

Saturn, and is supposed to be an allegory of human life. At the entrance of the first inclosure, which represents the beginning of life, crowds of persons are seen pressing through the gate. "And dost thou see," proceeds the expounder of the allegory, addressing Cebes, "a throne placed near the gate by which the multitude are entering, upon which a woman sits of an artificial appearance and a persuasive look (*πεπλασμένη τῶ εἶδει, καὶ πιθανῇ φαινομένη*), and having in her hand a certain cup?" "I see her," said I; "but who is she?" "She is called DECEIT," said he, "seeing she leads all men astray." "But what," said I, "does she then do?" "She makes all men drink," he replied, "by the power of her cup." "What," I asked, "does she make them drink?" "Error," said he, "and ignorance." "And what then?" "Having drunk in these they enter upon life." One might almost suppose that Cebes had in his eye the same mystical woman as St. John.

\* Creed of Pope Pius IV.

harsh and bigoted thing to speak thus of a Church which has contained within its pale a Pascal, a Bourdaloue, and a Fenelon. But we must never judge of the character of a corporate body by a few great names; they may be brilliant exceptions. Would we form a correct idea of what the Church of Rome is, we must look, not at its Pascals and Fenelons, (for even Sardis had its "few names,") but at its popes and cardinals, its doctors and its councils, and, above all, at its army of Jesuit priests. These are the men who represent the true character of the Church of Rome, and embody the essentials of her principles. Now will any man venture to affirm that holiness and virtue, simplicity of worship and spotless purity of manners, characterize the lives and principles of those men?

Let us look at the Church of Rome, for example, in the age of its glory, under the Pontificate of Leo X. Never did Rome make greater pretensions than at that period. Never did she bear herself more haughtily, or assert more strenuously her claim to be regarded as "the Mother and Mistress of all Churches," than at the commencement of the sixteenth century. Her boast was that heresy was extirpated; that catholic unity prevailed everywhere; and that not a single dissentient voice was raised against the doctrine, the discipline, and the ceremonies of the Holy Roman Church. These, then, according to Rome, were the palmy days of the Church. Now, if ever, she would exhibit the power of the Gospel. Now, if ever, she would show herself to be the immaculate spouse of Christ, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;" but being delivered from the pestilential influence of heresy, and the disorganizing effects of schism, be a living exemplification of that holiness

without which no man shall see the Lord. And such she was in pretence and profession, and according to the representations of her deluded admirers. To read the compositions of the orators and poets of those times, we might suppose that the millennium had commenced, and that the Church was, indeed, become “a peculiar people, redeemed from all iniquity, and zealous of good works.” But what are the real facts of the case? Surely never did the Church present a more melancholy spectacle than at the period of which we speak. Never were the people more corrupt, or the clergy more depraved. Great, indeed, was the outward splendour of the Church. She was literally “arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones;” but when we turn to the page of history, we find that all was false and hollow, and that whilst using the sacred names of God and Christ, and making the most pompous pretensions to sanctity, she was polluted by the most hateful crimes that ever disgraced human nature.

It is difficult to substantiate these charges without going more fully into the history of those times than is justifiable in a commentary like this; at the same time, as one of the most frequent complaints of Roman Catholics is, that we bring grievous accusations against their Church which we are unable to prove, I will endeavour to condense within as small a compass as possible such leading historical facts gathered from good authorities, as may seem best adapted to give a correct idea of the religious and moral condition of the Church at this period.

Let us, then, look first at the governing body of the Church, the College of Cardinals, with the Pope at their

head. These may be regarded as the representatives of the Church; and splendid, indeed, as to externals was the spectacle they presented to the world, clothed in their robes of scarlet, and dwelling in magnificent palaces.\* But who, and what manner of men, were they in themselves? I intreat the reader to peruse attentively the following description of some of the leading men amongst them, drawn by a candid and impartial writer:—

“The eldest member of the college was Roderigo Borgia, who had enjoyed upwards of thirty-five years the dignity of the purple. *The private life of Roderigo had been a perpetual disgrace to his ecclesiastical functions.* In adhering to his vow of celibacy he had alleviated its severity by an intercourse with a Roman lady of the name of Vanozza,—by whom he had several children.”

Another member of the college was “Rafaello Riario, Cardinal of S. Giorgio, who, under the directions of his great uncle, Sixtus IV., *had acted a principal part in the bloody conspiracy of the Pazzi.* In assuming his seat among THE FATHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, Giovanni de Medici found himself associated with one who had *assisted* in the murder of his uncle, and attempted the life of his father!”

A third “was Pierre d’Aubusson, upon whom that honour had been conferred as a reward for having surrendered into the custody of the Pope an illustrious

\* “By the example of the Supreme Pontiff, who well knew how to unite magnificence with taste, the chiefs and princes of the Roman Church emulated each other in the grandeur of their palaces, the sumptuousness of their apparel, the elegance of their entertainments, and the number of their attendants.”—*Roscoe’s Life of Leo X.*, c. xiv., vol. ii., p. 81. Bohm’s ed.

Turkish fugitive who had taken refuge with him to avoid the rage of fraternal resentment." (Roscoe's "Life of Leo X.," c. 1.)

Such were some of the men who composed the governing body of the Church in this the day of her glory. As for the supreme Pontiff himself, some idea may be formed of his feelings and character from the following facts: He was nominated a cardinal *when a boy of thirteen*, and three years afterwards was *admitted a member of the sacred college*, and assumed the insignia of his rank. At the age of thirty-eight he was elected Pope. In the third year of his pontificate a conspiracy was discovered at Rome to take away his life by poison; "and," says the writer above quoted, "if the name of religion had not already been sufficiently prostituted, the Christian world might have shuddered to hear that the authors of this crime were found among the members of the Sacred College."

The chief conspirator was Cardinal Alfonso Petrucci, who at first thought of assassinating the Pope *with his own hand*, but being deterred by the difficulty of effecting his purpose, not by any horror of the crime, resolved to have recourse to poison. The conspiracy having been revealed to the Pope by means of intercepted letters, he took immediate measures for the apprehension of the conspirators. The remainder of the story shall be told in the historian's own words: "Leo, under the pretext of consulting with Petrucci on family concerns, required his presence in Rome. Conscious of his guilt, Petrucci manifested some reluctance in complying with this request, but Leo removed his apprehensions by granting him a safe conduct, at the same time undertaking by his *solemn promise* to the Spanish ambassador

not to violate his own act. Confiding in these assurances, Petrucci repaired to Rome. On his arrival, he was introduced in company with the Cardinal Bandinello de Sauli, into the chamber of the Pope, where they were both secured, and committed prisoners to the castle of St. Angelo. The Spanish Ambassador remonstrated. But Leo alleged that *no* instrument of safe conduct, however full and explicit, could be allowed to avail a person who had conspired against the life of the Supreme Pontiff."

"The painful task of punishing the authors and principal promoters of this conspiracy yet remained. On the day of Pentecost, Leo having again assembled the cardinals, addressed them in a long and pathetic oration, in which he intimated, that although he might legally and properly have proceeded to degrade and punish the guilty, yet he had determined to pardon them. He then went to attend the celebration of mass, after which his disposition and intentions seemed to be changed, and it was thought that he had been instigated to convert the punishment of the offenders INTO A SOURCE OF GAIN. On the twentieth day of June, he proceeded to degrade the three cardinals from their dignities, and to deprive them of their goods and ecclesiastical preferments; after which, to the terror and astonishment of all the members of the Sacred College, he delivered them over to the secular power. On the following night Petrucci was strangled in prison. The subordinate instruments of this treachery were also sentenced to death, and, after suffering excruciating torments, were finally strangled, and their bodies quartered."

"Upon strict grounds of positive law," adds the

historian, "the execution of Petrucci may, perhaps, be justified: but the shameful violation of every principle of humanity, exemplified in the execution of the subordinate instruments of his guilt, can never be sufficiently execrated." ("Life of Leo X.," c. xiv.)

Such, then, was Leo in his public capacity as the supreme ruler of the Church. And what was he as a private individual? Perhaps there is no more sure criterion of a man's character than his recreations and amusements. These show the real congenialities of the inner man, and mark in an unmistakeable manner the current of the feelings. How, then, did Leo spend his hours of relaxation? "His favourite amusements were hunting, hawking, and fishing, in which he engaged with all the earnestness of the keenest sportsman. An unsuccessful chase, we are told, seemed to be one of the heaviest misfortunes, and those who were hunters for pontifical favour always found that the best time to present their petitions was after his exertions in the chase had been crowned with success. After the more violent exercises of the field, he amused himself with music and cards, interspersed with the *witticisms of jesters and the antics of buffoons!*" "It seems to have been his intention," says one of his biographers, "to pass his time cheerfully, and to secure himself against trouble and anxiety by all the means in his power. He therefore sought all opportunities of *pleasure and hilarity*, and indulged his leisure *in amusements, jests, and singing.*" \*

Such was the man at the head of the holy (!) Roman Church, and such were his coadjutors in its government at the commencement of the sixteenth century. And let

\* "Life of Leo X.," vol. ii., p. 390.

it be borne in mind that Leo was not one of the *bad* Popes. On the contrary, he was one of the best of them, and compared with some of his predecessors—as Alexander VI. for example, who was notoriously guilty of murder, and incest, and every abomination—he was as an angel of light. Yet this very best specimen of the Church's pretended head, what was he ?

But it may be said, What have these things to do with the harlot on the scarlet-coloured beast ? Because Pope Leo was a worldly-minded man of pleasure who took delight in jests and field-sports, and because the Cardinals were many of them assassins and traitors, and destitute of every principle of religion and virtue, does it follow that the Church of Rome is an apostate and adulterous Church, fitly symbolized by a bloated intoxicated harlot ? We answer, Yes ; these things have much to do with each other. The Church of Rome claims to be the only true Church of Christ, and she affirms that holiness is the great characteristic of that Church. Is it nothing then to the point that the head of the Romish Church and its principal members, in her best days, were worldly-minded politicians, refined sensualists, and treacherous murderers ?

Still it may be said, the Pope and Cardinals were not the Church. True ; but were the rest of the clergy any better ? Or were the people any better ? Was not the whole body corrupt ? What must have been the general character of the Church when a deacon proved guilty of murder could insure *legal* absolution for a sum equivalent to about 5*l.* ? When a bishop might assassinate with impunity by paying three hundred livres ? And when any ecclesiastic might violate his vows of chastity under the most aggravated circumstances for a third part of that

sum? \* It is impossible to conceive the horrible state of society which such a system must inevitably produce. Take the following facts as a specimen:—"In several places the priest paid to the bishop a regular tax for the woman with whom he lived and for every child he had by her. A German bishop who was present at a grand entertainment publicly declared that in one year eleven thousand priests had presented themselves to him for that purpose. It is Erasmus who records this." †

We would gladly cast a veil over such facts as these could they be concealed without weakening the cause of truth. But we must not sacrifice truth out of consideration for a fastidious refinement, and it is arguments drawn from such gross and palpable facts as these which tell most upon the minds of men in general, and come home with most power to the feelings and understanding.

But supposing the morals of the clergy and laity of the Church of Rome to be ever so corrupt, does this prove her to be the harlot of the Apocalypse? No, not in itself; there may unquestionably be soundness of doctrine and correct ritual observances in a Church where great moral corruption prevails, and, in that case, it would scarcely be allowable to call the off-sets of such a Church by the opprobrious name given to a dissolute woman. But it is not so with the Church of Rome. Her teaching and practices are as corrupt, as contrary to the doctrine of Christ, as her morals. The corruption of the one is, in fact, a natural consequence of the other;

\* "A deacon guilty of murder was absolved for twenty crowns. A bishop or abbot might assassinate for three hundred livres," &c.—Robertson's *Charles XII.*, b. 2.

† "Hist. of the Great Reformation." D'Aubigné, Vol. i., p. 41. Walther's Ed.

she is corrupt in morals *because* she is corrupt in her doctrine. She has departed from the simplicity of Christian truth, and therefore she has departed from Christ himself, and in the homely but expressive language of Scripture, "hath gone to seek many lovers." Take in proof of this the following testimony of one who was himself a long while a monk, and who speaks therefore from personal knowledge and experience:—

"The sufferings and merits of Christ were looked upon (says he) as an empty tale, or as the fictions of Homer. He was regarded as a stern judge prepared to condemn all who should not have recourse to the intercession of saints, or to the Pope's indulgences. Other intercessors were substituted in his stead, first, the Virgin Mary, like the Heathen Diana; and then the saints, whose numbers were continually augmented by the Popes. These intercessors refused their mediation unless the party was in good repute with the monastic orders which they had founded. To be so, it was necessary not only to do what God had commanded in his Word, but also to perform a number of works invented by the monks and the priests, and which brought them in large sums of money. Such were the Ave Marias, the prayers of St. Ursula and of St. Bridget. Bones, arms, feet, were preserved in boxes of silver or gold; they gave them to the faithful to kiss during mass, and this increased their gains."\*

"At the church of All Saints, at Wittemberg," adds the historian, "was shown a fragment of Noah's ark; some soot from the furnace of the three children (!); a piece of wood from the crib of the infant Jesus; some hair of the beard of the great St. Christopher; and

\* Myconius quoted by D'Aubigné, "Hist. Reform.," vol. i., p. 36.

NINETEEN THOUSAND other relics, more or less precious. At Schaffhausen was shown the breath of St. Joseph that Nicodemus received on his glove. Those who *farmed* the relics overran the country. They bore them about in the rural districts and carried them into the houses of the faithful. They were exhibited with pomp in the churches. These wandering hawkers paid a certain sum to the proprietors of the relics with a per centage on their profits. The kingdom of heaven had disappeared, and men had opened in its place on earth a market of abominations.”\*

Now when we consider that all these things were done with the sanction of the Metropolitan Church, and in fact emanated from Rome as from a common centre, are we not fully justified in giving her the opprobrious name affixed to her, as we believe, by God himself in this book? Might we not indeed with a few slight alterations adopt the language of the sentence last quoted, and say of the Church of Rome, “The Church of Christ, the chaste spouse of the Redeemer, had disappeared; she had fled into the wilderness; and men had substituted for her a Church of their own devising—a Church which was a market of abominations on earth?”

But there is one other point that remains yet to be noticed. This woman was “drunk with the blood of the saints, and of the witnesses of Jesus.” Now it is quite unnecessary to adduce further historical proofs that Protestants, or, as the Church of Rome would call them, heretics, have been put to death in great numbers. The facts before mentioned, that more than one hundred thousand persons were slain in the Netherlands alone for

\* Ibid, p. 37.

their religious opinions,\* and that the Inquisition in Spain committed upwards of thirty-two thousand individuals to the flames in the space of a few years, is sufficient evidence as to the bloodshedding. The only questions therefore that can be raised in connexion with this subject are, 1st, whether these things were done by the Romish Church; and 2dly, whether the sufferers were indeed saints.

That the men who have been put to death at various times under the name of heretics, have been so put to death at the instigation of that Church of which the Pope is the recognised head, will perhaps appear to most readers a mere truism, and not therefore requiring any direct proof. Yet the Church of Rome not only denies that she has ever put any one, whether heretic, Jew, or Pagan, to death, but she disclaims *the power* to do so, and even affirms that she abhors the idea of persecution for conscience sake! †

Who, then, we may ask, slew Huss, and Jerome, and Latimer, and Ridley, and Cranmer, and the Lollards in Belgium, and the Waldenses in Piedmont, and the

\* "Decline and Fall of the Rom. Emp.," b. xvi., ad finem.

† "I begin with expressly denying that the Catholic Church *maintains a claim* of punishing heretics with penalties, imprisonment, tortures, and death, and I assert on the contrary that she *disclaims the power* of so doing."—"End of Religious Controversy," Letter 49. By Rev. John Milner, Bishop of Castabala. Nothing can be more thoroughly Jesuitical than this letter. The writer begins with plumply denying the charge that the Church of Rome is, or ever has been, in principle, a persecuting Church. He then affirms, that all who have ever been put to death as heretics were put to death by the civil magistrate as offenders against the laws of the country. (Which of course in a sense is true, for how could the Church, *i.e.*, the clergy, put men to death without the sanction of the law?) And having thus slurred over this charge, he proceeds to retort it on Protestants, and affirms that Luther, Zuingle, and Calvin were greater persecutors than their opponents.

thirty-two thousand heretics in Spain? Not I, says the Church of Rome; I had no hand in it. I simply pronounced them heretics, and delivered them over to the secular arm. So far from wishing to shed their blood, I commended them to the clemency of the civil magistrate and to the mercy of God. "Shake not then, O Huss, thy gory locks at me, for thou can'st not say 'twas I did it."

Thus, like him of old who talked so loudly of his zeal for the Lord, with the bleeding heads of her victims piled on either side of her, she asks with insufferable calmness and effrontery, "Who slew all these?" But will such detestable hypocrisy and sophistry as this pass? No; we have a canon of the Church which speaks out the truth plainly and unblushingly, and stands to this day an unimpeachable witness that flatly contradicts the plausible statements of the Romish Church on the subject of persecution.

"If the temporal Lord, when *required* and *admonished* by the Church, shall neglect to purge it of this heretical impurity, let him be bound with the chain of excommunication by the metropolitan. And if he neglect to make satisfaction within the year, from that time let the bishop declare his vassals to be absolved from fealty to him, and expose his lands to Catholics, who, when *the heretics are exterminated*, may possess them without dispute and keep them in the purity of the faith!"

"But as for those Catholics who, having taken up the cross, have armed themselves for *the extermination of heretics*, let them enjoy the same indulgence, and be guarded by the same sacred privilege as is granted to those who go to the succour of the Holy Land." \*

\* Concil. Later. 4, Labbæi et Coss., tom. 11, p. 147. (Parisiis,

Such is the authoritative declaration of the Church of Rome on the subject of putting heretics to death. And yet she says, "I did it not." Why, might not the Jewish high priest and Sanhedrim with much more show of reason say of our Lord's crucifixion, "We did it not. It was Pilate, not we, that crucified Jesus of Nazareth. Why bring ye this man's blood upon *us*?" But what says the plain-speaking man of God? "This Jesus *ye* have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Yes; and was he not right? The priests indeed had said, "We have no *power* to put this man to

1671.) Dr. Milner (not Milner the historian of the Church of Christ, but Milner the Roman Catholic Bishop) refers to this Council, and his remarks upon it are truly characteristic. "From this canon," he observes, "it has been a hundred times over argued against Catholics, not only that the Church claims a right to exterminate heretics, but also that she requires those of her communion to aid and assist in this work of destruction at all times and in all places." Certainly, such seems to be the obvious bearing and practical meaning of the canon. How, then, does Dr. Milner explain it in any other sense? "First, it must be observed," says he, "that this Council was, in fact, a congress of Christendom, temporal as well as spiritual. We must, in the next place, remark the principal business which drew them together. It was the common cause of Christianity and human nature, namely, the extirpation of the Manichean heresy, which taught that unnatural lusts were lawful, but not the propagation of the human species; that perjury was permitted to them, &c. This detestable heresy was supported by the Counts of Thoulouse, Comminges, &c., as also by numerous bodies of banditti, called Rotarii, whom the Albigenses hired for this purpose. Thus strengthened, they waged open war with Christianity, morality, and human nature itself. They even cast the Bible into the lakes, &c. It was to put an end to these horrors that the great Lateran Council was held in the year 1215, when the heresy in question was condemned by the proper authority of the Church. It is remarkable, however, that the decree of the Council regarded only the prevailing heretics of that time, the Albigenses, Cathari, Brethren of the Free Spirit," &c.—("End of Religious Controv.," let. 49.) Thus, according to this statement, all the Albigenses were unnatural monsters, who taught that marriage was unlawful, &c. Is it not melancholy to see a man of intelligence and education defending a bad cause by calmly asserting such gross and palpable falsehoods?

death. We have no king but Cæsar." But would Cæsar have put him to death but for them? Was it not because they said, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die," that Pilate at length gave him over to death? And did not the whole guilt of his blood therefore rest on them? And where is the difference between this case and that of the delivery of heretics by the authority of the Church to the secular magistrate? Would the civil magistrate ever have executed heretics if the Church had not first declared them worthy of death? Their blood, then, rests upon her, the instigator of their slaughter, rather than upon the magistrate who, under her direction, wields the sword.

2. But after all, were they saints and witnesses for Jesus whom the Church of Rome has at various times put to death? That they were holy men, even their enemies, some of them at least, admit. "If," says Bernard, "you ask them of their faith, nothing can be more Christian; if you observe their conversation, nothing can be more blameless."\* Here we have a double testimony, both to the purity of their doctrines and the innocence of their lives. And, in fact, what crimes were they charged with? Take as a specific example John Huss. What were his offences? They were eight in number. He maintained that the communion ought to be administered in both kinds; that the bread remains after consecration; that the Church does not mean the Pope and the clergy, &c. These were the mortal sins with which this heresiarch was charged. But was this *all*? Was there no stain upon his moral character? None whatever; not a spot did even his bitterest enemies

\* "Milner's Church Hist.," cent. xii., c. 3.

pretend to have discovered in the life of this holy and virtuous man. Yet this is the man whom the Council of Constance condemned to be publicly deposed and degraded "as an obstinate and incorrigible heretic." Whom the prelates appointed for that purpose by the Council, stripped one by one of his sacerdotal robes, and whom, having placed a paper crown upon his head, marked with hideous figures of dæmons, and the superscription, *Heresiarch*, they "pronounced to be cut off from the ecclesiastical body, and then consigned him, as a layman, to the vengeance of the secular arm, having first of all devoted his soul to the infernal devils." \* And how did he act under this unjust and demoniacal treatment? "On his way to the stake he repeated pious prayers and penitential psalms; and when the order was given to kindle the flames he only uttered these words, 'Lord Jesus, I endure with humility this cruel death for thy sake, and I pray thee to pardon all my enemies?'" Was not this a holy man? Was not this a witness of Jesus? But Huss was only one of many;—who can count the myriads of innocent men like him that the Church of Rome has slain?

Let us now recapitulate. This vision presents us with a symbol having a double meaning and application; the symbol of a Church, and of a city. † It is admitted on

\* *Animam tuam devovemus infernis Diabolis.* See Waddington's Hist., vol. ii., p. 595.

† It is obvious that this woman cannot be *merely* a symbol of a city regarded as an assemblage of houses and streets filled with inhabitants. The exposition, therefore, given by the angel of the meaning of this symbol in the last verse must be considered as only an exposition *in part*, intended especially to mark out the specific locality which would be occupied by this symbolic woman, the centre, as it were, of her authority

all hands that the *city* symbolized is Rome. And we affirm that the *Church* symbolized is the Roman Catholic Church. And have we no ground for making this assertion? This woman, though polluted by her adulteries and defiled with innocent blood, is richly and magnificently adorned, and to the ordinary eye presents a splendid and attractive external. And have we not then here a true and faithful representation of the character and condition of the Church of Rome for the last twelve hundred years? Splendid indeed has she been as to externals. Enriched by contributions from all parts of the civilized world, her churches, her shrines, and her cathedrals have glittered with gold and shone with pearls and precious stones; nor can anything be conceived more dazzling and gaudy than the ceremonials of her worship. But we have seen, notwithstanding all this, that in her best and most palmy days she was but a specious adulteress, wallowing in her iniquity, and turning away the minds of men from Christ, the one only Mediator between God and man, to a host of inferior mediators and secondary intercessors. We have seen, that at the very time that she was expending millions upon her cathedral dedicated to the chief of the apostles, and that her altars were embellished by the talents of a Raphael and a Michael Angelo, her recognised head was a worldly-minded, pleasure-loving politician, her subordinate rulers sensualists and assassins, and her whole body ecclesiastical a mass of moral corruption! We

and power. Regarded, therefore, as the symbol of a city, she is Rome; but in another point of view, she is the embodiment of that system of ecclesiastical polity of which Rome is the fountain-head and centre; just as the seven heads of the beast are both the seven hills on which Rome was built, and the seven forms of government which prevailed at different periods.

have seen, moreover, that at her *instigation*, if not actually by her hand, multitudes of holy men, faithful witnesses for the pure Gospel of Christ, have at various times been put to death. And what, then, is the true and proper appellation of such a Church? The name she gives herself suggests her most appropriate designation, and condemns her out of her own mouth. She calls herself—

THE HOLY CATHOLIC, APOSTOLIC, ROMAN CHURCH,  
THE MOTHER AND MISTRESS OF ALL CHURCHES.

But surely her proper name is—

“BABYLON THE GREAT,  
THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS  
OF THE EARTH.” \*

\* It may strengthen the conviction of the truth of this conclusion in the minds of some readers to know that the above application of the prophecy is not confined to Protestants. So early as the twelfth century Dante, a Roman Catholic, in a passage partly before quoted, writes thus :—

“If reverence of the keys restrained me not,  
Which thou in happier time did'st hold, I yet  
Severer speech might use. Your avarice  
O'ercasts the world with mourning, under foot  
Treading the good, and raising bad men up.  
Of shepherds like to you, the Evangelist  
Was ware, WHEN HER WHO SITS UPON THE WAVES  
With kings in filthy whoredom he beheld;  
She who with seven heads tower'd at her birth,  
And from ten horns her proof of glory drew,  
Long as her spouse in virtue took delight.  
Of gold and silver ye have made your god,  
Differing wherein *from the idolater*,  
But that he worships one, *a hundred ye?*  
Ah, Constantine! to how much ill gave birth,  
Not thy conversion, but that plenteous dower,  
Which the first wealthy father gained from thee!”

These words are supposed to be addressed by the poet to Pope Nicholas V., who is represented as in hell, standing in a hole with his head downwards, his feet being on fire, which was the punishment of those guilty of Simony.—See Cary's *Dante*, Hell, cant. 19, l. 154.

## THE SCARLET-COLOURED BEAST.—XVII. 8—14.

We have already seen that the generality of modern commentators,\* and Mr. Elliott in particular, identify this beast with that of the thirteenth chapter. But in my remarks on that chapter I have shown that, notwithstanding a generic resemblance between these two beasts, there are some strongly marked points of difference. Now these points of difference undoubtedly have a meaning. For, as I have before had occasion to observe, there is nothing more astonishing about the Apocalypse than the minute accuracy with which the prophetic symbols employed in it are described. Nothing is said in vain. And I think, therefore, we must not confound the *sea* and the *abyss* as though they meant the same thing, or suppose that the absence of the crowns from the horns of this beast and his scarlet colour, have no specific signification. Disposed, therefore, as I was once to acquiesce in the opinion of the absolute identity of these beasts, further consideration has compelled me to abandon that idea, and has convinced me that they do not symbolize one and the same thing.

Another obvious error, as it appears to me, into which numerous commentators have fallen in regard to this beast is, the assuming that it represents the Papacy. The beast is *ridden* by the woman, that is, the Church; but the Pope is the head of the Church; how then can he in his official capacity be fitly represented as ridden by her? Neither this beast, nor that from the sea, can with any propriety, as it seems to me, symbolize a spiritual, or ecclesiastical power, seeing that there is nothing of a spiritual or ecclesiastical character about

\* Mr. Faber and Mr. Hatley Frere are the principal exceptions.

them. The entire portraiture in both instances is manifestly that of a secular, not a spiritual, empire. In that we are now considering the *woman* is the Church (including of course its head), the *beast* the secular empire, over which she exercises spiritual dominion.

This subject is one of so much interest and importance, that I shall make no apology for repeating the statement of my views of these two beasts, already summarily given in the commentary on chapter xiii.

I am inclined, then, to think, that the seven-headed dragon, the triple-formed wild beast from the sea, and this scarlet-coloured beast, all represent, as to its *primary origin* and the seat of its power, one and the same empire; that is to say, that mighty fabric of secular dominion which was founded by Romulus seven hundred years before our Lord's advent, and which, by the appointment of God, was to exercise so powerful an influence over the destinies of mankind to the end of time. The correspondence in the number of heads in all the three symbols puts this point, namely, their identity as to a common origin and seat of power, beyond all question. In fact, we are expressly told that the dragon gave to the beast from the sea his seat, or throne, and authority; so that the empire of which that beast is the symbol, is undoubtedly a continuation of that empire of which the dragon is the symbol. But this beast from the abyss is also evidently a continuation of the same empire; for he also has seven heads and ten horns, like the beast from the sea, plainly indicating an essential identity between them, although circumstantially they may differ from each other. I should say, therefore, that these three beasts (for the dragon may be so called) represent

the same secular dominion, only under different aspects and phases. All three are a persecuting power, opposed to Christ and his people. The dragon is that power in Pagan Rome. The beast from the sea is that power in the nominally Christian Roman Empire established by the kings of France and the Popes. And the beast from the abyss is still essentially that same power, only different in form and circumstances. And what then, it may be asked, is that form, and what those circumstances? This is no easy question. Whilst I cannot agree with Mede, and most modern commentators, in considering the abyss, or bottomless pit, and the sea to mean the same thing, and the two beasts which respectively issue from them to be absolutely identical, I freely confess that there are difficulties connected with any other interpretation which are not easily solved, although, perhaps, those difficulties may arise from our present ignorance, and be fully cleared up by future events. An examination of particulars will enable me to state those difficulties as they occur, and at the same time to offer what appears to me to be the most satisfactory explanation of this deeply interesting, wonderful, and most important prophecy. Let us first carefully read over the text as it stands :—

Vers. 7—15.—“ And the angel said to me, ‘ Wherefore dost thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and is about to ascend out of the bottomless pit, and to go away to destruction: and they that dwell upon the earth, whose names are not written in the book of life

from the foundation of the world, shall wonder, seeing the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. Here is the mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, whereon the woman sitteth. And they are seven kings: the five have fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he shall have come, he must continue a little. And the beast that was and is not, he is also an eighth, yet is of the seven, and goeth away to destruction. And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings, which have not yet received dominion, but receive power, as *it were* kings, at the same hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength to the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and those that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.' ”

Now, before attempting any exposition of this explanatory discourse of the angel, it may assist in the understanding of it to divest it of its figurative terms, and express the meaning more fully in a paraphrase, thus: “The beast which thou hast now seen, is a symbol of that empire which was before represented to thee by the great red dragon, and afterwards, in another stage of its existence, by the seven-headed beast from the sea, and which then *was* a mighty empire exercising dominion over the earth, causing all men to give it reverence, and slaying with the sword those who refused to submit to its authority. This empire, however, at the period of the world’s history at which we are now arrived, *is not*. It no longer exists in the form in which it was then exhibited to thee; that is, it has lost its character as a wild

beast, having ceased to persecute and slay the people of the Lord; and we may therefore say of it, *It was, but is not.* Nevertheless, it is not altogether destroyed. After having ceased to exist as a wild beast apparently for a time, it will once more reappear, and actuated by the spirit of him who dwells in the bottomless pit, it will again show itself a wild beast, persecuting the people of the Lord and shedding innocent blood. And in this it will have the approval of all the inhabitants of the earth, excepting only God's elect people. For men in general will look with wonder and admiration on this empire in its new form, and out of hatred to Christ and his true disciples, will commend its proceedings in regard to them.

“But let me admonish thee, before I proceed any further, that to understand these things demands much thought and consideration, and a mind enlightened by Divine wisdom; apply, therefore, all the powers of thy understanding to what I am now about to tell thee.

“The seven heads of the beast are seven mountains, whereon the city of which the woman is the symbol is built. They represent also seven kings, or forms of government, of which five have already passed away, the sixth is that which at present exists, and the seventh is not yet come, and when it is come and is fully established, it must continue for some time.\* And the beast which I said represented the same empire as the beast from the sea, but in another aspect and under different circumstances, which empire at the period we have now arrived at has apparently

\* See this point fully considered in a separate section, on the DURATION OF THE SEVENTH HEAD.

ceased to exist: this beast is an eighth king, or form of government, and yet is not altogether new, being one of the seven which have already passed away; and this also shall endure only for a time, being appointed like all the others to be destroyed when God shall set up the kingdom of his Son.

“Moreover, the ten horns thou sawest represent ten lesser kingdoms and dynasties, which at this present time are not in existence, but which will come into being, and be formed into separate kingdoms, about the same time with the rise of the empire prefigured by the beast from the sea. These ten kingdoms, or powers, shall give their united strength to the support of that empire in both its forms; both as the beast from the sea with its ten *crowned* horns, and as the beast from the bottomless-pit with its ten *uncrowned* horns; and shall combine with it in endeavouring to crush the Lord and his people, but in vain. Their impious attempts will issue only in the establishment of his kingdom and their own destruction; for he is Lord of lords and King of kings.”

Such is, I believe, a faithful paraphrase of the angel's words in this place. We now come to the historical explanation of these things.

It will be seen from the foregoing paraphrase, that I suppose this beast from the bottomless pit to be a revival of what was called the holy Roman Empire, begun by Clovis in the sixth century, and completed by Charlemagne and the Pope in the last year of the eighth; a sort of continuation, in fact, of that empire. Now, let it be borne in mind, that that was a *politico-ecclesiastical* empire, claiming dominion over the whole earth, and which, in the thirteenth

chapter, is called the Image of the beast. I would lay much stress upon the designation *politico-ecclesiastical*. This must never be lost sight of. If we regard the empire symbolized by the image of the beast either as a purely ecclesiastical, or a purely political empire, we shall form an erroneous conception of it. It is neither one nor the other—it is neither the empire nor the Papacy, taken alone,—but it is the result of the joint working of them both. That empire, then, being both a political and ecclesiastical power—the head of the one being the Emperor, and of the other, the Pope,—cannot be wholly destroyed as long as either head exists. The beast, it may be said, has two heads, and the cutting off of one of them does not therefore necessarily involve its utter extinction. Taking, then, this view of the subject, what is the historical explanation of the prophecy? The beast that *was*, is the holy Roman Papistico-imperial Empire, which rose as out of the sea in the sixth century, and which came to an end, as we have seen (see c. xi. 13), at the commencement of the present century, in the year 1806, after having existed, from its first beginning under Clovis, forty-two months, or twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days, more or less. That specific empire, therefore, has now run its appointed course. It has ceased to exist, and is not. Still the empire of Rome is not at an end. It has lost its secular head for the present, but it retains, notwithstanding, the principle of life in its mutilated trunk, being kept from utter extinction by the vitality it receives from its other, the ecclesiastical head (the beast from the earth), which yet remains. In the mean time, a new element has arisen in the political

world; that element is the democratic principle, combined with Infidelity. This element sprang up in France, and first manifested itself in its full proportions in the Revolution of 1789. From that time to the present hour it has been in constant action, working especially upon the minds of the subjects of the Papacy, and continually urging them to destroy all Governments that have in them the smallest particle of the monarchical or aristocratical principle, and to establish everywhere pure republicanism. And here, then, I think, we have the germ of the scarlet-coloured beast from the abyss. Democracy joined with Infidelity, or, in other words, impatience of all human control, coupled with contempt for the authority of God, involve in them the very essence of hellish rebellion; and an empire, or community, constructed and governed on such principles, may well be said to ascend out of *the bottomless pit*. This beast came up, as I have just intimated, in the year 1789,—only sixteen years before that from the sea ceased to exist, of whose destruction it was the cause,\* and whose place it is destined, I believe, to occupy.

But will Democracy and Infidelity ever suffer themselves to be over-ridden by the Papal Church, and combine for her exaltation and support, as the scarlet-

\* Francis, the last of the emperors (as before stated) was compelled to resign the Imperial dignity by Napoleon Bonaparte, who may be regarded as the concentration and representative of Infidel Republicanism. "On the 1st of August, 1806," says Menzel, "Napoleon declared that he no longer recognised the Emperor of Germany. The fall of the empire that had stood the storms of a thousand years, was not, however, without dignity. A meaner hand might have levelled the decayed fabric with the dust, but fate, that seemed to honour even *the faded majesty of the Cæsars*, selected Napoleon as the executioner of her decrees."—*Hist. of Germany*, vol. iii., p. 235.

coloured beast is represented in the vision upholding the harlot, and being ridden upon by her?—Why should they not? Have we not, in fact, seen this strange and improbable combination of antagonistic principles and agencies verified in part in our own days? It was republican Infidel France that in 1793 slew the witnesses, and it was republican Infidel France that in 1849 replaced the Roman Pontiff upon his pontifical throne. Let us not, then, imagine, that Democracy and Popery, or even Infidelity and Popery, are elements of so uncongenial a nature that they cannot mingle. Democracy and Infidelity may think it to be for the furtherance of their objects to offer the right hand of fellowship to the Papacy, and the Papacy may think it expedient to accept the proffered alliance, the common object of all the three being the destruction of Evangelical truth. There is no moral impossibility, therefore, involved in the idea that this scarlet-coloured beast may symbolize the ten European Papal kingdoms which once supported the Romish Church as monarchies, now supporting it as republics; at least, for a time, although the result of so unnatural an alliance must eventually be its destruction.

Viewed in this light, the specific differences between this beast and that of the thirteenth chapter, as well as all the other particulars connected with its history, admit of an intelligible and satisfactory explanation. The seat of this beast, the heart and centre of its vitality and power, is still the city of Rome. And therefore it is represented with seven heads, which, by the angel's interpretation, are the seven hills on which Rome is built. But these seven heads represent

also seven kinds of rulers, or forms of government, the scarlet-coloured beast itself being an eighth. In order, then, to make good the interpretation which assumes the beast to represent the Papal kingdoms of Europe republicanized, it must be shown, that supposing the holy Roman (Latin) Empire, as it was called, and which was dissolved in 1806, to become one vast republic, this would answer to the symbol, and be rightly denominated an eighth head, or, rather, form of Government.\* Now, what are the historical facts connected with this subject? They may be stated in very few words. Rome was originally governed by kings. Monarchy being abolished, it became a republic, and was governed by two consuls chosen annually. To these succeeded dictators; then, for a short time, decemvirs; and after them, military tribunes.† These, then, were the five forms of government which had fallen when St. John received the Revelation. The sixth was that of emperors, which was then in existence. The seventh, not yet come, was that of the Frankish monarchs, commencing with Clovis, and ending, as we have seen, with Francis of Austria, in 1806. This head, it will be observed, was to *continue* a little.‡ That is, it was to last a

\* It should be observed, that the angel does not say that the beast from the abyss is an eighth *head*, but an eighth *king*, or form of government. He could not, in fact, be an eighth head, seeing there were but seven. The scarlet-coloured beast, therefore, is an empire having Rome for its centre, but not united under one secular head.

† Tacitus, the greatest of Roman historians, commences his history by enumerating these five forms of government in the order above stated: "Urbem Romam a principio reges habuere. Libertatem et consulatum L. Brutus instituit. Dictaturæ ad tempus sumebantur: neque decemviralis potestas ultra biennium, neque tribunorum militum consulare jus diu valuit."—*Ann.*, l. 1.

‡ See the separate section at the end of this chapter.

considerable time. The other heads did not any of them continue very long. As Tacitus says, *non diu valuerunt*; they did not endure for any great length of time. But this *was* to be enduring. And, accordingly, it did last for more than a thousand years. And then came the beast from the bottomless pit. The Democratic Infidel system of government, of which it is said, that "it is of the seven, and goeth away to perdition." Now this expression, "of the seven," implies that it would be like one of the previous seven. And it is notorious, that the French revolutionists founded their republic upon the model, as they supposed at least, of ancient Greece and Rome. The whole system of modern Democracy is a fancied restoration of those principles of freedom and liberty according to which Rome was governed under its consuls. Its motto is, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. But it has in it no element of a religious character. There is fundamentally no acknowledgment of God. On the contrary, its fundamental principle, *vox populi, vox Dei*, in its own sense, is essentially atheistic. For this means really nothing more than that the voice of the people is the substitute for the voice of God; thus making the people their own God.

Now, if this view of the beast be indeed the true one, the differences between it and the former beast are easily explained. It comes from the bottomless pit, because it is not a secular kingdom beginning in any specific locality, but *a principle*, emanating from the prince of darkness, and fixing itself in the hearts and minds of men. Its horns are without crowns, because it disclaims all regal and aristocratical authority—all distinctions of rank and birth,—the only

title it acknowledges being that of citizen. And hence, perhaps, it is represented as all of one colour, to intimate, that it owns no shades of difference among its members. Nor is it difficult to discern why that colour should be red. Who has not heard of the RED Republicans? It is fearful, indeed, to contemplate the meaning of the colour in this connexion.\* It can portend nothing else than bloodshed and slaughter. And who will venture to affirm that a persecuting Democratic Infidel Power, secretly instigated and guided by the Papal Church, is an impossibility? But I forbear to speculate further in this matter. That the spirit of Democracy in its most unbridled form, is abroad among the nations of Europe which formerly constituted the revived Western Empire, is an indisputable fact. That it will one day gain a general ascendancy, and overturn all existing Governments amongst those nations, may seem highly improbable; and yet, I fear, this is a result to which we must look forward.† Certain it is, that the democratical principle is daily fixing its roots more and more deeply in the minds of the inhabitants of Papal Europe; nor will it be satisfied until it is either thoroughly subdued, or has obtained the mastery. On this point, let me again quote the words of one, the best qualified, perhaps, of all men living to form a correct estimate

\* See the separate article on THE COLOUR OF THE BEAST.

† Recent occurrences in France and Austria seem to render the prevalence of Democracy on the Continent a less probable event than ever. We must not, however, judge by outward appearances. A few years, or even months, may totally change the political aspect of the European kingdoms. There are *hidden fires* and *under currents* at work, the operation of which is slow and gradual, but the final results of which are, to borrow M. Guizot's metaphor, a "sudden explosion."

of the extent to which this principle prevails on the Continent. The subject, it will be remembered, is the empire of the term Democracy over the public mind in France, the causes of which having been explained, the author proceeds thus:—

“Such being the fact, the empire of the word DEMOCRACY is not to be regarded as a *transitory* or *local* accident. It is the development,—others would say,—the explosion, of all the elements of human nature throughout all the ranks, and all the depths of society; and, consequently, the open, general, continuous, inevitable struggle of its good and evil instincts; of its virtues and its vices,—whether to improve, or to corrupt,—to raise, or to abase,—to create, or to destroy.” (Guizot on Democracy, c. i., *sub fine.*)

Now, with such a testimony before us, who will say that the idea of a Continental Papal republic is altogether chimerical? Popery can unite\* itself with Democracy as easily as it can with despotism, and the example of America, where it has of late been making such rapid strides, is sufficient proof that there is no essential antagonism between Romish supremacy and republican liberty.

With regard to the ten horns, it will be seen that according to the paraphrase given of the angel's words, these ten horns represent ten lesser kingdoms, which were to come into existence about the same time with the Carlovingian Empire, and unite together in upholding that combined system of ecclesiastical and political

\* Have we not had clear proof of this in the late French Revolution? Did not the priests take part with the Republicans when they saw them the stronger party? Where was there a tree of liberty planted, that there was not a priest to bless it?

dominion of which the empire and the Papacy were the practical development. They were to be of one mind, and give their strength and power to the beast.\*

Now it has already been shown, that the Empire of Charlemagne was formed out of ten kingdoms into which the Western Roman Empire was divided after it had been overturned by the barbarous nations from the north in the fifth century. And it has also been shown, that the territory which that empire occupied continues to this day to be divided into ten kingdoms, all of them subject to the Papacy.† Consequently, what we may anticipate is, that these ten kingdoms, having renounced altogether the monarchical and aristocratical form of government; in other words, having abolished all hereditary distinctions and privileges, and having become pure democracies, will still uphold for a time the dominion of Rome, and assist her in opposing the pro-

\* There is a passage in Voltaire's "Age of Louis XIV." strikingly illustrative of this part of the prophecy. It is headed, "Of the States of Europe before Louis XIV." "The Christian part of Europe (excepting Muscovy) had long been in such a situation, that it might be considered as *one great republic*, divided into several states, some monarchical and others mixed; some aristocratical, others popular, but all corresponding with one another, all having the same foundation for their religion, although divided into several sects; and all having the same principles of political and natural law, unknown in the other parts of the world."—*Siècle de Louis XIV.*, c. i.

† The Empire of Charlemagne extended from the Ebro on the west, to the Elbe, or Vistula, on the east; and from the Duchy of Beneventum on the south, to the Eyder, the boundary between Germany and Denmark, on the north; and consequently comprised within it the countries now called France, Spain, Italy, Germany, and Hungary. (See "Decline and Fall," vol. ix., p. 180.) It is in these countries, therefore, that we must look for the ten horns of the beast, and not in the more extensive territories of the ancient Roman Empire. It is a remarkable fact that to this day the influence and dominion of Rome is confined within the above-named limits. (See the map prefixed to this volume.)

gress of evangelical truth by persecuting, and, perhaps, putting to death, the faithful preachers of the Gospel.

This union, however, between the Papal Church, and the democratical states of the empire, will not be of long continuance. "The horns which thou sawest on the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." Here, let it be observed, it is not the beast that destroys the harlot, but the *ten horns*. Implying, I imagine, that it is when they shall cease to be joined together by a common bond of union; when they shall cease, that is, to acknowledge Rome to be the mother and mistress of all Churches, then it is that they shall begin to hate her, and war against her, and consume her with fire; both the city of Rome itself, and that Church of which she is the centre and head.

Such, I am inclined to think, is the true interpretation of this deeply interesting and important prophecy.

There are two points, however, here, which call for a fuller and more accurate discussion than I thought it expedient to give them whilst endeavouring to present the reader with a connected comprehensive view of the meaning of this symbolic beast; these are, the colour of the beast, and *the duration* of the seventh head. To these I would now direct attention. And, first—

#### THE SCARLET COLOUR OF THE BEAST.

The question is, whether this scarlet colour implies the splendour of Royal magnificence, as exhibited, for example, in the pomp and costliness of the Papal Court, or whether it has not rather a *moral* meaning, and does not point to the *sanguinary character* of the power of which this beast is the symbol. Mr. Elliott, the

most able advocate of the former view, contends that the original word (*κοκκινον*) is synonymous with *πορφύρεος*, *purple*, and that it refers, probably, not to the colour of the beast himself, but of his trappings, or *housings*, which he supposes may have so entirely covered his body as to have made him appear to be of the colour of his trappings. But admitting that *κοκκινος*, *scarlet*, was a Royal colour, as well as *πορφυρεος*, *purple*; yet would it be a correct way of speaking to say, that an animal was the colour of *the trappings* with which he might happen to be adorned? For example, suppose a lady to be riding upon a black or grey horse with a scarlet saddle-cloth, what should we say to the man who should solemnly declare that he had seen a lady riding upon a horse of a bright scarlet colour? \* Now if the impropriety, not to say falsehood, of such a way of speaking, would be manifest in an ordinary case, can we for a moment suppose that it would be adopted in the Word of God? I think, then, that the *κοκκινον*, *scarlet*, must refer to the colour of the beast himself, and not of his trappings.

But now comes the question as to the symbolical import of this colour. Has it a moral meaning? or, does it simply imply, as before said, the splendour and magnificence of the empire represented by the beast? But surely there can be little doubt on this head. Had the scarlet colour referred to the housings, as

\* Mr. Elliott quotes the phrase *purpurei tyranni* from Horace. But the cases are so obviously different, that I almost wonder he should have made the reference. The *purpurei* in the one case is merely a poetical epithet, and every one knows that it refers to the robes usually worn by kings; but in the other case the *κοκκινος* is part of a graphic description, and cannot without unjustifiable wresting of words from their natural meaning be understood of anything but the beast himself.

Mr. Elliott assumes, then, indeed, I should have at once admitted his explanation of it; but seeing that it is the colour of the beast himself, it must, I think, have a moral signification. And what, then, may that be? To determine this point, we must first have an accurate idea of the colour itself. Now it is an indisputable fact, that the Greek word translated *scarlet*, is derived from the name of a worm, or insect, used in dyeing, very much resembling what we now call *cochineal*, and that the dye obtained from it was a *blood red crimson*.\* Further, it is certain that this colour is used in the Old Testament as an emblem of blood. Thus, in the ceremonial rites directed to be observed in the cleansing of the leper, (Lev. xiv. 4,) the *scarlet* combined with the cedar and hyssop was undoubtedly the symbol of the atoning blood. So likewise the *scarlet wool* (ἐρίον κοκκινόν) referred to by St. Paul, Heb. ix. 19, with which, he tells us, Moses sprinkled both the book of the covenant, and all the people, was no less plainly emblematical of the same thing. Isaiah also, I think, clearly has reference to the stain of *blood-guiltiness*, when he says, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be *red like crimson* (Sept., ὡς κοκκινόν) they shall be as wool." It is evident, therefore, that the colour of this beast was a colour inseparably associated in the mind of a Jew with the shedding of blood, and the idea of blood-guiltiness

\* It answers to the Hebrew חִלְצִית which, with the adjunct שָׁרִי is the word rendered by our translators *scarlet*, throughout Exodus and Leviticus, and signifies a *worm* or *grub*, as may be seen, e.g., Psalm xxii. 6. Hence it is evident that the colour derived its name from the insect from which it was produced, just as in the Greek. The reader who wishes for fuller information on this subject may consult Kitto's "Biblical Cyclopædia," Art. *Purple*.

thereby incurred. And can we, then, any longer entertain a doubt as to the moral meaning of this colour? This beast is surely the symbol of a secular power thirsting for blood, and already deeply stained with blood violently and unjustly shed.\* And can it be necessary for me to show how true a type this beast thus viewed is of the Atheistical democratical Empire of France, seen in its real character as developed in the revolution of 1789? Certainly, if ever there was an empire whose history might be written in blood it is that. Nor were the instigators of the slaughters by which it was stained ashamed of their deeds. They rather gloried in them. The motto of their leaders was, "The tree of liberty cannot flourish except it BE WATERED BY BLOOD." "Two hundred thousand heads must fall before we can be free!" was the loudly reiterated cry of another.† "Let us," said a third, when taking counsel as to how they should proceed, "Let us," said he, as if to identify himself and party with the crimson-coloured beast of the Apocalypse, "grind enough of the RED."‡ And to this day, what is the distinctive appellation of that party, but the same blood-red crimson colour?

\* Such is the explanation given of the meaning of this colour by Victorinus, one of the most ancient Apocalyptic expositors. "The woman borne by the seven-headed beast, is the city of Rome seated on the devil, red with the blood of saints." (See History of Apocalyptic Interpretation appended to the "Horæ Apoc.," vol. iv., p. 295.)

† The monster Marat.

‡ This was the painter David. "We regret," says Sir Walter Scott, "to record of a man of genius, that David, the celebrated painter, held a seat in the Committee of Public Security. Frightfully ugly in his exterior, his mind seemed to correspond with the harshness of his looks. 'LET US GRIND ENOUGH OF THE RED!' was the professional phrase of which he made use, when sitting down to the *bloody work* of the day." — *Life of Napoleon*, vol. ii., p. 281.

But it may be objected, that the democratic French Republic of 1793, instead of supporting and upholding the Romish Church, hated and detested her, and aimed at her utter extinction—how, then, can this beast be its representative? True; and is it not said that the ten horns, which taken collectively constitute the beast in this its last form,\* shall hate the harlot, and eat her flesh and burn her with fire? And why, then, should not the acts of this beast at his first rising from the abyss, be but a specimen (a fearful one it is) of the treatment which the harlot Church shall eventually receive at his hands?

But then it may be said, What has this beast to do with Rome? What connexion is there between the French Imperial-democratic Republic (for such it eventually became), and the seven hilled city and the Empire of the Cæsars? I answer, it has much to do with Rome; there is a closer connexion between these things than may at first sight appear. Was not Napoleon, like Clovis and Charlemagne, crowned by the Bishop of Rome? Did he not give his son the title of King of Rome? And more recently, have we not seen the French Republic restoring the Roman Pontiff to his city and throne by the point of the bayonet? And do we not at this very hour see the President of that Republic throwing himself into the arms of the Romish Church, and depending mainly upon her countenance and support for the carrying

\* This idea appears to Mr. Elliott to involve an absurdity. How, he asks, can the body of the beast, and his ten horns, represent one and the same thing? Yet, why should they not? Why should not the *ten horns* represent the ten powers in which *the strength* of the beast consists; *the body*, those powers united by some common bond of union?

out his plans whatever they may be, whether for good or evil?

To speculate further would be dangerous. My object is merely to give the reader a definite idea of what I conceive to be the moral import of the red colour of this beast. It denotes, I imagine, the *sanguinary* nature of the power or empire by it symbolized; the leading feature in its character being that it lightly esteems men's lives; it makes no scruple of shedding human blood. That this characteristic feature of the beast was verified not only in the purely democratic Republic of 1793, but in the democratic Empire which succeeded, needs no further proof.

But will Infidel Democrats ever join with Papists in persecuting spiritual Christians? We cannot be sure that they will not. True, both Infidels and Romanists disclaim, *just now*, all intention of persecuting, and reject the idea with apparent abhorrence. We must not, however, too hastily conclude that the spirit of Infidelity, any more than the spirit of Romanism, is essentially opposed to religious persecution. It must be borne in mind, that the most ferocious actors in the bloody scenes of the first French Revolution began with protestations of love and goodwill towards all mankind. Let the Infidel, indeed, go on in his own way; let men be mere nominal Christians, and neither rebuke him with their tongues, nor shame him by the holiness of their lives, and there will be little danger of his becoming a persecutor. They may in that case go on harmoniously together. "The world will love its own." But let Christians be what they should be, "a peculiar people,"—let them come out and be separate, testifying, like

their Divine Master, by their lives, as well as by their profession, concerning the world, that “the deeds thereof are evil;”—and the world will hate them as it hated him; and we should perhaps hear the philanthropic Atheist, in spite of his liberal principles, joining with the Romanist in uttering the old cry, “Away with such fellows from the earth, they are not fit to live.”

Whether such a combination as this for the putting down Evangelical religion, and the extirpation of the spiritual members of Christ’s Church, will ever take place, time will show. But I think we ought to be prepared for such a result. We must never forget that Infidelity and Popery, whatever they may profess, are essentially opposed to the truth of the Gospel, and consequently must hate those who uphold and defend it.

#### THE DURATION OF THE BEAST’S SEVENTH HEAD.

There is no point of apocalyptic interpretation which has occasioned commentators more difficulty, and about which there has been greater difference of opinion, than as to the meaning of this seventh head. Whilst there is a general agreement in regard to the six former heads, which are admitted to represent the six forms of government before mentioned—viz., *Kings, Consuls, Dictators, Decemvirs, Military Tribunes, and Emperors*,—the explanations given of the seventh head, and, as a necessary consequence, of the *supposed* eighth (for I would again remind the reader that there is no eighth *head* on the beast, nor mentioned in the text), are various and conflicting. Five different solutions have been proposed of the difficulties connected with this subject.

1. Mede makes the seventh head what he calls the *Demi-Cæsar*, meaning the Western Emperor who

reigned after the final division of the empire into East and West, under Arcadius and Honorius. "This Half-Cæsar," says he, "continued about sixty years, or not much more, which is the cause why St. John says, '*it should continue but a short space.*'" The eighth head he explains thus: "The last head is for the beginning but a seventh, because it immediately succeeds the sixth—viz., of the Cæsars; but for its continuance and ending it is an eighth, because it outlived a seventh—viz., that of the *Demi-Cæsars*. For the Papal sovereignty began with and as soon as the *Demi-Cæsars*, and so it was a *seventh* as well as they; but they *continued but a short time*, and the Papal outlived and succeeded them, and so was an eighth *a parte post*, though but a seventh *a parte ante*."\* The reader may perhaps understand this explanation, for myself, I must candidly confess I do not.

2. Bishop Newton makes the seventh head to be the dukedom of Rome, established soon after the extinction of the Western Empire under the exarchate of Ravenna. "Rome," he observes, "had never experienced this form of government before; and this I conceive to be 'the other,' which, in the apostle's days, 'was not yet come,' and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. For Rome was reduced to a dukedom in the year 566, and the city revolted from the Eastern Emperor to the Pope in the year 727, which is 'a short space' in comparison of the Imperial power which preceded, and the Papal power which followed." "But," adds the Bishop, "you may still hesitate possibly whether this is properly a new form of government, Rome being still subject to the Imperial

\* Mede's Works, b. iii., p. 596.

power; and according as you determine this point, 'the beast that was, and is not,' will appear to be 'the seventh,' or 'eighth.' If you reckon this a new form of government, the beast that now is, is 'the eighth;' if you do *not* reckon this a new form of government, the beast is 'of the seven;' but whether he be 'of the seventh' or 'eighth,' he is the last.'" But this explanation is, to my mind, even more unintelligible and less satisfactory than Mede's. For what have we to do in a case like this with this or that man's "reckoning?" Surely it is not what any man may "reckon," that is to determine the meaning and show the verification of the prophecy, but what is actually written. Such an explanation scarcely deserves a serious refutation.

3. Mr. Cuninghame explains the seventh head of the Christian Emperors from Constantine to Augustulus, and the eighth of the decem-regal confederacy of Western Europe under the Papacy. But to this view there is, as it seems to me, one insuperable objection, that it makes the Christian Emperors who upheld and supported the true Church, and certainly never persecuted the saints, the head of the wild beast, whose characteristic it is to "make war with the saints."

4. A fourth interpretation is that of Mr. Faber, who contends that the sixth Imperial head is properly "the first," having subsisted all through from Romulus until the dissolution of the Germanic Empire, in 1806; and that the seventh head arose in 1804, in the Emperorship of Napoleon, which was wounded, apparently, to death in 1814, but will be again revived.\*

\* Mr. Faber having kindly furnished me with a summary statement of his views in a recent letter to myself, I think it but justice to him, as his

But the Western, that is, the proper Roman Empire, unquestionably became extinct, as Gibbon states it, A.D. 476, in Augustulus, and then it was, therefore, that the sixth head of the beast received its deadly wound. If this were not the case—if the Greek Emperor, as Mr. Faber contends, were still the Emperor of Rome, and, therefore, the sixth head was still subsisting in him,—how could Charlemagne have been crowned by the Pope, and saluted as “Consul and Augustus, most mighty Emperor of the Romans?”

5. There remains but one other interpretation to be noticed—that of Mr. Elliott. Having stated the

opinions have been misrepresented, to put the reader in possession of them in his own words: “I do not suppose the *sixth* head of the beast to be the Napoleon Emperorship; on the contrary, I deem the Roman Emperorship, or (as Tacitus calls it) Princedom, to be the *first* head, commencing with Romulus, lying in abeyance during the rule of five other heads, and then restored by Augustus; in which particular of abeyance and restoration it exactly corresponds with the vicissitudes of the five intermediate heads. This head—properly the *first*, though often rated as the sixth, whereas, in truth, the Triumvirate was the sixth,—this head I am taught by history to view as variously subsisting either in the East or in the West, or in both simultaneously, down to A.D. 1806, when, like the five intermediate heads, it *fell* (to use the language of the prophecy), and fell never to rise again. Since, then, all the six first heads had fallen in A.D., 1806, we are compelled, unless we would make the symbolical beast headless, to look out for the rise of the *seventh* head, either in A.D. 1806, or immediately before. Accordingly, a new and distinct head arose in A.D. 1804, which has already fulfilled two of the prophetic conditions of the seventh head. The French Emperorship, or Franco-Roman Emperorship, has been—1. Short-lived; and 2. Slain by the sword of foreign violence. Hence, more than twenty years ago, I scrupled not to pronounce the French Emperorship, with the sovereignty of Rome united to it, to be the predicted seventh head, and, as I could discover consistently with the historical record of facts, no other polity which could occupy the place of the seventh head, I, *then even*, confidently looked forward to the revival of the short-lived and sword-slain Emperorship of the French. If no such revival should occur, I shall be convicted of error, but if it *should* occur, my interpretation would then possess a demonstration only not mathematical.”

difficulties connected with this seventh head, and shown the objections lying against the explanations of previous commentators, he proceeds to give his own view of the subject, which is in substance as follows:—This seventh head he supposes to be *the new form of government established by Dioclesian*, which, as a Pagan persecuting power—*i.e.*, as the head of the beast,—lasted only during that Emperor's life-time, being wounded to death by Constantine, and the Christian Emperors, his successors. As this is a point of so much importance, I will give Mr. Elliott's solution of the difficulty in his own words:—“It must already have been observed by the considerate reader, that could some change of government be shown to have arisen in the Roman Empire between the time of St. John's imprisonment, when the Imperial, or sixth head, was in power, and that of the establishment of Christianity by Constantine, there would then open before us a simple solution of all the grand difficulties of the question. Now, it has uniformly been taken for granted by expositors, that the sixth Imperial head continued unchanged *in Pagan* form till Constantine, and *in Christian* until overthrown by the Goths and Heruli. And so indeed it did, *in a certain sense*,—I mean as regards the *name* of the thing, the Imperial title. But as regards the *reality* of things, the case was very different. For on turning to Gibbon, and glancing at that part of his historical index of contents which has reference to the era immediately preceding the establishment of Christianity in the Roman Empire, both *the fact* and *the symbol* that we seek—(*viz.*, the badge of *absolute Asiatic sovereignty*)—arrest the eye connectedly, even as if placed there for the very purpose of illustrating the Apocalyptic

enigma: ‘*Dioclesian assumes the diadem, and introduces the Persian ceremonial. New form of administration.*’ The notice thus summarily given is explained and enlarged on in the history. The transition of the Roman Empire from its *Imperial*, or *sixth* head, introduced by *Augustus*, to a new and seventh, introduced by Dioclesian, is thus distinctly declared: ‘Like Augustus, Dioclesian may be considered as the founder of a new empire;’ and the change is then illustrated somewhat fully, as affecting alike the official dignity of the Prince governing, and the constitution and administration of the Empire governed.”\*

Thus Mr. Elliott considers that the seventh head “not yet come,” was the new system of government introduced by Dioclesian in the year 285, which continued, he supposes, until wounded, in the first instance, by Constantine, and finally by Theodosius, the latter of whom inflicted the last “deadly wound” on Paganism, and thus destroyed that “seventh head” of which Dioclesian was the originator. The *eighth* head he assumes to be the Papacy, and, as a consequence, he makes the Papacy also the scarlet-coloured beast from the abyss. To this explanation, it strikes me, there are two great and insuperable objections.

In the first place, it assumes that the destruction of Paganism was the destruction of the seventh head; thus making Paganism and the seventh head one and the same thing. But is there not some confusion of ideas here? The seventh head, according to Mr. Elliott’s own exposition, is *a form of government*, and the wounding of this head to death must surely imply the apparent extinction of that empire of which the beast whose head

\* *Horæ Apoc.*, pp. 111, 112, 113.

it is, is the representative; for the head being mortally wounded, the animal to which it belongs dies. Now, was the *Roman Empire* in any sense thus wounded unto death either by Constantine or Theodosius? Paganism, indeed, received from them a deadly wound, but surely not *the head of the empire*.

But, secondly, this explanation assumes that the beast from the abyss is identical with the beast from the sea, and that both symbolize the Papacy, neither of which assumptions, as I have elsewhere endeavoured to show (see c. xiii.), can be consistently maintained.

What, then, shall we say of this seventh head? Can no satisfactory explanation be given of it? I think there can; but it is one which at first sight must appear paradoxical. The grand difficulty connected with the interpretation of this seventh head originates, I am inclined to think, in a misapprehension of the period assigned for its duration. It is generally taken for granted by commentators, that the duration of the seventh head is to be very *short*,—short comparatively with that of the other heads. Almost all the expositions I have ever seen go upon this assumption.\* But is this assumption based upon such sure grounds as to be indisputable? That appears to me very doubtful. Let us examine the original text.

The whole verse in the Greek stands thus: “*Και βασιλεις ἑπτα εἰσιν οἱ πεντε ἔπεσαν και ὁ εἰς ἐστιν και ὁ ἄλλος ὄνπω ἤλθε και ὅταν ἐλθῃ, ὀλιγον αὐτον δεῖ μειναι,*” *i.e.*, “And they are seven kings; the five have fallen, and the one is, and the other is not yet come; and

\* Vitringa's is the only exception. He thinks that the Greek might be rendered, *aliquantum manere, he must continue a little time—i.e.*, some considerable time. But his explanation of the heads, according to this rendering, is anything but satisfactory. See Appendix.

when he shall have come, he must continue a little." Now the question is as to the true meaning of the last clause, *he must continue a little*. Does this necessarily imply, that the period assigned for the duration of this seventh head is very brief? I think not. On the contrary, many considerations incline me to take quite another view of the subject.

And, first, as to the grammatical meaning of the original. The word *μειναι* is never used, that I am aware of, in the New Testament, with reference to any act or transaction of *positively* short duration. It always implies rather long continuance in the same occupation, or state, or condition. And particularly in the writings of St. John it is constantly joined with *αίωνα*, *for ever*. For example, c. xii. 34, *Christ abideth (μένει) for ever*. Again, 1 Ep. ii. 17, *He that doeth the will of God ABIDETH (μένει) for ever*. In fact, the instances in which the word is thus used are numberless, as may be seen by running the eye down the columns of a Greek concordance. It is, then, highly probable that the verb has a similar force here, and refers rather to the long continuance of the seventh head of the beast, than to the shortness of its existence. This view of the meaning of the word is greatly strengthened by the connexion in which it occurs, being coupled with the impersonal verb *δει*, which is both affirmative and intensive. *He must continue*. That is, this seventh head is not to be of that short-lived evanescent character of most of the others; but when he is come, it is decreed by God that he shall remain, and exercise his power for some time. Nor is the force of the *δει* negated by the *ολιγον*; for this latter word does not necessarily imply absolutely a very short time.

On the contrary, in this very book we find it used with reference to a period of more than a thousand years—the whole interval, in fact, from the establishment of Christianity in the Roman Empire, to the Millennium. I allude to chap. xii. 12, where it is said of Satan, “He is come down to the earth, having great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time” (ὀλιγον καιρον). Now here we find this word used in relation to a period of almost precisely the same continuance as that which I suppose to be the duration of the seventh head. Thus, then, it appears that there is nothing in the grammatical construction of the text opposed to my view.

But, in the second place, the context, it seems to me, is altogether in favour of it. Why is the duration of this seventh head spoken of *at all*? To mark its brevity? Then its existence must be brief, indeed. For one of those previous heads continued only *two years*, and others of them not much longer.\* So that if the reason why the duration of this head is noted be on account of its *brevity*, it ought not to exceed two or three years. For it should be observed that this seventh head is the only one in regard to which anything is said respecting time. And we may, therefore, I think, infer, that the period of its continuance is marked to indicate either that it would last a *shorter* time, or else a *much longer* time, than any of the others. But a shorter time, it well could not. May we not, then, infer, that it was to last a longer time than they? This seems to me the more probable inference of the two. For

\* Viz., the Decemviral power. So Tacitus: “*neque decemviralis potestas ultra biennium, neque tribunorum militum (the fifth head) diu valuit.*”

it is certainly more natural to suppose that the word "continue" has reference rather to length, than to shortness of duration.

Another consideration which weighs with me is, that the beast from the sea, which I suppose to be the seventh head, is the only one of the beasts the duration of whose reign is definitely fixed. This seems to me to point to a connexion between them. Of the one it is said, "and power was given to him to act," or rather, continue,\* "forty and two months." Of the other—"he must continue a little." The period of the *acting* of the one, and the *continuance* of the other, is probably identical.

Upon the whole, then, I cannot but think that the interpretation I would give of this clause is the true one, and that the words, "when he is come he *must continue a little*," mark *enigmatically* (in accordance with the general character of this book) the comparatively long continuance of that power of which the seventh head is the representative.

Thus understood, everything runs smoothly, and the visions both of this chapter and the thirteenth, become easy of explanation. The sixth head, "that which was" in St. John's time, was wounded to death in 476, when the Western Empire was extinguished in Augustulus. The seventh head soon after came up in the form of the revived Roman Empire, created by the joint agency of the Popes and Frankish monarchs, which seventh head *continued* for upwards of a thousand years, until it was at length cut down, as we have seen, by the sword of Napoleon in 1806. About the same time, the

\* See critical note on the text.

Atheistical Democratico-imperial power\* — the beast from the abyss—arose, and having slain the witnesses; is now (as we suppose) about to bear the harlot Church for a time, and suffer itself to be overridden by her, but will eventually turn upon its imperious mistress, and tear her to pieces.

Such is the view which, after mature deliberation and much patient investigation, I have been led to take of the meaning of this enigmatical announcement (for such I cannot but regard it) concerning the duration of the seventh head. At the same time, I am quite ready to admit that the very novelty of the interpretation is a strong presumptive argument against it, and should cause it to be looked upon with suspicion, and received with caution; for as a friend, for whose judgment in such matters I have great respect, in a letter upon the subject, has observed, “It scarcely seems credible that a phrase, which for seventeen centuries has universally been supposed to signify a *short* time, should, after all, be discovered to mean a *long* time.” Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind, that, supposing these words, “he must continue a little,” to denote the brevity of the existence of this seventh head, no satisfactory explanation (for I cannot regard Mr. Elliott’s as an exception) has hitherto been given of them. Time, the great interpreter of prophecy, will ere long show who is right. One thing is certain: whatever, or whoever, this beast and his adherents may be, both he and they are doomed to

\* It may be well to remind the reader, that the present President of the French nation was chosen by universal suffrage, and by whatever title, therefore, he may be called, he is to be regarded as the representative of the *democratical principle*. He rules not by *the grace of God*, but by *the will of the people*. So did Louis-Philippe.

destruction. They may make war with the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them, for he is King of kings, and Lord of lords.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON.

THIS chapter is a fuller development of the prophecy contained in the 19th verse of chap. xvi., which describes the consequences of the effusion of the seventh vial. Amongst these is the destruction of the mystical Babylon; that is to say, of the city and Church of Rome. "And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." Having in the preceding chapter been fully instructed as to the "*manner* of the great harlot," we are now informed of the fearful end that awaits her, and are presented with a dramatic and pictorial representation of the terrific judgments hanging over her head, shortly to be accomplished. These are exhibited in imagery calculated to impress the mind with an awful sense of the magnitude of her crimes, and inspire us with a solemn dread of participating in any degree in her guilt. This, no doubt, is the reason of those minute and circumstantial details we here meet with, that, occupying, as they do, so large a portion of the Revelation, they may make the deeper and more lasting impression upon the mind, and awaken in those who read them with

a spiritually-enlightened understanding, a sense of the enormity of the guilt of that Church to which they refer, and of the danger of continuing within her pale.

The contents of this chapter may be divided into three portions :

1. The proclamation of the angel endued with great power. vers. 1—3.

2. The warning voice from heaven. vers. 4—20.

3. The mighty angel with the millstone. vers. 21—24.

### 1. THE PROCLAMATION OF THE EARTH-ENLIGHTENING ANGEL. Vers. 1—3.

The reader cannot fail to be struck with the resemblance between this proclamation and that of the angel flying in the mid-heaven (c. xiv. 8). Indeed, so great is the correspondence between them, that we might almost be led to think that these two angels represent one and the same agent, were it not, that the former was seen flying in *the midst* of heaven ; this descends *from* heaven and enlightens the earth with his glory. We must then, I imagine, regard this angel as the symbol of some great preacher, or company of preachers, who, like Moses, shall be “mighty in word and in deed ;” and who, going forth in the name of the Lord and in the power of the Spirit, shall proclaim in the ears of the adherents of the Papal Church, the approaching fall of Rome and all connected with her ; and at the same time point out in plain and forcible language, the extent of her corruptions, and the hateful character of her idolatry and superstition. Such a preacher, and such preaching, is greatly needed. It is now more than three hundred years since Luther made a proclamation like to this. But the echoes of his voice, which at the time were heard throughout Christen-

dom, and made, as we have seen, the Roman Pontiff tremble on his throne, have now nearly died away. We want another Luther to stand up and boldly proclaim, as he did in the ears *of the Romish priests and doctors*, that Rome is Babylon, and her Church the purple-clad harlot. And such an one, we doubt not, will ere long appear. And this great preacher, whoever he may be, will not merely expose the errors and follies of the Romish system. He will proclaim the everlasting Gospel, and set forth the truth as it is in Jesus, with an energy and power such as never perhaps has yet been witnessed; so that "the earth," *i.e.*, the Roman earth, "will be enlightened by his glory." There is something sublime and heart-cheering in this idea. The messenger who brings the announcement of the mystic Babylon's approaching fall, will bring with him spiritual enlightenment, and be the instrument of removing that veil of darkness which now hangs over the minds of those in her communion. All this was indeed, in a certain measure, fulfilled in the preaching of Luther and his fellow-workers; but this angel belongs evidently to the seventh vial, and cannot therefore prefigure the same agent, or agents, as the angel flying in the mid-heaven, who must, I think, belong to the period of the Reformation; besides which, the enlightenment of the Roman earth consequent upon the descent of this angel will probably far exceed what took place in the sixteenth century. Although, therefore, I admit that there are many things here which might with much appearance of probability be applied to Luther and his companions, I think the fulfilment of the prophecy is yet future, and that we may expect that God will send ANOTHER MESSENGER ere long to proclaim in the ears of Roman

Catholics in a louder and more powerful voice than even Luther's, the corruptions of the Romish Church, and the truths of the everlasting Gospel.

2. THE WARNING VOICE FROM HEAVEN. Ver. 4—20.

“*And I heard another voice from heaven,*” &c.—This voice is the voice of Christ, for it says, “*Come out of her, MY people.*” And we may therefore infer from hence, that at the period when the earth-enlightening angel shall proclaim the fall of Babylon, Christ will speak to the hearts of many in the Church of Rome, and, by the effectual working of his grace, bring them out of her communion. And this consideration is cheering and encouraging in two points of view. It shows that Christ *has* his people even in Babylon; and it shows that at the appointed time they will have their eyes opened to see her errors, and the danger of continuing associated with her, and come *out* of her. Who can tell how many Roman Catholics may be led by these very words, the Scriptures being now more freely circulated amongst them, to examine accurately into the foundations of their creed and the pretensions of the Church of Rome, and having discovered their hollowness, to renounce her communion? If so, then surely will the prophecy have a literal fulfilment; it will be Christ speaking to them as by a voice from heaven. God grant that that time may speedily come! God grant that the pious members of the Romish Church (for many such we may hope there are), struck by this solemn warning, may wake up to a sense of their danger, and flee from the fierceness of that fiery wrath which is surely hanging over her!

The remainder of this address requires little in the

way of exposition. The leading points in it are these :—

Ist. The suddenness of the destruction which awaits the Roman Church and city. “*She saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day.*” Rome, then, both as an ecclesiastical community and as a city, will be totally unprepared for the destruction that shall come upon her. Just as the wrath of God is about to burst in fury on her head, she will be congratulating herself upon her strength and stability, and, confident in her power, will be flattering herself with the continuance and increase of her glory. What a fearful view is this of the extent of that judicial blindness which God has sent upon that apostate Church! And can we not even now discern indications of its fulfilment? When was the Church of Rome ever more boastful than at the present time? When did she ever speak more arrogantly and more confidently? Who can read the apostolical letter of Pius IX., in which he divides England into dioceses and appoints an Archbishop of Westminster, and not perceive in that letter plain indications of that spirit of congratulatory security which says, “I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow?” \*

\* Take, *e.g.*, the following :—“Thus then in the most flourishing kingdom of England there will be established one ecclesiastical province, consisting of one Archbishop, or Metropolitan Head, and twelve Bishops, his suffragans, by whose exertions and pastoral cares we trust God will grant to Catholicity in that country A FRUITFUL AND DAILY INCREASING EXTENSION.” Similar to this is also the language of Cardinal Wiseman in his Pastoral Letter, dated October 7, 1850 :—“The great work then is complete. Catholic England has been restored to its orbit in the ecclesiastical firmament, from which its light *had long vanished*, and begins now anew its course of regularly adjusted action round THE CENTRE OF UNITY, THE SOURCE OF JURISDICTION, OF LIGHT, AND OF VIGOUR.”

2. The second leading feature here is the punishment inflicted. “*Therefore in one day shall her plagues come, death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be burnt with fire.*” It is obvious that this language in its literal acceptation can apply only to the *city* of Rome. But the destruction of the ecclesiastical polity of Rome will necessarily follow upon the destruction of its capital city, that being “the centre of unity and source of jurisdiction.” When, therefore, Rome shall be thus burnt with fire and utterly destroyed, like Babylon of old, as she assuredly will, then will the Romish Church also entirely fall to pieces. (See below, ver. 21.)

3. The next point deserving of notice is, the lamentation of the kings of the earth over her whom they once admired and honoured. It may seem inconsistent to suppose that the very powers which have been the instruments of Rome’s humiliation and destruction, and who are represented in the preceding chapter (ver. 16) as “hating her and making her desolate,” should, now that they have accomplished her ruin, weep and lament over her. But this whole chapter, being obviously a dramatic prophecy, must not be interpreted strictly according to the letter. This lamentation of the kings of the earth, as well as that of the merchants, may be introduced simply to give the more terrific effect to the picture. Or, supposing this circumstance is to be viewed as prophetic of what shall actually take place, still there would be no inconsistency in it. For a man may lament his enemy after he has slain him; and it is possible, that those nations which shall be the instruments of Rome’s destruction, may look upon her with sorrow and weep over her, as Titus did over Jerusalem, when they see her smoking ruins in desolate heaps before them.

4. The fourth circumstance deserving of notice is, the lamentation of the merchants. Here we see plain indications that something more than a literal city, with its ordinary business and accompaniments, is intended. The mention of the merchandise of *the souls* as well as of the bodies of men (ver. 13), points to a different kind of traffic from that carried on by merchants in general, and suggests at once the meaning of the metaphor. These merchants are the priesthood, the men who make a trade of the spiritual benefits which they are supposed to have the power to confer. True it is that "God has ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel." (1 Cor. ix. 14.) But this is a very different thing from making merchandise of spiritual acts, and spiritual functions and communications. The man who faithfully preaches the Gospel is justly entitled to a fair remuneration for his services, and in receiving that remuneration he makes no traffic in the souls of men. He preaches the Gospel, not *because* money is given to him, but because God has called him to the work of the ministry, and the remuneration is bestowed because he *does* preach the Gospel. Woe be to that minister in whose case this order is reversed! But the granting of pardons, absolution, and indulgences, and the performance of masses for the benefit of the living and the dead, *upon the payment of a certain sum of money*, is quite another thing. In the one case, the money is paid as an acknowledgment of the spiritual benefit conferred; in the other, the (supposed) spiritual benefit is conferred *because the money is paid*. The money is the *price* of the indulgence, the mass, &c., and until the stipulated price is paid, the spiritual benefit is not conferred. "As soon as the money chinks at the bottom of the chest," said

that most impudent trafficker in spiritual wares, the monk Tetzels,—“as soon as the money chinks at the bottom of the chest, THE SOULS FLY OUT OF PURGATORY.”\* This may seem to be an extreme case, a sort of caricature, and not one therefore to be adduced as an exemplification of the system. But was not this man’s conduct really *a part* of the system? When the revenues derived from indulgences were openly let by the Sovereign Pontiff and farmed by secular princes, just as the tolls of a turnpike-gate or custom-house duties might be farmed, was not this making merchandise of men’s souls, and turning the floor of the temple of the living God into a mart of commerce? Yet this is what the Popes have done. In proof of this take the following statement of facts:—Prince Albert, of Mentz, was both an Archbishop and a Cardinal. Being incumbered with debts, and unable even to pay for his *pallium*,† he had recourse to the same means of raising money as his superior. “He solicited from the Pope the contract for the ‘farming’ all the indulgences, or, as they expressed it at Rome, ‘*the contract for the sins of the Germans.*’”

“At times the Popes kept the speculation in their own hands. Sometimes they farmed it to others, as in certain States is still done with gaming-houses. Albert proposed to Leo to divide the profits. Leo in accepting the bargain required immediate payment of the price of the *pallium*. Albert, who was all the while depending on the indulgences for the means of discharging this claim,

\* D’Aubigné’s “Hist. Reform.,” vol. i., p. 347.

† “The *pallium* was a garment made of white wool, ornamented with black crosses, and blessed by the Pope, who was accustomed to send it to the Archbishops as a sign of their jurisdiction. It cost from 26,000 to 30,000 florins.”—D’Aubigné, vol. i., p. 293.

applied to the Fuggers (rich merchants), who, thinking it a safe investment, made the required advances, and were appointed cashiers in this great undertaking." \*

Such is a specimen of the manner in which the Church of Rome has made traffic of men's souls; by her avarice

" O'er casting the world with mourning; under foot  
Treading the good, and raising bad men up."

Dante, *Hell*, c. xix., l. 154.

Well may the official agents of such a system dread its exposure! Well may they weep and lament when all the sources of their unhallowed gains shall be dried up and abolished for ever!

5. The fifth, and last circumstance that calls for notice is, the mighty angel with the millstone. There is an awful sublimity in this last act of the prophetic drama which exceeds anything of the kind ever devised by the imagination of man. Let us endeavour to realise the things done. An angelic form of gigantic dimensions seizes upon a vast rock like a millstone with both his hands, and hurls it with violence into the sea. It descends with a loud noise upon the smooth surface of the waves; the waters foam and dash around it, but the stone disappears, and, sinking to the bottom, is seen no more. Thus then will it be when the hour of the mystic Babylon's destruction is come. There will be a great commotion of the nations; "an earthquake such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great" (c. xvi. 18); but the crash of nations which her fall will occasion will soon pass away; the rocking earth will again become quiet, and Rome, the cause of so much

\* D'Aubigné's "Hist. Reform.," vol. i., p. 298.

agitation and disquietude, having disappeared from the face of the earth, will be consigned to eternal oblivion.

Ver. 24. "*And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints,*" &c.—It is unnecessary to repeat what has been already said on this head in commenting on the preceding chapter. Unquestionably for the last thousand years Rome has been the great promoter of persecution. If Protestants have also persecuted, they learnt the lesson in her school, and the guilt of the blood of all the good and holy men which has been shed in Christendom up to this hour rests upon her head. "The voice of a brother's blood crieth out unto God from the ground," and fearful will be the execution of that retributive vengeance which will ere long overtake her.

But let us not as Protestants overlook the great lesson which this awful exhibition of the final destiny of Rome and her Church, is intended to convey. Let us listen to the heavenly voice which says, "COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, THAT YE RECEIVE NOT OF HER PLAGUES." We *have* come out of her, and shall we again return to her? We have come out of her, and shall we again subject our necks to her yoke, and surrender that liberty which our ancestors purchased for us at the expense of their blood? God forbid. It has pleased the Almighty Ruler of the universe to raise this country to the highest point of greatness, and, at the same time, to exempt it in a great measure from the evils with which the continental kingdoms during the last half-century have been visited. And why? It is not for us, indeed, to attempt to pry too curiously into the secrets of the Divine providence. One of the attributes of Jehovah is, that "he is a God that hideth himself." "He giveth no account of his matters." Still, we are warranted in drawing certain conclusions

from facts, and, seeing that it is as a Protestant nation, the avowed adversary alike of Popery, Atheism, and Infidelity, that England has become "the chief of the nations," may we not ascribe her greatness to her national advocacy of the truth of the Gospel? And ought we not to fear lest, if we renounce our Protestant character, and allow ourselves in any sense to be again identified with Rome, we should become "partakers of her sins," and be involved in the judgments that await her? Let us then "hold fast that we have." It is impossible to contemplate our present position without feeling *some* anxiety. We may hope, notwithstanding, that this country is still destined to "shine as a light in the world, holding forth the word of life," in opposition alike to Infidelity, Rationalism, and Popery.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

THIS chapter consists of three distinct portions, each of which must be considered separately. The first eight verses contain the *epinikion*, or song of triumph over Babylon, commemorating her destruction, and announcing at the same time the arrival of the marriage supper of the Lamb. (1—8.) The two next verses are a sort of interlude, consisting of a short colloquy between John and the angel who had interpreted to him the vision of the great harlot. (9—10.) The remainder of the chapter is occupied with a description of the great last battle, or rather war, which is to introduce the millennium. (11—21.)

## THE SONG OF TRIUMPH. Ver. 1—8.

In these verses we have another example of that sublimity of inspiration which so infinitely surpasses all mere human compositions. In the preceding chapter we had the kings and merchants of the earth weeping over Babylon, fallen and desolate. In striking contrast with the lamentations of these the enemies of God and the Lamb, we have here all heaven rejoicing in her fall, and ascribing praises to the Lord of heaven for the manifestation of his righteous judgments.

The Church above begins the song: "After these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven saying, 'Hallelujah; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God.' The four-and-twenty elders and the four living creatures, the representatives of the Church below, take up the theme, and, having responded with solemn earnestness in the loud AMEN, echo back the triumphant HALLELUJAH. A voice from the throne encourages these expressions of holy triumph, and exhorts the servants of God to continue their praises. And now, as if inspired with fresh vigour and animated with increased ardour by the voice of their King, heaven and earth, the Church above and the Church below, joining in a universal chorus, make the skies ring with the joyous sound: "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." What can be conceived more magnificent without pretence, more truly sublime without affectation, than all this?

But ought we thus to rejoice in the fall and destruc-

tion of our enemies, be they ever so wicked? Assuredly not, regarded as our personal enemies; but it is not regarded as personal individual enemies that we are here taught to rejoice over the fall of the apostate Church and her members, but as the enemies of Christ and his Gospel, as the foes of God and man. It is not that the adversaries have been slain; it is not simply that innocent blood has been avenged, that we are called upon to rejoice; but it is that God is glorified and his truth vindicated, and his people are delivered out of the hand of the oppressor.

But what mean these words, "For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready?" This question opens to us a wide and interesting field of inquiry. Upon the sense we attach to "the marriage supper of the Lamb," and "the preparedness of the bride," will mainly depend the view we take of the pre-millennial advent and the personal reign. For the marriage supper of the Lamb and the reception of the bride, now made ready, it is evident, are events that immediately succeed the judgment of the great harlot. No sooner is her destruction completed than we hear the announcement, "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Now, in c. xxi. 9, the apostle is called away to see "*the bride, the Lamb's wife,*" and he had previously beheld "*the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*" If, then, the event announced in these words, "For the marriage of the Lamb is come," &c., be the same event as the descent of the new Jerusalem out of heaven, more largely described in c. xxi., then does it follow of necessity that the personal advent will *precede* the millennial reign, for,

beyond all question, the condition of the Church as described in that chapter implies the personal presence of the Bridegroom, and, as a consequence, his previous advent.

The grand question, therefore, to be determined is, whether the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and the descent of the bride from heaven, are events that precede, or that come after the Millennium. If the marriage-supper be pre-millennial, then undoubtedly will the Saviour's advent also be pre-millennial; but if the supper be post-millennial, so will the advent.

Now, I enter upon this inquiry, I confess, with much diffidence and hesitation. Although apparently a purely speculative question, there are few points of difference which have given rise to more angry controversy, or which appear to have occasioned more coldness and alienation of mind amongst pious men holding different opinions upon it, than this. The error here, as in most similar cases, has been, that both parties have treated their opponents with too little respect. The one say, "You disregard the plain words of Scripture;" the others say, "By adhering to the strict literal sense you make the Bible appear absurd, and disgust men of sound and intelligent minds." But may we not here adopt the apostle's language in reference to another subject, and say, to the one party, "Why dost thou judge thy brother?" and to the other, "Why dost thou set at nought thy brother?" When we see men of whose earnest piety and sound scriptural knowledge we cannot entertain a doubt, holding different opinions on this question, ought it not to make us diffident of our own views, and cautious how we speak contemptuously of the views of others? "Let us not, then,

judge one another any more ; but let us follow after the things that make for peace, and the things wherewith one may edify another." On these principles, and with these feelings, let us now proceed to consider the meaning of THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB.

This language, we know, is figurative, still it refers to a *real event*, which must take place at a specific time. And therefore, I think, this marriage supper cannot signify indefinitely and generally merely a period of greater light and holiness than the Church has ever hitherto enjoyed ; which is the idea of those who advocate a figurative advent, and a figurative first resurrection. It does not appear to me that the language of Scripture on this head in other places can be so explained. The figure of a marriage feast is twice employed, parabolically, by our Lord ; in the parable of the king who made a marriage for his son, and in that of the ten virgins. Now, in both these parables the marriage feast is the *closing* event, and is *preceded* by the coming of the bridegroom, which coming is indisputably the second advent of our Lord. The coming in of the king to see the guests, in the former parable, and the return of the bridegroom with his bride in the latter, both of them unquestionably prefigure the same event, namely, the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory and majesty, to separate the tares from the wheat, the sheep from the goats, the nominal professors of Christianity from true believers, and to be glorified in the eyes of his people. If, then, the marriage feast be the beginning of the millennial reign, as it would seem from hence it is, and the coming of the bridegroom to celebrate the feast be the personal advent of Christ, it follows

as a necessary consequence, that that advent will be pre-millennial. And when therefore it is said, "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready," this can mean nothing less than that the time has arrived for the completion of "that mystical union which is between Christ and his Church." This is at present matter of faith, but then it will be matter of sight and experience. Now, "we love him whom we see not, and believing in him we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Pet. i. 8.) Then, we shall behold him eye to eye, and "being made like him, we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 3.) And when I say *we*, I mean the whole Church of the redeemed, both those who shall be alive at his coming, and those who, to use the apostle's words, "have fallen asleep." (1 Thess. iv. 15.) For, otherwise, how shall we explain the beatification, "Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb?" This surely implies some peculiar blessedness connected with the arrival and celebration of that mystical supper, and that a blessedness of which all the living members of his Church will be partakers. Or, is this marriage supper nothing more than those spiritual consolations and refreshments which Christians have enjoyed in all ages in communion with Christ through faith? But why, if so, the announcement, as if some new and great thing were about to take place, "The marriage of the Lamb is come?" I see not how it is possible to explain these things upon the hypothesis, that the millennial blessedness, to which the marriage feast is evidently introductory, and with which it is coincident, will be nothing more than the more general prevalence of Christian truth, and the practice of righteousness.

This question, however, will be more fully considered in commenting upon the two next chapters.

“*And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen,*” &c.—This also shows, I think, that the preparedness of the bride before mentioned, refers to the members of the Church risen and glorified. The fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. It is the wedding garment wherewith we must be clothed in order that we may be welcome guests at the marriage feast. Not merely the righteousness of Christ *imputed* to us by faith, and whereby we are justified, but the holiness of Christ, *imparted* to us by the operation of the Holy Ghost at the resurrection: a holiness spotless, unmixed, and perfect. This is that fine linen with which the believer will be clothed when, being called by the voice of the Son of God from the tomb, he will rise to “the resurrection of life.” As yet he has not put it on. He is indeed now, in this present life, sanctified in part. So far as the new man is concerned, he is made a partaker of the divine nature. He is renewed after the image of his Creator. But the renovation is partial and imperfect. The carnal mind still remains, and although he is not under its dominion, he is often by it, “sorely let and hindered in running his spiritual course:” but it will not be so when the words before us are fulfilled. Then he will *wake up* altogether in the likeness of Christ. Then “when He shall appear, he will be made like him, and see him as he is.”

This is that blessed consummation so sublimely and cheerfully described by the apostle in a passage bearing a close analogy with the above: “Christ,” he tells us, “loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he

might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the Word; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and WITHOUT BLEMISH." (Ephes. v. 27.) Happy, indeed, are those who shall be thus found by him at his coming without spot and blameless; yea, blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb! But are not these things to most of us, as regards the glorious hopes and expectations involved in them, like airy visions, having as little real subsistence in our minds as the golden palaces of a fairy tale, or the splendid imaginings of a dream? We ought to endeavour to *realise* the blessedness of the marriage supper of the Lamb.

THE COLLOQUY WITH THE ANGEL, vers. 9, 10.

"*And I fell at his feet to worship him,*" &c.—St. John appears to have thought that this angel was Christ himself, the same divine messenger who had appeared to him in the first instance, and had dictated the Epistles to the Churches. On no other ground can we account for his offering the angel divine honour, the idea of worshipping any creature being so abhorrent to the mind of a Jew. Or, if he did indeed intend to worship him *as an angel*, it must have been under the amazement and bewilderment of the moment; and certainly in no case can the act of the apostle be pleaded in justification of angel worship, seeing that the angel himself disclaimed with holy indignation the proffered honour, and reproved St. John for offering it. (See more on this head, chap. xxii. 8.)

"*For the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.*"

—This is a remarkable declaration. The angel assigns it as a reason why he ought not to be worshipped, that he was a fellow-servant with the apostle, being one of those who had the testimony of Jesus; “for,” he adds, “the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.” And what does this teach us, but that the one great end for which prophets of old were inspired, and angels at different times came from heaven to earth, was to testify of Jesus? The argument of the angel, in short, is this: Inspired men, as prophets, bear witness to Jesus. We do no more. We speak and act by the same spirit, and our testimony is the same as theirs. We are, therefore, your fellow-servants, and are neither entitled to, nor desire Divine honours, which are due to God alone.

#### THE BATTLE OF AR-MAGEDDON, vers. 11—21.

The subject of this vision is unquestionably that great battle, or warfare, the preliminaries of which were alluded to in chapter xvi. 16. There, “three unclean spirits like frogs” are seen proceeding “from the mouth of the dragon, and of the beast, and of the false prophet;” who “go forth to the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.” “And they gather them to a place called in the Hebrew tongue, *Ar-mageddon*.” But in the 19th verse of this chapter we read: “And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.” This conflict, therefore, on the description of which we are now entering, is, beyond all controversy, that conflict which is to be carried

on at Ar-mageddon. And what then will be the nature of that conflict? Who will be the actual combatants engaged in it, and what its results? These are questions more easily asked than answered. I have already expressed the diffidence I feel in regard to this subject (chap. xvi. 16); and I must candidly acknowledge that the more I consider all the difficulties connected with it, the less disposed I am to speak dogmatically.

The first point that demands particular investigation, is the nature of that manifestation described in the eleventh and five following verses. Will this manifestation be literal or figurative? Will our Lord appear in person to confound his enemies by the glory of his majesty, or, is all that is here said to be understood in a purely spiritual sense? There are some circumstances which seem to favour both views, but, I think, upon the whole, the weight of evidence preponderates in favour of the figurative interpretation.\*

The two circumstances which seem to be least reconcilable with the idea of a purely spiritual interpretation, are, the treading of the wine-press, and the slaughter of the enemies of the Lamb. It is difficult to give a satisfactory explanation of the language employed in describing these occurrences, on the figurative hypothesis. The treading of the wine-press, it is true, is a figure, and the call upon the birds to come and devour flesh is a figure, but they are figures which imply

\* This opinion may, perhaps, seem to be inconsistent with what was said respecting the coming of the bridegroom and the marriage supper. But it should be observed that the above remark applies only to this particular passage, which appears to me to relate to events antecedent to the celebration of the marriage supper. See notes on c. iii. v. 14—22.

terrible realities; nor does it seem probable that those realities will be accomplished in the figurative destruction of the wicked involved in their conversion. The treading of the wine-press of God's wrath, is an act of judgment, not of mercy, and the fowls of the air being filled with the flesh of the slain, implies great destruction of human life; and, certainly, the former of these acts, appears to require the personal manifestation of Christ for its accomplishment.

On the other hand, the white horse,—the many diadems,—the name written,—the vesture dipped in blood,—and, above all, the sword proceeding out of the mouth, wherewith the remnant are slain,—are manifestly pure figures, and would best consist, perhaps, with a figurative interpretation. The beast, and the false prophet also, are not persons, but kingdoms, or powers, and their being cast into a lake of fire, can signify, therefore, nothing more than their entire destruction; the idea of a literal fulfilment involving in it, not only *improbability*, but *impossibility*.\*

After revolving all these circumstances in my mind, the view I am inclined to take of this subject, beset as it

\* The reader will do well to compare with the above, Dan. xii. 11, 12: "I beheld then, because of the voice, of the great words which the horn spake; I beheld even till *the beast was slain and his body given to the burning flame*. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time." But in v. 20 we read: "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, (*viz., the dominion of the fourth beast*), to consume and destroy it to the end." Thus, it appears, that the giving the beast's body to the flame, is the taking away his dominion. Now the parallelism of this passage in Daniel, with the one under consideration, is obvious; and, I think, therefore, we may assume, that the casting of the beast and false prophet into the lake of fire, is the taking away of their dominion.

obviously is with difficulties until they shall be unravelled by the fulfilment, is as follows:—

The opening of the heavens, and the appearance therein of the great head of the Church, seated upon a *white horse*, having *his eyes as a flame of fire*, his raiment *dipped in blood*, a sharp sword *proceeding out of his mouth*, and *many diadems* upon his head, and the armies in heaven following, seated also upon white horses; may signify the great triumphs of the Gospel at this period;—the exaltation of Christ and his Church, followed by the general acknowledgment of him, in all his offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King. The mention of the white horse, carries back our thoughts to the opening of the first seal, when the Lord first went forth by his apostles, “conquering and to conquer,” and in the assurance of victory was crowned with the laurel crown. At that time he was not recognised by mankind as Lord of all; on the contrary, he was despised and rejected by the majority of men, especially by the kings and princes of the earth. But now, they are compelled to acknowledge his divine majesty—their diadems are taken from their heads, and placed upon his, and they bow down at his name, and “confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

These triumphs, however, will not be achieved without opposition and conflict. The enemies of piety will endeavour to stop the progress of the Gospel and the ascendancy of truth, by force and violence, and the consequence will be warfare and carnage. A great battle must be fought, in which an immense slaughter of the impious adversaries of the Lord and his people, such a slaughter probably as the world has never yet witnessed, will take place. Nor are we left altogether

without a clue to direct us as to the locality of this slaughter, and the instruments by which it will be effected. The proclamation of the angel, standing in the sun, is remarkable, and full of fearful meaning. Let it be attentively considered: "And I saw one angel\* standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the mid-heavens: Come, and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God: that ye may eat the flesh of kings," &c. Now, who is the *one* angel? And, who, or what, are these birds? And of what is this sun the symbol? I will give what appears to me to be the meaning of these things, although the explanation I have to offer must be taken in the way of conjecture rather than of positive assertion.

First, then, as to *the sun*.—It will be remembered that this symbol, c. xiv. 8, was supposed to signify the French Empire.† I think, most probably, it has the same meaning here. In fact, how should it have any other meaning? The analogy of the case requires that the same interpretation should be given in both instances. But if so, then will France be the theatre on which this terrific manifestation of God's wrath against the impiety of men will take place. And there are circumstances which warrant this conclusion. "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that cause trouble to others." (2 Thess. i. 7.)

\* The Greek is *ενα ἄγγελον*, and the word *one* therefore, must be emphatic, although it is not easy to determine the specific meaning of the emphasis.

† The reasons of this application of the symbol will be found at page 189. It should be borne in mind that Fleming gave the same interpretation a hundred and fifty years ago. See "Rise and Fall of the Papacy," p. 51.

Now France was the sun which, under the fourth vial, scorched other kingdoms with its burning heat, and inflicted incalculable miseries upon the nations of Europe. It is quité in accordance therefore with the mysterious dispensations of His providence, who "visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations," to suppose that France is yet destined to pay to mankind a terrible retribution in blood for all the blood of others she has caused to be shed.\* True, she has, it may be said, already paid that retribution, at least, in part. But it is, I fear, only in part, and we may therefore look for still more awful scenes in that distracted country, than any that have yet been witnessed.

But the birds of prey, who are they? And the one angel, who is he? With regard to the former, they are undoubtedly the armies and soldiery of the different nations of Europe, who are thus invited to assemble together against a common enemy, and glut themselves, like ravenous birds, with the spoils of the slain. And we may infer therefore from hence, that at the period to which this prophecy refers, there will be a general combination of all the European powers against that one nation symbolized by the sun. And these, therefore, are the instruments destined to effect the extinction of this symbolic sun; which, having scorched others, will be quenched in its own blood.

As to the *one* angel, it would be presumptuous to

\* So Fleming: "If they inquire whether the sun of the Popish kingdom is not to be eclipsed himself at length? I must positively assert he will, else this vial (the fourth), were not a judgment upon him and the Romish party. Therefore, we may justly suppose that the French monarchy, after it has scorched others, will itself consume by doing so."—P. 52.

attempt to determine its precise signification. It probably means some great European power, which will take the lead on this occasion, and assemble together the armies destined to accomplish the destruction of the Infidel kingdom and the Papacy. It should be observed, however, that these armies *are not* the followers of him who sits upon the white horse, but "*the fowls that fly in the mid-heaven*;" earthly-minded, carnal men, who, although employed as instruments in effecting the purposes of the Lord, are none of his; and who, at the very time that they are doing his work, will be thinking only of their own ambitious ends. Just as it is said of Sennacherib; "Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so." (Isa. x. 7.) So these nations, in destroying the Infidel kingdom and the Papacy, will not mean to promote the glory of God and the triumphs of the Gospel, but they will be the unintentional and unconscious instruments of accomplishing the purposes of the Almighty.

And will this then, it may be asked, be the great battle of Ar-mageddon? Will all the lofty-sounding words used in reference to that battle, and all the mighty preparations spoken of in connexion with it, resolve themselves into an ordinary contest between hostile nations, carried on according to the usual mode of warfare, and differing in nothing from battles in general, excepting that it will be on a grander scale than that of any previous conflict, and the slaughter more terrific? I confess myself unable to give a definite reply to these inquiries. Whoever reads this portion of the Revelation attentively and carefully, will, I am sure, feel with myself, the many difficulties which encompass the subject. As I have already said, the

mention of ravenous birds, and their being filled with the flesh of the slain, implies great bloodshed and destruction of human life; but "the remnant being slain by the sword, which proceeds out of the mouth of him who sits upon the horse," would lead to a different conclusion; that sword being no carnal weapon of warfare, but the Word of God. Perhaps the true solution of the difficulty may be this: that those who escape from the terrific conflict which will take place at this period, will be figuratively slain by the preaching of the Word, and being converted to God, will cease *to live* as his *enemies*. In that case, the clause, "*and all the fowls were filled with their flesh,*" must be referred, not to those slain by the sword from the mouth of Christ, but to those slain by the sword of war.

It will be observed, that I do not consider the eleventh and following verses, to involve of necessity a personal manifestation. Yet I would not say that a personal manifestation will not take place at this period. It is a remarkable fact, that, although the Apocalypse begins with the announcement of the personal advent of Christ, it is impossible to fix upon any particular passage in the latter part of the book in which that advent is distinctly and unequivocally to be discovered. This is evidently intentional. A veil of obscurity is thrown around that great event, in order that the exact period of its arrival may not be discernible, and that the Church may always be expecting and preparing for it.

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## CHAPTER XX. 1—6.

## THE MILLENNIUM.

THERE is no question in theology on which the minds of men of sound judgment and earnest piety have been more divided than on that which respects the nature of the millennium. It is, however, a striking fact, and deserves, I think, to be well considered, that there was no difference of opinion on this subject amongst orthodox Christians until the third century. The doctrine of the personal millennial reign of Christ, and of the literal resurrection of the saints at his pre-millennial coming, appears to have been generally received by the Church for upwards of two hundred years.\* It was Origen, a man of extraordinary endow-

\* The following is the well-known testimony of Justin Martyr on this head, contained in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew: Trypho. "But tell me truly, do you really believe that this Jerusalem will be again rebuilt? and do you expect that your people, being collected together and exalted, will live in great happiness with Christ, together with the patriarchs and prophets, and those who were of our race, and even some of those who were proselytes before your Christ came? Or, whether you have made this concession only that you may appear to have the advantage of us in this discussion?"

Justin. "I am not reduced to such straits, Trypho, that I must speak otherwise than I really think. I have before acknowledged to thee, that I and many others with me are of opinion, as you well know, that what you have just said will come to pass. But on the other hand, I have told you that there are many not holding the pure and godly doctrine of Christians, who do not acknowledge it; by whom I mean to designate those who are indeed Christians by name, but in reality are atheistical and impious heretics, inasmuch as they teach things altogether blasphemous, impious, and foolish. For although you may have conversed with some who are called Christians, who do not admit this doctrine, but even dare to speak evil of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and who say that there is no resurrection of the dead, but that the souls of the pious are received into heaven as soon as they die; think

ments, undoubtedly, but not of the soundest judgment, who first advocated with ability, and recommended by the authority of a great name, the doctrine of the spiritual reign and figurative resurrection. Now this is, I think, an important fact. It shows, at least, that the millennial hypothesis is the most natural and obvious; otherwise, how shall we account for its having prevailed for so long a time without ever having been even called in question? And when it is added to this consideration, that some of the soundest and most sober-minded expositors have strenuously advocated this hypothesis, it surely ought to make men hesitate before they venture to condemn it as wild and visionary. Great names, indeed, are worth nothing in support of positive error; but in every doubtful case they ought to have their weight, and when equally balanced on any disputed question, should repress that spirit of contemptuous dogmatism in which both parties are too apt to indulge. Let it be borne in mind, then, that if the figurative and spiritual scheme of the millennium has in its favour Origen, and Jerome, and Augustin, and Vitranga, and Whitby, and many other great names, that which explains the thousand years' reign and the first resurrection, of a personal reign and a literal resurrection, numbers amongst its supporters, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Bishop Newton, and, above all, he whose authority in this case outweighs all the rest,

not that they are Christians; just as no man of a right mind would say that the Sadducees, and others like them, are Jews. But I, and as many Christians as are right-minded in all things, (*ὀρθογνώμονες κατὰ πάντα*) know that there will be a resurrection of the flesh, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, rebuilt, adorned, and enlarged; as the prophets Ezekiel, Isaiah, and others, declared."—*Dial.* s. 80, p. 306.

Joseph Mede.\* This question, therefore, must stand exclusively on its own merits, and be decided by an appeal to the written testimony itself.†

Having made these preliminary remarks, in the hope that they may tend to diminish the strength of prejudices and partialities, I will now give a summary account of the two systems according to which the millennial reign is explained respectively by the two schools of modern interpreters, usually distinguished by the title of Millenarians and Anti-millenarians.

According to the latter, this whole prophecy is purely figurative. The descent of the angel, the binding and shutting up of Satan, and the resurrection of the saints, are all to be understood in a spiritual sense. Their idea, therefore, of the millennium is, that it will consist simply in the prevalence of true Christianity throughout the world. They suppose that Satan being figuratively bound, and Christ reigning spiritually in the hearts of his people, immorality and vice of every kind will entirely cease; and that all mankind being brought under the power of true religion, the inhabitants

\* Whitby, in his "Dissertation on the true Millennium," says, indeed, that Mede gave up the personal coming; I cannot, however, find any such renunciation in his works. He says expressly, "I differ from both (*i.e.*, Piscator and Alstedius,) in that I make this state of the Church—the millennium,—to belong to *secundus adventus Christi*, or *Dies judicii magni*, when Christ shall appear in the clouds of heaven, whereas they make it to *precede* the day of judgment."—P. 772.

† Dr. Wordsworth, in his "Lectures on the Apocalypse," insists very much upon the fact, that for a thousand years, namely, from the fifth century to the Reformation, this doctrine was completely exploded. But this argument is surely rather in favour of the millenarian view than against it, for that thousand years was just the period of the greatest darkness, the period during which the Scriptures were kept out of sight, and the traditions of men substituted for the revealed truth of God.

of the world will form, as it were, one great community of Christians, and sin and sorrow for a time be banished altogether from the earth. With respect to the souls of those who "were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and who had not worshipped the beast," they explain this to signify that persons of *like character* with the victims both of Heathen and Papal persecution will be raised up; men in whom the old martyrs may be said to live again,—just as Elijah was said to live again in John the Baptist,—and who will reign with Christ figuratively, he reigning by his Spirit, and they, as members of his mystical body, reigning with him. This happy state of things they think will be brought about, not by miraculous agency, or by any sensible manifestation of Divine power, but by the means usually employed in the conversion and instruction of mankind, that is to say, the preaching of the Gospel, and the ordinary secret influences of the Holy Spirit; and, consequently, they do not suppose that the millennium will be preceded by any great and striking events clearly indicative of some special interference on God's part in the government of the world; but that it will be introduced gradually and imperceptibly, so that the period of its commencement will scarcely be known, the thousand years of its continuance being merely a round number, used to express about that time, or a very long period.

Such, I believe, is a fair account of what may be called, by way of distinction, the *anti-millenarian scheme*.\*

The millenarian hypothesis, on the other hand, is

\* See, *e.g.*, Scott's Commentary *in loco*, and Jefferson on the Millennium.

as follows:—Millenarians believe that the millennium will be an entirely distinct and new dispensation:—that it will be ushered in by the personal advent of Christ from heaven in Divine glory and majesty; that at his coming he will call the righteous dead\* from their graves, and at the same time change the living righteous, and that both will rise together to meet him in the air; (1 Cor. xv. 51; 1 Thess. iv. 13—18;) and that they will then descend with him, and live with him upon earth in the enjoyment of happiness like to that which Adam enjoyed in Eden before he fell, only of a higher and more perfect kind. They do not, however, pretend to determine what will be the precise nature of the employments of the righteous in the millennial kingdom, or how the government of it will be carried on. All that they consider to be clearly revealed is, that Christ will be personally present with his people upon earth; † that all believers, both those who may be alive at his coming, and those who have died previously, will be clothed with glorified, immortal, incorruptible bodies like his own; that sin and evil of every kind will be entirely banished from the world, and that this state of blessedness will continue without interruption during a period of a thousand years.

Such are the sentiments entertained concerning the millennium by the two great parties whose views on this

\* Some think that those only will be raised who have suffered martyrdom in defence of the truth against Heathen and Papal idolatry; but I can see no reason for confining the privilege to such. In other places the expression used is, *the dead in Christ*; and here it is not only those who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus that rise, but those who have refused to worship the beast and his image.

† There are some who believe in the literal resurrection of the saints, but do not hold the personal reign. This I cannot understand. The two things must, I think, stand or fall together.

question are opposed to each other. Let us now consider the arguments and objections respectively adduced on either side.

In favour of the figurative and spiritual interpretation it is urged, that the whole of the Revelation being a book of figures, it is irrational and inconsistent to understand what is here said of the resurrection of the saints and their reigning with Christ *literally*; more especially as it was not the *bodies* of believers, but the *souls* which St. John tells us he saw; that the resurrection is always spoken of in other parts of the New Testament as a general *simultaneous* restoration to life of all the dead, both the righteous and the wicked; that it seems highly improbable that the saints in heaven should be called down to live again upon earth, which must of necessity involve a lower degree of happiness than that which they previously enjoyed; that it is difficult to conceive how, after so miraculous a demonstration of the power of Christ, and the truth of Christianity, the inhabitants of the world should again become wicked; and, lastly, it is argued, that there is no intimation here of the personal advent of Christ in the clouds of heaven, but, on the contrary, that his glorious appearing as the Judge of all mankind is evidently described as a subsequent event in the eleventh verse.

Such are the principal arguments used by those who advocate the figurative scheme; and it must be admitted that they have their weight, and deserve to be attentively considered. Let us endeavour to examine them with impartiality.

1. The Revelation is a book of figures, &c. This is unquestionably true; but yet it is not altogether figur-

ative. There are some parts of it which *must* be taken literally, and that too in the very midst of symbol and metaphor. As, for example, the description of the last judgment in this chapter is partly literal and partly figurative. The great white throne, and the books, and the lake of fire, are probably figures, but the resurrection, and the standing of the dead, small and great, before God, and the act of judgment, are not figures; they are literal realities which will actually come to pass. And so throughout this chapter, it will, I think, be found, that as regards *the act* or *event* itself, the prophecy is literal, but as regards *the mode* of its accomplishment, figurative. On this principle, then, we must interpret the passage relating to the first resurrection. The event itself, the resurrection of the righteous from amongst the dead prior to the general resurrection, is a real fact, and will be literally accomplished; but, as in every other case, it is foretold in figurative language, and the apostle, therefore, speaks of the souls, not the bodies, as being seen by him.\*

2. With respect to the second objection, that the resurrection is in every other part of the New Testament spoken of as general and simultaneous, this is altogether a misconception. So far from it, in every other

\* It should be observed, however, that the word *soul* has a different meaning in English from the words  $\psi\psi\eta$  and  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ , which are the Hebrew and Greek words generally supposed to stand as its equivalent. By the word *soul* we commonly understand the immaterial, immortal part of man, but the above words signify rather *the principle of animal life*, that which is common to man with the inferior creatures, and is supported by food, and liable to death. (See Matt. vi. 25; Gen. i. 24—30.) Consequently, when it is said, that *the souls of those who had been slain lived*, the natural meaning is, that the very parties who had been put to death, whose animal life had been for a time extinguished, were restored to existence.

place but one, we think that two distinct resurrections are manifestly implied, as will be more fully shown hereafter.

3. As to the improbability of the righteous being called to leave heaven and dwell again upon earth, this is an objection founded entirely upon a gratuitous assumption, namely, that the souls of the righteous in the separate state of existence must necessarily be happier than they would be reunited to their bodies, and dwelling again with Christ upon earth. I would simply ask, How do we know this? Have we any scriptural authority for assuming that the body, however perfected, even although made like the body of Christ, must involve sin, and act as a clog upon the soul, and a hinderance to happiness? (Phil. iii. 21.)

4. The fourth objection being avowedly founded on our ignorance, cannot be allowed much weight; it will, however, be more fully considered in the remarks on the passage to which it relates.

5. With regard to the absence of any clear intimation here of the personal advent of Christ in the clouds of heaven, as previously foretold, this objection, it must be admitted, appears, at first sight, to have great force. It should be observed, however, as was before remarked, that neither *in any other part* of the Apocalypse have we that glorious advent symbolically represented in vision; and hence no argument against its taking place previously to the millennial reign can be derived from the absence of any such symbolical representation here. We know that this advent *must* take place at some specific point of time during the period of the apocalyptic history, and no reason can be assigned for its

not preceding the millennium ; on the contrary, there is every reason for supposing that it will.

But is it so certain that we have here no intimation of the personal advent? For the solution of this question, let us, divesting ourselves of preconceived opinions, go at once to the fountain-head and examine the text itself.

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand,” &c. Now, the question is, whether this angel is the Lord Jesus Christ himself, or only a messenger-angel, his representative? In a book so full of allegory as this, we certainly might be warranted in assuming, at a first glance, that this angel, like most, if not all of the preceding, is not a person, but a symbolic agent intended to represent, as in a visible picture, the moral operations of Divine Providence, the putting forth of the power of God at this time in restraining the actings of Satan. There are, however, some things about this angel which indicate that he is the personal representative of Christ himself. He has the key of the bottomless pit, and he binds Satan; but who but the Lord Jesus has “the keys of death and of hell?” (Chap. i. 18.) Who but he can “bind the strong man and spoil his goods,” and dispossess “the god of this world” of that throne which he has so long held upon earth? Nor is it any objection to such an application that he is called *an angel*; for this is the very term by which our Lord is designated by the prophet Malachi, when speaking of his coming to purify his Church: “The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even *the messenger*

(*i. e.*, *angel*) of the covenant, whom ye delight in." (Chap. iii. 1.) So St. Paul, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the archangel*." (1 Thess. iv. 16.) Our blessed Lord, in fact, is frequently everywhere in Scripture called *an angel*, as being the agent and executor of his Father's will and purposes. I grant, however, that these circumstances would not afford sufficient ground for concluding that the personal coming of our Lord is here foretold, had we nothing but the verse before us upon which to build this conclusion. But it is far otherwise. In fact, the great subject of the New Testament, next to the atonement, is the personal coming of Christ, and the resurrection of his people to participate with him in the glories of his kingdom.

The Revelation itself begins with it. "*Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him.*" This great event is never lost sight of throughout the book, but is that to which the believer's attention is continually directed as the consummation of his hopes. See especially the three last Epistles to the Churches. So also in the Acts, and in the inspired writings of the apostles, we find the personal manifestation of Christ constantly and prominently brought forward, and spoken of as that upon which the believer's mind ought always to be fixed. The passages to this effect are far too numerous to quote at length; I shall content myself with the three following, from the writings of the three great apostles:—

"Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, *shall appear*,

*then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*" (Col. iii. 3.)

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptation: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, might be found unto *praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*" (1 Pet. i. 6, 7.)

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, *when he shall appear*, we shall be like him; for we shall *see him as he is.*" (1 John iii. 1, 2.)

Now, the reader will observe that in all these places the personal appearing of our adorable Redeemer is plainly spoken of as connected with the accomplishment of the Christian's hope, and the consummation of his blessedness.

"When Christ shall appear—*then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*" "That the trial of your faith might be found unto praise, &c., at *the appearing of Jesus Christ.*" "We know *when he shall appear* we shall be like him."\* No man can for a moment suppose that the appearance here alluded to is a *figurative* one. I cannot imagine that such an idea can find place in any one's mind.

It is certain, then, that our Lord will at some

\* Compare also Matt. xiii. 41—43, xix. 28; Acts iii. 19—21; Rom. viii. 18—23; 1 Cor. i. 7; Phil. iii. 20, 21; 1 Thess. i. 10; iv. 13—17; 2 Thess. i., ii.; Tit. ii. 12, 13; 2 Peter i. 16, iii.

time or other appear personally upon earth, and that this personal manifestation will be accompanied with a glory and blessedness to the Church far surpassing anything we have yet witnessed. Now, where shall we find this personal manifestation in the Revelation if not here? There are but two other places which can have any reference to it; these are, the description of the rider on the white horse in the preceding chapter, and of the great white throne in the eleventh verse of this chapter. I have already given my reasons for thinking that the first of these should rather be understood figuratively; and in the last, there is no intimation of a *coming*, but only of an *act of judgment*. The apostle makes no mention of any new manifestation of the Judge; his language rather implies that the Judge had previously come, and having arranged the preliminaries of the great assize, if I may so speak, now takes his place upon the judgment throne, and summons the world before him. But if that "glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," for which the Church has been so long waiting, be not referred to in either of the passages just noticed, then must we look for it in this place, where the angel of the covenant descends from heaven, and with his own hand binds the ancient enemy of God and man.

Further, this view is confirmed by another consideration. All parties admit that the millennium will be a period of great and unmingled blessedness. It seems evidently, in fact, to be the time of that "manifestation of the sons of God," for which the apostle tells us the "earnest expectation of *the creation*" is, and has been, waiting. But have we any reason to think that

such a state of things will take place, until the Lord himself is revealed from heaven? Are we not rather expressly told that the tares will be allowed to remain mingled with the wheat to the end of the *world*?\* (Matt. xiii. 30, 39.) And does not our Lord intimate, and indeed the whole tenor of the New Testament lead to the conclusion, that the Church will be in a state of mourning and affliction until he returns to the earth to gladden it once more with his presence? † What would a millennium be, in fact, without the presence of the Lord? Will any one say that we may see him by faith, and enjoy his presence spiritually in the soul, although he be not personally present with us? And what Christian will dispute it? But surely something more than this must be meant by the living and reigning with him hereafter spoken of. If this be all, every believer *now* lives and reigns with Christ; for by his Spirit he is quickened into spiritual life, and by his grace he crucifies the flesh with its affections and lusts: and why then should those be pronounced peculiarly blessed who have part in the first resurrection? But are we not taught that the view which even the most exalted Christians now have of the Saviour, is dim and imperfect? Does not the great apostle himself declare, that while present in the body, we are *absent* from the Lord; and that

\* *του αιωνος*, the present dispensation; that is, the dispensation of the Spirit, during which Christ is personally absent from his Church, and governs it by the Spirit.

† Let the reader who has any doubt carefully compare the following passages: Matt. ix. 15; John xvi. 16—22; 1 Cor. iv. 5; 2 Thess. i. 6, 7. The last quotation is peculiarly striking. The apostle seems to hold out no expectation to the Church of perfect rest, until "*the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven.*"

we are saved by hope? And what is that hope to which he alludes, but “*that blessed hope of the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ?*”

My object in these remarks, let me observe, is to show that there is no such thing as perfect blessedness for the Church, such as appears to be described as belonging to the millennial period, without the presence of its Lord and head. And truly, setting aside the testimonies of Scripture, I see not how all our divisions are to be healed, all the pride and selfishness which, alas! we see too plainly “remain in them that are regenerate,” is to be counteracted and subdued; and perfect union, harmony, and peace to be secured to the Church, but by the presence of the Lord himself, and by that perfect and entire renovation of body as well as soul, which we are assured will take place in the believer at his coming.\* Can there be such a thing as perfect happiness as long as “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh,” and the believer has thus to fight against sin in his members? And yet, if the Church during the millennial period is to consist only of men *like* the martyrs and confessors, regenerate indeed, but still carrying about with them a corrupt and sinful nature, must they not still “groan, being burdened?” And can we then suppose that it is with reference to such a state that the Holy Spirit declares so emphatically, “*Blessed and holy is he that hath part in it?*” Let not former prejudices prevent

\* “Our conversation (πολιτευμα) is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” (Phil. iii. 20.)

the reader from giving to these suggestions that consideration which I think they deserve.

I pass on now to THE FIRST RESURRECTION. Let us carefully analyze the words of the prophecy itself:—

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of those that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.”

Mysterious and enigmatical as is the Revelation generally, these two verses seem to contain as plain a statement as any in the Bible. There is nothing about it which looks at all like metaphor and figure. The obvious import of the prophecy appears to be, that the martyrs of Heathen persecutions, and those who shall have kept themselves from Papal idolatry and pollution, shall at the time referred to be restored to life, and reign with Christ a thousand years; and that the general resurrection shall not take place until the thousand years are expired. No one, I think, who had never heard of the millenarian controversy, would feel any doubt as to this being the true interpretation. Another interpretation, however, as we have seen, has been given to the passage, and this reign of believers with Christ has been, and is, by many, explained to signify only a *figurative* restoration to life of the martyrs in men of like mind. Such was once, I acknowledge, my own view; but a long and careful examination of the text, and other passages bearing upon the subject, has convinced

me that it is erroneous. The argument which has had most weight with me, and which appears to me almost irresistible, is founded upon the apostle's own interpretation of the meaning of what had gone before: "*This is the FIRST resurrection.*" How shall we explain these words on the hypothesis of a figurative resurrection? If the first resurrection be only figurative, must not the second be figurative likewise? And, on the contrary, if the second resurrection be a literal one, which none will dispute, then must not that which by way of distinction is called the *first*, be a literal resurrection also? What propriety would there be in thus distinguishing them *numerically*, supposing them to be in *character* totally and entirely unlike? This is not according to the ordinary use of language. The definite assertion, "*This is the first resurrection,*" unquestionably implies merely precedency; not a difference in respect of *character* from the second, but of *time*. Nor can I understand, as before remarked, why so emphatic a beatitude should be pronounced on him who has part in this resurrection, if it be merely a figurative one. If the millennium be only a more general prevalence of true piety all over the earth, will *individual* Christians be so much happier than they are now, as that their state should call forth such strong and expressive language as this: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection?" What resurrection? Will piety altogether cease ere it takes place? Will there shortly be no true Christians upon earth? And if not, in what sense can the *gradual increase* of real religion be called a resurrection?

Again, who are the *rest of the dead*, that live not till the thousand years are finished? They are, undoubtedly, all the remaining dead in a literal sense; those of whom the apostle speaks, when he says, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." Is it not then doing a most unjustifiable violence to plain language to explain *the rest of the dead*, as applied to true believers, one way, and as applied to mankind in general, another? I mean, is it not obvious, that in the same sense as the dead who had *not* risen before the expiration of the thousand years, arose *after they had* expired, the others, not included among them, had arisen, previous to their commencement? *The rest of the dead lived not again* till a certain period, necessarily implies that there were some from among the dead who *did* live again before that period commenced.

But it has been argued, that the resurrection is everywhere else represented as a general event, involving the simultaneous resuscitation of all, both the righteous and the wicked, and that it is unreasonable to build a doctrine upon a single doubtful passage, which seems opposed to so many others. But is it really so? Does the language of the New Testament, generally, on the subject of the resurrection, lead us to expect that *all* the dead will rise at one and the same moment? A careful investigation of the subject will, I am inclined to think, lead to a contrary conclusion. The words of our Lord, John v. 28, which are often quoted to prove that the righteous and wicked will rise together, will be found, upon consideration, to affirm nothing as to time: he simply declares that *all* shall

rise ; whether together or separate, he does not say. In two other places in which he alludes to the subject, there seems a manifest intimation of a resurrection peculiar to the righteous. Thus, Luke xiv. 14 : “ *They cannot recompense thee, but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.*” Why of the *just* ? Does not this imply that the resurrection of the just will be a distinct event from the resurrection of the unjust ?

The other passage is much stronger ; it occurs in our Lord’s well-known answer to the Sadducees, Luke xx. 34 : “ Jesus, answering, said unto them, The children of this world marry and are given in marriage : but they which shall *be accounted worthy* to obtain that world, and *the resurrection from the dead*, neither marry nor are given in marriage ; neither *can they die any more.*” Now, what does this mean—“ *they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain the resurrection from the dead ?*” We shall find it difficult to explain these words on the supposition that there is but one resurrection common to all ; for how, in that case, can it be a privilege of which *some* only shall be thought worthy ?

The same thing appears to be implied by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24, which passage I would have the reader consult himself. It is not a little remarkable, that throughout this chapter, the apostle does not make a single allusion to the resurrection of the wicked. I do not say that this circumstance proves that their resurrection is a subsequent event, but it is certainly singular that in so full a statement upon the subject there should not be the slightest mention of any but the righteous.

But the clearest intimation to be found in the apostolic writings of the prior resurrection of some, is perhaps the following, contained in Phil. iii. 11: "If, by any means, I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."\* What is that resurrection of the dead to which the apostle so earnestly desired to attain? Certainly not the resurrection from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, for that he had already attained.† (Col. iii. 1.) Nor could it be the general resurrection he referred to, for how could there be any danger of his *not* attaining that which will be common to all? He must necessarily, therefore, refer to a resurrection which would be the peculiar privilege of a few only; and what other can that be than this first resurrection of St. John? ‡

These are some of the grounds, then, on which I am disposed to maintain the personal reign of Christ with his risen people during the millennium. It will, perhaps, be asked, supposing the literal resurrection be admitted, will all the faithful, who have lived from the beginning of the world rise, or only martyrs and confessors? As far as my own opinion goes, I should say, *all*; for, although those are particularly specified who had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and had not wor-

\* The original is peculiarly emphatic, *την ἐξανάστασιν τῶν νεκρῶν*. (Some MSS. of authority read *την ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν*, *the rising up out from among the dead*. See Mill's Greek Testament.)

† Probably it was thus that Hymenæus and Philetus interpreted the doctrine of the resurrection, saying, "it was past already," and, so the apostle tells us, "*overthrew the faith of some*." See 2 Tim. ii. 18.

‡ I have sometimes thought that, perhaps, the reason why the doctrine of the resurrection, as taught by the apostles, excited such violent opposition on the part of the Jews, was, because they maintained not only a general, but a particular resurrection, of which the living members of Christ's Church would alone be partakers. See Acts iv. 2; xxiii. 6.

shipped the beast and his image, this may have been intended to afford especial encouragement to those who might be exposed to Heathen and Papal persecutions : the Scriptures generally intimate that all true members of Christ will be glorified together,\* and this is certainly the most encouraging view of the subject.

Another question that may be asked, is, *where* the risen saints will live, and how? But to attempt to enter into these minute details would be absurd and unprofitable. It was by presumptuous speculations of this nature that some of the ancient fathers brought the doctrine of the millennium into contempt.† A more reasonable and interesting question is—why do we understand, in this place, a thousand years to mean a thousand ordinary years, whereas everywhere else in this book we interpret a day to stand for a year, according to which computation a thousand years would be 360,000? In reply, with reference to this seeming inconsistency, we may remark, that, in those other places, the whole of the language employed is evidently mystical and figurative ;—the *locusts*, the *horsemen*, the *witnesses*, the *beasts*, are all pure figures, and, therefore,

\* See Matt. viii. 11 ; 2 Tim. iv. 8. The latter passage is : “ *and not to ME ONLY, but unto ALL them that love his appearing.*” The above was Cyprian’s opinion, who quotes the fourth verse of this chapter at full length, and then observes, that the second part implies that not only martyrs, but all the faithful servants of God will rise. Works ; fol., p. 283. De exh. Mar.

† When some of the primitive millenarians maintained, for instance, that the risen saints would participate in all sorts of sensual pleasures, we cannot be surprised that sober and spiritual-minded Christians should have looked upon their tenets with abhorrence. Yet the abuse, or misapprehension of a doctrine, ought never to be admitted as an argument against it, for, on this principle, what truth is there that might not be brought into question ?

the time of their continuance is expressed mystically ; but Christ and his people are not figures, and therefore the period of their reign is expressed in the ordinary manner.

Lastly, it may be objected, that the millennium continues only a thousand years, but the happiness of the righteous will be for ever. In this, however, there is no real difficulty. The period of a thousand years is employed, not to limit the duration of the believers' blessedness, for that will indeed be eternal, but with reference to the general resurrection, which will not take place until the thousand years are expired.

Having thus stated, without reserve, the millenarian scheme of interpretation, I would again remind the reader that these views appear to have been *generally received by the orthodox Christian Church, during the two first centuries.*\* This is an important fact, and ought to have its due weight in this controversy. It is hardly conceivable that an opinion generally received in so early an age, should not have some foundation in truth. That it is not a doctrine embraced only by weak-minded, superficial men, is sufficiently proved by the fact, that such profound scholars and

\* See the quotation from Justin Martyr, p. 318. The words in the original are :—

“ Εγω δε, και ει τινες εισι ορθογνωμονες κατα παντα χριστιανοι, και σαρκος αναστασιν γενεσεσθαι επισταμεθα, και χιλια ετη εν Ιερουσαλημ οικοδομοθειση, και κοσμηθειση, και πλατυνθειση.”

“ But I, and all Christians, *who are exactly, and in all things orthodox*, know there will be a resurrection of the flesh, and a millennium, in Jerusalem, built, adorned, and enlarged.”—*Dial. cum Tryp.*, p. 306. See Whitby's treatise of the true millennium, p. 690, who, strange to say, adduces this passage to show that the first resurrection was *not* the generally received opinion of the Church. See also the Bishop of Lincoln's Justin Martyr, p. 104.

excellent divines as Joseph Mede, Bishop Newton, &c., received and maintained it. It is certainly not a doctrine very agreeable to our present philosophical views concerning a future state. I say *philosophical*, because it appears to me we are too apt to form our ideas upon this subject, rather from the dogmas of philosophy than the statements of Scripture. Our expectations of a future state of happiness are founded, if they can, properly speaking, be said to have any solid foundation at all, on the philosophical idea of the immortality of the soul, rather than on the scriptural promises of the resurrection of the body. Perhaps the reason why the personal coming of our Lord, and the resurrection of his people before the millennium, is so repugnant to the ideas of many even pious persons, is owing to this circumstance: they have taken their opinions, not from the Bible, but from "the doctrines of men."

Another reason, it may be, of the dislike entertained to the doctrine of the personal advent is, that there is something in it exceedingly terrible to those who have not the love of God in their hearts. Death is a far less awful subject of contemplation to the worldly-minded professor of Christianity, than the second coming of Christ. In the one case, he expects gradually to sink down to the grave, and to have time given him to prepare to meet his God; he thinks, also, perhaps, that sickness, and the prospect of death, will work in him a sort of indefinable but happy change, whereby he will be rendered fit for the enjoyment of heaven: but, in the other case, he can hope for nothing of the kind; he knows that the coming of the Judge will

be “as a thief in the night; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye;” and, that there will be no time for those to prepare who have not previously “made themselves ready.” The appearance of our blessed Lord also will put an end to all the ambitious schemes and desires of self-aggrandizement, entertained, too often, even by those who not only preach the gospel, but have some real piety in their hearts; who yet, notwithstanding, “love to have the pre-eminence;” and are, therefore, unconsciously it may be even to themselves, the less desirous of the appearance of the great Head of the Church, who will instantly assign to all their proper places, and give to “every man according to his works.”

Like children left to themselves, we contend about trifles, and being all, in a sense, equal, desire each one to be greatest. Oh! how would the manifestation of our adorable Lord, in a moment put an end to these our strifes and divisions, and heal our petty animosities! But then it would put an end also to the pretensions of the proud, self-sufficient, earthly-minded professors of Christianity, and consign all who may have thrust themselves in among the guests without the wedding garment, to that outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Is it not our want of heavenly-mindedness, and purity, and altogether *deficiency of Christian character* and unlikeness to Christ, which makes the thought of his appearing a fearful, rather than a joyful anticipation?

But, as a commentator, I have, perhaps, indulged too much in reflections of this kind. In conclusion, I would observe, that I am not insensible to the force

of some of the objections which have been urged against the foregoing views of our Lord's second coming. That which has occurred to my own mind as involving the greatest difficulty is, how to reconcile the personal advent of Christ *before* the millennium, with the representation given of that event by St. Peter in his second epistle. His words certainly seem to imply that the destruction of the earth by fire, and its subsequent renovation, will take place at the time of the Lord's coming (see c. i. 16; c. iii. 4—13); but, in c. xx. 11, and c. xxi. 1, of this book, that destruction and renovation are represented, apparently, as not occurring till after the conclusion of the millennium. Here, I confess, is a difficulty, of which I can offer no solution. It may, however, be partly owing, as before remarked, to that veil of indistinctness and obscurity which is purposely, I imagine, thrown over the time of our Lord's appearing, in order that, being to us uncertain, we may be continually expecting and preparing for it. The consideration of this and similar difficulties, connected with the pre-millennial advent and literal resurrection of the saints, should keep those who advocate these doctrines, humble and diffident; and make them ready to give to every man that asketh them a reason for the hope that is in them, with *meekness and fear*.

If we know, that "when Christ shall appear, we shall be like him, and see him as he is;" let us remember, it is written also, "every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." 1 John iii. 3.

## THE POST-MILLENNIAL CONFLICT.

Vers. 7—10. “*And when the thousand years are expired,*” &c.

This portion of the Revelation and what remains to the end of the chapter, is so beset with difficulties, that I almost shrink from attempting anything in the way of exposition or elucidation. That men should pretend to dogmatise, as some do, in a case like this, is, indeed, surprising, and argues no little presumption. Every person who has carefully studied the subject, and compared what is here written with other parts of Scripture, must, I think, feel that there are obscurities and *apparent* inconsistencies in this and the following chapter which the event alone can clear up, or which, at least, we might suppose would be sufficient to restrain the dogmatism of the self-confident expositor, and make every man express his sentiments, whatever they may be, with diffidence and modesty. It will be my endeavour, in the few remarks I have to offer, to avoid offending against the rule now laid down. I write with diffidence, and I trust the reader will receive what is written with candour.

At the expiration of the thousand years of millennial peace and blessedness, Satan is to be again loosed out of his prison, and to go forth and *deceive* the nations that are in *the four quarters of the earth*, called by the names of Gog and Magog, whose number is as the sands upon the sea-shore; and these nations being deceived by him, will congregate together in countless multitudes, and in their impiety and madness make a combined attempt against the Church, thinking to destroy and utterly annihilate it; but fire will

come down from heaven and consume them, and thus an end will be put in a moment to their impious and daring attempt. Now the difficulty is, to reconcile this statement with any view, however low, of the millennium. The mention of *the nations*, or Gentiles, *in the four quarters of the earth*, would imply, that during the millennial period there will be vast multitudes of ungodly, unconverted men in the world; for their number is likened to “the sand upon the sea-shore;” and they are said to be in, or *on*, the earth when Satan is loosed. But where are these ungodly, unconverted men to come from? \* Is it

\* Some persons think that *the nations in the four quarters of the earth* are the wicked dead now raised again to life, who, returning to the world with the same feelings as they had at death, will show that their enmity to Christ and his people is unchanged, by immediately attacking the righteous and seeking to destroy them. The only circumstance that gives the slightest ground for such an idea is the immense number of these nations, which cannot easily be accounted for on any other hypothesis.

The most satisfactory explanation of this matter on the anti-millenarian scheme, is that given by Thomas Scott, the commentator. It is certainly entitled to consideration:—

“At the end of the millennium God will remove the restraint which had been laid on Satan and his angels, for reasons which we are not competent to understand; perhaps, among others, to show that the long-continued happy state of the world was not the effect of any essential amelioration of human nature, but of an immediate divine influence on the minds of men by regeneration, ‘to the praise of the glory of his grace.’ Being loosed out of his prison, this great deceiver will again exert himself, and soon excite agents who, with all earnestness, subtilty, and sagacity, will corrupt the Gospel, and seduce men into apostasy, idolatry, heresy, infidelity, and vice: and thus the old generation of believers dying, the succeeding race through many nations ‘in the four quarters of the earth,’ will be deceived by him: and having themselves departed from the faith, they will be instigated to hate and persecute such as adhere to it. Thus the spirit of Antichrist will rise again after the thousand years are expired. Then religious wars will be undertaken, and at length the whole multitude of the apostate nations, even Gog and Magog, as risen again (Ex. xxxviii. 2), will

conceivable, even taking the lowest view of the millennium, that, after Christianity has achieved such signal triumphs as even the anti-millenarians admit it will achieve; after it has subdued all other religions, and been acknowledged as the true religion by all the inhabitants of the earth, for a thousand years, and changed men's characters, and put an end to all wars, discord, and strife: is it conceivable, I say, that the great mass of mankind should on a sudden again become Infidels, and be persuaded to seek the destruction of a religion that will then have stood a trial of seven thousand years, and have proved itself so incontestably to be of God? I see not how these things are to be explained. One thing, however, is clear, that this last struggle will be short and decisive. The Lord God will take the battle into his own hands, and the avenging fire from heaven will for ever put an end to all further attempts to disturb the tranquillity of his people.

In this second loosing of Satan, it must be allowed, there is something exceedingly mysterious and incomprehensible. But "God's ways are not as ours." The whole history of man is a mystery far too deep for us to fathom. That some wise and beneficent purpose is to be accomplished by what appears to us so strange and inexplicable, we cannot for a moment doubt. Let us be content, then, for the present, to remain in ignorance, and not perplex ourselves by vain conjectures on a subject which seems to be purposely

confederate against the Church, and come to fight against her with armies innumerable as the sand of the sea."

Of course, this explanation assumes that the millennial reign and the first resurrection will be purely figurative.

veiled in obscurity. "What we know not now we shall know hereafter;" in the meantime, it is our wisdom to wait patiently upon the Lord in the doing of his will.

Respecting "Gog and Magog" little or nothing is known, and it seems to be a mere waste of time to hazard conjectures on a subject which after all we can say or write, must remain enveloped in obscurity. Magog was the second son of Japheth (Gen. x. 5), and mention is made both of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel xxxix.; but that prophecy is almost equally obscure with the one before us, nor do they throw any light upon each other.

A more important circumstance, as affording a clue to the right interpretation of the millennium, and of the succeeding chapter, is the mention of "the camp of the saints," and "the beloved city." The reader cannot but have observed that in one or two instances in this book the inspired writer speaks, as it were by anticipation, of things not yet in existence. Thus, the witnesses were to be slain by the beast from the bottomless pit, of whom no previous mention had been made, although he is fully described afterwards. (Chap. xi. 7, xvii.) So here, "the beloved city" must, I think, refer to "that great city, the holy Jerusalem," the beloved spouse of the Lamb, of which we have so large a description in the next chapter. But if so, then the descent of this city out of heaven, and everything relating to it, must belong to the millennial period, and the city itself be a type of the Church during the millennium, and not, as Scott and other anti-millenarian expositors suppose, of the heavenly state. This point will be

more fully considered hereafter; but I direct attention to it now as being one of considerable importance with reference to the question of the pre-millennial advent and personal reign. If that city be the type of the Church during the millennium, then there can be little doubt that Christ will be personally present with it throughout that period.

THE THRONE OF JUDGMENT; THE GENERAL  
RESURRECTION, VERS. 11—15.

This portion of the Revelation is of so sublime and heavenly a character, and at the same time so plain and practical, that the commentator feels almost afraid of offering any remarks upon it, lest, like Uzzah, he should be touching the ark with unclean hands; or, like the men of Bethshemesh, be attempting to look too closely into that which, by its sublime simplicity, seems to repel a vain curiosity and forbid too near an approach. To enter into an exact analysis of a passage like this, and attempt to discuss minute particulars, is as if a man should set himself to examine the quality of each separate stone in St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey, instead of fixing his eyes with calm composure on the magnificent grandeur of the whole building. I think it, therefore, safer and better to leave the reader to make his own reflections, and draw his own conclusions. Whether the setting up of the great white throne, and the passing away of the earth and the heaven, be occurrences that precede, or follow after the millennium, is comparatively a question of little importance; but whether, when the judgment takes place, our names will be found in the Book of Life; whether, when "the sea shall

give up the dead that are in it, and death and hell shall give up the dead that are in them," we shall awake to everlasting glory and joy, or "to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. xii. 2), are questions of infinite moment, and of universal interest. Let us endeavour to realize the solemnities of that great day. Let us bear in mind that the placing of the throne, and the opening of the books, and the lake of fire, although symbols and figures, are symbols and figures of *realities*, and those, realities in which we are every one of us individually concerned. There is not perhaps a more solemn and awakening sentence in the whole Bible than this: "WHOSOEVER WAS NOT FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE WAS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE." Pause, reader; pray over it, and lay it to heart.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

THE NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH; THE DESCENT OF THE NEW JERUSALEM; THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS; THE FINAL PORTION OF THE UNBELIEVING.

VER. 1. "*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away,*" &c.—This portion of the Revelation, like that immediately preceding, is also of almost too heavenly and sacred a character to bear the touch of the human commentator. There are, however, particular points here on which I shall venture a few remarks, although I would do so with reverential diffidence.

This new heaven and earth which St. John now saw, must, I think, unquestionably be regarded as identical with that new heaven and new earth, concerning which St. Peter says, "We, according to his promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." And what, then, are we to understand by these expressions? Were this new heaven and new earth mentioned only in the Revelation, I should be inclined to take the language in a purely figurative sense, as signifying merely a *moral* renovation of the world; but the context in St. Peter will not admit of such an interpretation. He tells us, that "the earth and the heavens *that are now* are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Pet. iii. 7), and, that at the coming of the day of the Lord, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be "burnt up" (v. 10). Now this language cannot be mere metaphor. The heavens and earth *that are now*, here plainly mean the present earth, and the sky, or atmosphere, by which it is surrounded. For that these terms are not to be taken in their largest sense, as signifying the whole visible creation, is obvious. The destruction and renovation of this our globe, which is but a speck in the immensity of space, will assuredly not involve the destruction of the whole material universe. The heavens and the earth, therefore, spoken of by St. Peter, are simply the earth and the sky in their vulgar acceptation, the former of which he declares "will be burnt up," and the latter "pass away with a great noise." "But," he immediately adds, "we according to His promise look for a new heaven and a new earth."

And can this, then, be a *figurative* earth and sky? Surely not. In that case it would not be a *new* earth, &c.; it would be none at all. The new heaven and earth, therefore, must be like the former,—a portion of the visible material universe. The new earth will be this present earth restored to its more than primeval beauty and excellence, and the new heaven will be this present sky, or atmosphere, purified and renovated, and fitted to impart immortal vigour to the risen glorified bodies of holy and happy beings. In this new earth “there will be no more sea,” which may be taken both in a literal and figurative sense. It is not improbable, that when this earth shall come forth from that tremendous conflagration described by St. Peter—a conflagration in which the hardest rocks shall melt like wax, and every organized substance on its surface shall be consumed,—it is not, I say, improbable, that the earth will come forth from that conflagration without any of those immense collections of waters which now separate countries and nations from each other, and render the intercourse of individuals not only difficult, but impracticable; and that the whole company of the redeemed will be like one great family, united under a common head, and joined together, as it were, by innumerable living links, touching and communicating with each other, so that there shall be no break, no separating bar, no vacant gap, between the extremities of the chain, or, rather, the manifold radii of the vast circle, the Lord Jesus Christ himself being the common centre and point of union.

But this circumstance has also (if not exclusively), no doubt, a figurative meaning, and implies the absence, both of the wicked themselves, and of the

disturbances and troubles they occasion. For “the wicked are like the troubled sea, whose waters cannot rest” (Isaiah lvii. 20); and when “they shall be consumed out of the earth, and sinners come to an end” (Ps. civ. 55), then will this tempest-tossed world be at rest, and God will once more “rejoice in his works.”

I have said, that “the new heaven” will probably be the present sky, or atmosphere, regenerated, as it were, and made new; by which I mean, purified from all those noxious vapours and hurtful spiritual influences (Eph. ii. 2), which now infect it, and make it the medium both of natural and moral evil. And there can, I think, be no doubt, that if the earth is to be the abode, though only for a limited time, of the risen righteous, a great change will pass upon it, and that the quality and composition of the atmosphere, which will then, probably, as now, constitute an essential element in the support of life, be altogether different from what it is at present.

But these are mere speculations. To some persons, perhaps, the idea of a new earth, such as is here supposed, may appear altogether chimerical, if not physically impossible. But let us take care, that in our philosophical reasonings on this head we do not err, like the Sadducees, “not knowing the Scriptures or the power of God.” Will no changes, then, ever take place in this our world excepting such as are produced gradually by the agency of those chemical and mechanical causes, acting according to certain fixed immutable laws which have been in operation ever since the creation? Shall the earth remain essentially what it now is for ever? Will “day and night, summer and winter, seed time and harvest,” continue to succeed each other to all

eternity? This is an opinion no believer in Revelation can entertain. We are expressly told, that "the earth and all things that are therein shall be burnt up," and that instead of being *annihilated*, as some seem to think, it will be *renovated*. And why should this seem a thing impossible? Why should we doubt the power of Him who made the world what it now is, to make it a thousand times more beautiful and glorious, a suitable dwelling-place, in short, for pure, holy, and immortal beings? For my own part, I can see nothing in this idea opposed to sobriety and right reason, unworthy of the majesty of God, or beneath the dignity of redeemed and glorified man. So far from it, it appears to me to be most agreeable to reason, and most suitable to the character of the eternal, immutable Creator, and the hereafter condition of man, to assume that it will be so. For nearly six thousand years this earth has been a theatre for the display of human folly, depravity, and rebellion, exhibiting to the rest of creation an example of the *apparently* successful endeavours of a fallen malignant spirit to mar the work of God, and frustrate his purpose in creating the world and man upon it. (Compare Gen. i. 31, and vi. 5, 6.) But will this be permitted? Will Satan really triumph, and oblige the Lord of all things to destroy the work of his hands, and annihilate a world which he created to be the abode of holy and happy beings? Is it not much more reasonable to suppose, and does not Scripture favour the supposition, that that portion of the creation which has been the scene of Satan's triumph, will be the scene also of his defeat? That, as the earth has been the theatre for the exhibition of the wickedness of debased and fallen man, so it will be the theatre like-

wise for the manifestation of the righteousness of redeemed, sanctified, and glorified man? Nothing less than this can, I think, verify the language of the apostle in that well-known passage in the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans: "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, but the CREATION\* itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." The creation here is manifestly the earth and its inhabitants, and its deliverance from "the bondage of corruption," can import nothing less than its being made free from all those physical and moral evils to which it is at present subjected.

The eighth Psalm, as interpreted and illustrated by St. Paul, Heb. ii. 5—9, declares the same truths.† "The world to come," of which the apostle there speaks, is this world renewed and restored to more than its primeval glory; and this world, he teaches, is to be subjected, not to angels, but to the second Adam, the man Christ Jesus, to whom all things will be put in subjection.

And what are all the Psalms which speak of the reign of MESSIAH, the ANOINTED ONE, but so many prophetic descriptions of the renovated earth, with Christ and his people reigning upon it? See especially from Psalm xciii. to Psalm c. Let the reader attentively

\* Gr. ἡ κτίσις ἄντη, the same word as in the next verse, and therefore should be translated by the same English word.

† "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour," &c.

peruse those eight Psalms with this impression on his mind,—that is to say, that they are descriptive of the personal reign of the Lord Jesus with his redeemed people,—and he will find, if I am not mistaken, a flood of light thrown upon them.\*

\* The following extract from Augustin's "De Civitate Dei," as showing the views of that eminent man on the above subject, may be interesting to some readers. It occurs in the 16th chapter of the 20th book, entitled, "*De cælo novo, et terra nova,*" of which the following is a literal translation:—

"The judgment being ended, with which he (St. John) announced the wicked would be judged, it remains that he should speak also of the good: *And I saw*, said he, *a new heaven and a new earth.* For the first heaven and the first earth have passed away, and there is now no sea (*et mare jam non est*). This will take place in the order in which, as by anticipation, he had before said, that he saw one sitting upon the throne from whose face the heaven and the earth fled away. That is to say, those having been judged who were not written in the book of life, and sent away into eternal fire, then shall the form (*figura*) of this world by the conflagration of mundane fires pass away, as the deluge was caused by an inundation of mundane waters. By that mundane conflagration, therefore, as I have said, those qualities of corruptible elements which correspond with the corruptible nature of our bodies, will by burning utterly perish, and the substance itself (of the earth) will have those qualities which, by a wonderful change, are suited to and agree with immortal bodies, so that the *world* renewed for the better shall be well adapted to *men* renewed for the better, even as regards the flesh. As to what is said, *and there is now no sea*, whether this means that it will be dried up by the intense heat, or whether that the sea itself will be changed for the better, I cannot pretend to say."

In the 18th chapter, again, he writes thus on 2 Pet. iii.: "At that time (*i.e., the deluge*) Peter saith that the world which then was perished, not the earth only, but the heavens also, whose place the waters, by displacing them, occupied. Therefore the whole, or nearly the whole, of the windy atmosphere (which he calls heaven, or rather *the heavens*—that is, *these lower heavens*, not those highest heavens, in which are placed the sun, and moon, and stars), had been converted into moisture, and in this manner perished with the earth, whose former surface had been destroyed by the deluge. "But," saith he, "the heavens and the earth which are now, are reserved by the same word unto fire," &c. "That is, as the heavens and the earth, or world, which perished in the deluge was replaced from the same water, this same world is reserved unto the day

But I will not enlarge further upon this point. I would simply suggest one inquiry in connexion with this subject, namely, whether professing Christians in general are accustomed to look forward to the final accomplishment of God's purposes with that intense earnestness and interest which their importance to every one of us individually demands? and whether we should not be less worldly-minded, less selfish, covetous, and ambitious, and, as a consequence, far more *holy* and *far happier*, if we were to live more by faith, endeavouring to attain to a realizing view of "the riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints" (Ephes. i. 18), that "new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness?"

THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY CITY.—XXI. 2—8.

"*And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband,*" &c.—The holy city, which is more fully described hereafter, is another name for the bride, the Lamb's wife. And its descent from heaven is only a figurative mode of expressing that descent of believers with Christ, which will take place when he shall descend from heaven with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and bring those with him who have died in the faith. (1 Thess. iv. 14.) But the mention of this circumstance here throws some farther light upon the question of the pre-millennial advent. It is evident that what the apostle now saw is supposed to take place *after* the creation of the new heaven and earth. But it is no less plainly evident that the preparation of the bride and

of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. For he does not hesitate to call that the *destruction* or perdition of men because of the great change it involves, although their *nature* will remain for ever in eternal punishment."

of the nuptial supper, are pre-millennial events, which occur immediately after the destruction of the apostate Church. (Chap. xix. 1.) But we know that the nuptial feast involves the presence of the bridegroom; and it would seem therefore an inevitable conclusion from hence, that the second advent and the renovation of the earth will precede the millennium. Yet, on the other hand, the heavens and the earth do not flee away until the placing of the great white throne (c. xx. 11), and that, apparently, does not take place till the general resurrection, and, consequently, not until after the expiration of the thousand years. How are these things to be reconciled? The only explanation I can suggest is this:—It does not follow of necessity that the general resurrection of the dead, described in ver. 12, occurs immediately upon the setting up of the great white throne. The whole millennial period *may* intervene between the setting up of that throne and the general resurrection. No good reason can be assigned why we should not assume this interval of a thousand years between the events of the eleventh and twelfth verses. It may be asked, If the judgment of the dead is not then to take place, why is the throne of judgment set up? I answer, Why should it not be for the judgment of the living? This consideration, I am inclined to think, affords the true solution of the difficulty. The judgment of the *quick* will precede the judgment of the *dead*, and occupy that period of a thousand years during which the saints will reign with Christ as co-sessors with him in judgment. This view of the subject is greatly strengthened and confirmed by our Lord's own representation in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew. "When," says he, "the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy

angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations." Now there is no mention here of the resurrection of the dead. He sits upon the throne of judgment, but it is the living only apparently that are now summoned before him. Does not this correspond with that view of the subject just mentioned? Why should our Lord studiously avoid any *allusion* even to the resurrection of the dead in this place, but on the ground that the resurrection is not to take place immediately on his coming?

These, however, are matters of speculation. In the eagerness of our discussion on such points, let us not lose sight of the "glorious things which are here spoken of the city of God." Whatever difficulties may be connected with the interpretation of certain portions of this sublime and heavenly book, one thing is clear, that God has here revealed to us by the Spirit that he has prepared for those that love him, "*such things as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and such as never entered into the heart of man.*" To know that God shall again dwell among us and hold familiar converse with man as he did with Adam in Eden; to know that in the renovated earth "there will be no more death, nor sorrow, nor pain;" that "we shall be heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ," and inherit as his children "*all things,*" all things belonging to his everlasting kingdom—all the glory, and beauty, and excellence of that inheritance which has been preparing for six thousand years, and which he purchased for us with his own blood—this surely is enough. Oh, had we faith but as a grain of mustard-seed, the glory of that light which promises like these shed upon the darkness of the future, would surely cast the false lustre of things present into the shade, and they would no longer

occupy, as they too often do, the whole sphere of our mental vision, but, dwindling into their proper dimensions, they would be lost to view in the contemplation of the "things unseen and eternal."

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CHAPTERS XXI. 9—27 ; XXII. 1—5.

THE NEW JERUSALEM.

THE subject of the last eighteen verses of this twenty-first chapter, and of the first five of the next is *one*, and the chapters, therefore, ought not to have been divided. The whole portion is a figurative description of the redeemed and glorified Church under the symbol of a city. And here we see the exactness of order and admirable consistency with which the Revelation is written. There is, as has been before remarked, a wonderful uniformity of arrangement in the construction of its several parts throughout, showing the infinite wisdom of the mind by which it was contrived. In nothing is this more apparent than in that portion of the book now before us.

It will be remembered that *after* the apostle had witnessed the outpouring of the vials of Divine wrath upon great Babylon, "The mother of harlots and of abominations of the earth," one of the angels commissioned to execute those judgments came to him and talked with him, and having carried him away in the Spirit into the wilderness, showed him a representation of the apostate Church, under the figure of an adulterous harlot adorned with all the meretricious ornaments of

her profession, and triumphing in the intoxication of prosperity and power. In exact accordance with such an arrangement, and as a sort of parallelism with the former vision, the apostle is again called away by one of the seven angels with the vials to behold the holy city, the *real* Church, the pure and spotless bride of Christ, descend from heaven. Now in this we see oneness of arrangement, order, and consistency. The Church is first exhibited as a chaste matron in her primitive beauty and simplicity. (Chap. xii.) But she flees into the wilderness, and is hidden for a season from observation. An adulterous counterfeit now takes her place, and assuming her name and prerogatives, presents herself to mankind as the beloved of the Lord, the one only spouse of the anointed Redeemer. But her false pretensions are exposed and her end foretold. (Chaps. xvii., xviii.) And now the adulteress being removed out of the way, the true wife again appears upon the scene, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." When, however, the apostle is called to contemplate her in her glory and beauty, it is under the similitude of a *city*, not of a *woman*, that she is presented to him. And in this also we see the same oneness of arrangement, and the same order and consistency. For as the false and counterfeit Church is first presented to us under the figure of a licentious woman revelling in luxury and intoxicated with prosperity, and afterwards when her fall is foreshown, under the symbol of a city laid in ruins and made desolate ; so the true Church is first presented under the similitude of a woman travailing in pain, and at length fleeing away into a wilderness ; but now that her season of exaltation and glory is come, she is brought before us and described under the symbol of a city coming down out of heaven

from God. It will be observed, therefore, that both Churches, the true and the false, the real and the pretended, are each represented under two symbols, and called by two names. The one is, *Babylon the Great* and *the Mother of Harlots*; the other is, *New Jerusalem* and *the Bride, the Lamb's Wife*. These things are so plain and obvious that "he who runs may read them;" and nothing but a wilful and judicial blindness could have hidden them for so long a time from the great body of professing Christians. But it is with the members of the Romish Church as with the Jews, "their minds are blinded, so that until this day, in the reading of the Scriptures, the veil remaineth untaken away." May it be speedily removed!

In offering a few remarks upon this sublime picture I shall not attempt the explanation of particulars. It is to the grand effect of the representation as a whole we must look, rather than to the minutiae of its details. That we have here an emblematical description of the glorified Church, and not of a literal city, is so obvious, that it is amazing how such an idea as the latter could ever have entered into the mind of man. What the apostle saw was, THE BRIDE, the WIFE OF THE LAMB, and she is described as *a city* simply, I imagine, because this emblem admits of more amplification than that of a woman, and affords a more varied groundwork for setting forth the glory of the Church in the latter day. Viewed in this light nothing can be more sublime than this description. A city composed of precious stones and pearls, having its streets paved with transparent gold, and surrounded by lofty walls hard as adamant and of dazzling brightness, gives an idea of richness, beauty, endurance, and security which nothing can

surpass. The following are the prominent points in this description which seem to demand especial notice:—

Ver. 12. “*And twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.*”—The mention again of the twelve tribes of Israel, and that in connexion with Jerusalem, seems to indicate that the Jews will now be restored to favour, and stand as watchmen at the gates of the heavenly city, inviting men to enter, and welcoming all who present themselves. At every gate there is *an angel*, a messenger of the Lord, and that angel is a Jew! This is a cheering thought. God then “hath not cast off his ancient people.” No, he will “yet have mercy upon Jacob, and will yet choose Israel,” and in the period of millennial blessedness the Jew will share with the Gentile the unsearchable riches of redeeming love.

Ver. 16. “*And the city lieth foursquare, and the length thereof is the same as the breadth,*” &c.—That is, there are no irregularities, no inequalities in this city; all is order, harmony, and quietness. “In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, but all are one in him.” Differing, if I may so speak, in size; differing also in degree and quality; yet are the stones of this spiritual city so put together that they seem, as it were, but one substance. The members of the glorified Church will indeed have but one heart and one mind, and thus they will be “buildd together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

Ver. 22. “*And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.*”—What a thought is this! No temple! Will there then be no worship there? Yes, it will be all worship; every day

will be a Sabbath; every moment will be filled with prayer and praise. How, then, will there be no temple? Because "the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple thereof." They will be everywhere present and *in* everything. The creature will visibly reflect the glory of the Creator, and no secondary agency as a medium of intercourse between God and man will be needed. Earthly material temples and ordinances are but the visible things by which "the invisible things of God" (Rom. i. 20) are brought sensibly before our eyes, and they are necessary now because in the present body "no man can see God and live." (Exod. xxxiii. 20.) But it will not be so hereafter. In the risen glorified body "we shall be made like Christ, and see him as he is." (1 John iii. 2.) And thus the manifested presence of the Lord everywhere will supersede the necessity of all secondary channels of communication; churches, and temples, and ordinances will be unnecessary; the light of God's countenance will shine directly upon the inhabitants of that holy city, and their worship will not be stated and occasional and of brief duration, but uninterrupted and perpetual, one eternal Sabbath. "The Lord God and the Lamb are the temple of it." This is perhaps the most sublime idea that was ever put into the mind of man. To use the language of an eloquent writer, "We cannot find words in which to express our thoughts of the grandeur of the imagery which represents the Almighty as the temple of the city. A temple filled with Godhead; its walls his attributes, its roof his majesty, its gates his eternity! And to worship in this temple; to live in this temple; to worship God *in* God. Oh! there is a wonderfulness here which with all our strivings we cannot reach. For who can imagine to

himself the Everlasting Creator condescending to become as a sanctuary to the children of men! Yet let not the majesty of the statement prevent our taking to ourselves its comfort and its instruction. In place of going up to the house of God, I am to go hereafter to God himself; the house of God is to be God. The Lord God and the Lamb shall be the temple of that glorious city.”

Ver. 23. “*And the city hath no need of the sun nor of the moon,*” &c.—This confirms the view taken of these symbols, chap. xii. 1. The city is the Church. The sun and the moon must be something then whereby the Church has received light previously to her glorification. Now, under the old dispensation the light of the Church was the law. (Ps. cxix. 105.) And under the new it is the Gospel. But in her state of millennial blessedness the Church will need neither the law nor the Gospel. God will communicate knowledge and truth immediately and directly from himself, without the intervention of any secondary instrumentality whatever. And how inconceivably blessed a state will that be when Divine and heavenly light will come into the soul—the eye of the mind, as the natural light now enters into the eye of the body, and we shall perceive spiritual truths as by intuition, without that long and laborious process which is now required to attain even to a child’s knowledge of the things of God! When we shall no longer see through a glass darkly, but face to face; when we shall know, not *in part* only, but even *as we are known*!

Vers. 24—27. “*And the nations of those that are saved shall walk in the light of it. And the kings of the earth,*” &c.—These verses seem far more suitable to the millennial than to what is commonly understood by the heavenly state of blessedness. In fact, I see not how

those words, "And the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it," can be explained on the supposition that the apostle is here describing the condition of the blessed *in heaven*. The meaning evidently seems to be, that all the potentates of the earth shall at the time referred to be subject to Christ, and, acknowledging him to be the Lord of all, shall lay their riches and glory at his feet to be disposed of as he will. As it is said in Zechariah, "In that day shall the Lord be king over all the earth, and there shall be one Lord, and his name one." (Chap. xiv. 6.) This prediction has never been fulfilled, but, like that we are considering, seems manifestly to belong to the millennial period. So likewise does that other prediction of the same prophet, "And in that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD, and there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord," which corresponds with the words of St. John: "And there shall not enter into it anything that defileth, and that maketh an abomination and a lie;" nothing, *i.e.*, polluting, false, or deceitful; nothing offensive to God or hurtful to man; but those things and persons only shall find a place in that city which are pure, real, and true. Blessed and glorious state! Hasten, O Lord, the fulfilment of these great and precious promises.

Chap. xxii. 1. "*And he showed me a pure river of water of life,*" &c.—There is a manifest correspondence between this part of the description of the "beloved city," and that given of Eden, Gen. ii. This may be designed to teach us that man will be restored, not only to what he had at first, but to more than his original inheritance. In Eden immortality was assured to man by free access to the tree of life, which was in the midst of the garden;

but in this new Eden there is not only the tree of life, but THE RIVER OF THE WATER OF LIFE also, flowing continually from the throne of God and the Lamb. A beautiful emblem this of the Holy Spirit flowing in rich abundance from the Father and the Son, and refreshing the Church by his gracious influences. This is that river of God's pleasure of which his people will hereafter be privileged to drink from the fountain head; and it would appear from hence that the life of the believer will then be sustained by direct communications of the Spirit from the throne of Deity. The life of Adam was a *physical* life—a life produced and sustained by physical means and appliances; but the life of the glorified believer in Christ will be a *spiritual* life, communicated in the first instance, and to all eternity sustained, by the life-giving influences of the Holy Spirit.

Ver. 2. "*In the midst was the tree of life,*" &c.—The "twelve manner of fruits" on this tree, shows that the enjoyments of the redeemed and glorified man will be suited to his nature and condition. They will not weary by repetition nor clog by their sameness, but partake of that agreeable variety which seems necessary for the continued happiness of all beings endued with the higher moral and intellectual faculties. The healing virtue in the leaves of the tree may symbolize the purification of the soul from its spiritual diseases,—that is, all the moral evil with which it is now infected, and its consequent perfect restoration to primeval unsullied purity.

Ver. 4. "*And his name shall be in their foreheads.*"—In other words, they shall be made like him. The Divine image shall be re-stamped upon them, and all the moral perfections of the Godhead so far as they are communicable to the creature, shall be visibly seen upon

them. And therefore shall they "see his face." SEE HIS FACE! Blessed and glorious hope! Who can conceive the transcendent joy which that vision will produce in those who are privileged to behold it? If we could but catch a glimpse of that countenance *now*, the sight would so amaze us by its splendour and ravish us by its ineffable beauty, that we should never again for a moment forget it; it would fill the mind's eye to the exclusion of every other object, and all the petty vanities of the present time would be annihilated. Gracious Lord, grant us this vision, though it be through a glass darkly! Begin the writing of this thy name upon our foreheads now, that we may wake up hereafter in thy perfect likeness, and see thee as thou art!

CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK.—XXII. 6—22.

The prophetic portion of the Revelation may be said to end at the fifth verse of this chapter. The remaining sixteen verses consist of various detached sentences addressed in the way of exhortation, encouragement, and warning to persons of different characters, containing matter of the highest interest and importance, and deserving of the reader's most earnest and anxious consideration.

Vers. 6—10. "*And he said unto me, These words are true and faithful,*" &c.—This repetition of the declaration, c. xix. 9, shows that what follows respecting the falling down of St. John to worship the angel belongs to the same period in the prophetic narrative, and, therefore, that he did not, as is generally supposed, offer worship to the angel a second time. This is certainly highly improbable, since only a few minutes could have elapsed between the first and second attempted act of adoration, and it is scarcely to be conceived that John would in so short an

interval have forgotten the denial and reproof he had just before received. Nor does the manner in which the circumstance is related require that we should so understand the apostle's statement, which is, in fact, a repetition of what he had *before written*, and does not involve a repetition of the act described. It is as if he had expressed himself thus:—"And I, John, when I had heard and seen these things, fell down (*as I before said*) to worship before the feet of the angel," &c.

But if these are indeed the true sayings of God, what shall we say of those who neglect and despise them? What shall we say of those who speak of "breaking seals" and "sounding trumpets," as if any attempt to expound the Revelation were only a fit subject for ridicule! There is an approach to profaneness in this way of talking which ought carefully to be avoided. May we not say with reference to such irreverence, "He that despiseth despiseth not man but God?" Has God said, "Blessed is he that observeth the sayings of this book," and shall man presume to treat them with contempt?

"*Seal not the words of the prophecy,*" &c.—St. John having now finished writing, or being supposed to have finished writing, the things he had heard and seen, is commanded not to seal the roll on which these things were written, but to leave it open for the reading and meditation of all. This implies, not only that the prophecies were about immediately to commence their course of fulfilment, but that they were *immediately to be studied* with a view to ascertain their meaning, and verify their accomplishment. It will be remembered it was otherwise with Daniel. His prophecies were to be "closed up and sealed till the time of the end," (xii. 9.) *i.e.*, until the end of the Jewish dispensation and

beginning of Messiah's kingdom. And accordingly they were sealed up until Christ came.

Ver. 11. "*He that is unrighteous let him be unrighteous,*" &c.—No one will suppose that these words are to be taken as an encouragement to the unrighteous man to continue in the practice of iniquity. They are spoken rather in the way of warning and dehortation. The sense is, "Let the unrighteous man if he will, if he be determined upon his own destruction, continue in his unrighteousness; let him, if he will, persist in his ungodliness, wickedness, and impurity; but let him not think that he will eventually escape punishment: it is but for *a while* that he will be permitted thus to go on with impunity: the time is coming when every man shall receive according to his works, and then will he find that I have power to punish as well as to reward." So that, in fact, we have here that solemn appeal of St. Paul in the second chapter of the epistle to the Romans, only in another form: "Thinkest thou, O man, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?" Such is precisely the import of the words before us, and which are therefore a gracious remonstrance addressed to careless men who are sinning with a high hand.

On the other hand, there is encouragement given to the righteous. "*He that is righteous let him be righteous still,*" &c. Here, it will be observed, the "*righteous is the man who doeth righteousness,*"

(1 John iii. 7,) that is to say, the term *righteous* is here used with reference to the believer's character and works,—the outward manifestation, so to speak, of justification, or the proofs of his being in a justified state ; not with reference to the grounds of his righteousness. Just as in the passage above referred to, the apostle says, "He that doeth righteousness, is righteous." So that the sense might be expressed thus : "But whilst I warn the unrighteous man against presuming upon his present impunity, as supposing that the time of retribution will never come ; I would cheer and encourage the righteous under the conflicts and trials which beset their path. Let none such be disheartened. Let them persevere steadily in the way of holiness and virtue, whatever enemies may oppose them—whatever difficulties and hinderances they may meet with. The race will soon be run ; the conflict will soon be over ; the time of my coming to judge the world is at hand ; and then shall they find that my word is true ; that I am as able to reward and bless those who love and serve me, as I am to punish those who hate and blaspheme me : then shall the world know that I will give to every man according to his works."

13—15. "*I am the Alpha and Omega, &c. ; blessed are those that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.*"—It is the Lord Jesus who still continues to speak, and who thus, therefore, declares himself to be, as the Almighty Father had done previously (c. i. 8), "the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and end ;" "making himself, indeed, equal with God." (John v. 18 ; x. 33.) For that it is Christ who here speaks, is evident, from his using

the pronoun in the third person, "*Blessed are they that do his commandments.*" The Son of God came to declare to us the will of his Heavenly Father, and "the words which he spake, were not his," as the man Christ Jesus, but "the Father's who sent him." (John xiv. 24.) Therefore does he say, "Blessed are those that do HIS commandments," the commandments, *i.e.*, of my Heavenly Father, delivered to them by me; "*that they may have right to, or power over, the tree of life.*" Let us not, in order to maintain the consistency, as we may imagine, of a system of our own constructing, pervert the plain meaning of Scripture, and shrink from the natural and obvious interpretation of a passage like this. We know that it is "not by works of righteousness we have done, but of God's mercy that we are saved." (Tit. iii. 5.) "All our righteousnesses are filthy rags;" (Is. lxiv. 6;) and to attempt to found any claim to God's favour and acceptance on them, would, indeed, be building upon the sand. What, then, mean this and similar declarations, many of them uttered by the mouth of our Lord himself? If we are not saved by our own works; if all our righteous acts are but filthy rags, how can they entitle us to eat of the tree of life? But is this the truth here affirmed? Is it really asserted that the believer's good works give him a right to eat of that tree? Let us look at the words again: "Happy are those, doing his commandments, that their power may be over the tree of life, and they may enter in by the gates into the city."\* Now, does this assert the *merit* of good works? Surely not; nothing of

\* This is the exact literal rendering of the Greek: Μακάριοι οἱ ποιῶντες τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ, ἵνα ἔσται ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς, κ. τ. λ.

the kind. It simply pronounces those persons blessed who are *engaged in doing* the commandments of God, and it declares that such persons only are entitled to eat of the tree of immortality, and to enter into the glorified Church of the redeemed. And is not this the universal language of Scripture? Does not our Lord say, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father in heaven."\* Are

\* I cannot, therefore, attach that importance to the reading of the Alexandrine and another ancient MS., which is done by Mr. Tregelles, who thinks that to have brought to light one such various reading, would repay the labours of a life. For the satisfaction of the reader, I will give his remarks on this passage in his own words: "As an instance of the result of labour purely critical, in a passage where every Christian reader may in some measure appreciate it, I may refer to Rev. xxii. 14;—all may feel the difference between the statements of the readings: 'BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO WASH THEIR ROBES, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city;' how different from, '*Blessed are they that do his commandments*, that they may have right to the tree of life,' &c.! The common text can be understood *by means of other Scriptures* in such a way as not to contradict grace; but a soul that values the salvation which God has provided in the blood of Christ, finds in the declaration, 'Blessed are those who wash their robes,' that on which it can repose, as having the gospel of the *grace* of God in Christ's redemption, brought before it with a rich unction. How beautifully have we thus the holiness of those gates of pearl, through which nothing that defileth shall ever enter, set in immediate connection with that cleansing through which a title is given to enter in, as ransomed, forgiven, and saved! To me it would be a reward for years of toil, to be the means of bringing one such text forward with the full light of clear and certain evidence bearing on it."—*Int. to the "Revelation, translated from the ancient Greek text,"* p. xxiii. It is, however, to my mind, very doubtful, after all, whether the reading of the Alexandrine MS. is the true reading. Taking all circumstances into consideration, I should say, it is more probable, that men zealous for the doctrines of free grace, should have altered the original words, as thinking them *opposed* to their system, than that the opponents of grace should have changed them to suit theirs. The words, "*Blessed are*

we not constantly told, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord? There is nothing inconsistent with the doctrine of grace in this. It is not a man's works; it is not his holiness, that entitles him to live for ever in eternal happiness; nevertheless, without works, and without holiness, he can have no communion with God. And this, then, is the true meaning and interpretation of such passages as these. The right, or power, to take of the tree of life, is inseparably connected with the doing the commandments of God, as they are made known to us by our Lord Jesus Christ; and therefore is it said, "Blessed are they that *do* his commandments," &c. Yet, it is not the doing of the commandments that gives the title, or right, to partake of the tree, it is only *a necessary condition*, without which none can be admitted to that high privilege.

"*Without are dogs and sorcerers,*" &c.—LOVE and TRUTH, are the two prominent features in the divine character. In fact, they comprehend everything. That "God is love," that "he cannot lie," are the pillars and ground of all his moral perfections. And thus then, also, it is with those who are born of God, and made his children by adoption and grace. Love is in their hearts, truth on their lips. The *Israelite*, INDEED, *hath in him no guile*. Such only shall dwell with him and behold his face with joy.

*those that wash their robes,*" &c., are only a repetition of the sentiment in c. vii. 14, and express a truth, which no Christian can for a moment hesitate to receive; but the declaration, "*blessed are those who do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life,*" does, at first, stagger us, and I can well understand how a transcriber, jealous of any glory being given to man, might set himself to consider whether there might not be some error in the text.

Hence, it is said, “without are dogs,” &c., *i.e.*, whosoever is fierce, revengeful, malignant, impure, hypocritical, and false. Such persons, whatever religious pretensions they may make, show themselves to be the genuine offspring of him who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, and with him, therefore, are they doomed to dwell for ever.

Ver. 16. *I, Jesus, have sent my angel, &c.*—See c. i. 1, and c. ii. 28.

Ver. 17. “*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come thou; and let him that heareth, say, Come thou; and let him that is athirst come, and take of the water of life freely.*”—This is explained, by the generality of commentators to be an invitation to all persons to come and partake freely of the blessings of the gospel covenant. But, were this the case, the verb would probably be in the plural, “Come ye:” as in Isa. lv. 1. “Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!” The two first clauses, therefore, are to be regarded, I imagine, as a response to the announcement of the Redeemer, v. 12. He had said, “Behold, I come quickly.” The Spirit and the Bride, that is, the Church speaking under the guidance and influence of the Spirit, takes up the words and answers with joyful acquiescence, “Come.” And the apostle in the fervour of his mind, calls upon all who should hear of this blessed and glorious coming, to join in the prayer of the Church, and say, “Come.” And then, as if to silence every unbelieving doubt, and banish every causeless fear, he adds, in the name of his Lord, an unconditional invitation to every sincere but timid seeker after divine truth, to come and partake freely of the water of life,—that river, clear

as crystal, which he had just described as proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb.

Hence I think we may infer, that previously to our Lord's coming, not only there will be an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit upon the Church and mankind at large, but that the Church will be led to expect and pray for his coming. This idea is in perfect analogy with the method of God's dealings in times past. Thus, when he was about to deliver his people from Egyptian bondage, the spirit of grace and supplication was first poured out upon them; they called unto the Lord, and he sent them a deliverer; and their deliverance is expressly declared to have been an answer to prayer; yet the precise day on which it would take place had been determined upon and announced four hundred and thirty years before. (Ex. ii. 23—25, and xii. 41.) So also Daniel, when the set time for the deliverance from Babylon was arrived, was led to offer up supplications in the name of the Church for the accomplishment of the promise. (Dan. ix.) And thus also we may assume it will be when the end of the Church's captivity in the spiritual Babylon draws near, and her Great Deliverer is about to appear. The eyes of his believing people will be directed heavenwards. The Church will be looking anxiously for the return of her Lord, and will be frequent and earnest in her supplications to him to fulfil his promise and hasten his coming. *Nor will he come* until he hears the anxious petition sent forth from ten thousand longing hearts prepared to welcome him with joy. Gracious Lord! pour upon thy Church this spirit of grace and supplication! Let the joyful response to thy promise even now begin. Let the Spirit and the Bride say,

“Come!” and do thou prepare our hearts for the realization of this blessed hope, and thy glorious appearing!

Vers. 18, 19. “*For I testify unto every one,*” &c.—It would seem as if the Lord foreseeing that this portion of his Word would be especially liable to the cavils of unbelief, the neglect of rationalistic latitudinarianism, and the adulterations of presumptuous criticism, added this solemn caution, for the express purpose of checking the rashness of the daring emendator, and stimulating to watchfulness the careless transcriber.\* Let it be borne in mind, however, that this caution applies not only to presumptuous transcribers and critics, but to all persons who speak contemptuously of this heavenly book, or endeavour in any way to detract from its authority.

Ver. 20. “*He that testifieth these things, saith, Surely, I come quickly.*”—Three times is this testimony repeated within the compass of a few verses. Surely, then, there must be something more in this coming than is commonly supposed. Why, I again ask, this frequent repetition? Why are we so constantly reminded that the time of the Lord’s coming is at hand, if that coming be only figurative?—if it be a coming only in the enlargement of the Church, and the increase of true religion? No; it cannot be thus. The Spirit of Truth would never have employed language which, in its plain and obvious meaning, would lead us to look upon the day of Christ’s coming as ushering in an event at once

\* It is a striking fact, that the text of the Revelation has come down to us in a state of remarkable purity. The only various readings of any real importance, that I am aware of, are the two before particularly noticed, c. xi. 1, and c. xxii. 14. It would appear, therefore, that the caution has not been given in vain.

the most momentous, most glorious, and most joyful that has ever taken place since the foundation of the world, if that coming were nothing more than a gradual extension of Gospel light. Every Christian, indeed, must rejoice in the progress of truth, and it is delightful to contemplate the probability of a general diffusion of the knowledge of God amongst all nations of the earth; but this is not an event which seems in any sense or degree to correspond with the solemn announcement, "Surely, I come quickly." Centuries, it is true, have elapsed since this announcement was first made, nor is it yet fulfilled; and the scoffer may begin to say, "Where are the signs of his coming?" But we should always remember that words of time have a very different import in the mouth of the infinite Jehovah, from what they have when used by us his finite creatures. To him with whom "a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years," centuries are as minutes, and minutes as centuries. He looks on the future as we look on the past. To his infinite mind, grasping eternity and all events and things belonging to it, a thousand or ten thousand years are but as a short parenthesis in that boundless duration which has neither beginning nor end. And even as addressed to us short-lived creatures, who measure our age by years and days, the declaration, "Behold, I come *quickly*," is still true. For *quick* will that coming be in comparison of the eternal duration which shall succeed it: *quick* also will it be as compared with the four thousand years, or more, which preceded the first coming: and, which is perhaps the true sense, *quickly* will it follow upon the accomplishment of the other prophecies contained in this book. To attempt to fix the precise point beyond which the

second advent cannot be delayed, is indeed unwarrantable presumption, but to treat the subject with supercilious indifference, is little less than avowed Infidelity. Does not that disposition so generally prevalent to regard the coming of Christ to judge the world as indefinitely distant, argue an unwillingness to think of his coming at all? Do we thus usually put off in thought to as distant a period as possible those events the arrival of which we earnestly desire and long for? Reader, examine the state of your own feelings on this subject. Are *you* “waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ?” (1 Cor. i. 7.) Do you “love his appearing?” (2 Tim. iv. 8.) Are you looking for it as to that “blessed hope” (Tit. ii. 13), the fulfilment of which shall be the beginning of eternal glory, the consummation of your joy? Remember the solemn prophetic inquiry of your Divine Master: “When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” Whatever may be your opinions on those points of theory and speculation, in regard to which even the best and wisest men are not agreed, see at least that your feelings in respect to “the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,” accord with those of the beloved apostle, that in reply to the announcement, “BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY,” you may be able to respond with heartfelt earnestness, “AMEN; EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS!”

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all!  
Amen.

## APPENDICES.

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- A. ON THE GENUINENESS AND AUTHENTICITY OF THE APOCALYPSE.
- B. ON THE DATE OF THE APOCALYPSE.
- C. ANALYSIS OF MODERN COMMENTARIES.



## APPENDIX A.

### ON THE GENUINENESS AND AUTHENTICITY OF THE APOCALYPSE.

BEFORE we enter upon the immediate consideration of the subject of this Appendix, it may be well to premise that the genuineness of any ancient writing rests upon two species of evidence, the one usually called *external*, the other *internal*. External evidence is the testimony to be derived from other contemporary, or nearly contemporary, writings. Internal evidence is that which is contained in the work itself. The external evidence, for example, that "Macbeth" and "Julius Cæsar" were both written by Shakespear, is the concurrent testimony of his contemporaries; the internal evidence of their genuineness is the similarity in the language, style, and thoughts of the two plays. The same remarks apply to the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" of Homer, to the plays of Sophocles and Euripides, and all other ancient writings. The force of this testimony is so plain and strong that it seems to be universally admitted. Although more than two thousand years have passed since some of the authors just mentioned wrote, no one thinks of questioning the genuineness of those works which are usually ascribed to them, and which have come down to us. It is obvious, in fact, that the longer any book has been received as the undoubted production of any particular writer, the broader and firmer must the foundation become upon which its authenticity rests. Provided, therefore, the genuineness of a work be not questioned somewhere about the time of its publication, or soon after, supposing it to be a work of importance and much read, its authority becomes established on an immoveable

basis, which it is next to impossible should be shaken in after ages.

Having made these preliminary remarks, I shall now proceed to show that we have amply sufficient evidence, both external and internal, to establish the genuineness and authenticity of the Apocalypse beyond all question. With this view let us consider first the external evidence.

*External Evidence in favour of the Apocalypse.*

1st. It was generally received as the undoubted work of St. John during the second century; that is, for more than a hundred years from the time of its first publication.

The writers whose testimony is most unquestionable and satisfactory in confirmation of this assertion are Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Theophilus, and Tertullian.

Justin wrote and flourished about the year 140, and is the earliest of the fathers of whose writings any considerable portion has reached our times. He quotes the Revelation, and expressly ascribes it to St. John; nor does he intimate that any doubts were entertained by the Church in his days respecting its authenticity. On the contrary, he affirms that "as many Christians as were *in every respect orthodox*," (*ορθογνομονες κατα παντα*,) believed in the millennial reign, which opinion he establishes by referring to the Revelation of St. John;\* whence we may infer that those Christians who were "in every respect orthodox," received the Revelation as a divinely inspired book, for from what other quarter could they have derived their expectations concerning the millennium? Nothing can be more satisfactory, therefore, than Justin's testimony.

Irenæus wrote a little later than Justin. He was a disciple of Polycarp, who had seen and conversed with St. John, and may, therefore, be supposed to have heard from the apostle himself whether the Apocalypse were his writing or not. Now there are twenty-two chapters in the book of Revelation, and Irenæus quotes from *thirteen* of them, producing more

\* "Dial. cum Tryph.," p. 306, Ed. Paris, 1636.

than twenty-four passages; some of considerable length.\* What stronger witness can we require than this?

Theophilus was Bishop of Antioch about A.D. 170. His works have not come down to us, but Eusebius informs us that in a treatise he wrote against the heresy of Hermogenes, he "adduces many testimonies out of the Revelation of St. John." †

Tertullian flourished about the close of the second century. "He quotes, or refers, to the Apocalypse in above *seventy* passages of his writings, and he appeals to it expressly as the work of the Apostle John. He defends the authenticity of the book against the heretic Marcion and his followers by asserting its external evidence. He appeals to the Asiatic Churches, and assures us, that though Marcion rejects it, yet the succession of bishops traced to its origin will establish John to be its author." ‡

Several other orthodox writers belonging to this period might also be mentioned, as Melito, Bishop of Sardis, who, as we are told by Eusebius, "*wrote a Commentary on the Revelation*;" § Apollonius, a pious and learned Phrygian, "who," says Eusebius, "alleges passages out of the Revelation;" || Athenagoras, the contemporary of Polycarp and Justin Martyr, who is proved by Lardner to have been acquainted with the Apocalypse. ¶ But I deem it unnecessary to dwell any further upon this point. Let the reader consider the following fact, and say whether it is not of itself sufficient to establish the above position. There are nine ecclesiastical writers of note belonging to the period immediately succeeding the publication of the Apocalypse fragments of whose works have reached us, viz. :—

\* Archdeacon Woodhouse, "Diss. on the Apocalypse," p. 28. See also Lardner's "Cred. Gosp. Hist.," art. Irenæus.

† "Hist. Ecc.," l. iv., c. 24.

‡ Tertul. "Adv. Marcion," lib. iv., c. 5. Quoted by Dean Woodhouse, p. 51.

§ "Hist. Ecc.," l. iv., c. 26.

|| Ibid, l. v., c. 18.

¶ "Cred. Gosp. Hist.," art. Athenagoras.

Justin Martyr.  
 Athenagoras.  
 Hermias.  
 Theophilus.  
 Irenæus.

Melito.  
 Apollonius.  
 Clement of Alexandria.  
 Tertullian.

Of these, *eight* mention the Revelation and distinctly acknowledge it as the genuine work of St. John. The only remaining one has left nothing behind him but a small imperfect tract, a satire on the philosophy of the Gentiles, in which, as might be expected, we find no allusion to this book either for or against.

2d. The most distinguished writers of the third century have quoted and received the Apocalypse as the work of St. John and divinely inspired.

The writers of this century are Minucius Felix, Hippolytus, Origen, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Cyprian, and Methodius; to whom may be added Dionysius of Alexandria, although his works have perished, excepting some fragments preserved in Eusebius. Of these, Hippolytus wrote two books in defence of the Revelation,\* for about this time its genuineness began to be questioned by heretics. Origen, the most learned and acute of all the fathers, quotes it frequently, and in his catalogue of the books of the Old and New Testament, ascribes it without any hesitation to St. John.† Methodius also commented upon it.‡ Cyprian has quoted it upwards of ninety times, which quotations contain passages of some length from almost every chapter,§ and it was universally received by the African Churches. The testimony of Dionysius will be noticed hereafter.

\* Lardner, vol. ii., p. 412.

† His words are, "What shall I say of John, who leaned on the breast of our Lord Jesus, who wrote one Gospel, and confessed that if as many had been written as might have been written the world could not have contained them? HE WROTE ALSO THE REVELATION, being commanded to conceal and not to write the words of the seven thunders."—*Eus. H. Ecc.*, l. vi., c. 25.

‡ Lardner, vol. vi., p. 629.

§ See the Index of Quotations prefixed to his works, Ed. Bremæ, fol., 1690.

Thus it appears, then, that we have the concurrent testimony of all the principal ecclesiastical writers of the second and third centuries in favour of the genuineness and authenticity of this book. Now when it is considered that it is not a history, like the Gospels, inscribed indefinitely to the Church at large, nor an epistle addressed to some particular Church, but a revelation of the purposes of God which was to be confided to the custody of *seven* Churches specifically named, and to whom it was to be sent immediately upon its publication, which very circumstance would make a forgery so much the more impracticable; what stronger external evidence can we require of its being the true and genuine work of St. John, and entitled consequently to be received with reverence as a canonical book of the Scriptures, unless it should appear that it contains in itself its own refutation of its claim to inspiration? In other words, that the *external* evidence in its favour is counterbalanced by the *internal* evidence against it? This is, therefore, the next point for our consideration.

*Internal Evidence of the Authenticity of the Apocalypse.*

In examining into the internal evidence of the books of Scripture, one thing must be taken into consideration as belonging to them especially and peculiarly, which is this,—that although written by different men in different ages they were all composed and dictated, if I may so speak, by one author, so that the variety to be found in them consists purely in the style and subject-matter, not in the sentiments and doctrines. As the whole Bible was written under the inspiration of one Spirit, even the Spirit of Truth, one part of it cannot contradict another; and, therefore, if any particular book can be proved to contain assertions which are contrary to the general tenor of the rest of Scripture we may at once reject it. On the other hand, a perfect correspondence between the sentiments, doctrines, and phraseology of any one book with all the rest is, so far as internal evidence goes, conclusive in its favour. Hence, with reference to the books of Scripture, more particularly those of the New Testament,

several of which were written by the same persons, two kinds of internal evidence are to be considered,—that which refers to the sameness of the *Spirit*, and that which refers to the sameness of the *particular author* writing under the influence of the same Spirit. For although all the sacred penmen were inspired by one Spirit, there is unquestionably a great variety in their styles and modes of expression. St. John writes in a different style from St. Matthew, and St. Paul in a different style from both. The internal evidence, therefore, of the genuineness of an inspired book will necessarily be of a two-fold character. There will be the internal evidence of its inspiration, arising from its general correspondence with the rest of Scripture; and the internal evidence of its being written by that particular author whose name it bears. Let us then now try the Revelation by these criteria.

First, as to its general correspondence with the rest of Scripture, thereby showing it to have been written by inspiration of the same Spirit. Is there anything in the Apocalypse contrary to the general tenor of the Bible? Does it teach anything opposed to the doctrines set forth in other parts of the inspired volume? Rather, may we not affirm that, whilst it contains nothing of an opposite tendency, there is no truth of vital importance connected with the salvation of man which may not be learnt from it? I have no hesitation in making this assertion, and whoever carefully and attentively examines for himself will find it to be true. But if so, is not this fact in itself almost sufficient evidence of the Divine inspiration of the book? We may conceive of an uninspired yet pious writer composing a work which should contain nothing *contrary* to the truth; but is it to be imagined that any man not under the immediate influence of the Spirit would write a book such as the Revelation, which is anything but a theological treatise, and introduce into it, as it were incidentally, all the great truths of religion?

But it is not only the *doctrines* that distinguish the Sacred Scriptures from all other writings; there is in them a certain majestic simplicity, an unaffected loftiness and sublimity, which, as it is indescribable, is likewise perfectly

inimitable. This is so striking a characteristic of the inspired writings, that although many attempts have been made to imitate them, all those compositions which men at various times have endeavoured to palm upon the world for the productions of the Holy Spirit, betray their mere earthly origin by the want of it. But can this be said of the Apocalypse? Rather, is not this peculiar and inimitable characteristic of inspiration most distinctly and conspicuously manifest throughout it in every part? Take, for example, the first five chapters,—what can be conceived more truly sublime and magnificent, and that without the slightest appearance of labour, or art, or affectation of any kind? We may safely challenge the whole world to produce anything that will bear a moment's comparison in this respect with the vision of the fifth chapter. We need not, however, rest the argument solely on the super-human sublimity of this book. Another characteristic of the inspired writings equally inimitable, is the authority with which they speak.

Addressing us in the name of God, they do not found their claim to our attention upon human arguments directed to the reason and intellect, but, taking a higher ground, they speak to us as the oracles of the Almighty, and that with a majesty and authority which asks, and commands, implicit faith and obedience. And is it not so in the Revelation? What book of Scripture is there which speaks with more authority? or which, by its own inherent majesty, commands more the attention and respect of the reader? If this be a characteristic of inspiration, as I think none will deny, is it not pre-eminently so of the Apocalypse? As far then as regards correspondence with the other admitted canonical books of Scripture, the internal evidence of its being written by inspiration of the same Spirit is complete. All the most marked and striking characteristics of inspiration emphatically belong to it.

With respect to the internal evidence of its having been written by St. John, that point will more properly come into consideration under the next head.

*Objections urged by Michaelis and others against the  
Apocalypse.*

Having thus shewn the weight of evidence both external and internal, by which the genuineness and authenticity of the Revelation are supported, I shall now briefly consider what has been said on the other side. The great opponent in modern times of this Book is Michaelis; he derives his objections chiefly from Eusebius, who, in the seventh book of his Ecclesiastical History, c. 25, gives at some length the sentiments of Dionysius of Alexandria concerning it.\* These objections may be comprised under the following heads:—

1. The excessive obscurity of the book, which is so great as to render it totally unprofitable.

2. The Revelation does not mention the Catholic Epistles or Gospels, nor do they allude to *it*.

3. The Apostle John does not speak of himself by name either in his Gospel or Epistles, but the writer of the Revelation names himself more than once.

4. There is a difference between the style, sentiments, and phraseology of the Revelation, and the other acknowledged writings of St. John.

Such are the objections adduced by the learned against

\* This Dionysius was Bishop of Alexandria about A.D. 270. He was a good man, but a great opponent of the *Chiliasm*, who had indeed many of them fallen into most gross and pernicious errors, making the millennium a sort of Mahometan paradise. It is not surprising that men of pious minds should have shrunk from such doctrines, and that they should have looked with some suspicion upon that mysterious book from which their advocates *pretended* to have derived them. It is difficult, notwithstanding, to say what were the real opinions of Dionysius and Eusebius concerning the Apocalypse. Sometimes they speak of it, the latter especially, as an unquestionably inspired book; at other times their language would imply that they thought but lightly of it. Their statements are, in fact, inconsistent and contradictory. I imagine the truth to have been that their private *feelings* were against it, but yet they dared not reject as spurious a book so generally received by the Church. (See "Eccles. Hist.," l. iii., c. 24, 25, and 39; l. vii., c. 25.)

the authenticity of this Divine book : the first and the last will require some notice ; but the other two appear to me to be so exceedingly frivolous as scarcely to be worth mentioning. That cause must be weak indeed which is obliged to have recourse to such arguments.\*

With respect, then, to the obscurity of the Apocalypse, I may candidly admit that this did at one time appear to me to be an objection against it ; but it is an objection which I am persuaded no one will entertain for any length of time who studies the book itself. Upon this point I would remark, first, that the obscurities of the Revelation are not so great as has sometimes been represented ; and, secondly, that however great those obscurities may be, they do not prevent the book, as a whole, from being most interesting and profitable to those who read it with humility and devotion. Does it follow, that, because there are some parts of it "hard to be understood," therefore the whole is unprofitable ? Is not the experience of thousands a practical argument to the contrary ? Shall any one presume to pronounce that to be an unprofitable book which multitudes have found to be full of consolation and instruction ? Rather, have we not here a remarkable proof of its Divine inspiration, that, notwithstanding its obscurities, which are confessedly many, it ever has been, and still is capable, perhaps almost more so than any other book of Scripture, of kindling devout affections, and confirming the faith of the Christian ? But these obscurities, as before remarked, have been exaggerated. Admitting that great doubt and difficulty attends the interpretation of particular parts, there can be none as to the general bearing of the whole. The persecutions of Christians, the apostasy of the Church, the universal promulgation of the Gospel, and the final triumph of Christ and his people, are as clearly and distinctly foretold as they well could be. And why should the difficulties of the Apocalypse on minuter points be con-

\* If the reader wishes to see this subject more fully treated, he may consult "Horne's Intr.," vol. iv., p. 479. Or, Woodhouse's "Prel. Diss.," c. viii.

sidered as an argument against its inspiration any more than similar difficulties in Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, against theirs ?

As to the difference in style, &c., between this book and the other acknowledged writings of St. John, no one will dispute that there is a difference. But is it not easily accounted for by the difference in the subjects? Should we expect the same style in a history and a poem by the same writer? And is there not as great a difference between the Gospel of St. John and the Apocalypse, as to the subject-matter of them, as between a poem and a history? Besides, throughout the latter, it is not the apostle who writes; he acts merely as an amanuensis, setting down what Jesus Christ dictated to him by the angel. Taking this circumstance into consideration, can the slightest importance be attached to the above objection?\*

Such, then, are the arguments adduced by its adversaries against the inspiration and authority of this Divine book. To counterbalance the weight of evidence derived from the almost universal consent of the Church during the two first centuries after its publication, from its agreement in the peculiar characteristics of inspiration with other parts of Scripture, and from other considerations equally strong in its favour; they say, "It is obscure; it is in some respects

\* Notwithstanding, so far as it was probable a resemblance could exist between writings of so different a character by the same author, such resemblance is to be found. I give the following examples from Horne's "Introd." Compare:—

Rev. i. 1	with	John xii. 33; xviii. 37.
i. 5	„	1 John v. 7.
i. 7	„	John xix. 37.
ii. 7	„	vi. 32.
ii. 10	„	xx. 27.
ii. 17	„	vi. 32.
v. 6, 12	„	i. 29, 36.
xii. 9	„	xii. 31.
xix. 13	„	i. 1.
xxi. 6	„	vii. 37.
xxii. 14	„	i. 12.

unlike the other writings of St. John; and it makes no mention of the Gospel." Why, who does not see that objections like these are mere captious cavils, and lighter than vanity itself? But if the genuineness and authenticity of the Apocalypse be established upon so sure and immovable a basis, then does it not become a duty on the part of all those who have opportunity and ability, to study it with that reverence and attention which the importance of such a communication demands?

## APPENDIX B.

### ON THE DATE OF THE APOCALYPSE.

ALTHOUGH the foregoing scheme of interpretation is not at all affected by the date of the Revelation, yet, as the commentaries of some modern expositors, particularly that of Mr. Elliott, are based upon the assumption that it was given to St. John at a specific period, I think it desirable the reader should be put in possession of the principal historical facts and arguments connected with this question.

The generally-received opinion is, that the Apocalypse was communicated to St. John, and written by him, towards the end of Domitian's reign, about A.D. 96, or 97. This opinion, it must be admitted, rests upon very strong traditionary evidence. Irenæus, writing in the middle of the second century, says, speaking with reference to the name of the beast: "If it ought to have been publicly proclaimed at the present time, doubtless it would have been proclaimed by him who wrote the Revelation. For it was not seen a long time ago, but almost in our own age, towards the end of the reign of Domitian."\* This tradition is several times alluded to by Eusebius, who speaks of it as generally believed. Thus he says, l. iii., c. 18, "About this time,

\* *οὐδὲ γὰρ πρὸ πολλοῦ χρόνου ἐωράθη, ἀλλὰ σχεδὸν ἐπὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας γενεᾶς, πρὸς τῷ τέλει τῆς Δομετιανοῦ ἀρχῆς.* (Advers. Hær., l. v., p. 449, ed. Grabe.) It may be as well to observe, for the information of general readers, that although Irenæus wrote in Greek, the principal part of his works have come down to us through the medium of a Latin translation alone. Fragments of the original only have been preserved. In the best editions, these are printed as far as they go, and the hiatus filled up by the Latin. Hence it happens that we find him sometime quoted in Greek and sometimes in Latin.

John the Apostle and Evangelist is said to have been banished to the Isle of Patmos. Irenæus, in his fifth book against heresies, writing of the epithet of Antichrist, mentioned in the Revelation of St. John, says expressly, 'If his name ought publicly to have been proclaimed,' &c., quoting verbatim the passage above cited.

Again, in chap. 23 of the same book, he says, "As yet the Apostle and Evangelist whom the Lord loved, remained alive in Asia, who, after the death of Domitian, having returned from the Isle of Patmos, governed the Churches in Asia. That he lived to that time, the confirmation of two witnesses shall suffice. They are worthy of credit, such as have governed the Church with sound doctrine. These are Irenæus and Clemens Alexandrinus. The former, in his second book against heresies, writes thus: '*All the elders bear witness, who lived together with John, the disciple of our Saviour in Asia, that he delivered these things. He remained with them in the time of Trajan.*' Also, in the third book of the same argument, he declares the same in these words: '*The Church of the Ephesians planted by Paul, confirmed by John, who remained there until the time of Trajan.*' Clement in like manner signifies the time."\*

Now, were there no counter considerations, these traditional statements would at once settle the question as to the date of the Revelation. But there *are* counter considerations, and these I will now proceed to lay before the reader.

The first is that derived from the testimony of Epiphanius, who wrote about the middle of the fifth century. He expressly affirms that St. John saw the Revelation in Patmos in the reign of Claudius. Some persons, it seems, had objected to the authenticity of the Revelation, on the ground that some of the Seven Churches addressed were not in existence when it was written. In reply, Epiphanius says: "See ye not, my good friends, what he says concerning the women (*i.e.*, Churches) who were deceived by the semblance of a prophetess, and who

\* See "Hanmer's Eusebius," l. iii., pp. 45, 46.

deceived many, but whose mistake was not hidden from the Holy Spirit, who spake beforehand by the mouth of St. John of what was done after the saint had fallen asleep, since he himself prophesied in the time of Claudius Cæsar, when he was in the island of Patmos.”\*

The second difficulty in the way of the received tradition, is derived from the subscription to the Syriac version of the Apocalypse, which states that St. John wrote it in the island of Patmos, in the reign of the Emperor Nero, *before the destruction of Jerusalem.*

Thus it seems that there were three traditions respecting the time when the Revelation was written; one, which ascribed it to the reign of Claudius, about A.D. 57; a second, which assigned it to the reign of Nero, A.D. 67 or 68; and a third, which makes it to have been written towards the end of Domitian's reign, A.D. 97. It is argued, however, by the advocates of the latter date, that little or no importance is to be attached either to the testimony of Epiphanius or the subscription to the Syriac version.

Epiphanius being a notoriously careless and inaccurate writer, and having lived three hundred years after St. John, his testimony, it is said, possesses no weight or authority when set against that of Irenæus; and as for the anonymous subscription to the Syriac version, since the Apocalypse was not translated into that language until the sixth century, it is of no force or value. Consequently, we may assume that both are merely the gratuitous assertions of individuals who knew nothing about the matter, and that the generally-received tradition in the Church was as stated by Irenæus.

This, however, does not appear to me to be so clear. If there were no variation in the traditions of the Church on this head, whence did Epiphanius and the Syriac

\* “Non videtis, O boni, quod de mulieribus dicit in prophetiæ opinione deceptis, et multos decipientibus, quarum fraus non latuit Spiritum Sanctum, sed prævaticinatus est prophetiis per os Sancti Joannis quod factum est post Sancti Joannis dormitionem quum ipse vaticinatus sit in temporibus Claudii Cæsaris quando in Pathmo insula erat.”—*Epiphanius contra Hæreses. I. Cornario Interp. Basill.*, p. 214, l. ii., H. 51.

translator, or copyist, derive their information? Is it to be supposed for a moment that they asserted,—the one, that the book was written in the reign of Claudius, the other, in that of Nero, of their own minds? That, in fact, the date was a pure invention of their own? And if such a supposition is manifestly improbable, not to say incredible, how shall we account for the fact, that they assign a different date from that of Irenæus, but on the supposition that there were different traditions on the subject? What makes the testimony of Epiphanius the more remarkable, and gives it a weight which it might not otherwise possess, is the circumstance that incidentally occasioned its introduction. It was in answer to an objector who denied the authority of the Revelation on the ground that it speaks of Churches not in existence when it was written, that Epiphanius alludes to its date. Now if there had been an authentic and universal tradition that it was written in 97, why should he not at once have stated the fact? Why should he, as it were, have created a difficulty, or at least have increased one supposed already to exist, by inventing an earlier date of his own?

But is it at all probable then, that the Revelation was really given so early as the reign of Claudius? I think not. The solution of the difficulty connected with this early date given by Epiphanius is by no means satisfactory. The seven Churches must, I think, have had a real existence when the testimony concerning them was delivered. I would not say, indeed, that the hypothesis of Epiphanius is altogether impossible and absurd, but it is certainly unnatural. This consideration, however, does not affect the argument to be derived from it in favour of two or more traditionary opinions on the subject. However improbable it may be that St. John was banished to Patmos in the reign of Claudius, we have no positive proof to the contrary; and, in any case, it is obvious that Epiphanius must have read or heard of the fact somewhere, or he would never have made the assertion.

It has been suggested, that possibly Claudius may mean Nero, the full name of that emperor being Nero Claudius Cæsar, which would make the statement of Epiphanius

accord with the subscription to the Syriac version. This conjecture is worth consideration. It is just possible that as we sometimes say Flaccus for Horace, and Naso for Ovid, so Epiphanius may have called Nero by his second appellation, and this, perhaps, to avoid the mention of a name so universally detested as that by which he was usually known.

I am ready, however, to admit, that these considerations in themselves are scarcely sufficient to have any weight against the preponderating testimony of Irenæus, supported as it is by that of Eusebius. Yet there are difficulties in the way of their statements which appear to me to render them at least as little entitled to our entire confidence as that of Epiphanius.

Domitian's persecution of the Christians did not commence until the year 93 or 94, when St. John must have been at least ninety years old. Now is it probable that a man of that age would have been regarded as a fit subject for banishment? Would he have been *worth* removing to a desolate island, there to be guarded and kept at the public expense? What danger could be apprehended from an aged man of ninety? Let us only realise the condition of the most robust individuals who attain to that age, and we shall, I think, feel the great improbability of his exciting the jealousy or fears of even his most implacable enemies.

Again, at the time of Domitian's death, John must have been ninety-three or four; and is it to be supposed that at that age he would have been capable of writing such a book as the Apocalypse? I do not say the thing is impossible. We know that Moses was much older when he wrote the Pentateuch. But the circumstances were different. In Moses' case we have a plain intimation that the preservation of his physical and intellectual powers to the last hour of his life was miraculous. We have no reason to suppose anything of the kind in the case of St. John. On the contrary, tradition says that both his physical and intellectual powers suffered decay like any other man's, and that when he was old and no longer able to preach, he used to go into the assemblies of

Christians, and laying his hands upon them, simply say, "Children, love one another." Now if this were so, is it consistent with reason and experience to suppose that such a man, when between ninety and a hundred years old, would possess either physical or intellectual strength sufficient to write such a book as the Revelation? I admit that God may have endued him with supernatural powers for the occasion, and this would account for everything. But we are not told that he did; and I think that the rule of the Heathen poet, that the agency of the deity is not to be introduced without sufficient cause,\* is as agreeable to Scripture as it is to sound reason.

But, in fact, the statement of Eusebius almost refutes itself. For, having told us that Clement confirms the traditionary report of Irenæus respecting the time, he adds from the same writer a story to this effect: "After the death of *the tyrant*," says he, "John having returned to Ephesus from Patmos, being gone into the neighbouring country to visit the Churches, saw in a certain city a young man of great beauty and intelligence, and being struck with his appearance, he said to the chief bishop, 'I commend this young man to thy care, in the presence of Christ and the Church.' The bishop accordingly took him home, and having carefully instructed him, at length baptized him. For some time after this the young man conducted himself properly, and was highly esteemed by the bishop. But, being corrupted by some dissolute companions, he plunged into the lowest depths of wickedness, and became at last the captain of a banditti. About this time the bishop again sent for John on some private business, which being finished, John said, 'And now, bishop, restore us that which I and Christ committed to thy charge, the Church being witness: I mean the young man and his soul entrusted to thy keeping.' 'Alas!' said the bishop, looking down upon the ground, 'he is dead.' 'And how,' said John, 'did he die?' 'He is not really dead,' answered the bishop,

\* Nec deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus

Inciderit.

—*Hor. De Ar. Poet.*, l. 191.

‘but he is dead to God, for he has become a robber, and infests this mountain.’ The apostle, rending his garment and beating his breast, exclaimed, ‘I have left a wise keeper truly to our brother’s soul. Prepare me a horse, and let me have a guide.’ So saying, he hastened out of the church, and rode at *full speed* to the place named by the bishop, and was immediately taken by the robbers, and conducted at his own request into the presence of their captain, who seeing him coming, and recognising the apostle, struck with shame and remorse, fled away. The old man forgetting his years, pursued him, crying out, ‘My son, why dost thou flee from thy father unarmed and old? Why shouldst thou despair of salvation? I will answer for thee to Christ. I will die for thee if need be, as Christ died for us.’ On hearing this, the young man stood still, and then having laid aside his arms, with downcast looks, trembling and weeping, embraced the aged man, and promised amendment; so that he seemed to be baptized again with tears, the motion of the hand only being omitted. In fine, the apostle having kissed him, brought him back with him, and prayed for him; nor did he leave him till he was fully restored to the Church.”\*

Now I have given this story at length, and nearly in the words of the historian, that the reader may be the better able to judge of the value to be attached to the corroborating testimony of Clement, as regards the statement of Irenæus; and that he at the same time may see the palpable contradictions involved in that testimony. Let us make a summary of the facts. John on his first visit to the bishop sees a youth whom he commits to his charge; the bishop instructs him, and the young man for some time promises well. He is afterwards corrupted by dissolute associates, and becomes the captain of a banditti, and is a terror to the neighbourhood. These events must have occupied, upon a moderate computation, at least ten years; so that John, upon his second visit to the bishop, could not have been

\* Eus. Hist., l. iii., c. 23.

less than a hundred years old. Now, is it conceivable that a man of that age should have been capable of doing the things ascribed to him?

Are we, then, it may be asked, to treat the whole story as a fable? I do not see why we must necessarily come to this conclusion. There is an evident error somewhere in the dates; but it does not follow therefore that the story itself is a pure invention. It will be observed that Clement does not mention any name. He says simply, "After the death of THE TYRANT;" and why may not this tyrant mean Nero, as probably as Domitian? This would make Clement's statement accord with the subscription to the Syriac version, and at the same time remove the difficulties and almost physical impossibilities connected with the subsequent story.

Upon the whole, it appears to me that the traditions concerning the time when the Revelation was written, are not sufficiently clear to support any system of interpretation the truth of which rests upon the supposition that it was given at a particular period from whence the prophecies contained in it commence. Taking all the facts into consideration, I should say the most probable hypothesis is, that St. John *withdrew* to Patmos during the Neronian persecution (for there can be little doubt, as Mosheim observes, that that persecution extended to the provinces), as Cyprian many years afterwards retired from Carthage, and hid himself during the persecution of Decius; that upon Nero's death he returned to Ephesus, where he may have lived to an extreme old age; perhaps reaching to the reign of Trajan; and that Irenæus, or rather, the vagueness of tradition, may have confounded the time of the apostle's death with the time of his seeing the vision. If this hypothesis be correct, the Apocalypse must have been written about A.D. 68. This date is sanctioned by the high authority of Sir Isaac Newton,\* and being supported

\* The following is a summary account of his argument:—

"Irenæus cannot be relied on, because he asserts that many other books of Scripture were written later than is commonly believed.

by the subscription to the Syriac version and the testimony of Tertullian is, I have little doubt, the true one.

[He also asserts that our Lord was at least fifty years old when he was crucified.]

“He had perhaps heard from his master Polycarp, that he had received this book from John about the time that Domitian was slain, and so thought it was *written* at that time.

“Eusebius, in his ‘Demonstration of the Gospel,’ associates the banishment of John with the death of Peter and Paul.

“Tertullian also, and the Pseudo-Prochorus, say that John was banished to Patmos by *Nero*, having been first thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil.

“Arethas cites the opinion of Irenæus, but dissents from it, and asserts that the Apocalypse was written before the destruction of Jerusalem.

“Epiphanius makes the same assertion.

“The subscription to the Syriac version shows the tradition of an early date to have existed in that Church.

“The story of the reclaimed robber, related by Clement, proves that the tyrant of whom he speaks was *Nero*.

“The reference to the temple and altar and holy city shows that they were still in existence.

“The early appearance of many pretended revelations, and in particular that of Cerinthus, who died before St. John, proves that a genuine revelation must have previously existed, these spurious ones being only imitations of the real.”

Such are the principal arguments adduced by Sir Isaac Newton in his introductory observations in favour of the earlier date. They are all fully considered by Mr. Elliott, who expresses his astonishment that a mind like Sir Isaac’s should have been so warped by a preconceived theory as to think them conclusive. Notwithstanding, ably as Mr. E. handles the subject, the question, it seems to me, is one that must still be considered doubtful, nor with the evidence we possess can it ever be conclusively determined.

## APPENDIX C.

### ANALYSIS OF MODERN COMMENTARIES.

THE following list of authors who have either written entire Commentaries on the Revelation or illustrated particular portions of it, will show how very large the number of Apocalyptic expositors is. It has been suggested to me by a friend as worthy of remark, that all these writers, from the commencement of the sixteenth century downwards, with scarcely a single exception, agree in applying the sixth trumpet to the Turks:—

#### SECOND CENTURY.

Justin Martyr.—Occasional Notices.  
Irenæus.—Ditto.

#### THIRD CENTURY.

Tertullian.—Ditto.  
Hippolytus.—Wrote an entire Commentary, but not extant.

#### FOURTH CENTURY.

Victorinus.—Entire Treatise, which is still extant.  
Lactantius.—Occasional Notices.  
Augustine.—Ditto.  
Tichonius.—Entire Commentary, still extant.

#### SIXTH CENTURY.

Primasius.—Entire Commentary, extant.

#### EIGHTH CENTURY.

Bede.—Commentary.  
Ausbert.—Ditto.

#### NINTH CENTURY.

Haymo.—Entire Commentary.  
Andreas.—Ditto.  
Arethas.—Ditto.  
Berengaud.—Ditto.

#### TWELFTH CENTURY.

Anselm.—Treatise on the Seals.  
Joachim (Abbot).—Entire Commentary.

#### THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

Thomas Aquinas.—Occasional Notices.

#### SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

Luther.—Occasional Notices.  
Bullinger.—Commentary.  
Bale.—Ditto.  
Fexe.—Ditto.  
Napier (1593).

## SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

Brightman (1607).—Commentary.  
 Taffin (1609).  
 Forbesius (1614).  
 Bernard (1617).  
 Pareus (1622).—Commentary.  
 Piscator (1622).—Ditto.  
 Mede (1627).—Ditto.  
 Meyer (1627).  
 Poole (1638).  
 Tillinghast (1655).  
 Trapp (1655).  
 Haak (1635).  
 Brenius (1666).  
 Des Marets (1669).  
 Calovius (1676).  
 Ribera (Roman Catholic).  
 More (1680).  
 Jurieu (1687).  
 Cressener (1689).  
 Marckius (1689).  
 Bossuet (1690).—Roman Catholic.  
 Clarke, Samuel (1690).  
 Petto (1693).  
 Waple (1694).

## EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Sylveira (1700).—Roman Catholic.  
 Burkitt (1704).  
 Whiston (1706).  
 Fleming (1710).  
 Wells (1717).  
 Daubuz (1720).  
 Vitringa (1721).  
 Sir Isaac Newton (1733).  
 Eichorn.

Whiston (1744).

Lowman (1745).

Bishop Newton (1750).

Gibert (French) (1796).

## NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Woodhouse, Archdeacon.

Johnston (a Scotch Minister).

Allwood.—Warburton Lectures.

Gauntlett.—Exposition.

Benson.

Brown.

Boothroyd.

Scott, Thomas.

Faber.—Sacred Calendar of Prophecy.

Frere.

Cuninghame (of Lainshaw).

Galloway.

Croly.

Habershon.

Fuller, Andrew.

Fysh.

Lacunza (Ben Ezra).

Irving, Edward.

Basset (French).

Lee, Professor.

Davidson.

Hawker.

Keith.

Bickersteth.

Brooks.

Dallas.

Elliott.

Cumming.

Wordsworth.

&amp;c., &amp;c., &amp;c.

Among so large a body of expositors, as might be expected, there is great diversity of opinions. All modern commentators, however, may be divided into three grand classes,—the *Præterists*, the *Futurists*, and those who, as taking a middle course, may be designated *Futuro-Præterists*; these latter may again be divided into *Millenarians* and *Anti-*

*millenarians*. The Præterists are those who think that the whole of the Revelation, with the exception perhaps of part of the twentieth chapter, has been already accomplished.\* The Futurists are those who maintain on the contrary that the whole book, with the exception of the Epistles to the Churches, relates to events yet future. The Futuro-præterists endeavour to steer between these two extremes, and, regarding the Apocalypse as a continuous prophetic history of the Christian Church from its commencement, or nearly so, suppose that it has been in the course of fulfilment from its first publication up to the present hour, and remains yet, in part, to be accomplished. The difference between the Millenarians and Anti-millenarians has been already fully stated in the commentary on c. xx.

It is not my intention to enter into a discussion of the comparative merits of the Præterist and Futurist theories. This has been often done by others abler than myself,† and would in my opinion be an unprofitable waste of time, as I cannot think that either of them have any foundation in truth. I shall now, therefore, proceed, without further preface, to give an account of those commentaries of modern times which appear to me to be most deserving of notice.

### I. MEDE.

Joseph Mede stands at the head of modern commentators. Whatever may have been his mistakes, he certainly opened the way to the right understanding of the Apocalypse by demonstrating that the prophecies contained in it are not regularly consecutive, but synchronical; some of those in the latter part of the book running parallel in point of time with others in the former part, and foretelling events that were to happen at corresponding periods. This was Mede's grand

\* A specimen of the Præterist scheme will be found in the following analysis under the heading, "Kitto."

† The reader who may wish to see the arguments for and against fully developed will find the subject ably discussed in the "Horæ Apocalypticæ" of Mr. Elliott, by whom the schemes, both of the Præterists and Futurists, are clearly and, as it seems to me, satisfactorily refuted.

discovery,\* and, like Sir Isaac Newton's discovery of gravitation, it throws a flood of light upon what was before dark and incomprehensible. Besides many lesser pieces, letters, and treatises, Mede has left two complete works on the Revelation, the titles of which are as follows:—

1. "Clavis Apocalyptica, ex innatis et insitis Visionum Characteribus eruta et demonstrata." (1627.)

2. "In Sancti Joannis Apocalypsin Commentarius ad Amussim Clavis Apocalypticæ." (1632.)

These two treatises are contained in the third book of the folio edition of Mede's works, and are exceedingly valuable. The *Clavis* is not a commentary, but, as its name implies, a *key*, intended to show the arrangement and *synchronisms* of the prophecies contained in the Revelation. The author's object is to prove that the structure and order of the prophecies may be gathered from the contents of the book without any reference to their historical fulfilment; and, therefore, that in endeavouring to interpret it, we must apply events according to the arrangement of the prophecies, and not attempt to arrange the prophecies according to events. In his own words,—

"The Apocalypse, considered only according to the naked letter, as if it were a history and no prophecy, hath marks and signs sufficient inserted by the Holy Spirit, whereby the order, synchronism, and sequel of all the visions therein contained may be found out and demonstrated without supposal of any *interpretation* whatever."

"This order and synchronism thus found and demonstrated (as it were) by *argumenta intrinseca*, is the first thing to be done, and forelaid as a foundation-ground, and only safe rule of *interpretation*, and not *interpretation* to be made the ground and rule of it."

"If the order, method, and connexion of the visions be framed and grounded upon supposed interpretation, then must all proofs out of that book needs be founded upon

\* Not that it was altogether new. The principle had been perceived by Augustine and other ancient commentators, but it was first fully developed by Mede.

begged principles and human conjectures. But on the contrary, if the order be *first* fixed and settled out of the indubitable characters of the letter of the text, and afterwards the *interpretation* guided, framed, and directed by that order, then will the variety of expositions be drawn into a very narrow compass, and proofs taken from this book be evident and infallible, and able to convince the gainsayers."—(*Works*, b. iii., p. 581.)

These remarks are of incalculable value, as stating in plain language the only principles on which the Revelation can be satisfactorily interpreted. Had they been duly appreciated and considered, we should never have heard of those many discordant interpretations which now exist.

The COMMENTARY is the application of the principles contained in the *Key*, and gives the writer's views of the historical fulfilment of the Apocalypse up to his own times. The following is a summary of its contents. After some introductory observations on the *scene* of the visions, he proceeds to explain the seals thus:—

1st Seal. The rider on the white horse. Christ going forth to lay the foundations of complete and final triumph over all adversaries.

2d Seal. The slaughters of the Jews and other Roman subjects under Trajan and Hadrian, and to the reign of Commodus.

3d Seal. Begins with Severus.—Predicts extreme severity in the administration of justice by himself and his successor, Alexander Severus.

4th Seal. Predicts the slaughters of the thirty tyrants and the horrible cruelties of Maximin, Galienus, &c., together with the pestilences and famines which prevailed at the same period.

5th Seal. Begins with Aurelian, A.D. 278, and ends with Dioclesian.—Predicts the persecutions of Christians.

6th Seal. The overthrow of Paganism under Constantine.

Chap. VII. The hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from all the tribes of Israel are the elect remnant who would be preserved from apostasy during the reign of the beast.

The palm-bearing multitude are the glorified Church of the Redeemed, and belong to the period of the seventh trumpet.

[This appears to me to be one of Mede's greatest mistakes. We have no reason whatever for supposing that this palm-bearing vision extends beyond the limits of the sixth seal. I quite agree with the following observations of Daubuz on this head:—"A third mistake of his (Mede) is this,—that he has thought that the visions of the seventh chapter, which consist of sealed servants and a palm-bearing company, belong to different periods, so that with him the sealed servants belong to the times of the trumpet, and the palm-bearers to the millennium. But all this is false, for the whole belongs properly, as it is placed, to the sixth seal, and the promises there made in the future are such as are accomplished at the opening of the seventh seal." (*Comm. on the Rev.*, p. 66.)]

Chap. VIII. The first four trumpets predict the overthrow of the Western Empire by the Goths, Huns, &c.

Chap. IX. The fifth trumpet—The rise of Mahometanism and the conquests of the Saracens.

Sixth trumpet—The overthrow of the Eastern Empire by the Ottomans, or Turks.

Chap. X. Mede says little upon this chapter. He thinks, however, that the seven thunders correspond with the seventh trumpet and mean the same thing. The sweetness of the little book in the mouth and its bitterness in the stomach, he explains, like the generality of commentators, of the sweetness of prophecy in itself to the recipient, but the bitterness of the subject-matter of it. As for the little book itself, he regards it as a new series of prophecies relating to the fates of the Church given to St. John by Christ, a sort of supplement to the seven-sealed book, which (strange to say) he seems to think contained the fates of the empire. [This I consider another grand error of Mede, although it has been very generally followed by subsequent commentators. See this point examined in my commentary on c. v. and c. x.]

Chap. XI. The measuring of the temple and court he refers to two different periods. The first shows the condition of the

primitive Church when it was constructed and disciplined according to the rule of God's Word; the second relates to the condition of the Church when it was debased and polluted by the introduction of idolatrous rites and ceremonies, or during the period of the great apostasy. The *two witnesses*, he thinks, are Churches holding the true doctrines of the Gospel in opposition to Romish error. They were not slain in the sixteenth century, nor does he think they will be slain until just before the destruction of the beast and the false prophet. The tenth part of the city he explains, somewhat curiously, to signify the *whole* of modern Rome, which he endeavours to show by a diagram is equal in extent to only a tenth part of ancient Rome.

Chap. XII. The woman clothed with the sun is the Christian Church. The sun is the Gospel, the moon the law. The man-child is the mystical Christ, or Christ formed in his members. The rest of the chapter he explains much in the same manner as the generality of modern commentators.

Chap. XIII. *The ten-horned beast* is the secular revived empire formed by the union of the ten kingdoms, more or less, into which the Western Roman Empire was divided. The *head wounded to death* is the Pagan Imperial power destroyed by Constantine. The seventh head is the revived Western Empire.

The beast from the earth, with lamb-like horns, is the Papacy; or the ecclesiastical power in the revived empire.

[Mede's views, however, of this chapter and the two beasts, are not so clear as we might expect. He says distinctly, "*Bestia decemcornupeta, seu Secularis, est UNIVERSITAS illa Decem plus minus regnorum—in unam denuo Rempublicam Romanam coalescentium.*" And again, "*De SECULARI Bestia dicitur quod Sanctis bellum faceret, eosque vinceret.*" "*De bestia vero ECCLESIASTICA, non quidem ipsam gladio occidere, sed facere ut quicumque Imaginem Bestiæ non adoraverint,*" &c. Here he clearly makes the ten-horned beast the secular empire, the other

beast the Papacy; but in some other places he seems to identify the Papacy with the first beast.] (Pp. 498, 504.)

Chap. XIV. The name of the beast is *Λατεινος*. The hundred and forty-four thousand are the true Church, the faithful followers of the Lamb, during the reign of the mystical Babylon. Respecting the three angels flying in the mid-heaven, his explanation is as follows:—

First angel (vers. 6, 7,) foreshows the opposition made to the worship of images by the Greek Emperor, Leo the Eiconoclast, and by Charlemagnè, in the seventh and eighth centuries.

Second angel (ver. 8), the bold protestations of the Waldenses, Albigenses, &c., against the Church of Rome.

Third angel (vers. 9—11), represents Luther and the Reformers. *The gathering in the harvest of the earth* (vers. 14—16), is the conversion of the Jews. *The treading of the winepress* (vers. 17—20), the last judgments of God upon the kingdom of the beast, corresponding with chap. xix. 12, &c.

And here Mede's *Commentary* may be said to end. He does not profess to explain the remainder of the book, but gives only a few detached thoughts, or, as he calls them, *specimens* of his views on particular parts.\* The seven vials, he thinks, may be explained thus:—

First vial he supposes to have been fulfilled when the Waldenses, Albigenses, Wickliffites, &c., began to renounce the authority of the Roman See, in consequence of which the followers of the Papacy grew furious (*doloris et indignationis ulceribus excanduerunt*), and raised persecutions, thinking to exterminate them by fire and the sword, but in vain; since the more they raged, the more they were tormented by their sores.

Second vial he refers to the time of Luther, when whole provinces and kingdoms were torn from the body of the

\* "In reliqua quæ supersunt Vaticinia SPECIMINA tantum do; eorum nimirum partem quæ ante triennium aut quadriennium in plerasque visiones Apocalyplicas cum amicis privatim communicaveram."—*Works*, p. 523.

beast, and the *Pontifical See* became, as it were, the blood of a dead man, slain by wounds and mutilation.

Third vial was accomplished in England by Elizabeth, in the punishment, capitally, of the Jesuits, the destruction of the Spanish Armada, &c.

Fourth vial. The *sun* is the Germanic Empire under the house of Austria.

Fifth vial. The *throne of the beast* is Rome itself. He observes, however, "I do not think that the Pontifical name will entirely perish by this calamity, but it will be shorn of its glory and splendour."

Sixth vial. The *river Euphrates* is the Ottoman Empire; the *kings of the east* are the Jews.

Seventh vial. This vial consummates the destruction not only of Rome, but of all the powers opposed to the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ, and coincides with the great battle of Armageddon, when all his enemies being shut up as in a hollow place, will be destroyed by the immediate hand of God.

Concerning the millennium and the first resurrection, Mede thus briefly states his views: "I consider that the seventh trumpet, with the whole period of a thousand years, denotes the great day of judgment, which is not the short space of a few hours, but (according to the practice of the Hebrews, who use a day for a time of indefinite duration) an unbroken interval of many years, bounded by the two resurrections; a day, I say, which shall begin first from the particular, and, as it were, *morning* judgment of Antichrist, and the other living enemies of the Church, at the glorious appearing of our Lord in flaming fire;—and at length, after a thousand years' reign on earth of the New Jerusalem his most holy spouse, end with the general resurrection and judgment. Which things being performed, the wicked will be transferred to hell, to be tormented for ever; but the saints to heaven, that they may live for ever with Christ." (*Works*, p. 531.)

Such is a summary account of what this learned and excellent man has written on the Revelation. His con-

cluding words are strikingly characteristic, and well deserve attention: "These things, reader, I have thus proposed for consideration, but I affirm nothing. I refer the whole thing to be judged of by the Church according to the Word of God, to whose judgment, as is meet, I cheerfully submit." (P. 532.)

## 2. FLEMING.

George Fleming was the minister of an Independent congregation. The exact date of his birth is not known, but he died 1716. His work entitled, "A Discourse concerning the Rise and Fall of the Papacy," is a partial commentary on the Apocalypse; and although badly arranged and inelegant in its diction, contains much interesting matter.

Assuming that the Papacy took its rise in 606, when the Emperor Phocas granted to the Pope the title of "Universal Bishop," and reckoning that the prophetic year is only 360 days, he sets out with endeavouring to prove by an arithmetical calculation, that the 1260 year-days of the beast's dominion, make only 1242 year-days of the Julian year, and, consequently, that, supposing we date his rise from the grant of Phocas, the final period of Papal usurpation must conclude with the year 1848. Now, considering that this calculation was made nearly 150 years ago, it is certainly not a little singular that in that very year thus named, the Pope should have been driven from Rome, and the Papacy seemed tottering to its fall.

Fleming, however, does not *affirm* that the beginning of the Papacy is to be dated from 606; on the contrary, he thinks the true date is rather 758, when the temporal dominion was conferred upon the Popes by Pepin, and, therefore, that the reign of the beast will not expire till A.D. 2000. Fleming then proceeds to the consideration of the seals and trumpets, in the exposition of which he does not essentially differ from Mede, only that he thinks that the star that fell from heaven on the sounding of the fifth trumpet, is the Bishop of Rome, not Mohammed; notwithstanding, he makes the locusts the Saracens. The

two witnesses, he thinks, were the Albigenses, Waldenses, &c., whose slaughter began with John Huss, in 1416, and was completed by the destruction of the Taborites in 1510 or 1512, but who rose again, as from the dead, in the preaching of Zuinglius and Luther.

The seventh trumpet contains the vials, and is not sounded till after the slaying of the witnesses.

First vial brings the Reformation, and fills the worshippers of the beast with a noisome sore, *i.e.*, with pain and vexation.

Second vial refers to the losses of the Spaniards in the Netherlands, defeat of the Armada, &c., between 1566 and 1617.

Third vial was fulfilled in the victories of Gustavus Vasa over the Emperor, between 1617 and 1648.

Fourth vial denotes the humiliation of the houses of Austria and Bourbon, and their mutual scorching, as it were, of each other.

And here Fleming having arrived, as he thinks, at his own times in the prophetic history, hesitates to proceed any further. He adds, however, with much modesty, the following remarkable "conjectural thoughts:"—

"As to the remaining part of this vial, I do humbly suppose that it will come to its highest pitch about the year 1717, and that it will run out about the year 1794; when I suppose the fourth vial will end, and the fifth commence by a new mortification of the Papacy." "Whosoever is denoted by the sun here (as I suppose the house of Bourbon principally is), is made use of, as the devil is, both to torment others and be tormented himself in so doing. Therefore, we may justly suppose that the French Monarchy, *after it has scorched others*, will itself consume, by doing so, its fire, and that which is the fuel that maintains it, wasting insensibly—till it be exhausted at last, at the end of this century."

These conjectures are remarkable, as showing that Fleming, even a hundred and fifty years ago, took that view generally which modern expositors do of these vials, and which has

been verified by the event. For although he was mistaken as to the exact dates, owing, I imagine, to his considering all the vials as strictly consecutive, which they certainly are not, he was singularly right in the local application of them, particularly of the fourth.

Of the fifth vial, he says: "This judgment will probably begin about the year 1794, and expire about the year 1848. But yet we are not to imagine that this vial will totally destroy the Papacy (though it will exceedingly weaken it), for we find it still in being and alive when the next vial is poured out."

6th vial.—Of this vial he says: "This sixth vial dries up their waves (of the waters of the Euphrates) and exhausts their power (the Turks), as the means and way to prepare and dispose the Eastern kings and kingdoms to renounce their Heathenism," &c. It commences, he thinks, in 1848, and will end about 1970, when he supposes the Turkish power in Europe will be entirely destroyed.

7th vial, he says, "destroys all the Antichristian nations, and particularly Rome, or mystical Babylon. And, therefore, with this doth the blessed millennium of Christ's spiritual reign begin." He adds, however: "Seeing these two vials are, as it were, one continued, the first running into the second, and the second completing the first, there is no need to give you any conjectures about the conclusion of the sixth vial, or the beginning of the last; only you may observe that the first of these will probably take up most of the time between the year 1848 and the year 2000; because such long messages and intrigues (besides the time spent in destroying the Turkish Empire), and preparations for so universal a war, must needs take up a great many years. So that, supposing the Turkish monarchy should be totally destroyed between 1848 and 1900, we may justly assign seventy or eighty years longer to the end of the sixth vial, and but twenty or thirty at most to the last."

Such are the principal points touched upon in Fleming's work, entitled, "The Rise and Fall of the Papacy." The *least* that can be said of him is, that he saw "men as trees

walking." Perhaps the event will show that he is entitled to much higher praise.

### 3. BOSSUET.

Bossuet, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Meaux, published his Commentary on the Revelation in 1690. As the production of an eloquent writer, and one of the most eminent advocates of the Papal creed, this commentary is especially deserving of our attention. The following is an analysis of its contents:—

The author adopts the Præterist scheme. He conceives the grand subject of the prophecy to be the triumph of Christianity over Judaism and Paganism,—*i.e.*, over Paganism in the Roman Empire, and over Judaism after, not *before*, the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. The first six seals give a general view of the subject. The 1st rider is Christ going forth to conquer; the 2d, 3d, and 4th, are war, famine, and pestilence; the 5th seal foreshows the persecutions of Christians; the 6th seal relates to political revolutions and convulsions, and is applicable, in the first instance, to the overthrow of the Jewish nation; secondly, to that of the Roman Empire; and, thirdly, to the general judgment.

The sealing vision of chapter vii., Bossuet explains of the sealing of an elect remnant from among the Jews, and of the salvation of innumerable Gentile martyrs. The first four trumpets depict the progress of God's judgments against the Jews. The 1st, the victories gained over them by Trajan; 2d, the victories of Hadrian; 3d, relates to the impostor Barchochebas; 4th, predicts the obscuration of the Scriptures (which were as luminaries to the Jews) by the compilation of their Talmud; in particular, the subjects obscured are Christ, who is the sun, and the Church, which is the moon. The *third part* means that not *all* the Jews would be killed, nor *all* the light extinguished, but only a portion. The 5th trumpet passes from the Jews themselves to Jewish heresies, &c. The *locusts* are *Judaizing heresies* introduced into the Church after the destruction of Jerusalem

by Hadrian. The 6th refers to the invasion of the empire from the Euphrates by the Persians, and the defeat and captivity of the Emperor Valerian.

The *little book* in the hand of the angel of chapter x., is a portion of the seven-sealed book, what remained after the sixth trumpet. The *witnesses* are the martyrs of Heathen persecution until the time of Dioclesian, by whom, as the beast from the abyss, they are slain. The resurrection of the witnesses, is the revival of Christianity under Constantine; the falling of the tenth part of the great city, and the slaughter of seven thousand names, foreshow the overthrow of the Pagan emperors and their adherents. The song of triumph on the sounding of the seventh trumpet, refers to the establishment of Christianity in the Roman Empire.

Chapter XII.—The *woman* is the Church; the *male-child*, Constantine, and other Christian emperors; the war of the dragon before the birth of the child, Dioclesian's persecution; the war in heaven afterwards, the contests of Christianity with Paganism under Galerius and Maxentius; the flood from the dragon's mouth, is the war of Maximin; that against the remnant of the woman's seed, the war of Licinius with Constantine.

Chapter XIII.—The *beast from the sea*, is Dioclesian revived in Julian the Apostate; the *beast from the earth*, his Pagan priests and philosophers; the *image of the beast*, represents images of the Pagan gods made to deliver oracles, &c.; the name and number of the beast is Diocles Augustus; thus expressed, DIoCLes AVgVstVs,—the numeral letters thus making the required number.\*

Chapter XIV., foretels the fall of Rome and the Roman Empire, under the Goths. The *harvest* judgment is that by Alaric; the *vintage*, that by Attila. The *vials*, chapter xvi., contain more particular details of these judgments. The *sore* of the first vial was the great plague in the time of Valerian

\* By *Diocles*, Bossuet intends Dioclesian; but besides that *Dioclesianus* and *Diocles* are quite different names, a sufficient refutation of his hypothesis is, that the Roman letters were not numbers, as in Greek and Hebrew.

and Galienus. 2d vial exhibits the empire as a bleeding corpse. 3d, relates to the civil wars of the thirty tyrants. 4th, the scorching heat of the fourth vial prefigures drought and famine, as described by Cyprian. 5th, refers to Valerian's defeat by the Persians. The 6th vial belongs to the same period; the drying up of the Euphrates being the opening of a passage into the empire to the Persians, under Sapor. The *three frogs* are magicians, &c., who urged on Valerian to his fate. The *battle of Armageddon* was the battle between Valerian and Sapor, in which the former was defeated and captured (!!). The 7th vial foretels the taking of Rome by Alaric.

Chap. XVII. The beast is the Pagan Roman Empire; his seven heads, Dioclesian, Galerius, Maximian, Constantius Chlorus, Maxentius, Maximin, and Licinius. At the period to which this vision relates, A.D. 312, the first five of these had fallen; one *was*, viz., Maximin; the seventh, Licinius, *was not yet come*, i.e., did not yet persecute; the eighth is Maximian, who had abdicated, and then became Emperor again, and so, though "an eighth, was of the seven." The *ten horns* of the beast, Bossuet explains of the Goths, Vandals, &c., who being admitted into the Roman armies as allies, gave their power to the beast for a time, but afterwards tore and made desolate the *woman*, i.e., the city and Empire of Rome.

Chap. XX. The *millennium* is the period of the Church's supremacy, from Constantine's days until the short loosing of Satan near the end of the world; and, consequently, we and our forefathers have long been enjoying the millennial blessedness. (!)

Such is a summary of the scheme of the most celebrated of prophetic interpreters in the Church of Rome. It is interesting, as exhibiting the views of a learned and talented man of that communion; otherwise, in itself it is so entirely fanciful and arbitrary, that it would scarcely be worth noticing. How a powerful and intelligent mind like Bossuet's could acquiesce in such an exposition, is indeed astonishing. It shows how the clearest natural under-

standing may be darkened by the strength of prejudice, and the determination to uphold what is essentially erroneous.

#### 4. VITRINGA.

Vitringa's Commentary on the Revelation was published in 1721. Like all his other writings, it displays great learning, diligent research, and unusual candour in the examination of the opinions of others. The following is a summary of its contents:—

After an elaborate exposition of the first nineteen verses of the first chapter, he proceeds to the investigation of the question, whether the Epistles to the seven Churches are to be understood simply *historically*, or whether they are to be taken also *mystically*. This question he decides in the affirmative, on the following grounds:—

1st. Because the whole book is prophetical.

2dly. From the circumstance that these Epistles are addressed to seven comparatively insignificant Churches of Asia Minor. Did Christ care only for these seven Churches? And if not, is it not reasonable to suppose that there is a mystery here?

3dly. The seven candlesticks are manifestly the universal Church.

4thly. The exhortation, "He that hath an ear," &c., is evidently addressed to all Christian men of every age and condition.

5thly. No reason can be assigned why these seven Churches should have been chosen, regarded historically.

6thly. The subject-matter of the Epistles, which, morally considered, is of too sublime a character to suit only single and even obscure Churches.

7thly and lastly. If the *inner* state of the universal Church is not described in these Epistles, it is described nowhere in the Apocalypse. But it is highly probable that its inner state, as well as its external condition, is described.

Vitringa, however, observes that the historical sense of these Epistles is not to be altogether disregarded, but taken

in conjunction with the prophetical. He then proceeds to the prophetic application of them as follows:—EPHESUS is the type of the Church from the days of St. John until the middle of the third century. SMYRNA represents the Church from A.D. 250 to 313. And the Epistle is especially addressed to the martyrs of those days. PERGAMOS typifies the state of the Church from A.D. 320 to the end of the seventh century, and relates especially to the contests with the Arians, against whom Christ fought with the sword of his mouth. THYATIRA belongs to the period from the beginning of the eighth century to the latter end of the twelfth. SARDIS represents the state of the Church from the rise of the Waldenses to the time of the Reformation, and is the type of the Church of Rome. PHILADELPHIA exhibits the state of the reformed Church and its ministers. LAODICEA shows the state the Protestant Church will be in just previous to the infliction of the last judgments upon the adversaries of the Church.

[Thus it will be observed that Vitringa's view of the prophetic bearing of these Epistles is very nearly the same as my own. Now, as I did not see his commentary until some time after I had written the substance of my exposition, this circumstance, it must be admitted, is strongly confirmatory of the truth of the theory.]

Vitringa next proceeds to what he calls Visions of the *second class*, which relate, he thinks, chiefly to the external condition of the Church.

Chap. IV. The *living creatures* are eminent ministers in all ages, especially the apostles.

Chap. V. The *sealed book* is the Divine decrees sealed up from man in the mind of God till revealed.

Chap. VI. The seals and trumpets and vials are not consecutive, but run chronologically parallel to each other, and begin respectively a new series of prophecies.

1st seal relates not to Trajan, but to Christ subjecting the world to himself by the preaching of the Gospel.

2d. The persecutions of Christians from Decius to Dioclesian.

3d. A famine of the Word of the Lord from the time of Constantine to the beginning of the ninth century, arising from the contests with the Donatists, Arians, &c.

4th. The rider on the pale horse is the *angel of death*, and signifies the Saracens and Turks.

5th. Was fulfilled in the martyrdoms of the Waldenses, Albigenes, and other martyrs of the Reformed Church.

6th. Relates to the final destruction of the Papacy, and all other enemies of Christ and his people.

[The foregoing exposition occupies seventy quarto pages in the original Latin, and is a striking exemplification of the danger of departing from the grand principle of interpretation laid down by Mede in his "Clavis," viz., that the seals, the trumpets, and the vials are not synchronical, but consecutive, the seventh seal containing the seven trumpets, and the seventh trumpet the seven vials. What, *e.g.*, can be more unsatisfactory than Vitringa's exposition of the fourth seal? He has wasted an immense deal of labour and learning in endeavouring to prove a manifest fallacy.]

Chap. VII. The preservation of an elect remnant during the preceding troubles by the sealing of the Holy Spirit, and the final triumph of all the elect congregated together after the destruction of their enemies.

Chap. VIII. Vitringa thinks the half-hour's silence is all that belongs to the seventh seal, and that it typifies the millennial rest of the Church.

#### THE TRUMPETS.

1st trumpet brings war, pestilence, and famine; commencing with the reign of Trajan, and ending with that of Gallus.

2d. Refers to the wars with the Goths under Gallus, Valerian, and Galienus.

3d. The *star* that fell from heaven is Arius, and this trumpet describes the effects of his doctrine.

4th. Portends the approaching fall of the Western Empire, and belongs to the period from the rise of Arianism to the reign of Valentinian III.

5th. Foretels the devastations of the Empire by the Goths under Alaric and Ataulphus.

6th. The successive invasions of the Empire by the Saracens, the Turcomans, the Tartars, and the Turks.

Chap. X. The angel standing on the earth, &c., is either the second or third (!) person in the Trinity, the Word or the Spirit. (!) The seven thunders are the seven crusades for the recovery of the Holy Land.

The little book is *a part* of the seven-sealed book, and contains the destinies of the Western Church. Sweet to receive, but bitter to anticipate and reflect upon.

The two witnesses are the ministers of the Waldenses, Albigenes, and later reformers. Of their slaughter, resurrection, &c., Vitringa speaks doubtingly. After discussing the various hypotheses proposed in his days, he says: "I think it, therefore, to be the part of a prudent expositor to speak cautiously concerning the fulfilment of this prophecy, seeing that the end of God's ways is not yet open to us. For although history may point to some circumstances in which the fulfilment of this prophecy is *obscurely shadowed forth*, we know not what new thing the eventide of the world may bring, in which the fulfilment of the prophecy may be *demonstrated*. And certainly, the more I contemplate the state of Europe, the more firmly I am persuaded that Europe will see what I pray God, so far as may be consistent with his glory, long to avert!"\*

7th Trumpet. This trumpet introduces the millennium, when the Papacy and all the enemies of Christ being destroyed, the Church will enjoy a peace unknown before.

#### CHAPTERS XII., XIII.

Vitringa heads his remarks on these chapters thus: "The Third Vision; having respect to the external condition of the Church, in which the destinies of the Church, of

\* Certe quanto faciem rerum Europæarum magis contemplor, tanto mihi certius persuadeo, fore, ut Europa videat; quod utinam Deus, quatenus id cum sua gloria et Ecclesiæ comodo consistere queat, diu avertat! (Com. p. 502.)

which mention was made in the prophecy of the two last trumpets, are more fully expressed from chap. xii. to the end of the book; the first part of which describes the rise and characteristics of the Roman beast, the persecutor of the saints, chaps. xii. and xiii." (P. 513.)

Chap. XII. The MAN-CHILD is the Christian Roman Emperors, and specifically Constantine, by whom Christ reigned and chastised the Pagans. In the interpretation of the rest of this chapter, Vitringa agrees in the main points with the generality of Protestant commentators.

Chap. XIII. The beast from the sea is the Empire of the mystical Babylon, or pseudo-Christian Rome, about to arise in the West from the wreck of the ancient extinct Roman Empire under Gregory the Seventh, towards the end of the eleventh century. The seven heads, he thinks, *may* mean seven different forms of government, as other Protestant interpreters; but rather inclines to the opinion that they designate seven remarkable Popes, commencing with Gregory VII.; the seventh being Paul V., "who," says he, "continued for some little time" (qui *ὀλίγον* ALIQUANTUM *mansit*); and the eighth, a Pope yet to come, who will slay the witnesses, and rage against the Church beyond all his predecessors. (P. 774.)

On these points, however, he speaks with hesitation, and would have the reader, if he prefers it, adopt the interpretation of an anonymous writer, who makes the seventh head the kingdom of the Heruli and Ostrogoths, which lasted but a short time; and the eighth the politico-ecclesiastical Empire under the Popes and Emperors. (P. 773.)

The beast from *the earth* with lamb-like horns, are the teachers and preachers of the Romish Church, specifically the Franciscans and Dominicans. The IMAGE OF THE BEAST are *the tribunals of the Inquisition*, who are a vivid representation of the supreme authority assumed over the consciences of men by the Church of Rome. His *mark*, "the confession of faith of the Romish Church, which if any man venture to call in question, he must be refuted, not by Scripture and argument, but by fire and faggots."

*The Name and Number of the Beast.*—Having discussed the names *Lateinos* and *Romiith*, and rejected them as untenable, Vitringa proceeds to give a list of Greek and Hebrew names, taken from the ancient prophets, and containing the number 666, to which he thinks there may possibly be some allusion; and at length, strange to say, fixes upon the name ADONIKAM, not because it contains the number 666 (which it does not), but because the family of Adonikam on the return from Babylon consisted of 666 persons! (Ezra xi. 13), and because that name signifies, or rather, *may signify*, the *adversary of the Lord!*\*

Chap. XIV. The hundred and forty-four thousand are the Waldenses, &c. The first angel flying in the mid-heaven, Luther and his fellow-helpers in the Reformation, who would proclaim the Gospel in such a manner that it would never again be hidden, therefore called *everlasting*. The second angel belongs to the second age of the Reformation, and symbolizes Calvin, &c. The third angel denotes the third age of the series of Protestant preachers, and intimates that they would preach under persecution. Partially fulfilled in the troubles that followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, but not wholly.

The angel on the white cloud may signify kings and princes, the executors of the Divine judgments. The *harvest* and *the vintage* have the same signification, and foretel the execution of the final temporal judgments of God (not the judgment of the last day) upon the enemies of the Church.

Chaps. XV. and XVI. The vials are judgments upon the Papal Kingdom.

1st Vial, was fulfilled in the *corruptions* (spiritual ulcers) of the Romish Church, which obliged all pious men to forsake its communion, as of an infected person.

2d Vial. Fulfilled in the wars of the Guelphs (the supporters of the Popes) and the Ghibelines (the party of the Emperors) in Italy and Germany, which filled those countries

\* The more natural signification, as Vitringa admits, is, *the Lord will arise.*

with the slain, and made the figurative sea as the blood of a dead man.

3d Vial relates to the sanguinary edicts of the Council of Constance, and the terrible retribution inflicted on the slayers of Huss and Jerome by their followers.

4th Vial. The *sun* is a principal kingdom of the Papacy. Fulfilled in the wars of Charles VIII. and Louis XII. in Italy, towards the end of the fifteenth century.

5th Vial. Fulfilled in the Reformation, by which the dignity and authority of the Papacy was darkened.

6th Vial. The Euphrates is to be understood mystically of the great bulwark of the Papacy, *i. e.*, the kingdom of the French; the drying up is the gradual wasting away of the power and resources of the French Empire, whereby the way will be prepared for the last grand assault upon the mystical Babylon.

[Nothing can be more forced and unnatural, in my opinion, than this interpretation. How can France be both a part of the great city (which Vitringa himself admits) and the river Euphrates also?]

The *three unclean spirits* are the Dominicans and Jesuits, who partake of the *persecuting spirit* of the dragon, and *war with the saints*, like the beast, and like the *false prophet*, speak as a dragon, teaching that all who refuse to submit to the authority of Rome should be exterminated.

7th Vial, brings the entire subversion of the whole power of Antichrist in every part of the world. The *mountains* are the larger kingdoms; the *islands* the lesser states and free cities; the *hail* is the emblem of the wrath of God, as manifested in both temporal and spiritual death; the *division of the city* into three parts, portends the division of the followers of the Papacy into three factions opposed to each other.

Chapters XVII., XVIII.—In the interpretation of these chapters Vitringa differs little from the generality of Protestant expositors. He makes the seventh head the empire founded by Charlemagne, of which the Popes, he thinks, might be called an eighth head, as ruling at Rome conjointly with the emperors.

Chapter XIX.—Describes the last great conflict, previous to the Millennium.

Chapter XX.—Vitringa's views in regard to the Millennium accord with those of Whitby. He therefore rejects the personal reign, and the literal first resurrection. The descent of Christ is figurative; the chain and key are the Scriptures. The resurrection of the martyrs is the deliverance of their memories from the unjust reproaches cast upon them, and their exaltation, &c. Gog and Magog are either the Turks, Persians, and Ethiopians, or, more probably, the Scythians and Tartars, who remaining in an unconverted state during the Millennium, will attack the Christian nations of Europe in immense multitudes, but will be destroyed by the immediate interposition of God.

Chapters XXI. and XXII.—These chapters describe the Millennial glory of the Church on earth, not the heavenly state. The saints are said to *reign for ever and ever*, because "the kingdom of grace on earth will be completed, and absorbed in the kingdom of glory in heaven."

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The foregoing is a correct summary of Vitringa's commentary. The original work is in Latin, and occupies upwards of nine hundred pages of a closely printed quarto volume. I have been thus particular in the analysis, because of the great name and high reputation of the author, who is justly esteemed for his piety and learning. As an exposition, however, I must confess, it is to me most unsatisfactory and disappointing. In examining and thoroughly sifting other men's interpretations, Vitringa's diligence and acuteness are unequalled, but he is not so happy in establishing the truth of his own. He often leaves you, in fact, more in doubt at the end of a chapter than you were at the beginning. He may be compared, indeed, to a too cautious chess-player, who gets bewildered in contemplating and examining every possible move of his adversary, and thus loses the plan of his own game, and at length determines, perhaps, upon the worst move he could make. Nevertheless, the work

is valuable, as exhibiting the interpretations of so many other previous expositors, and often showing, in a masterly manner, the untenableness of the scheme of interpretation adopted by Bossuet, and others of the same school.

#### 4. DAUBUZ.

Charles Daubuz was a clergyman of the Church of England. His work is entitled, "A PERPETUAL COMMENTARY ON THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN," and was first printed in folio in 1720. It was afterwards remodelled and abridged, and published in quarto in 1730, by P. Lancaster. The following is a summary of its contents:—

A preliminary discourse in two parts: 1st, On the origin of symbolical language; 2dly, On the rules by which the symbolical language is to be applied in the Revelation. In this essay he demonstrates that days in this book stand for years. He also observes that "St. John is here an actor in a vision, and not barely a scribe, and therefore a symbolical person." (P. 23.)

#### CHAPTER I.—*The Title.*

Under this head he observes: "We must look on this prophecy as that which discovers all that concerns the economy of the Gospel, what God designed it to be, and what he would have us to know. So that this mysterious book shows not only the future state of the Church, as to the times which went before St. John received the vision, but is rather a complete system, beginning at the foundation on which the glory of Christ is begun, and *that is his death*, which hath given him a title to his future glory." (P. 66.)

#### CHAPTER V.—*The Sealed Book*

Is the new law, or Gospel, prepared and kept by God in his right hand, to be published by the mediation of his Son Jesus Christ. (P. 208.)

"Christ's kingdom is committed to him by the delivery of a book sealed with seven seals, to intimate that he is rather

invested in the *right* of a kingdom, than in the full and immediate possession of it." (P. 251.)

CHAPTER VI.—*The Seals*.—P. 261.

1. The triumphs of the first preachers of the Gospel.
2. Slaughters of the Jews, beginning with Vespasian.
3. The strict observation of justice throughout the Roman Empire, beginning with Severus.
4. The pestilences, civil wars, famines, &c., which desolated the Empire in the third century.
5. The martyrdom of Christians by Decius, Dioclesian, &c.
6. The abolition of Paganism.

Chapter VII.—The angel from the east is Constantine. The public profession he made of Christianity was the seal, because by so doing he acknowledged Christians to be the true servants of God, and confirmed them in the faith. The sealing has respect not to the future, but to the present and past; they are sealed, not to preserve them from impending calamities, but to mark them out, and prepare them for the rest of the seventh seal. The 144,000 are the elect of the Jews; the countless multitude, the elect of the Gentiles, corresponding with the mixed multitude who went out of Egypt with the Israelites.

[The remarks of Daubuz on this chapter are particularly deserving of attention, as clearly proving, in my opinion, that all those explanations of the vision must be wrong which make the 144,000 sealed ones and the palm-bearing multitude entirely distinct companies, belonging to quite different epochs.]

Chapter VIII.—The silence for half an hour is the peace to the Church which followed the accession of Constantine.

1st Trumpet, Alaric and his Goths (p. 366); 2d, The great mountain is Rome, the capital city; 3d, The Huns and Vandals under Attila, Genseric, &c.; 4th, The destruction of the Western Empire; 5th, The Saracens; 6th, The Ottomans.

Chapter X.—The message of this angel is the Reformation, accomplished by Luther and the other Reformers.

*The little book* symbolizes the opening again of the Gospel. The *seven thunders* are the voices of the seven supreme powers who embraced the Reformation. The command *not to write* foreshows the endeavours of the temporal powers to stop the progress of the Reformation.

The book *sweet in the mouth*, &c., signifies that the Scriptures are *sweet* to the spiritual mind, but *bitter* in their results, in that the obeying of them brings affliction and privation. [But how can this be? Are we not told, not only that God's commandments are sweet to the mouth, but also, that in keeping of them there is great reward? That they "are *not* grievous?" Every attempt to explain this circumstance, except on the hypothesis adopted in the "Rationale," manifestly fails.]

Chapter XI.—*The witnesses* are a successive body of saints. They were slain by the Turks. The tenth part of the city is the Greek Church, which fell when Constantinople was taken, and the Eastern Empire dissolved.

Chapter XII.—The *woman* is the Church. The *sun* is Christ. The *moon* symbolizes the Holy Spirit. The *man-child* is Constantine. The seven heads of the dragon are the chief subjected kingdoms of the Roman Empire.

Chapter XIII.—The *beast from the sea* is the Papacy. The wild beast from *the land*, the Pope; who is also *the image of the beast*, as representing in himself all the power of the other beast.

*The name of the beast* is ROMIITH and LATEINOS.

Chapters XV. and XVI.—*The first five vials* refer to the wars of the crusaders, and the wars of the Popes with the Emperors. The *drying up of the Euphrates* signifies the depopulation of the Eastern or Greek Empire, whereby a way was made for the kings of the East, or Turks.

Chapter XX.—With regard to the Millennium, Daubuz advocates a literal first resurrection, and the personal reign of Christ. On the former head he makes the following important remarks:—"This I am sure of, that these words can be understood only of such as have been slain, not of any other sort of men, and so cannot denote any collective body

of men in a mortal state, but only the very persons who keep the Word of God, and have the testimony of Jesus. The Church of Christ *never dies*; the gates of hell can never prevail against it. The whole tenour of the prophecy leads us to understand this place of a proper resurrection."

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The commentary of which the above is a sketch, is a very elaborate and learned work, and proceeds upon the only right principle of interpretation,—namely, that the seventh seal contains the trumpets, and the seventh trumpet the vials. Subsequent commentators have been much indebted to Daubuz, although they have not always acknowledged their obligations. It is, however, a most unreadable book as originally published. The writer allows himself to go into long digressions, which have little or no connexion with his subject, and apparently, but not, perhaps, intentionally, makes an ostentatious display of his learning on various occasions. Still the work is highly valuable, particularly as correcting some of the errors of Mede, and containing much useful information, combined with originality of thought.

#### 5. NEWTON (SIR ISAAC).

This great man's "Observations on the Revelation of St. John," were published in 1733. He begins with the *date*, which he thinks was the year 68. (See Appendix B.) The epistles to the Churches he makes to correspond with the different states of the Church universal under the seals. *Ephesus* represents the Church up to the time of Dioclesian's persecution. *Smyrna* belongs to the period of that persecution. *Pergamos*, *Thyatira*, and *Sardis*, exhibit the Church gradually declining under Imperial favour up to the accession of Julian. *Philadelphia* describes the faithful under that Emperor. *Laodicea*, the subsequent lukewarm state of the Church, which provoked the Lord to spue it out of his mouth. In the interpretation of the seals and trumpets, as also of the symbolical scenery, chaps. iv. and v., Sir I. Newton agrees generally with Mede.

## 6. NEWTON.

Bishop Newton's Commentary on the Revelation constitutes his twenty-fourth Dissertation on the Prophecies. His scheme differs from that of Mede only in a few unimportant particulars. He considers the rider on the white horse of the first seal to be Vespasian, and the man-child of chap. xii., to be Constantine. The vials he regards as altogether future to his time, and does not attempt to explain. He has borrowed largely, as he states in his preface, from Mede (whom he often translates *verbatim*), Vitringa, and Daubuz. In fact, his work is rather a compilation than an original composition.

## 7. WOODHOUSE.

Archdeacon Woodhouse published his work in 1806. It contains, besides the commentary, the Greek text, the authorized version, and his own translation, in three parallel columns. Unlike Bishop Newton's, it is altogether an original book, and on that account, perhaps, the less valuable. Putting aside all preceding commentators, the author formed an entirely new scheme of interpretation of his own, with what success the reader will be able to judge from the following analysis.

According to the scheme of the Archdeacon, the seals comprehend the whole prophetic period contained in the book. He explains them thus:

1st Seal.—Christianity going forth to triumph over all its adversaries.

2d Seal.—The corruptions of Christianity, and feuds and hatred which ensued, beginning about A.D. 320.

3d Seal.—The ignorance of God's Word, and superstitions and burdensome rites and ceremonies of the middle ages.

4th Seal.—The murders and persecutions of Popery.

5th Seal.—Exhibits the whole army of martyrs, from the death of our Lord to the great day of retribution.

6th Seal.—Is a general description of the day of judgment.

Chapter VII.—This chapter belongs to the sixth seal, and relates to the conversion of the Jews, dreadful judgments upon the earth previous to the final judgment, &c.

Chapter VIII.—The first four trumpets “afford a general view of the warfare which the Christian religion underwent upon its first establishment.” The 1st trumpet fortels Jewish persecution. 2d, The persecutions of the Heathen. 3d, The corruption of the waters of life by early heretics. 4th, The consequent darkening of the light of Revelation.

Chapter IX.—The 5th trumpet relates to the corruption of the true doctrine by the Gnostics. (!) The 6th trumpet, the irruptions of the Saracens and spread of Mahometanism during the twelve hundred and sixty years of the Papal reign.

Chapters X., XI.—The *two witnesses* are confessors of the truth in the dark ages in opposition to Popish error. They were slain about the commencement of the sixteenth century, when the Inquisition seemed by fire and faggot to have extinguished the light of pure religion. But they rose again, and stood on their feet, by the establishment of the Reformation. This, however, was accompanied with great commotions, and much bloodshed, and with the *spiritual* death also of many, liberty being productive in some cases of licentiousness, fanaticism, and infidelity.

“Such,” says the Archdeacon, “is the interpretation which has presented itself to me respecting the prophecy of the witnesses. Yet upon a calm review, I must confess myself not very confident of complete success. All the symbols of the prophecy, especially in the latter part, will *not* be found to be fulfilled so completely in the history which we exhibit as should *reasonably* be expected.”

[It is evident, therefore, that he was not satisfied with his own exposition of this difficult prophecy. In fact, I believe it will be found impossible to show the fulfilment of the latter part in the history of the Reformation.]

Chapter XII.—The *dragon* is the personification of Satan; the *man-child* is Christ.

Chapter XIII.—In the exposition of this chapter, the

Archdeacon does not materially differ from the generality of Protestant commentators, only that he takes the two-horned beast from the land to be the symbol both of the Eastern and Western Antichrist,—*i.e.*, of the Pope and Mahomet, whom he supposes to be represented respectively by the two horns.

Chapters XV., XVI.—The vials, he thinks, agree chronologically with the seven trumpets, but he is not very explicit in his explanation of them. The 3d vial, he thinks, may have been accomplished in the bloody wars between the Popes and the Emperors, and between the Papal and Mahometan powers in the crusades. Of the other vials he does not attempt any particular application.

Chapter XVII.—The *eighth head* is the secular Roman Empire revived, and persecuting the saints under the guidance and at the instigation of the apostate Church.

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From the above outline it will be seen that Archdeacon Woodhouse understands the Apocalyptic symbols almost exclusively in a spiritual sense, as relating wholly to the internal condition of the Church, and that he makes the seals, the trumpets, and the vials, to a certain extent synchronous.

Bishop Hurd speaks highly of this commentary, and says, "It is the best book of the kind I have seen." I cannot agree with him. On the contrary, it is to my mind, one of the least satisfactory expositions I have ever met with. The writer seems to have had no fixed principles of interpretation whatever, as regards, at least, the chronological position of the prophecies. Hence he goes backwards and forwards without rule, just as he may fancy he has found some event which suits a particular prophecy. What, for instance, can be more purely arbitrary than his application of the fifth trumpet to the Gnostics? In fact, the author set out upon a wrong principle, that of discarding the assistance of all former commentators, with the purpose of producing an entirely original work. This was the Archdeacon's grand mistake, in which, however, he does not stand alone. But,

as Bishop Newton justly observes, “to explain this book properly is not the work of one man, or one age.” The man who sits down to write a commentary on the Revelation, with the fixed determination of rejecting the aid of all previous expositors, may produce an original work, but not a work from the perusal of which the reader will rise up satisfied that he has got a correct view of the structure and meaning of the Revelation.

### 8. CUNINGHAME.

Mr. Cuninghame, of Lainshaw, is well known as a writer on prophecy. His explanation of the seals, trumpets, and vials, is as follows :

#### *The Seals.*

1st Seal. The triumphant progress of the Gospel in the three first centuries.

2d. Intimates the prevalence of a spirit of discord, dissension, &c., in the Church after the first age of Christianity.

3d. Accomplished in the rise and prevalence of the Papal power.

4th. Represents the state of the Church during the ages of Papal persecution.

5th. Explanatory of the slaughter of the former seals ; describes also the aspect of the Church immediately before the dawn of the Reformation.

6th. Relates to the final revolution which is to convulse the nations of Christendom before the second advent. This seal commenced at the period of the French Revolution, 1789.

7th. Comprehends the whole of the trumpets, and begins a new series of prophecies.

#### *The Trumpets.*

The first four trumpets relate to the overthrow of the Western Empire by the Goths and Vandals.

5th Trumpet. The rise and spread of the Mahometan religion and power. The *fallen star* is an apostate Christian bishop, and symbolizes the Bishop of Rome.

6th, Relates to the overthrow of the Eastern Empire by the Turks.

Chapters X., XI.—The *little book* is a part of the sealed book, the seventh, or last roll.

*The two witnesses* are the spiritual Church. Their death, resurrection, and ascension, were accomplished in the events which followed the dissolution of the league of Smalkalde. England was the tenth part of the city which fell in the earthquake of the Reformation. The *seventh* trumpet began to sound in 1792.

#### *The Vials.*

The vials commence contemporaneously. All the seven began to be poured out in 1792.

1st Vial *was* fulfilled in the prevalence of Atheism and Infidelity in the Papal kingdoms.

2d, The revolutionary massacres in France.

3d, The judgments which fell upon the other nations of Europe.

4th, The oppressive tyranny of the French revolutionary government.

5th, Affected principally the Austrian Emperor, who was the head of the beast until 1806.

6th, Accomplished in the present decayed state of the Ottoman power.

7th, Relates to the dreadful political tempest and earthquake of the French Revolution of 1789. But the greater part of this vial, including the tripartite division of the city, is probably yet future. Chapters xvii., xviii., and xix., show in detail its accomplishment.

The conversion of the Jews will take place during the effusion of the vials. Their conversion, however, will not be completed until after their restoration to Palestine, nor until the second advent of our Lord at the close of the vials.

This great event, in Mr. Cuninghame's opinion, is not far distant.

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It will be perceived, that the two preceding commentators assume that the first six seals contain the whole period of the Revelation, reaching to the last great day of judgment. They regard them, in short, as a sort of programme, in which is contained the substance of all the subsequent prophecies; thus, supposing the sealed book to be a prophetic writing, they make the whole of its contents to be laid open before a single line of it could be read!

#### 9. IRVING.

Mr. Irving's commentary, consisting of four volumes, embraces only the first five chapters, and part of the sixth, to verse 12. The general character of his work may be gathered from the following extracts from the preface:

“As I proceeded, there arose in my mind a strong conviction that the thing which the Church needed was not so much another exposition added to the multitude she already possesseth, of this blessed book, as a practical exhibition of the infinite theological and moral treasures which it containeth—not so much another scheme of interpretation, as the scheme of former interpreters corrected by the new lights which have been cast upon the subject, as a demonstration of the excellency of the materials whereof it is composed, and their fitness for the edification of all saints.” And then, having noticed the neglect of this book by the professing Church, and his desire to deliver it from the guilt and loss of this neglect, he adds: “To accomplish this most desirable end, I perceived that the means were not so much, by showing its object as a connected whole, as by exhibiting the excellence of all its parts, the preciousness of every name of God and of Christ, of every saying, of every figure, and almost of every word; and especially by showing the connexion of the book with the other parts of Scripture, and the light which it casts upon the sacred canon.”

Again, "The work of which I now present the first portion is one of a larger scope than any which I have yet undertaken, being an endeavour to unfold the whole mystery of God, as it is expressed in this great revelation of Jesus Christ, which is the concentration of all the names, actions, and purposes of God into one. It is not to set forth my scheme, or to gainsay the schemes of others, but to open the deep things of God, revealed in this portion of his Word, that I have undertaken this labour."

In accordance with these statements, the book is rather a theological treatise, founded on the text of the Apocalypse, than a prophetic exposition. The first three volumes are wholly occupied with the introduction and the epistles to the Churches, which Mr. Irving supposes to be addressed by Christ to the Catholic Church, in the character of universal Bishop. The fourth contains remarks upon the visions of the fourth and fifth chapters, and an exposition of the first four seals. The seven-sealed book is not a revelation, but a book relating to a forfeited inheritance, namely, the inheritance of the earth forfeited by Adam, and for which none could pay the price of redemption but Christ, and therefore none but he could open the seals.\* The riders on the four horses are different Roman Emperors.

1st Seal.—The rider on the white horse is Constantine, who commenced the conquest of the Roman Empire to Christ.

2d. The rider on the red horse is Theodosius, and the colour "has reference to the bloody times in which Theodosius arose and acted."

3d. The rider on the black horse is Honorius. "The blackness of the horse is significative of the darkness and desolation, and oppression of death, which came on the Roman Empire upon the death of Theodosius, with whom, according to Gibbon, the glories of Rome expired." The

\* Mr. Irving appears to have derived his views of the seven-sealed book from a very remarkable work by Lacunza, a Spanish Jesuit, entitled, "*The Coming of Messiah in glory and majesty*" (written under the assumed name of Ben Ezra, a Jewish convert to Christianity), of which Mr. I. published a translation in 1826.

blackness of the horse, therefore, represents the empire in a state of famine, or in the agonies of violent death, covered over with mourning, and misery, and woe."

4th. This seal exhibits the state of the empire from Honorius until its overthrow and entire desolation by the Goths, Vandals, &c., ending about the year 568.

Here the commentary ends. The author did not long survive the publication of these volumes, which appeared in 1831.

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It is greatly to be lamented, that a man possessed of such extraordinary endowments as Edward Irving (for certainly they were extraordinary), should have made so bad a use of them, and have fallen into those extravagances, not to say dangerous errors, which marred his usefulness, and clouded his latter days. His exposition of the Revelation is a work full of original and striking thoughts, and contains much that is sound and excellent, but so mixed up with what is unsound, or, at least, doubtful and fanciful, and so disfigured by an affected style and antiquated phraseology, that to read it through is a task few would undertake. The writer disclaims at the commencement any desire to glorify himself, and yet you cannot but feel, in reading his book, that he writes with a dogmatic confidence justifiable only in one conscious of Divine inspiration. Edward Irving, indeed, is a melancholy but instructive exemplification of the wisdom of the apostolic rule, "not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil." (1 Tim. iii. 6.) This was just his case. True, he was not a novice, perhaps, exactly in the sense intended by the apostle. But he was comparatively young when the tide of popularity set in full upon him, and raised him so far above his contemporaries. The sudden exaltation was too much for him, and carried away by the current of popular applause, he lost his balance. There can be little doubt that latterly there was in his case decided aberration of mind.

Let it not, however, be thought that he is a practical confirmation of South's profane remark, that "the Revelation always finds a man mad, or makes him so." Irving's madness, if he were indeed labouring under such a calamity, was not caused by the study of the Revelation, but was the result of over-excitement, working upon a powerful but finely-wrought mind. Mede, Sir Isaac Newton, and Vitringa, not to mention living names, are brilliant examples of the falsehood involved in the often-repeated saying of South. Surely such an assertion savours not a little of presumption, if not of impiety.

### 11. BASSET.

M. Basset is a French commentator. His work entitled, "L'Apocalypse considérée comme un Ecrit Hieroglyphique ; ou, Exposition Raisonnée de l'Apocalypse," was published in 1832. It is the only modern French commentary I have met with. The following summary account of its contents, so far as I am acquainted with them,\* will probably be acceptable to many readers:—

The work consists of two parts. The first contains a methodical statement of the principles of interpretation adopted. These principles are numbered *first, second, third, &c.*, and amount altogether to seventy-seven. This first part contains also a vocabulary of the meaning of the hieroglyphics, or figurative terms and objects employed in the Revelation. The following are specimens:—

### 3. COURONNE.

#### *Triomphe.*

"Chez quelques peuples de l'antiquité, les vainqueurs dans les combats ou dans les jeux recevaient des couronnes de diverses sortes. De là le mot *couronne* a souvent été employée pour désigner un triomphe."

\* I am in possession of the first volume only; the second I could not meet with in London, nor do I know that it was ever published.

## 11. BLASPHEME.

*Outrage en matière de Religion.*

“ Dans la langue Française, le mot de *blasphème* n'est donné qu'à des outrages faits à la Majesté Divine; mais le nom Grec rendu d'ordinaire par *blasphème*, signifie généralement toute parole ou action qui blesse l'honneur ou la réputation, et peut en conséquence s'appliquer également à ce qui regard Dieu ou les hommes.”

Having thus prepared the way by the explanation of every word and phrase in the Apocalypse involving, as the author thinks, a mystical meaning, he proceeds to his exposition.

## THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

M. Basset supposes the seven Churches of Asia to represent the universal Church in various places, and at different periods. He considers the Epistles to be a prophetic history. *Ephesus* he regards as the type of the Greek Church under the Roman Emperors. *Smyrna* is the Eastern Church of the first ages under great tribulation. *Pergamos* is the Italian Church, regarded as assuming authority over other Churches. *Thyatira* is the Church in the North and West of Europe, subject to the Church of Rome. *Sardis* is the Greek Church under the dominion of the Turks. *Philadelphia* is the Protestant Church become independent in the sixteenth century. *Laodicea* is the Russian Church. This latter, however, he gives as only a conjectural sense, of the truth of which he entertains great doubt. “ Some future event,” he observes, “ or a better explanation than ours of this prophecy, may show with certainty whether this Church is that of Russia, or whether some other Church is intended.”

Chap. V. The *sealed book* is the Gospel. The *seven seals* represent the obstacles to the profession of Christianity in the Pagan Roman Empire. The opening of the seals is the removal of those obstacles; or seven distinct kinds of events to which the Lord Jesus would give rise.\*

\* “ L'ouverture des sept scéaux signifie que Jésus donnera cours à sept sortes d'événemens.”

The *horses* are the Roman Empire; the several *riders* the rulers of the Empire.

1st Seal shows that the Roman Empire will appear under a very glorious aspect. Its princes will gain great victories over distant nations, and will make many new conquests. Fulfilled in the victories of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius.

2d Seal fulfilled in the civil wars and slaughters under Caracalla, &c.

3d Seal represents the Empire under an august and venerable aspect. Fulfilled in the reigns of Antoninus, Aurelius, Severus, &c.

4th Seal announces the wars, pestilences, and famines which desolated the Empire in the third century.

5th Seal relates to the martyrs of the three first centuries.

6th Seal, the destruction of Paganism in the Roman Empire.

The trumpets M. Basset explains as most modern commentators do. The three wild beasts, he thinks, all represent different powers. *The beast from the sea* is the Latin Christian Empire in the West and South of Europe subject to the dominion of the Pope. *The beast from the earth* is the Papacy, *i.e.*, the Pope and his College of Cardinals, considered as a political and ecclesiastical corporation. *The beast from the bottomless-pit* is an empire (or government) which in a time posterior to those of the writer (1832) will establish itself by craft (*une voie astucieuse*), and rule over all the territories of the Latin Empire. *The image of the beast* is a government (posterior to our days) representing in some way the Latin Empire. Probably the same as is represented by the beast from the bottomless pit.

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These are the only points in the above-named commentary which appear to me worth noticing. It is gratifying to find that there are some even in the very heart and centre of the Infidel kingdom who make the Apocalypse a study, and who have their eyes opened to see its general scope and meaning.

## 12. ELLIOTT.

The "Horæ Apocalypticae," by the Rev. E. B. Elliott, is unquestionably the most important work on the Apocalypse which has been published in modern times, not only on account of the quantity of valuable information it contains, but still more because of the influence it is likely to exercise on prophetic interpretation.\* Mr. Elliott is a brilliant and powerful writer, and possesses the art of stating his views in so attractive a manner, that he absorbs the whole attention, and thus by not allowing his readers leisure for calm reflection, brings them gradually and insensibly to adopt his opinions. Firmly persuaded in every instance of the truth of his own interpretation, he loses sight, as he proceeds, of any doubts and difficulties that may have stood in the way at the outset; and assuming certain data as incontrovertibly proved, he confirms his theory by such an overwhelming mass of historical proofs and illustrations, that forgetting the doubts we had in the beginning, we find it difficult to question the correctness of his conclusions. It is obvious that a writer of this description must be read with more than ordinary caution, unless we are prepared to follow blindly wherever he may lead us. We must act as we would towards an individual who should undertake to conduct us through a difficult country with which he himself was but imperfectly acquainted. In such a case, the more confident our guide, the more necessary it would be to keep upon the watch, and every now and then to pause, and make inquiries, and endeavour to obtain information from other quarters, lest, having missed a turn, or taken a wrong direction, we should find we had irretrievably lost our way. Mr. Elliott undertakes to guide us through all the intricacies of the Apocalypse; but he so beguiles us with the variety and sweetness of his conversation, that unless

\* A sufficient proof of this is, that other commentaries, based entirely on Mr. Elliott's scheme, have already appeared. I may instance, in particular, Dr. Cumming's "Apocalyptic Sketches." The first edition of the "Horæ" was published in three vols., in January, 1844; the fourth in four vols., in 1851.

we are on our guard, he may lead us wrong without our being aware of it, and we shall then have some difficulty in retracing our steps.

Having made these general remarks on some of the leading features in Mr. Elliott's character as a writer, I shall now proceed to give a summary account of the work itself.

**DATE OF THE APOCALYPSE.** Mr. Elliott's first object is to prove that St. John was banished to Patmos by Domitian, and consequently that the Revelation was communicated to him about A.D. 97 or 98. His exposition of the seals rests upon the certainty of this fact, which he endeavours to establish in an elaborate and powerfully written dissertation, the object of which is to prove that the statement of Irenæus is incontrovertible, and that the counter-statements of Epiphanius and the Syriac version are not entitled to any consideration.

Passing by the Epistles to the Churches with a slight notice, as being purely historical, although containing much instruction for the Church in all ages, Mr. Elliott proceeds to the consideration of the visions of the fourth and fifth chapters. In expounding these chapters and the seals, he insists much upon the introductory words, "I will show thee things which must be hereafter," from which he argues, that what had gone before must relate to things *past*, as what remains must relate to things *future*, commencing with the point of time immediately subsequent to the communication of the vision.

*The Temple* represents the Church, its parts and character. *The world around*, with its land, seas, rivers, &c., is the Roman Empire.

The *seven-sealed book* is the Revelation: the writing *without* being supplemental to that *within*; "supplemental," he observes, "not accidentally, or as occasioned by an unexpected redundancy of matter, but purposely and with premeditated design." (Vol. i., p. 99.)

This book, or *roll*, Mr. Elliott thinks, consisted of seven rolls, one within the other, sealed together by projecting

slips of parchment hanging down at the side, so that the seven seals were all visible at one time.

[It is difficult, however, to conceive how each roll could in that way be securely sealed. It is obvious that each roll in that case must have been sealed at both ends; but even then I see not how the seals could have been so placed as not to interfere with each other.]

**THE SEALS.** The opening of the seals represents the series of events which led to the downfall of Pagan Rome and the establishment of Christianity, beginning with the reign of Nerva. The *horse* in each instance is the symbol of the Roman nation; its *colour*, of the successive symptomatic phases that the body politic which the horse represents would exhibit, from that of high health and prosperity at the first to that of mortal dissolution; its *riders* represent the characteristic *agents* or *agencies* by whom, during the times respectively intended, it would be thus acted on and influenced: *the instrumental causes*, in effect, of these *symptomatic phases*.

[It will be observed that this view of the seals, as to their general import, singularly accords with that of M. Basset, the French commentator. Yet it does not appear that Mr. Elliott had seen M. Basset's commentary, and this makes the agreement the more remarkable.]

**1st Seal.** This seal represents the condition of the Empire from the accession of Nerva to the end of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, comprising a period of about eighty years. The white colour of the horse is symbolical of the prosperity of the Empire, and the happiness of the Roman people during that period. In Mr. E.'s own words: "Combining the chief indications here given, it was as if prosperity long unknown would spring up, and continue for some considerable time within the Empire: a prosperity introduced in some striking manner by wars of victory; and that would still be attended by victory, even to the end of the period prefigured." (Vol. i., p. 121.) The *bow* in the hand of the rider points to the country from whence the Emperor who was to stand at the head of this line of prosperous Emperors

would come, and shows him to be of Cretan origin, the Cretans being famous for their archery, and their bows celebrated all over the world, so that, as appears by some ancient medals, a man stringing a bow was an emblem of Crete. Accordingly, the family of Nerva, the successor of Domitian, came originally from Crete, and although he reigned but a few months, yet as Trajan and his successors were his *adopted sons*, therefore the bow, the symbol of Cretan extraction, belongs equally to them all. The *crown's* being *given*, implies that he who wears it would not be born to the imperial dignity, but would have it offered to him by those who had the power to bestow it; and his going forth "conquering and to conquer" signifies a succession of victories attended with an extension of territory: all which Mr. Elliott thinks was fulfilled in Nerva and his successors, who being unexpectedly and almost against his will invested with the purple, soon transferred it to Trajan, by whom and the three next Emperors, Hadrian and the two Antonines, the prophecies of this seal were accomplished.

2d Seal. This seal embraces a period of about ninety years, from the reign of Commodus, A.D. 193, to the accession of Dioclesian, 284,\* and was fulfilled, Mr. Elliott thinks, in the civil wars of the Pretorian guards, who, during that period, disposed of the empire at their pleasure and occasioned an immense slaughter of Roman citizens.

3d Seal. The *balances* in the hand of the rider indicate extreme severity in the administration of the fiscal laws, accompanied with cruelty and oppression. The *black* colour of the horse is symbolical of mourning and distress. This seal, Mr. Elliott thinks, was accomplished in the oppressive taxation occasioned by the edict of Caracalla, and the exactions of the provincial governors, who, although bearing in their hands the symbol of equity and justice, and charged by their Imperial masters to act justly, oppressed the people

\* In the earlier editions of the "Horæ," Mr. Elliott makes this second seal extend only to the edict of Caracalla, granting the privilege of Roman citizens to the provincials, A.D. 215.

and defrauded the republic, to which causes, amongst others, Gibbon ascribes the fall of the Empire.

4th Seal. This seal was fulfilled in the wars, pestilences, and famines which desolated the empire from A.D. 245 to the accession of Dioclesian, 285.

5th and 6th Seals. In the interpretation of these seals Mr. Elliott agrees with those commentators who explain the fifth seal of the martyrs of the Dioclesian persecution, and the sixth of the revolution under Constantine.

Chap. VII. Mr. Elliott regards the vision of this chapter as *prospective*, and prophetic of the condition of the Church after the empire became professedly Christian. The twelve tribes of Israel are *the visible* professing Church in the Roman Empire; the 144,000 Christ's true Church, the election of grace gathered out of it, *i.e.*, the elect at one particular time, who are always a small number in comparison of the aggregate of nominal Christians. The *palm-bearing* multitude are the elect all gathered together at the last, and their glorification and blessedness are here described by anticipation.

This vision has, however, another bearing and application. By an *allusive contrast* \* this palm-bearing multitude represent the visible Church from the time of Constantine to the end of the fourth century. Countless multitudes then pressed into the Church, and being received into it by baptism, upon their coming out from the baptismal font were, according to custom, supplied with palm branches and clothed with white robes, as if true converts. But the majority were mere nominal professors; they were not sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, and did not belong to the true Israel of God. This distinction between the baptized and the elect was first clearly asserted by Augustine, to whom and his doctrines concerning grace and election as opposed to the Pelagianism which was then gaining ground in the Church Mr. Elliott thinks there is a specific allusion.

Chapter VIII. and IX. In the explanation of these

\* See this phrase explained in the remarks on Mr. E.'s views of this chapter.

chapters Mr. Elliott does not materially differ from the generality of commentators who have preceded him, but he has many interesting and important remarks on the preliminaries to the sounding of the trumpets. The half hour's silence he explains of the very short interval between the death of Theodosius and the irruptions of the barbarous nations into the empire.\*

The first trumpet brings the Goths, the second the Vandals, the third the Huns, the fourth the Heruli, the fifth the Saracens, and the sixth the Ottomans. On these trumpets Mr. Elliott has written largely and ably, and establishes the general correctness of his interpretation by an accumulation of proof almost irresistible. The only point where, in my opinion, he fails is in the explanation of the conversion of the rivers into wormwood, which he interprets of Attila and his Huns, who, following the course of the Danube and other smaller rivers, converted them, as it were, into wormwood by the miseries they occasioned. This does not, it seems to me, verify the imagery. The rivers are not described as being filled with *blood*, but they become *bitter as wormwood*, and it is by *drinking of them* that men die. What relation has this to the ravages of Attila?

With regard to the chronology of the first and second woes, Mr. Elliott dates the commencing epoch of the locust or Saracenic woe from A.D. 612, when Mohammed "first publicly announced his prophetic mission, and so caused the smoke of the pit of darkness to rise up before the eyes of men." (Vol. i., p. 431.) And, consequently, he makes it cease in 762, the year in which Almanzor laid the foundations of a new capital on the banks of the Tigris, calling it Medinat

\* In the three first editions of his work, Mr. Elliott translates the clause, "And when he had opened the seventh seal there *was* silence," &c., thus, "And when he had opened the seventh seal there *had been* silence," &c., but this forced and unnatural rendering he has given up in the fourth edition, candidly acknowledging it to be untenable, and, therefore, any further discussion of it is unnecessary. Had I been aware of this circumstance before the remarks in volume i., p. 280, were printed, they would not have appeared.

al Salem, the *City of Peace*, as if to signify that the Saracens were now about to cease from war and conquests.

In fixing the chronology of the Turkish woe, Mr. Elliott follows Mede, but adds many interesting and important illustrations of his own. He shows that this woe commenced with the inauguration of Thogrul Beg, the head of the Turkmans, January 18, A. D. 1057; that the hour, and day, and month, and year make a period of 396 years and 118 days, which, being added to the former date, brings us to May 16, 1453, the very year and month in which Constantinople was taken and the eastern third part of men slain.

Chapter X. In interpreting this chapter Mr. Elliott very nearly follows Daubuz. The angel standing on the land and the sea is Jesus Christ, who now appears to claim those rights which had been long usurped by his pretended representative. The lion-like cry is the voice of the Reformation, of which Luther is the leader. The seven thunders are the *fulminations* of the Pope against the reformed doctrines, which Luther was disposed at first to respect; and therefore does John, who here represents Luther, *prepare* to write what the seven thunders have uttered. The command, however, *not* to write shows that these seven thunders are not "the true sayings of God;" and, accordingly, Luther being taught from above, soon discovered that what he had taken to be the voice of Christ was the voice of Antichrist, and not to be regarded.

The little book in the hand of the angel is the New Testament. John's taking it out of his hand and eating it, &c., is symbolical of the revival of faithful preaching at the Reformation. The sweetness and after-bitterness of the book signify, the first, the sweetness of the word in itself, and the latter, the bitter consequences of preaching it, both of which were emphatically realized in Luther's experience.

Chapter XI.—Mr. Elliott's interpretation of this chapter is exceedingly laboured and ingenious, but not to my mind satisfactory. I will endeavour to give the substance of his exposition in a small compass, although it is not easy to do this and at the same time do justice to the author.

This chapter and the preceding, Mr. E. thinks, ought not to have been divided, since the injunction to rise and measure the temple is only a sequel to the previous injunction, "Thou must prophesy again," both being given by the angel clothed with the cloud. The "reed like unto a rod" is the symbol of *the official authority* given by the Elector of Saxony to the Reformers to re-model the Church and to introduce new formularies of public worship drawn on Evangelic principles, and also to cast out from it the adherents of the Papacy, as being really and properly excommunicate.

In treating of the TWO WITNESSES, Mr. E. begins by noticing seven characteristics. 1st. *Personality*, implied, as he thinks, in the term by which they are designated. 2. The grand subject of their witnessing is the Lord Jesus. 3. They are the two *olive-trees* and two *candlesticks* that stand before the Lord, the latter emblem being explained by Christ himself to symbolize Christian Churches. 4. They are two in number. 5. They are clothed in sackcloth, the sign of mourning. 6. Avenging power is given them against their enemies. 7. Their prophesying in sackcloth corresponds with the duration of the beast from the sea, &c.

Such being the characteristics of the witnesses, Mr. E. thinks that they represent both "*preachers* of Gospel truth and *congregations* or *churches* ministered to by them." The number *two* may refer to two lines of witnesses in the Eastern and Western Churches respectively. The witnesses in the Eastern Church were specifically the Paulicians; \* in the Western, certain Christian dissentients, in France, Germany, and Italy, beginning with Augustine and Vigilantius, and Claude of Turin, &c., which two lines met eventually in the *Waldenses*, by which common name they were known from the close of the twelfth century. Mr. Elliott's exposition is here accompanied by a circumstantial history of the Paulicians, the object of which is to clear them from the charge of Manicheism and other heretical opinions. [In this I think he is successful, but the digression is too

\* Mr. E. calls them Paulikians.

lengthy for a commentary.] He then shows how the seven characteristics before mentioned were fulfilled in this united line of witnesses, and notices particularly the *sackcloth covering* of the witnesses as literally coinciding with the dress of the Vaudois, which was a *black sheep-skin*, and which, from its resemblance to sackcloth, procured for them the identical appellation given to the Apocalyptic witnesses of *sackcloth wearers*. (Vol. ii., p. 392.) The *shutting heaven*, &c., he explains of the dews of Divine grace withheld during the time of their prophesying in sackcloth; *the fire going out of their mouths*, of the predictions uttered by them of the final triumph of their cause and the destruction of the Papal Church.

The *war* against the witnesses, their *defeat*, *slaughter*, and *resurrection* are thus explained. The clause, "And when they shall have finished their testimony," does not refer to "the close of the whole period of witnessing assigned them," but means simply, "when they shall have *made complete* their testimony," *i.e.*, when they shall have fully borne witness against all the prevailing errors of the Church, *then* shall the beast make war with them, &c. This completion, Mr. E. thinks, took place towards the close of the twelfth century. (P. 405.) Then the beast from the abyss, *i.e.*, the Papacy, began to make war with them in the crusades against the Albigenses, &c., which warfare was carried on without intermission until the period of the Reformation, just previous to which the witnesses were slain and their dead bodies exposed, &c. As regards particulars, the following is a summary of Mr. Elliott's views:—The *broad street of the great city* is Rome. The specific scene and occasion of exposure, *the Lateran Council*, held from 1512 to 1517. (P. 425.) The completed death of the witnesses was verified in the *non-appearance* at that Council of any heretics (so called) although summoned by name; their resurrection, in the sudden standing forth of Luther, and the posting up of his Theses at Wittemberg in 1517.

But as this is the most striking point in Mr. Elliott's exposition, I think it but fair, although differing from him,

to give it as nearly as possible in his own words. Having stated that a citation had been issued to the dissidents in Bohemia and elsewhere to appear and plead either before the Cardinal Legate in Hungary, or before the Lateran Council at its next session, convened for May the 5th, 1514, he proceeds thus:—

“So was the crisis come which was to try the faith of this little remnant of witnesses, and exhibit its *vitality* or *death*. And would they, then, face their Lord’s enemies? Alas! no. The day of the Ninth Session arrived. The Council met. But no report from the Cardinal Legate gave intimation either of the pleading, or of any continued opposition of the Bohemian heretics. No officer of the Council announced the arrival of deputies from them to plead before it. Throughout the length and breadth of Christendom Christ’s witnessing servants were silenced: they appeared as *dead*. The orator of the Session ascended the pulpit, and amidst the applause of the assembled Council, uttered that memorable exclamation of triumph, never, I believe, pronounced before, and certainly never since, “*Jam nemo reclamat, nullus obsistit!*” ‘There is an end of resistance to the Papal rule and religion: opposers there exist no more.’ And again, ‘The whole body of Christendom is now seen to be subjected to its *Head, i.e., to Thee.*’ So did ‘they from the people, and kindred, and tongues, and nations,’ assembled in Rome, that *πλατεια* of Anti-Christendom, and ‘watch-tower of the world,’ look on all anti-Papal witnesses as extinct and dead. Let the reader mark well the description. And let him well mark the day. It was May 5, 1514.”

Mr. E., after having shown how, in his opinion, the exposure of the dead bodies of the witnesses, and the joyous feastings of their adversaries, were fulfilled in an edict of the Council forbidding the burial of heretics, and the splendid entertainments given by the Pope and cardinals on its dissolution, thus proceeds to explain, “THE SPEEDY AND WONDERFUL RESURRECTION OF THE TWO WITNESSES!” “But what need,” he asks, “of any explanation of mine?

History speaks for itself. Not in the compass of the whole ecclesiastical history of Christendom, is there any such example of the sudden, mighty, and triumphant resuscitation of his (Christ's) cause and Church from a state of deep depression, as was exhibited just after the separation of the Fifth Lateran Council in the *protesting voice of Luther*, and outburst of the glorious *Reformation*. But does the *chronology* suit? It was predicted that for *three and a-half days* the witnesses were to be looked on as dead; in other words, that there was to be the interval of *three and a-half years* between the *first recognition of their extinction* by the assembled deputies from the states of Christendom, and their resuscitation. Was this the interval between that memorable day of the Ninth Session of the Lateran Council, on which the orator pronounced his pœan of triumph over the extinction of the heretics, and the first act of protestation by Luther? Let us calculate. The day of the Ninth Session was May 5, 1514; the day of Luther's posting up his Theses Oct. 31, 1517. Now from May 5, 1514, to May 5, 1517, are three years; and from May 5, 1517, to Oct. 31 of the same year, is 180, or half 360 days; that is, just half a year. So that the whole interval is *precisely, to a day*, three and a-half years; *precisely, to a day*, the period predicted in the Apocalyptic prophecy. Oh, wonderful prophecy! is the exclamation that again forces itself on my mind." (Vol. ii., pp. 413—441.)

Such is a summary account, nearly in his own words, of Mr. Elliott's exposition of the death and resurrection of the witnesses. The remaining circumstances connected with this subject are by him thus explained: The *great fear* that fell upon those who beheld the witnesses arise, was verified in the terror occasioned to the adherents of the Papacy by the revival of Gospel-preaching. The *ascent of the witnesses* was accomplished in the exaltation of the Protestants to political power and importance by the pacification of Nuremberg, 1532. The *cloud* in which they ascended, and in which the Covenant Angel, *i.e.*, Christ, Mr. E. supposes, also ascended, shows that

their ascension was the result of Christ's special interference. The *earthquake* which accompanied the slaughter of the witnesses, was the Reformation. The *tenth part of the city that fell* was *England*; its fall, the severance of the English Church and nation from the Papacy, in the reign of Henry VIII. And now comes what appears to me to be the weakest point in Mr. E.'s exposition of the witnesses, and which, in fact, if it be an essential part of it, nullifies, in my opinion, the whole. I allude to his interpretation of the slaughter of the *seven thousand names of men*. These seven thousand, or, as Mr. E. would translate, *seven chiliads of names*, he explains of the SEVEN UNITED DUTCH PROVINCES; and *their slaughter*, of the deliverance of these provinces from the Spanish yoke, and the establishment of Protestantism in them, just about the same time that England fell from the Papacy! "In 1609," (I quote his words,) "their independence was acknowledged: and out of the ruins of the *seven old Papal lordships and counties*, (now slain, just like the third of men, or Greek Christendom, in their political character,) there arose the Protestant Republic of Holland. Such," he observes, "were the two grand and permanent political changes in Europe, that arose out of the earthquake attendant on the Reformation." (P. 463.)

The clause, "*And the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven*," Mr. Elliott thinks refers to two different parties. The affrighted remnant were the Papists, who were alarmed and terrified at the triumphs of the Protestant cause; but they who "gave glory to God," were the two witnesses, after they had ascended in the cloud; *i.e.*, the Protestants, now exalted to political power, who both individually and nationally returned thanks to "the God of heaven," (not to the Virgin Mary and the saints,) for their deliverances.

Such is Mr. E.'s exposition of the prophecy of the two witnesses, and its attendant circumstances. Reserving the remarks I have to make upon it for the present, I proceed with the remainder of his commentary.

Chap. XII. THE SUN-CLOTHED WOMAN is the Christian Church at the commencement of the fourth century, when it began to be exalted to the political heaven. The *sun* is specifically *Constantine*, the highest of the Imperial dignities, shining upon it with the sunbeams of his favour; the *moon*, *Licinius* (!), the second in rank, giving it also the lesser light of his countenance; the *twelve stars*, the *chief bishops of the empire*, now imperially recognised as the heads of the *twelve tribes* of the Christian Israel. (Vol. iii., p. 18.) On the other hand, the *Great Red Dragon*, is the Emperor Maximin, the third ruler of the Roman world, who drew with his tail the third part of the stars, *i.e.*, ruled over a third part of the empire; and who, actuated by Satanic enmity, made war against the Gospel and the Church; but who being defeated by Constantine, was thus cast out, together with Heathenism, of which he was the champion, from the heaven of political ascendancy. The *man-child* is also Constantine, the first of a long line of Christian emperors, whose throne might now be called *the throne of God*, as being the throne of what was now by its right profession of allegiance and faith, God's kingdom. If, however, this interpretation should appear objectionable, Mr. Elliott thinks that the *man-child* may be understood of Christ himself. In that case he would explain its "abreption to the throne of God" of the acknowledgment of our Lord's divinity by the ruling powers, and the final establishment of this great doctrine throughout the empire in opposition to Arianism, and every other heresy which would detract from the glory of his person. The war in heaven, &c., Mr. E. explains much as I have done. Only the *flood* from the mouth of the dragon he thinks symbolizes both *heresies*, and also the floods of *foreign invaders* who, tainted with the Arian heresy, inundated the empire just after Christianity had been firmly established upon the Imperial throne by Theodosius. The "earth's helping the woman," &c., he explains of the absorption of the barbarians into the land they had invaded, and their incorporation with the Roman people. (Vol. iii., p. 57.)

Chapters XIII. and XVII. Mr. Elliott considers the beasts from the sea and the abyss, as in every respect identical. "The beast from the sea," he observes, "*in a manner unparalleled* in the Apocalypse, is made the subject of a second figuration in the seventeenth chapter: the latter figuration being given at the *termination* of its predicted history, as the present is at its *commencement*." Both beasts, he thinks, symbolize the ROMAN POPES and PAPAL CHRISTENDOM; the Popes themselves being the *beast's head* with the *great mouth*, and the *decem-regal empire and power* the *beast's body*, as subordinate to and inspired by the Pope. The *seven heads* he explains, as already stated, of different forms of government, the six former in the usual way, viz.: kings, consuls, decemvirs, dictators, military tribunes, emperors; the seventh, the new form of the empire under Dioclesian; the eighth, the Papacy. The *ten horns*, he thinks, are the ten kingdoms into which the Western Empire was divided about A.D. 533, as follows: 1st, the Anglo-Saxons in Britain. 2d, 3d, 4th, the Franks, the Alemanni, the Burgundians in Gaul. 5th, the Visigoths in Spain. 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, the Ostrogoths, the Lombards, the Suevi, the Vandals, and the Bavarians, in Italy. With regard to the forty-two months of the beast's power, Mr. E. would assign two dates to its commencement; the first from the decretal letter of Justinian, 533, and the second from the edict of Phocas, 606.

The *two-horned lamb-like beast*, is the *Papal Priesthood*, especially its mitred double hierarchy of bishops and abbots, branching from the common patriarchal head. The *image of the beast*, is the symbol of the PAPAL GENERAL COUNCILS of Western Europe, which may be regarded as the *image or representation* of *Papal Anti-Christendom*. (Vol. iii., p. 205.) The compelling all men to *worship* this image, refers to the Pope and clergy obliging all persons to submit to the decrees of the General Councils. The beast's name and number is *Λατρευος*. The imposing on men the mark, name, and number of the beast, Mr. E. explains of the compulsory oaths of obedience exacted on all persons who engaged

in the Crusades, and of the excommunicatory decrees of councils, &c., against recusants.

Here follows an able dissertation on the year-day theory, in which Mr. Elliott refutes the objections of opponents in a very masterly manner, and establishes the truth of the theory, as it appears to me, on the clearest and most indisputable proofs.

Chap. XIV. This chapter Mr. Elliott explains as do most other Protestant commentators. The hundred and forty-four thousand are the elect remnant from the apostate Church. The epoch of their triumph, the *Reformation*. (Vol. iii., p. 286.) The *three angels flying in the mid-heaven*, however, he thinks belong to the era of the seventh trumpet, which began to sound about 1790. The angel with the *everlasting Gospel* prefigures the modern era of evangelic missions. The *harvest-reaping* and the *winepress-treading*, are both emblematical of judgments yet future; the one representing Christ as the *initiator*, the other as the *completer* of God's final judgments on Papal Christendom. (Vol. iv., p. 11.)

Chaps. XV. and XVI. The "*glassy sea mingled with fire*," Mr. Elliott explains of the *overflow of French revolutionary fury*, which desolated France and Europe for so many years, and was like the *burning lava of a volcano*. The *harpers singing the song of Moses*, he thinks, represent specifically the triumphs of true religion in England during that period. The VIALS he thus explains:—

First Vial. The "*noisome sore*" of this vial symbolizes "some extraordinary outbreak of moral and social evil, the expression of deep-seated disease within, that would arise somewhere in Papal Europe shortly after the cessation of the Turkish woe;" and was fulfilled in "the democratic fury, Atheism, and vice of the French Revolution." (Vol. iii., p. 338.)

The Second Vial prefigures the destruction of the naval forces of the Papal Kingdoms, especially France and Spain, and was accomplished in the victories of Hood, Howe, and Nelson.

The Third Vial symbolizes the battles and victories of the French republican armies on the Danube, and Rhine, and other rivers of Europe.

The Fourth Vial Mr. Elliott explains, as it appears to me, somewhat paradoxically. Because the fourth trumpet brought with it a partial obscuration of the sun, he argues that this fourth vial must necessarily produce a corresponding effect. "It results," says he, "as an inference, that there is predicted in the vial before us the darkening, partially or entirely, either of that power among the ten Papal kingdoms that might be considered as most properly the sun in the symbolic firmament of Papal Christendom, that is, of the *German Emperor*; or perhaps of the sovereigns of these Papal kingdoms, more in the general." But is not this a purely gratuitous assumption? Nothing whatever is said of the *darkening* of the sun on the effusion of this vial:\* on the contrary, it would appear rather that its light was increased thereby; for otherwise how could it have "power to scorch men with fire?" Here, however, again Mr. E. gives an explanation peculiar to himself. He thinks that this power belongs to *the angel that poured out the vial*, not to the sun, and was accomplished in the victories of Napoleon, to whose tremendous artillery, he thinks with Dr. Keith, there may be an allusion.

[Both the foregoing interpretations appear to me untenable. More particularly, the application of "the power to scorch men" to the angel of the vial, and not to the sun, is, in my opinion, most forced and unnatural, and contrary,

\* Mr. Elliott indeed argues that it is implied. "The sun is surely," he says, "the recipient and sufferer under the vial poured out upon it, precisely as the *earth, sea, and rivers*, under the vials poured on them; just, too, as the *sun* was described as the object of judgment in the fourth trumpet. It seems to me," he adds, "quite extraordinary that commentators should so generally have been drawn aside from what both the figure itself and the analogy of every parallel, without exception, show to be the true meaning." (Vol. iii., p. 361, note.) But our answer is very simple. The text says nothing about the darkening effects of this vial, but according to the natural and obvious meaning of the original, tells us that its effusion on the sun gave *it* power to scorch.

in fact, to the grammatical construction of the Greek, according to which the *αὐτῷ*, *to him*, must refer to the immediate antecedent, the *τοῦ ἡλίου*, *the sun*, of the preceding clause. We might, in fact, almost as well make the pronoun in the tenth verse, where it is said of the beast, "*his* kingdom was darkened," refer to the fifth angel, as though it were *the angel's* kingdom that was darkened, as in this instance ascribe the power to scorch to the angel, and not to the sun.]

The Fifth Vial portends the judgments inflicted on the Popedom by the French, consummated in the decrees of Napoleon at Schoenbrunn and Vienna in 1809, "whereby the Pope's temporal authority over the Roman State was abolished, and Rome itself incorporated with France."

The Sixth Vial Mr. Elliott explains, as the generality of commentators do, of the gradual wasting away of the Turkish Empire, commencing from the year 1820. The **KINGS FROM THE EAST**, he thinks, mean not the Jews, but the oriental kingdoms and nations generally.

The **THREE FROG-LIKE SPIRITS** he explains of the spirit of *Heathen-like Infidelity* and *anti-social violence*, of *Popery* as emanating directly from *the Popes* and *Papal Court* at Rome, and of *Popery* as coming from "the mouth of the *false prophet*, or body of the *apostate Romish priesthood*," including pointedly and specifically the Oxford Tractarians, whose frog-like voice began to sound in 1833. (Vol. iii., p. 48.) Mr. E. subsequently designates these three unclean spirits as those of *Infidel revolutionary irreligion*, of *Popery*, and of *antichristian priestcraft*. (Vol. iv., p. 21.)

Seventh Vial. Mr. Elliott thinks the effusion of this vial very probably began in 1848, when, as he had stated in former editions he expected would be the case, "the *whole political atmosphere* of Western Christendom was *darkened* and *vitiating*." The *earthquake* he supposes to foreshow the final breaking up of the decemregal form of the Papal Empire, the *tripartition* of the great city having reference probably to both a religious and political division. The *hailstorm*, he thinks, may indicate that *France*, the most

northerly of the Papal kingdoms, is to be the chief instrumental executor of the plague.

Chaps. XVII. and XVIII. Mr. E.'s views of chap. xvii. have already been given in connexion with chap. xiii. The "mighty angel" of the eighteenth chapter is probably the executor of the judgments he announces. Those judgments Mr. E. thinks will involve:—

1st. The destruction of *Rome* and the *Papal Ecclesiastical States* in Italy, by the agency of *an earthquake and volcanic fire*.

2dly. The diffusion of great religious light just previously.

3dly. The conversion of the Jews, who will probably join, and indeed take the lead, in the earthly Church's song of praise on the occasion, the language of this song in the Apocalyptic prefigurations being now for the first time *Hebrew*, "*Hallelujah*."

4thly. The continuance up to this period of the existing state of things, *i. e.*, as respects the condition of the living saints and the earth itself.

Chap. XIX. As regards the BATTLE OR WARFARE OF ARMAGEDDON, Mr. Elliott thus sums up his views: "In fine, all seems to indicate that there is to be the destruction of some grand antichristian confederacy in the mountain country of Judah, with fearful physical convulsions attending, and the agency of fire and sword immediately at or before the final conversion and restoration of the Jews, and the commencement of the consequent glorious predicted times of universal blessedness." (Vol. iv., p. 122.) Consequently, he considers this battle as immediately preceding, and preparatory to, the millennium.

Chap. XX. THE MILLENNIUM. Mr. Elliott's views are strongly and decidedly *millenarian*. He, therefore, holds and advocates the literal first resurrection of all the saints; the *pre-millennial* advent and personal reign of Christ, and the *pre-millennial* renovation of the earth. As regards the probable order of events connected with the millennium, he thus states his sentiments: "It would seem, therefore, that in this state of things (*viz.*, whilst scoffers are saying,

‘Where are the signs of his coming?’)—all suddenly and unexpectedly, and conspicuously over the world, as the lightning, &c., the second advent and appearance of Christ will take place: that at the accompanying voice of the archangel and trump of God, the departed saints will rise from their graves to meet him—all at once, in the twinkling of an eye: and that then instantly the saints living at the time will be also caught up to meet him in the air: these latter being separated from out of the ungodly nations, as when a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats; and all alike welcomed to enter on the inheritance and kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world; and so in a new and angelic nature, to take part in the judging and ruling of the world. Meanwhile, it would also appear that the solid crust of the earth shall be broken with a tremendous earthquake, and fountains burst forth from its inner deep, not as once of water, but of liquid fire; of fire pent up within it as in a treasure-house, and intended as the final habitation of devils: this, I say, shall then burst forth and engulf the vast territory of the Papal Babylon; thence spreading even to Palestine, and that there the flame shall consume the Antichrist at the head of his confederacy, while the sword also does its work of slaughter. And then immediately, it would seem also that the renovation of this our earth is to take place, its soil being purified by the very action of the fire. And the Spirit, too, poured out from on high to renew, in a yet better sense, the moral face of nature: and that so the millennial commencement of Christ’s eternal reign with his saints is to begin: the shekinah, or personal glory of Christ, being manifested chiefly in the Holy Land and at Jerusalem; but the whole earth partaking of the blessedness, and thus the regeneration of all things, and the world’s redemption from the curse,\* having their accomplishment, according to the promise, at

\* I cannot help here directing the reader’s attention to the striking correspondence between this view of the final results of Christ’s death and the interpretation I have given of the seven-sealed book, and its attendant circumstances.—See chap. v. and commentary.

the manifestation of the 'sons of God.'" (Vol. iv., p. 188.)

Such are Mr. E.'s views in regard to the appointed order of events, introductory to the millennium. With respect to the millennial state, he thinks it is symbolized in the New Jerusalem, the descent of which, of course, he supposes to be also pre-millennial. "Jerusalem will then be the *Mother-Church* of a Christianized universe. The blessedness thence resulting will be universal. The creature, delivered from the bondage of corruption, will experience the glorious liberty of the children of God. And holiness, and peace, and joy everywhere blending together, the Lord shall again rejoice in his works." (Pp. 211, 212.)

With respect to the objection to the pre-millennial advent derived from 2 Pet. iii. 10, which seems to imply the earth's being burnt up at Christ's second coming, and the consequent impossibility of the new earth's having living inhabitants in the flesh remaining on it,—Mr. Elliott meets it in this way: he suggests that the conflagration spoken of by St. Peter does not necessarily involve as its subject the whole habitable world; or, in fact, any other than the Roman earth; which the Apocalypse itself declares is to be destroyed pre-millennially. (P. 184.)

On the subject of the re-loosing of Satan, the gathering of the armies under Gog and Magog, &c., Mr. E. writes briefly and cautiously, and wisely abstains from attempting to dive too curiously into things designedly wrapped up in mystery. Mr. Elliott concludes his commentary with a solemn and instructive application addressed to England as a PROTESTANT NATION, to the *Church of England* as a PROTESTANT CHURCH,—to *Nonconformists*, as PROTESTANT DISSENTERS,—to the members of the CHURCH OF ROME,—and, finally, to INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIANS; to all and each of whom he commends the attentive consideration of the solemn announcement, "Surely, I come quickly."

Mr. E. has appended to his commentary an exceedingly interesting sketch of the history of Apocalyptic interpretation from the earliest period to the present

time, concluding with a masterly examination ; and, as it appears to me, refutation, both of the Præterist and Futurist schemes.

Having thus given a summary account of the contents of Mr. Elliott's work, I now proceed to notice some of what I consider to be his leading mistakes, although I scarcely need say, that in venturing to pronounce an opinion on a commentary which has received the unqualified approbation of so many competent judges, I would write with diffidence.

### 1. THE COMMENCING EPOCH OF THE APOCALYPTIC HISTORY.

The first and fundamental mistake of Mr. Elliott is, as it seems to me, his assuming, in common with Vitringa \* and some other commentators, that the Apocalyptic history necessarily begins from the date of its publication, or rather from the time when it was given to St. John. "The *chronological reference* of the first seal," he argues, "is determined by its position to signify what was to happen soon after the epoch of St. John's seeing the visions in Patmos, according to the angel's words, 'I will show thee things that must be hereafter.' (Vol. i., p. 113.) It has, however, I trust, been proved that the words refer not to the order of the *events* but of the *prophecies*, and consequently that any argument as to the commencing epoch of the Apocalyptic history founded thereupon is invalid. (See my remarks, vol. i., p. 81.) But, indeed, independently of the uncertainty which rests, and ever, I think, must rest, upon the date of the Apocalypse ; there is, it seems to me, an *à priori* grand and insuperable objection to Vitringa's and Mr. Elliott's views on this point derived from the consideration I before stated, namely, the improbability of such an event as Nerva's accession and the prosperity of the Roman Empire under his immediate successors, being the subject of the prefigurations of the first seal. Let me again remind the reader of the grandeur and sublimity of the preliminaries

\* A Nerva, sive a tempore editæ hujus Prophetiæ—quærendum esse *initium* implementi hujus Oraculi clarissime notant Dei verba ad Johannem : "Ostendam tibi quæ oporteat fieri post hæc."—*Com.*, p. 249.

to the opening of that seal, as detailed in chapters iv. and v. Can we think that this magnificent exordium, with the mighty angel's proclamation—the mute astonishment of all created beings in heaven and earth—the bitter tears of the apostle because no one was found worthy to open the book—can we, I say, think that all this was merely introductory to a prophecy of the prosperity of the Roman Empire under a Nerva or a Trajan? How far more probable, I should say, is the view taken of this subject by Daubuz. Well, I think, does he direct us to the true commencing epoch of the Apocalyptic history, when he says, “Therefore we must look on this prophecy as that which discovers all that concerns the economy of the Gospel; what God designed it to be, and what he would have us to know of all its state, both present and future; and by consequence all that shall certainly befall to Jesus Christ and his Church. So that this mysterious book shows not only the future state of the Church, as to the times which went before St. John received the vision, but is rather *a complete system, beginning at the foundation on which the glory of Christ is begun, and that is his death, which hath given him a title to his future glory.*”—(*Com.*, p. 66.) How far more satisfactory, I say, is this view than that which would make this divinely-inspired history of the Christian Church in connexion with the world begin in the year 96 with the accession of Nerva? I know not how it may strike the reader, but to my mind this consideration alone is sufficient to awaken doubts as to Mr. Elliott's interpretation, startling as the historical facts may appear by which he endeavours to support it. I cannot think that after all the sublime preliminaries of the fourth and fifth chapters—the proclamation of the angel—the taking of the seven-sealed book by the Lamb that had been slain—and the outburst of thankful praise from the heavenly choir\*—the first prefiguration presented to the apostle on the opening of the book would be a Roman Emperor going forth to conquer.

\* The remarks of Mr. Elliott on these points seem to me singularly feeble and *jejune* for one who can write so eloquently and so powerfully. —See p. 90 of the “*Horæ*,” vol. i.

But *are* the facts adduced by Mr. Elliott in confirmation really of so striking and startling a character as they appear to be in his Commentary? I think not. I think it will be found on examination that the effect produced upon the mind by the perusal of his proofs is owing rather to the brilliancy of his colouring, by which he literally dazzles the reader's eyes, and the skilful manner in which they are exhibited, than to the intrinsic value and authority of the proofs themselves. Here indeed it is that Mr. Elliott's power as a writer becomes at once apparent. So ably does he urge his historical proofs respecting the Cretensic origin of Nerva, and the prosperity of the Roman Empire under him and his successors, that we lose sight of the many difficulties connected with the previous question, and can scarcely bring ourselves to doubt that the one was prefigured by the *white* horse, and the other by the *bow* in the hand of the rider. But let us now examine this matter more closely. Take, *e.g.*, first of all, the peace and prosperity of the Roman Empire from the accession of Nerva to the reign of Commodus, the period assigned by Mr. E. to the first seal, and of which he supposes the rider on the white horse with the laurel crown to be the prefiguration. Passing by the assumption that the horse is the symbol of the Roman Empire, and would have been so understood by St. John and his contemporaries, which is very questionable,\* was the state of the Roman Empire during the eighty years which succeeded the death of Domitian answerable to the imagery of this seal? Mr. Elliott maintains it was, and in proof adduces the following statement of Gibbon, who says, "If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the

\* If this had been so, how does it happen that such an idea never seems to have entered into the mind of any ancient commentator, from Irenæus downwards? Had the horse been the well-known symbol of Rome, would not its meaning at once have been perceived by contemporary writers? It is true there are coins extant with the effigies of a horse and the word *Roma* underneath; but so there are coins with horses on them and the names of other cities subscribed, which is sufficient proof that the horse was not the distinctive emblem of Rome. Many such coins may be seen in the British Museum.

world during which the condition of the human race (!) was most happy and prosperous, he would without hesitation name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus."—"Decline and Fall," vol. i., c. iii., p. 126.) Now it must be admitted there is something at a first view startling in this statement, considered as descriptive of the precise period assigned by Mr. Elliott to the first seal. But is it true? From this statement it might be inferred that during the period to which Gibbon refers, the Roman Empire was in a state of profound peace, and being free from intestine commotions and public calamities, such as pestilence and famine, enjoyed universal and uninterrupted prosperity. Or, at least, if it were engaged in external wars, that they would be attended with a succession of victory after victory, and the continual acquisition of new territories. Now what are the facts of the case? Nerva reigned only a few months, and did nothing worthy of being recorded. (Yet it will be borne in mind, he is supposed to be the first of the Emperors who goes forth on the white horse wearing the laurel crown, *conquering and to conquer*.) Under Trajan, indeed, the Roman arms were everywhere victorious, and the boundaries of the Empire were greatly extended. But his reign was far from being one of uninterrupted internal tranquillity. Christians suffered much, and multitudes were put to death in the provinces.\* Many myriads of Jews also, Eusebius tells us, were slain in Egypt, Cyrene, and Mesopotamia.† Added to which, a dreadful pestilence followed by famine, raged through many of the provinces.‡ Hadrian, the successor of Trajan, so far from going forth "conquering and to conquer," not only gained no fresh victories, but abandoned most of the territories acquired by his predecessor.§ In his reign also the Jews caused great disturbances. Two

\* Euseb., iii. 30.

† Ibid, l. iv., c. 1.

‡ "Eo tempore per provincias multas ATROXQUE PESTILENTIA, FAMESQUE, et incendia facta sunt."—Victor, in Trajano, c. xiii., quoted by Vitranga, p. 345.

§ "The resignation of *all* the eastern conquests of Trajan was the first measure of his (Hadrian's) reign."—*Decline and Fall*, vol. i., p. 11.

hundred thousand of them were slain, and the remains of Jerusalem utterly rased from the ground. Of Hadrian himself Gibbon says, "The Senate doubted whether they should pronounce him a god or a tyrant."\*

The reign of Antoninus Pius was indeed peaceful and prosperous, but he gained no battles and made no conquests, and Christians were still persecuted. It was in this reign that Justin Martyr wrote his two Apologies, from which we learn how rancorously the heathen still hated and persecuted the followers of Christ.

The reign of Marcus was more brilliant, but far less uniformly prosperous. His war with the Marcomanni was attended in the first instance with disastrous consequences, and Eutropius tells us that in his reign A GREAT PART OF THE POPULATION OF THE EMPIRE AND NEARLY THE WHOLE OF THE ARMY were cut off by pestilence.† Marcus was also a determined enemy of the Christians, and multitudes were put to death in his reign.

Such is a summary of the characters of these Emperors, and of the leading events of their reigns. And this is that period in the history of the world during which the Infidel historian affirms that "the human race were most happy and prosperous, being governed by absolute power under the guidance of virtue and wisdom." And this is that period also which Mr. Elliott thinks is fitly represented by the symbol of a peaceful monarch going forth on a white horse, with a *bow* (not a *sword*) in his hand, conquering and to conquer! But were not the Christians and Jews Roman subjects, and shall we say then that whilst they were being slain by thousands and tens of thousands, this was the period when the human race was most happy?

\* "Decline and Fall," vol. i., p. 122. Yet Hadrian was one of those Emperors under whom this same author affirms that the empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. (P. 127.) Can the testimony of a writer so inconsistent with himself be implicitly relied on?

† "Sub hoc tantus casus pestilentiae fuit, ut post victoriam Persicam, Romae ac per Italian provinciasque, maxima hominum pars, militum omnes fere copiae languore defecerint."—L. viii.

I dwell upon this statement of Gibbon because it is perhaps more likely to make an impression on the mind of the reader than any other of Mr. Elliott's proofs. I have shown, I trust, that it is not supported by facts. It may be asked, If it be not true why did he make it? The answer to this question lies deeper than at first appears. Gibbon was the most bitter and subtle enemy that Christianity ever had. One great object of his history undoubtedly is to bring Christianity into contempt. With him philosophy was better than religion, and any religion better than the religion of Jesus Christ. Hence this statement. His object in making it was to insinuate that philosophy makes men happier than Christianity, since mankind were in a better condition under the absolute government of heathen philosophers than under that of Christian princes; just as he insinuates that Mohammed and his captains were better men than Christian bishops. The statements of such a writer, however accurate he may be in general, must be received with great caution where religion is only remotely concerned.

To say that the *human race* was happier under Nerva and his successors than at any other period of the world's history from that time to the present, is so gross and palpable a misstatement, that I almost wonder it should be adduced in evidence by so accurate and careful a writer as Mr. E. We might almost as well affirm that Europe was never so happy as under the despotic sway of Napoleon. That the Empire under Trajan and the Antonines was in a far better condition than under some of the monsters in human form who preceded and followed them, no one acquainted with Roman history would dispute, but that that period could be fitly symbolized by the Apocalyptic emblems of the first seal, I cannot admit.\*

\* It is not a little remarkable, that Vitringa thinks the first trumpet, which, in his view, brings with it pestilence and famine, might be referred to this very period to which Mr. Elliott would assign the first seal: "Ubi vero historiam percurro Romani Imperii, quo fuit statu inter tempora *Nervæ et Gallieni*, dabit mihi historia hæc mala quæ quæro, notabilibus locis sub TRAJANO, HADRIANO, MARCO AURELIO, et Commodo."—*Comm. on Rev.*, p. 344.

But what shall we say of *the bow* in the hand of the rider on the white horse? Was not the bow the distinctive badge of a Cretan, and was not Nerva of Cretan origin? It must be admitted, that both these points are so put by Mr. Elliott as to give something like the appearance of mathematical demonstration to his triumphant conclusion, which, for the sake of those of my readers who may not possess the "Horæ," I will give in his own words: "Yes; the meaning of the bow in the rider's hand is now indeed manifest. And how admirable, beyond what the most learned of human artists or scholars would have devised, appears the point and the comprehensiveness of this device of the Holy Spirit! Had a *javelin*, or a *sword*, been in the hand of the rider, the weapon carried would have added precisely nothing either to the meaning or the distinctiveness of the hieroglyphic,—the *crown* sufficing to designate emperors, and the javelin and the sword, although appropriate, not being distinctive of them. But by the addition of the *bow* there was prefigured the very *provincialism* of the family to which (first of any families not of Italian origin) the Empire, within a year\* from after the visions in Patmos, was destined to be committed, and under which, in a measure quite unprecedented, † the symbolic horse was to assume and to retain the *white* colour, and in its wars, both at first and whenever afterwards occurring, to realize the predicted destiny of conquering and to conquer." ‡ (Vol. i., p. 137.)

\* It will be observed that Mr. Elliott here assumes it to be an *indisputable* fact, that the Revelation was communicated to St. John in the last year of Domitian's reign. But how can that be considered an indisputable fact in a matter of chronology which is denied by Sir Isaac Newton?

† Can this with truth be said? Was not the reign of Augustus at least as prosperous as that of Hadrian and Marcus? It may suffice to remind the classical reader of Virgil's *Pollio*,—*Redeunt Saturnia regna, &c.*

‡ But why should this career of conquest and prosperity cease with Marcus Aurelius? Did not the Cretan bow and the crown of triumph belong at least to Commodus his son as well as to himself? I see not what possible reason can be assigned for limiting the period of Imperial conquest and prosperity, prefigured, as Mr. E. thinks, by the white horse, to the end of the father's reign, and not extending it to that of his *own* son.

Now, not to notice the many questionable premises here assumed to be proved, there is one *primâ facie* objection to this interpretation of the bow, which, as it seems to me, overthrows at once the foundation of Mr. E.'s argument. That argument is built upon the assumption that the bow was so distinctively the badge of a Cretan, that St. John, on seeing it in a European warrior's hands, would instantly recognise its meaning, as intended to signify that the warrior was of Cretan origin. I ask, then, if so, how comes it to pass that such an idea never entered into the mind of any of the ancient commentators on the Revelation? How comes it to pass that neither Irenæus, nor Tertullian, nor Victorinus, nor any of the Greek or Latin Fathers, ever thought of this bow as being a Cretan emblem? Is it to be supposed for a moment, that if the bow had been so notoriously a distinctive badge of Crete, none of the earlier and contemporary Apocalyptic expositors, who must surely have been better acquainted with the national devices of their own times than we can be, would have had their thoughts turned in that direction? I pause for a reply. Still, I would not rest mainly on this or any other objection founded on circumstantial details. I recur to what is to me the grand insuperable difficulty—the incongruity between the sublime preliminaries connected with the opening of the seven-sealed book, and the going forth of a Roman Emperor on a career of conquest. Here I would fix my foot. I may be wrong, but I cannot think, that, even viewing the sealed book merely in the light of a prophetic record, such an interpretation is answerable either to the dignity of its Divine Author, or the grandeur of the circumstances under which the loosing of its seals takes place.

### 3D SEAL.—THE BLACK HORSE, &c.

Mr. Elliott argues that this horse and its rider cannot be the symbol of famine, the price fixed for barley being indicative rather of plenty than of scarcity, and, moreover, the injunction "*not to hurt,*" or, as he thinks we ought rather to translate, "*not to do wrong in regard to the oil and*

the wine," implying mercy, not judgment. Now, without attempting to follow him in all the details of his long and laboured argument, I think the real points in dispute may be comprised in a very small compass. In fact, the whole question turns upon this, whether the prices affixed to the wheat and barley imply scarcity or not. And what, then, are the facts of the case, as stated by Mr. E. himself? They are these. A *chœnix*\* was a measure of capacity, containing four *cotylæ*, or about a quart. A *denarius* was the usual pay of a day-labourer, value about 8*d.*; and the average price of wheat in the reign of Severus (the period to which he thinks this seal belongs), *two denarii and a half* for the modius, or *nine chœnixes*, *i.e.*, not *the third* of a denarius for a *chœnix*. If, then, the price of wheat were fixed by law at one *chœnix* only for a denarius, would not this be something like a famine price? Mr. Elliott himself admits the difficulty of reconciling these facts with his interpretation. "Indeed," he says, "for a long time it seemed to me insurmountable on the hypothesis of the Attic *chœnix*." (Vol. i., p. 170.) And how, then, does he get over the difficulty? "I had overlooked," he says, "one most important element for consideration in the question, which at once sets all right, *viz.*, the *intrinsic value of the denarius* at the time supposed to be depicted in the vision. For so it is, as I now find, that though the denarius for centuries previous had been always scrupulously coined of pure silver, yet from the commencement of the third century, it began to be gradually more and more adulterated to the value of *one-half* in the reign of the first Severus; and in the reign of the second Severus, to the value of just *two-thirds*. So that, as under the last-mentioned prince, the denarius had but one-third the silver, and, consequently, but one-third the value, of the older and standard denarius, the Apocalyptic charge, 'A *chœnix* of wheat for a denarius,' proves to have been the literally true expression of about its average price at that

\* There were several sorts of *chœnixes*, of different capacities, but the *chœnix* here meant, Mr. E. admits, was most probably the Attic *chœnix*, that being the one in ordinary use.

particular era." (P. 172.) But is not this reasoning founded altogether on a mistake? Does the adulteration of a coin alter its current value? Surely not. The denarius of the second Severus would be the symbol of the same amount as the ancient denarius, which was the wages of a day-labourer; and, consequently, according to Mr. E.'s own showing, the price of wheat named a famine price.

To put the case in another form.—It is admitted that the denarius was the ordinary wages of a day-labourer, and that the chœnix was about a quart. Now, with us the day-wages of a labourer is, on an average, two shillings. Suppose, then, that the price of a quart of wheat were now to be two shillings, and of three quarts of barley two shillings—that is, wheat 64*s.* per bushel, and barley 21*s.*,—would not this be something like a famine price? But this, according to Mr. Elliott's own statement, would only correspond with the price of wheat and barley announced by the voice from the throne! To avoid the possibility of misrepresentation, I will give his own words: "The Attic chœnix was notoriously the ἡμεροτροφία, or day's sufficient quota for a man of wheat or barley, and, at the same time, a denarius was approximately the daily wages of labour in St. John's time; the price specified (therefore) would indicate that a labouring man would gain under this seal a three days' sufficiency of barley-bread (above five pounds in weight) by one day's labour! Did ever man hear of such a famine as this?" (Vol. i., p. 156.) Now, does not this fully confirm my statement of the case? Mr. E. states that the prices specified in the prophecy indicate that a labouring man could earn five pounds of barley-bread by a day's labour. Granted. But what follows? He thinks, the incompatibility of famine with such a state of things; but I should say just the reverse. For to bring the case, as before, home to ourselves. A labouring man amongst us can earn by a day's labour five pounds of barley-bread,—in other words, a quartern loaf of barley-bread is sold at a *maximum* price fixed by Government, for nearly two shillings, and a quartern loaf of wheaten bread for little less than six shillings,—would not this, I again ask,

be something like a famine price? I cannot, then, admit Mr. E.'s conclusion, that "the idea of famine must be decisively set aside."

Nor does his reasoning in regard to the injunction from the throne, and "the balances," appear to me to be more conclusive. He argues, that the injunction, "See that thou injure not, or that thou act not unjustly about,\* 'the oil and the wine,' is directly opposed to the idea of its being the main object in the voice as from the throne to enjoin a famine." (P. 157.) But independently of the change he would make in the translation, the propriety of which is very questionable, I cannot admit that the injunction is *opposed* to the idea of famine. We must take the injunction as a whole, and the latter clause must be interpreted in consistency with the former. Now, it is a well-known fact that the fixing of a *maximum* price by law for the sale of provisions, is in itself a circumstance indicative of scarcity. And it is also, I believe, a fact, that whenever a state has had recourse to this measure, it has tended to increase, rather than to diminish, the evil apprehended.† Assuming, then, that this first injunction, abstractedly considered, implies scarcity and famine, can the second injunction, respecting the sparing *the wine and the oil*, be reconciled with it? I trust I have shown in my commentary on this clause that it can. The wine and the oil are to be taken in a figurative sense, as I have there shown; and this second injunction, therefore, is a charge to the angel of famine, to take heed that whilst he fulfils his commission in regard to "the meat that perishes," he interfere not with that which "endures to everlasting

\* I would not absolutely deny that the Greek might be so translated, yet I think a comparison of this passage with chapter ix. 4, almost settles the question, and puts the correctness of the Authorized Version beyond dispute. For there we have a precisely similar phraseology, and the meaning incontrovertible: *καὶ ἐρρήθη αὐταῖς ἵνα μὴ ἀδικήσωσι τὸν χόρτον, κ.τ.λ.* And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass, &c.

† See this strikingly illustrated by Mr. Alison in his remarks on the evils of the *maximum* established by the French Revolutionary Government, in his "History of Europe," vol. ii., p. 592.

life." It is no objection to this view, as Mr. Elliott intimates, that the conjunction which connects the latter clause with the former is the conjunctive (*και*), not the disjunctive (*αλλα*). For the Apocalypse abounds with Hebraisms, and in Hebrew the *conjunctive* is *always* used where we should employ only the disjunctive.\* We might, therefore, without doing any violence to the text, translate, "BUT *hurt not thou the wine and the oil.*" As to "the balances," taken in connexion with the black colour of the horse, they certainly rather imply scarcity than plenty; the *limited* distribution of food, rather than the administration of strict justice.

Upon the whole, after an attentive perusal of Mr. Elliott's laboured and brilliant commentary on the first four seals, I confess I feel more disposed than ever to acquiesce in the interpretation of the earlier expositors, as being not only the most natural and obvious, but the true one.

Chapter VII.—Mr. Elliott's commentary on this chapter occupies sixty closely-printed octavo pages, and it would be impossible, therefore, to follow it out in all its details without writing a volume. I shall only notice a few of its leading features, which, as the reader will probably have observed, are these: 1. The vision of this chapter is *prospective*, and relates to the period immediately succeeding the conversion of Constantine. 2. The tribes of Israel are the whole professing Christian Church; the 144,000 sealed ones, the elect from the great body of nominal Christians. 3. The palm-bearing multitude are the whole body of the elect gathered together at the last, and received into glory,—but representing also, by an *allusive contrast*, the abuse of the rite of baptism, which now began to be unduly exalted, and made not only a means of grace, but an infallible instrument of salvation. Now, as I have before said, this interpretation is based, as it seems to me, upon an erroneous assumption. It assumes that the vision is *pro-*

\* One example may suffice: in Exod. ix. 31, the Hebrew translated verbatim would be, "And the flax and the barley were smitten, and the wheat and the rye were not smitten;" the sense, however, is obviously as in the A.V., "but the wheat and the rye," &c.

*spective*, and refers to times subsequent to the opening of the seventh seal. This, I think, cannot be. The loosing of the seals has *ceased*, and the course of the symbolic drama is *stopped*, in order to introduce this sealing vision. Can it, then, have a prospective reference? Is it not obvious that the action of the drama is interrupted, not to carry on the prophetic history beyond the seventh seal, and jump, as it were, to the end, but rather to introduce a supplementary symbolic scene, having reference to the same period as the six preceding seals, and intended to supply information in regard to important matters, to which in the seals there had been no allusion? This seems to me too clear to require further proof. If I am mistaken here, I really know not what other arguments to use. But assuming the retrospective bearing of the vision, Mr. Elliott's exposition, of course, at once falls to the ground. It cannot mean what he makes it to mean. And I must confess that, after a calm review of his scheme, ingeniously and eloquently as it is put, it strikes me as being scarcely compatible with the *simplicity* of truth. More particularly, I cannot help questioning the correctness and reality of that idea, peculiarly his own, of *allusive contrast*, to which he attaches so much importance, and of which he makes so prominent an application in his exposition of this chapter. The reader may perhaps ask, What does Mr. Elliott mean by the phrase, *allusive contrast*? and I will give the answer to this inquiry in his own words: "Supposing the great subject of the Apocalyptic Revelation to be the histories, in connexion or in contrast, of Christ's faithful Church and of the world, then—just as in God's actual intervention at one and another crisis, for the revival of his Church, and vindication of his own rights and honour, the revelations of Gospel light and truth made by Him would be necessarily in marked contrast and opposition to the then prevalent errors and corruptions,—so in the Eternal Spirit's foreshowings of the same, a similarly-marked contrast must be expected to appear, on putting the Apocalyptic picturing of the heavenly revelation side by side with the historic picturing of the chronological correspondent corruption and

heresy." (Vol. i., p. 106.) Such is Mr. E.'s explanation of this idea of his of *allusive contrast*. Now, I know not how it may strike the reader, but, to my mind, the very development of the meaning of the phrase almost carries with it its own refutation. The explication itself requires explaining. It is too recondite, too *recherché*, for ordinary minds, and not in keeping with the general character of the inspired prophecies, which, if they are sometimes obscure before they are interpreted by events, are never, I believe, difficult to be understood when rightly explained. But can this be affirmed of Mr. E.'s explication of this palm-bearing vision on his principle of *allusive contrast*? I think not. I verily believe that nine persons out of ten might read the whole sixty pages he has written upon this chapter, and, after all, not quite apprehend his meaning. What he endeavours to prove, if I rightly understand him, is, that the countless multitude clothed in white robes, and with palms in their hands, represent, primarily, the whole company of the redeemed received into glory, and enjoying the heavenly felicity; but also, in the way of *allusive contrast*, the professing Church of nominal Christians in the Constantinian age pressing forwards to be baptized, and mistakenly supposing that the rite of baptism, and the outward profession of Christianity, will secure their salvation! (Vol. i., pp. 259, 260.) Now, here is indeed a *contrast*, but that such a contrast was ever intended by the Divine Author of this sublime vision, is, to my mind, more than doubtful.

Chapter X.—In his interpretation of this chapter, Mr. Elliott, as we have seen, again has recourse to the principle of *allusive contrast*. The "mighty angel" represents both Christ and his pretended Vicar, the Pope. But here, as in the former instance, the application of the principle, as it seems to me, entirely fails, and instead of throwing light upon the meaning of the prophecy, produces rather obscurity and confusion. This angel must either represent exclusively Christ, or, exclusively one who usurps his name and authority. He cannot, I think, represent both. The acts of the one and the acts of the other must necessarily be so

different, that it is impossible that one symbol should stand for the type of them both. And hence, I think, the unsatisfactoriness of Mr. E.'s commentary on this vision. Had he regarded this angel as the exclusive symbol of the Roman Pontiff, nothing could be more to the purpose, and more convincing, than the graphic picture he has drawn of that blasphemous usurper of Christ's titles and prerogatives; but when he afterwards proceeds to explain the prefiguration also of Christ himself, and makes the lion-like roar to be the utterance of Christ's voice, he nullifies, in my opinion, all he had previously written, and leaves his readers involved in an inextricable maze of doubt and uncertainty.

Nor does his explanation of the general import of this vision, which he has adopted from Daubuz,\* appear to me a happy one. A mighty angel coming down from heaven, and setting one foot on the land and the other on the sea, is surely no very appropriate symbol of Luther and his coadjutors preaching in the name of Christ the true Gospel. The act and attitude of this angel imply rather the assumption of *territorial* right and dominion, than the proclamation of spiritual truth. Nothing, indeed, as it seems to me, can be imagined less suited to represent symbolically the office and work of Luther and his fellow Reformers of the sixteenth century, than the imagery of this chapter. Their peculiar mission was the restoration of the true doctrine of Christ, the preaching of the pure, unadulterated Gospel, in opposition to the traditions of men,—but what analogy is there between such a work and the *roaring of a lion*? Mr. Elliott's interpretation of the seven thunders as symbolizing the Papal anathemas against Luther, which he was at first inclined to respect, but which afterwards, being better taught, he treated with contempt, appears to me equally unsatisfactory with his previous explanations of the cloud-clad angel, and the lion-like cry. For might we not assume, almost as a certainty,

\* Daubuz, however, it should be observed, was not satisfied with his own interpretation. His opening remark on this chapter, it will be remembered, is, "When I set upon the study of this sacred book, I found the symbols of this chapter to be not so obvious as those of the rest."

that these seven thunders would agree essentially in their symbolical character with the other septenaries of the Apocalypse? That is to say, that, like the seals, the trumpets, and the vials, they would symbolize, not one single act, such as the putting forth of a Papal Bull, but a connected series of seven distinct actings or events, separated from each other by clearly-marked lines, yet having one common end and object. Such, I think, we might infer, *à priori*, would be the symbolical meaning and bearing of the seven thunders, and such, I trust, it has been shown in the commentary on this chapter is their meaning. Let the reader carefully compare the two interpretations together, bearing always in mind this important and remarkable fact, that it is *a voice from heaven* throughout, *not* the cloud-clad angel, that directs the apostle what he is to do.

Chapter XI.—THE TWO WITNESSES, &c.—The most striking point in Mr. Elliott's exposition of the witnesses, is the apparent exactitude in the agreement between the prophecy and the history in regard to the period during which their dead bodies were to lie exposed in the broad place of the great city. It must be admitted that, at first sight, there is something quite startling in the way in which he puts the case, and the arithmetical accuracy with which he makes the two periods correspond. Nevertheless, supposing the agreement between the two to be ever so exact, it must be looked upon only as a curious coincidence, unless supported by all the other circumstantials of the prophecy. It does not, however, appear to me quite clear that the agreement in the periods is so exact as Mr. Elliott represents it. The ninth session of the fifth Lateran Council was indeed held, as he states, on the 5th of May, 1514; but was it on that day that the orator of the Council uttered those memorable words on which he lays so much stress, as implying that the witnesses were now altogether slain? This appears to me questionable. It might be so, but the fact is not established by any authoritative reference. However, not to dwell on this point, supposing the dates to be exactly correct, do the other leading circumstantials of the

prophecy bear out Mr. Elliott in his exposition? I think not. On the contrary, the difficulties and objections seem to me many and insurmountable. There is, first, the difficulty that meets us at the very threshold, in regard to the period of the warfare against, and slaughter of, the witnesses. "And when they shall have *finished* their testimony." Mr. Elliott himself admits that "this is the most natural mode of translating and understanding the clause, as if it referred chronologically to the end of the twelve hundred and sixty years of the witnessing." (Vol. ii., p. 399.) I think so too; nor does his after-explanation, as if the *ὅταν τελεσῶσι*—*when they shall have finished*—had reference not to the period of testifying, but exclusively to the testimony itself,—at all satisfy my mind. It is an unnatural gloss, had recourse to in order to get over an otherwise insuperable difficulty in the way of a favourite hypothesis. Then there is next the assumed identity between the beasts from the sea and the abyss, and of both with the Papacy, neither of which positions can, in my opinion, be sustained. Then there is the question whether, after all, what took place at the Lateran Council can properly be construed into the slaughter of the witnesses, and the public exposure of their dead bodies. For, what if an adulatory orator did utter the vain-glorious boast, "*Jam nemo reclamat, nullus obsistit,*"—does it follow that it was true, and that there were really none of Christ's witnesses left alive?—*i. e.*, none who ventured to speak out? So far from it, Dean Waddington (whom Mr. Elliott himself quotes) tells us that the reason why the Bohemian schismatics were invited to assist at the Council, was because "THEIR HERESY WAS AGAIN RISING INTO FORMIDABLE ATTENTION." (P. 661.) Now let it be observed, that these words refer to the very year when, according to the hypothesis under discussion, the witnesses were slain! True, none of the brethren answered to the summons to appear at the Council. But neither did Luther answer to a similar summons. What heretic, in fact, would thus presumptuously throw himself into the lion's jaws? To appear at Constance or Worms was a very different thing from

appearing in Rome; and I cannot therefore think it follows, that, because none of the Bohemian schismatics ventured to answer to the summons of the Pope on the occasion in question, they must be considered as figuratively slain, and their dead bodies exposed in the sight of all the nations of Christendom. It is notorious, indeed, that the fifth Lateran Council was composed almost exclusively of Italians, and in no sense answered to a representative assembly of "nations, and peoples, and kindreds, and tongues."\* And shall we say, then, that, because a pompous orator, in a declamatory harangue before such an assembly, thought proper to boast that the mouth of every heretic was stopped, the witnesses for God's truth were proved to be slain, and their dead bodies exposed to ignominy and contempt? Let the reader refer to the prophecy itself, and carefully compare the verification of circumstantials, according to the two interpretations given respectively by Mr. Elliott and myself, and I think he cannot fail to perceive how very far short his hypothesis falls of the requirements of the prediction in almost every particular. Objections indeed crowd into the mind as we proceed, and I scarcely know on which to fasten. It may suffice to notice two or three more of the most prominent.

There is then, further, the ascent of the witnesses in *the cloud* wherewith the mighty angel was clothed. This Mr. Elliott explains of the encouragement given to the Protestant cause by certain princes of the Empire, and the political importance in consequence which Protestantism henceforth acquired. But is this satisfactory? Why in that case is *the cloud* particularly specified as accompanying the witnesses in their ascent? And how shall we explain the angel's being left still standing in colossal pride and grandeur upon the earth and sea? †

\* Fifteen cardinals, and about eighty archbishops and bishops, were present; but it must not be forgotten that almost all were Italians."—*Waddington*, p. 660.

† Mr. Elliott says, indeed, that the ascent of the cloud together with the witnesses showed: 1, that their ascent was the result of Christ's

There is next the great earthquake, and the falling to pieces of a tenth part of the city; the former being explained by Mr. E. of the *Reformation*, the latter of the falling away of Protestant England from the Papal confederacy. But although once disposed to acquiesce in this interpretation, it has since appeared to me untenable, on two grounds: 1, the unsuitableness of the image of a city falling to pieces, as shaken by an earthquake, to represent the separation of England from the Papacy. 2, the fact that England never formed any part of the dominions of Charlemagne, or of the Holy Roman Empire. To this also it may be added, that the Papacy to this day consists of ten independent states; and if England had been one of them, how could the number still be complete? It is also, I think, doubtful whether an event like the Reformation would be prefigured by an *earthquake*, which is the symbol rather of a political revolution, than of a religious movement, and of a change in the condition of the Church.\*

But the crowning objection to Mr. Elliott's hypothesis, and which, as I before said, appears to me decisive, is founded on his explanation of the slaughter of *the seven thousand names of men*. These *seven thousand names* he explains, as we have seen, of the *seven Dutch united provinces*. The reader will doubtless be curious to know on what premises he builds so extraordinary an interpretation; † and I will therefore give a summary of his

special intervention. 2, it identified their cause with that of the Reformation. (Vol. ii., p. 454.) But he assumes as a *matter of course* that the angel ascended with the cloud, without one word of proof. (P. 447.) I should rather infer, as I before remarked, that, as nothing is said of the ascent of the angel, he did *not* go up with the cloud.

\* The earthquake of the sixth seal symbolized indeed the abolition of Heathenism and the establishment of Christianity; but that was obviously a very different case.

† Yet Mr. E. is not the first commentator who has given this explanation of the *seven thousand names*; it was proposed long ago by Cocceius, a learned German expositor, as we are informed by Vitringa in his "Anaerisis," p. 491. Mr. E. says, "Against the explanation of the *seven chiliads* itself Vitringa has no objections to make worth notice."

arguments in as few words as possible. He begins with observing that it is not the numeral adjective, ἑπτακισχιλιοι, that is here used, but ἑπτα χιλιαδες, *seven chiliads* or *thousands*.\* He then goes on to show, that on the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan, the tribes were divided into thousands, or *chiliads*, and that each *chiliad* had its territorial endowment; so that eventually a *chiliad* came to signify a district, just as a *hundred* in an English county. Now, he argues, that as in the Apocalypse the population of Roman Christendom is represented under the figuration of the *twelve tribes of Israel*, to interpret this symbol, we must look for some *septenary of subdivisions* in the commonwealth of Western Christendom, which was destroyed in the political earthquake attendant on the Reformation. Such a *septenary*, he thinks, we find in the seven Dutch united provinces. He then gives a brief history of these provinces; and argues that they were slain, as regarded their relation to the Papacy, when, in 1609, after a protracted struggle of thirty-seven years, their independence was acknowledged by Spain. (Vol. ii., pp. 457—463.)

Now I have been thus particular in giving the details of this exposition, because of the great name and high reputation of its author; otherwise, I must confess, it seems to me, as Vitrिंगa observes, “so strained and far-fetched” that I should not have considered it deserving of particular notice. Few readers, I imagine, will require a laboured refutation of it. To me the simple fact that the revolt

But is this exactly correct? Let us hear Vitrिंगa himself: “Quis non videt interpretationem hanc vocis *χιλιὰς* *longius petitam* esse? an *septem Familiæ* Belgii dici possunt commode *occisa* esse, quando septem provinciæ Belgii in fœdus coeuntes, excusso Philippi jugo, se vindicarent in libertatem? Id sane DURUM est, et à phrasi prophetica alienum. Aliud est *cadere*, aliud *occidi*.”—Ibid.

\* I almost wonder that Mr. Elliott should lay any stress upon this circumstance, seeing that both forms of expression are equally grammatical, and appear to be used indiscriminately in the Greek Scriptures. Compare, *e.g.*, 1 Kings xix. 18, with Romans xi. 3. In the Septuagint we have ἑπτα χιλιαδες; but St. Paul, in quoting this very passage, uses the numeral adjective.

of the Dutch provinces (supposing it possible that they could be intended by *the seven thousand names of men*, which I cannot think)—I say the simple fact that the revolt of these provinces did not begin until *more than fifty years* after what Mr. E. would call the earthquake of the Reformation, and that their independence was not declared till 1609, almost a hundred years *after the earthquake*, is of itself sufficient to invalidate his whole argument, independently of the numerous other objections against it which meet us on every side. For the slaughter of these seven thousand names is obviously a contemporary event with the earthquake itself and the fall of the tenth part of the city; how then could it be fulfilled in an event which did not take place till nearly a hundred years afterwards?

I might notice further the forced and unnatural explanation, as it seems to me, given of the last clause of this prophecy: "And they gave glory to the God of heaven," which Mr. E., to avoid a difficulty, refers to *the witnesses*, not to the affrighted remnant. According to this view, we must separate the last clause of ver. 12 from the words immediately preceding; and instead of, "And they ascended up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies beheld them," we must read, "And they ascended up into heaven in the cloud, and gave glory to the God of heaven." Now, I ask, can that interpretation be the true one, which requires so strained and unnatural a division of words and sentences? I must then still think, that unless some more satisfactory explanation can be given of the slaughter of these *seven thousand names*, in consistency with the rest of Mr. Elliott's exposition of the two witnesses, the whole scheme must fall to the ground.

Chap. XII. The only material objection I have to make against Mr. E.'s exposition of this chapter relates to his views of the *sun*, and *moon*, and *twelve stars*, and of the *man-child*. That the sun is the symbol of the highest Imperial dignity (the *Augustus*), the moon of the next in rank (the *Cæsar*, *i. e.*, Licinius), and the twelve stars of the twelve superior bishops of the Christian Israel,

appears to me to be more than questionable. Why in that case is the moon *under the feet* of the woman? Nor can I admit that the *man-child* is a fit emblem of Constantine and his successors. The words "*all the Gentiles*" must, it seems to me, be taken in a more comprehensive sense than this interpretation would give to them. The term *Gentiles*, throughout the Apocalypse, means, not Heathen Idolaters, as contradistinguished from Jews, but unconverted, unholy persons; and can it with any show of truth be said, that the professedly Christian Roman Emperors ruled *these* with a rod of iron? I leave it, however, to the reader to decide whether my interpretation of these symbols, or Mr. Elliott's, most commends itself to the understanding and judgment.

Chapters XIII. and XVII. Having in my Commentary fully considered the question of the identity of the beasts from the sea and the abyss, and stated my reasons for dissenting from Mr. Elliott on this point, it is unnecessary again to go over the subject in detail. I will only state that after a calm and careful review of the arguments for and against, I feel more strongly impressed than ever with the conviction that the two beasts are *not*, as to their symbolical meaning, absolutely identical. There is one circumstance in particular noticed by Mr. Elliott, as establishing the identity of the two beasts, which, as it strikes me, very plainly points to a distinction between them. I allude to their both being associated, as he assumes, with *the false prophet*. This point of resemblance is thus stated and argued upon by him:—"They are each alike associated with some professedly Christian, but really apostate, ecclesiastical or priestly power, which acted to it as its chief help and minister, viz., *the beast from the sea with the two-horned lamb-like beast, the beast from the abyss with what is called 'the false prophet.'*" Nay, I may add respecting this last-noticed *false prophet*, that both by the attachment to it of the definite article, as by the way of reference, and by its being specified also as the same that did the signs before the beast, and deceived them that received the mark of the beast and that worshipped his image,

—it is positively and directly identified with *the two-horned lamb-like associate of the beast from the sea*, and by consequence the beast it practised before, or *beast from the abyss*, just as positively and expressly with the beast from the sea itself of chapter xiii. For it is said, ‘The beast was taken, and the false prophet that did the signs before him;’ and also that it was the same beast whose *image* was worshipped, and whose *mark* received.” (Vol. iii., p. 70.)

Now this statement, as regards the main matter of fact, is perfectly correct; but not so, it appears to me, the inferences drawn from it. It is most true that both beasts have an attendant minister associated with them, who works miracles before them, and that this attendant minister, under the name of *the false prophet*, is said to *be taken*, together with the beast from the abyss, before whom he had wrought signs; but although this points to some essential resemblance between *the false prophet* and *the two-horned lamb-like beast*, it does not necessarily involve their representing *circumstantially* the same person or power; it does not forbid, *i.e.*, the supposition that the two-horned beast may represent the same ecclesiastical person or power symbolized under one form as the false prophet represents under another form. And this, in fact, is, I am inclined to think, the true view of the subject. The *two-horned lamb-like beast* is the Papacy as it existed in the days of Hildebrand and afterwards, in the possession of temporal as well as spiritual dominion, a political as well as an ecclesiastical power, and therefore represented by a *wild beast with lamb-like horns*. But the *false prophet* is the Papacy, or, rather, the Pope, deprived of his temporal dominion, and acting *exclusively* in the character of a false prophet, *i.e.*, a religious teacher. Just as the beast from the sea is the Holy Roman Empire under the Emperors, and the beast from the abyss the same empire *territorially*, not united under one temporal head, but subsisting in the form of independent dynasties, having the false prophet for their religious teacher and spiritual head. So that, supposing this view to be correct, the Popedom before its destruction will cease to be a temporal power, and the ten Papal king-

doms that are now, having probably become democracies, will act in concert with the Pope as their *spiritual* guide and director. Thus then, as it appears to me, this argument regarding the identity of the *false prophet* with the *earth-born lamb-like* beast, makes rather for than against the idea that there is a circumstantial diversity between the beast from the sea and that from the abyss. A diversity, let it be observed, corresponding in *character* with that which I suppose to exist between the false prophet and the two-horned beast; a diversity, that is to say, arising from the democratical tendencies of the nations of Europe, and, as a consequence, the privation in both instances of despotic power.

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Having thus stated the principal points of difference between myself and Mr. Elliott, and explained the grounds on which I dissent from some of the leading peculiarities in his exposition, I cannot conclude this notice without expressing my unfeigned admiration of the "*Horæ Apocalypticæ*" regarded as a whole. It is indeed the work of a master-mind, the merits of which not many perhaps are capable of fully appreciating, and certainly such an one as few would be capable of producing. That Mr. Elliott has exercised a right judgment in all things, even his most devoted admirers would scarcely maintain. Such entire exemption from mistake is not to be looked for in fallible man. But that he has accomplished a great work, and thrown much light on the subject of prophetic interpretation, no one, I think, can deny. He may have built into his composition (to borrow and accommodate a scriptural metaphor) some "wood, hay, and stubble," but he has also assuredly inserted much "gold and silver and many precious stones," and his book will doubtless long remain a standing memorial of his learning, industry, and piety.

## 13. CUMMING.

The "APOCALYPTIC SKETCHES," by Dr. Cumming, are a series of Lectures delivered in Exeter Hall in 1847 and 1848. Dr. C. does not pretend to originality as an expositor of the Revelation. He has adopted Mr. Elliott's scheme almost without a single variation. In fact, the "Sketches" may be said to be a popular digest of the "Horæ," in which the eloquent author has interwoven many striking original thoughts and instructive practical observations; and to those persons who cannot afford either the time or the money for Mr. Elliott's larger and more learned work, these lighter "Sketches" by Dr. Cumming will be a good substitute.

## 14. KITTO.

In the "CYCLOPÆDIA OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE," edited by Dr. Kitto, under the article, "Revelation, Book of," the writer, whose initials are "S. D.," states his views of the principles on which the Apocalypse should be interpreted; and as this part of the article contains a fair representation, I imagine, of the Præterist scheme, I give it for the information of the reader nearly as it stands in the original:—

"The body of the work is contained in chaps. iv., xxii. 6, and is almost entirely a series of symbolic representations. To this is prefixed a prologue of considerable length, embracing separate epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia Minor. After the prologue we come to the body of the work itself, commencing with the *fourth* chapter. This may be appropriately divided into three parts:—1. iv. to xi.; 2. xii. to xix.; 3. xx. to xxii. 5. The first narrates the fortunes and fate of Christ's followers to the destruction of Jerusalem, when the *coming of the Saviour* took place. Here the triumph of Christianity over Judaism is exhibited. The following particulars are comprised in this portion:—

"A vision of the Divine glory in heaven, analogous to the vision of Isaiah, chap. vi.—An account of the sealed book.—The opening of the first six seals.—After the opening of the seventh the catastrophe is delayed by the sounding of seven

trumpets.—Yet before the last trumpet sounds a mighty angel, with a rainbow round his head, appears with an open book in his hand, &c.—After this the interior of the temple with its Jewish worshippers is measured by the prophet, while the outer court is excepted, and given over to the Heathen for the space of forty-two months.—But notwithstanding the long-suffering of God, the Jews continue to persecute the faithful witnesses, so that they are punished by the fall of a tenth part of the holy city in an earthquake.—Hence 7,000 men perish, and the remainder affrighted, give glory to God.—After this the seventh angel sounds, and the Lord appears to inflict the final blow on Jerusalem and its inhabitants.—The catastrophe takes place; the heavenly choir give thanks to God for the victory of Christianity; and the temple of God is opened in heaven, so that he is accessible to all, being disclosed to the view of the whole earth as their God, without the intervention of priest or solemnity, as in the abrogated economy.—Thus the Jewish ritual is done away; the Jews as a nation of persecutors are destroyed: and free scope is given to the new religion.”

“ This portion therefore of the prophetic book depicts the downfall of Jerusalem, and the triumph of Christianity over Judaism. The twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew treats of the same subject, though in much briefer compass.”

“ The second division, chaps. xii. to xix., depicts the sufferings inflicted on the Church by the Heathen Roman power, and the triumph of Christianity over this formidable enemy also. Here the writer (!) \* has especial reference to the cruel Nero, as chap. xvii. 10, 11, which can only be consistently interpreted of *him* (!), demonstrates. This part commences with a description of the Saviour’s birth, which is represented as springing from the theocracy, or theocratic Church, and of Satan’s malignity against him. Cast out of Heaven by Michael and the good angels, Satan turns his

\* I cannot refrain from putting a note of admiration here. Was the Apostle John then the *writer* of the Revelation, and did he compose it, and arrange its several parts according to the dictates of his natural understanding?

rage upon the followers of Christ on earth. Hitherto there is no account of the Romish persecuting power, and it is an inquiry worthy of attention, why John commences with the birth of the Saviour and Satan's opposition to the early Church, thus *reverting* to a period prior to that which he had gone over already. The question is not easily answered. But perhaps St. John carries the reader back to the origin of Christianity, when Satan was peculiarly active, in order to link his malignant opposition as embodied in the persecuting violence of Heathen Rome, to his unceasing attacks upon the truth, even from the very birth of Christ. The second part therefore begins, properly speaking, with the thirteenth chapter, the twelfth being simply preparatory."

"A beast rises out of the sea with seven heads and ten horns. To it the dragon gives power. The Heathen power of Rome, aided by Satan, makes war upon the saints and overcomes them. Presently another beast appears to assist the former, with two horns, as a lamb, but speaking as a dragon. This latter symbolizes the Heathen priest assisting the civil power in its attempts to crush the Saviour's adherents. Then comes the vision of the Lamb and the hundred and forty-four thousand elect on Mount Sion. Doubtless this vision is introduced at the present place to sustain and elevate the hopes of the struggling Christians during the dominance of this power."

"Three angels are now introduced with proclamations of the speedy downfall of Heathenism, and of Divine judgments on the persecuting power. The first announces that the everlasting Gospel should be preached; the second, that the great city Rome is fallen. The third speaks of tremendous judgments that should befall those who apostatized to Heathenism (!); while, on the other hand, a voice from heaven proclaims the blessedness of such as die in the Lord. But the final catastrophe is yet delayed; it is not fully come. The Saviour again appears sitting on a white cloud, &c. The catastrophe rapidly approaches. Seven angels are seen with seven vials, &c. The first six are represented as tormenting and weakening the Roman power in different ways until

it should be overthrown. At last, the seventh angel discharges his vial of wrath, and heaven resounds with the cry, **IT IS DONE!** Rome is divided into three parts; the cities of the heathen fall, &c. After this the destruction of the Romish power is described more particularly. An angel takes the seer to show him more closely the desolation of the Church's enemy. The Roman power then reigning is indicated somewhat mysteriously, though in such a way as would be intelligible to the Christians whom John addressed. This power is embodied and personified in Nero, who, though not named, is not obscurely designated. He is the beast "that was, and is not, and yet is." (!) The story that Nero was not really dead, but had retired to the Euphrates, and would return again from thence, appears here more fully delineated by a Christian imagination. (!! ) He is the monster to whom Satan gave all his power, who returns as Antichrist and the destroyer of Rome, who will force all to worship his image. The Roman Empire at that time is set forth as the representative of Heathenism and of ungodly power personified; and in this connexion, under the image of the beast with seven heads (the seven Emperors which would succeed one another till the appearance of Antichrist), Nero is signified as one of these heads (xiii. 3) which appeared dead, but whose deadly wound was healed, so that, to universal astonishment, he appeared alive again. Nero re-appearing after it had been believed that he was dead is the beast "which was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and yet is."

"After this, Babylon, or the Roman power, is represented as fallen, and the few remaining believers are exhorted to depart out of her. A mighty angel casts a great stone into the sea, an emblem of the ruin of that power. At the catastrophe heaven resounds with praises. The marriage supper is announced, and the Church is permitted to array herself in fine linen. But the destruction is not yet completed. A battle is to be fought with the combined powers of the Empire. Heaven opens. The conqueror on the white horse appears again, &c. The beast and the false

prophet are taken. The congregated hosts are slain by the sword of the Redeemer. Such is the second great catastrophe,—the fall of the persecuting Heathen power—the triumph of Christianity over Paganism.”

“The third leading division of the book reaches from chapter xx. to xxii. 6, inclusive. This is the only portion that stretches to a period far remote from the time of the writer. It is added to complete the delineation of Christ’s kingdom on earth. Though his main design was accomplished in the preceding chapters, John was reluctant, so to speak, to leave the sublime theme without glancing at distant times. Here, however, the writer’s sketches are brief and rapid. A glorious period now commences, but how long after the preceding events, is not affirmed. That a considerable interval may be assumed we deduce from the description itself. Satan is bound, or his influences restrained, a thousand years throughout the seat of the beast. Christianity is spread abroad and prevails in the Roman Empire. But after the thousand years are expired, Satan is set free, and begins again to practise his deceptions. He incites Gog and Magog, &c. But fire from heaven devours the adversaries, while the devil is again taken and cast into the lake of fire. After this (how long is unknown) comes the general resurrection, the last judgment, &c. For the righteous a new heaven and earth is prepared, in which they shall be perfectly free from sin and corruption. With this the visions end, and an epilogue closes up the book.”

Having thus stated his own views in regard to the Apocalyptic visions, the writer of the article in question thus proceeds to notice, “*some errors into which the expounders of the book have fallen.*” Amongst these *errors* he notices that of “those who seek a detailed history of the Church universal in the Revelation.” “Some,” he goes on to observe, “even find an epitome of the Church’s entire history in the Epistles to the Seven Churches; others in the rest of the book; others, again, in both. But the entire plan of proceeding is inconsistent with the writer’s original purpose, and leads to endless mazes.” (!)

“ It is obvious that we should not look for a circumstance, event, or person, corresponding to every particular in the visions of the seer. Many are introduced only to enliven the representation, or are taken from the prophets and sacred books for THE PURPOSE OF ORNAMENT !”

Respecting the merits of Apocalyptic commentators, the writer of the foregoing article thus delivers his authoritative judgment: “ By far the greater number of works on the Apocalypse are of *no value*, the authors having failed to perceive the primary purpose of the apostle.\* We shall only mention a few. The best book on the “ Literature of the Apocalypse,” is that of Lücke, published in 1832. Of English works, Lowman’s Commentary has been highly esteemed, though his scheme is *wrong*. Faber’s *Sacred Calendar of Prophecy* is able and ingenious, but *radically wrong*. Sir Isaac Newton’s “ *Observations*,” and Bishop Newton’s “ *Remarks*,” are *generally incorrect*. Cuninghame is *dark and doubtful*. Woodhouse . . . has greatly deviated from the right mode of interpretation. The latest and largest work on the Apocalypse that has appeared in England is Elliott’s *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, characterized by great research and minute investigation, but proceeding on principles *essentially and fundamentally erroneous*.”

Such is the statement given by this learned advocate of the *Præterist scheme* of the principles on which the Apocalypse ought to be interpreted, and such his explanation of some of its leading visions. I fancy I see objections both to his principles and to his application of them, but it would be highly presumptuous in a fallible mortal like myself, who pretend to nothing more than the knowledge which is common to man, and who, therefore, may by possibility

\* It will be observed that “ S. D.” assumes throughout that St. John wrote the Revelation of *his own mind*, having therein a specific purpose in view, of which purpose “ S. D.” seems to have been perfectly well informed. How he got his information he does not tell us. I cannot but express my regret that the respectable Editor of the Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature should have admitted into so important and useful a book an article the Neological tendency of which can scarcely have escaped his notice.

be mistaken, to venture any remarks upon the opinions of a writer who, from the oracular confidence and authority with which he delivers his sentiments, is evidently conscious of the possession of supernatural wisdom.\* I leave the reader, therefore, to make his own observations, and draw his own conclusions. Perhaps the best thing he can now do, if he should have been so unfortunate as to have purchased the "Rationale," is to act on the Roman poet's suggestion, and send it, together with *Mede's Clavis*, and *Vitringa's Anacrisis*, and *Elliott's Horæ*, and any other Commentary he may happen to have in his possession which does not agree with "S. D.'s" views, to the nearest chandler's shop, to be there sold for the purpose of wrapping up salt and pepper,

"Et quicquid chartis amicitur ineptis."

#### 15. WORDSWORTH.

The "LECTURES ON THE APOCALYPSE," by Christopher Wordsworth, D.D., were delivered in Westminster Abbey, during Lent, in 1849. The following is a summary of their contents.—The author begins by stating his views respecting the millennium, which is the whole period between the first advent of Christ and the revelation of Antichrist.† (Pp. 63 and 2 64)

THE SEVEN EPISTLES are addressed to the universal Church, but are not prophetic: at least their prophetic bearing is questionable. (P. 174.) THE ROLL SEALED

\* See Rev. iii. 17, and Commentary.

† In arguing against the millenarian theory, Dr. W. insists very much upon the fact, that for a thousand years, *i.e.*, from the fifth century to the Reformation, this doctrine was completely exploded. But does not this argument make rather for than against the doctrine? For, was not that period precisely the period of the Church's greatest obscuration, and during which the Scriptures were least understood? In adducing texts to disprove the idea of a first literal resurrection, Dr. W. occasionally omits some of the most important words. As, *e.g.*, he quotes 1 Thess. iv. 16, thus: "*And the dead shall be raised;*" but the full text is, "*the dead IN CHRIST shall rise FIRST.*" So in quoting Heb. ix. 27, he leaves out the clause, "*to them that look for him shall he appear the second time,*" &c.

WITH SEVEN SEALS, presents a history of the conflicts of the Church from St. John's age to the day of doom. It could not be perceived that it had seven seals till it was unfolded. St. John calls it a *roll sealed with seven seals* by anticipation. When one seal was broken, a portion of the roll was unwrapped,—was not traced with alphabetical characters, but with hieroglyphical symbols. (Pp. 176, 177.)

THE SEALS.—1. The rider on the white horse is Christ. (P. 179.) 2. The red horse prefigures the persecutions of the Pagan Roman Emperors. (P. 180.) 3. The black horse, heresies within the Church, originating in Satan. (P. 183.) 4. The fourth seal refers to the ravages committed by savage tribes, as the Goths, Saracens, &c. It exhibits also the evils arising from the suppression of God's Word. (P. 187.) 5. This seal reveals the souls of the martyrs in the previous persecutions. (P. 188.) 6. The sixth seal relates to the battle of Armageddon,—the last great conflict. 7. The silence in heaven consequent upon the loosing of the seventh seal, is "the Sabbath-bell of eternity:" the peace of the eternal Sabbath begins. The silence is only of *half an hour*, because it is not to be described now, but more fully in the latter part of the Apocalypse.

THE TRUMPETS.—The trumpets synchronize with the seals. Not respectively, *each with each*, but as to the whole period. (P. 201.) They are prophetic of judgments on the enemies of God. (P. 204.) 1st trumpet predicts the woes which fell on Pagan Rome. 2d. The dissolution of the Empire by the Goths, &c. 3d. The fall of great luminaries in the Church, as, *e.g.*, Arius, Nestorius, &c., and the consequent corruption of the Church by heresies. 4th. The errors and confusions prevalent in the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries. 5th. The rise and progress of Mahometanism. 6th. The four angels represent the Gospel(!), which had been bound in the mystical Babylon, the Church of Rome, but are now diffused to the four winds of heaven. (Pp. 205—212.)

THE MIGHTY ANGEL (chap. xi.) is Christ. The open book in his hand is the Gospel. (P. 232.) The two wit-

NESSES are the Scriptures. (P. 243.) 7th. The SEVENTH TRUMPET is the third and last woe. It carries us beyond the time of the spiritual Armageddon; and does not embrace the period of the millennium, which is past. (P. 252.)

Chap. XII. The woman is the Church; the *sun*, Christ's righteousness; the *moon*, earthly vicissitudes, all which the Church survives. (P. 255.) The *man-child* represents *Christians*, the true members of Christ's body. The *rod of iron* is the inflexible rule of Christ's Word, by which Christians break in pieces the earthly theories of corrupt religion and carnal philosophy. The *two wings* of the great eagle are the Two Testaments of the incarnate Word, who ascended on the clouds of heaven, and carried his children thither like the eagle. (Pp. 255—260.)

THE NUMBERS in the Apocalypse represent certain *ideas*, not quantities. (P. 261.) The 1260 days of the woman's flight is not a definite period, but simply signifies the period of the Church's trials. (Pp. 261—268.)

Chap. XIII. The two beasts are two personifications of the Papacy in its two forms—civil and ecclesiastical—its temporal and spiritual sovereignty. (P. 282.)

THE SEVEN VIALS.—These vials represent generally spiritual benefits converted into banes; means of grace changed into plagues. (P. 422.) 1st vial, describes the corrupt profession of faith, applicable to the creed imposed by the Church of Rome on her clergy. 2d. Judgments on the nations that communicate with Rome. Foretels that they will be agitated by revolutionary tumults, and be deluged with blood. 3d. The rivers are the Scriptures and the sacraments. This vial signifies the empoisoning of those waters of salvation by false expositions, &c. 4th. The sun of the fourth vial is Christ. To those who believe he is the fountain of grace: but to all who disobey him he is a consuming fire. (Pp. 426—429.) 5th. The fifth vial represents a state of perplexity, panic, and despair, in the very heart of the mystical empire. 6th. The EUPHRATES is the spiritual and secular supremacy of Rome. The drying up

of its waters, the decline of Rome's supremacy. The **KINGS OF THE EAST** are Christ's servants, whether Jews or Gentiles. The decline of Rome's supremacy will prepare the way for a new and glorious manifestation of the Gospel amongst both Jews and Gentiles. (P. 437.)

The **THREE UNCLEAN SPIRITS** are Democrats, Infidels, and Rationalists, as well as schismatics of every class. The going forth of these spirits forebodes an alliance of Infidel, Democratic, and Papal powers. (P. 441.) 7th. The seventh vial brings the battle of Armageddon.

Chap. XVII. The harlot on the scarlet-coloured beast, is the city and Church of Rome under the Papacy.

Chap. XX. The visions of this chapter reascend to the first age of Christianity, and show how Christ had bound Satan, and triumphed over him even from the beginning. The thousand years, as was before stated, is the whole period of the world's history, from the first advent of Christ.

Such is a summary account of Dr. Wordsworth's work, which is the most recent Commentary on the Apocalypse I am acquainted with. On the subject of the identity of the harlot on the scarlet-coloured beast with Papal Rome, Dr. W. is clear, decided, and conclusive; but as regards the rest of his commentary, most of his expositions appear to me to be fanciful and arbitrary, and as a consequence altogether unsatisfactory.

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## CONCLUDING REMARKS.

HAVING thus taken a survey of the principal Apocalyptic commentaries which have been published within the last hundred and fifty years, I think it may be well, in conclusion, to meet a feeling which the contemplation of this

variety in the views of different expositors is not unlikely to produce.

It is possible that the perusal of so many different and conflicting schemes of interpretation may have had a depressing effect, and have awakened doubts in the reader's mind even as to the book itself, seeing it may apparently be explained a hundred different ways, just according to the fancy of each individual expositor. Such doubts, I freely acknowledge, have in former times passed through my own mind. But they are groundless, and need not occasion a moment's uneasiness. Because man in his presumption, and ignorance, and folly, chooses to interpret the Word of God according to his own fancies, and different individuals form each their own schemes, and have their own theories, shall we say that there is no truth and certainty in the Word itself? Nay, surely, "let God be true, and every man a liar." For do we so reason in natural things? Because a variety of opposing theories respecting the solar system and its laws were invented and confidently put forth before Sir Isaac Newton published his "Principia," did men argue that there was *no* system; that the material universe was a chance production, governed by no fixed laws, and under the superintendence of no eternal omnipotent Creator? Who did not see, when the grand secret was at length discovered, manifestly displayed in the system itself the wisdom, the power, the goodness of God? And who did not at the same time perceive, in the previous theories and their mistakes, only the ignorance and short-sightedness of man? Did any one ever for a moment think of blaming the system because man had not previously understood it? Even so then should we reason in regard to that work of the Divine mind we have in the Apocalypse. The ignorance of man may misinterpret it a thousand different ways, and the folly of man may mould it into a variety of fantastic forms of his own invention, and thus make it even appear ridiculous; nevertheless, it is itself unchanged; it remains intrinsically the same; the things contained in it are still "the true sayings of God;" and when all those perplexing mists which

the presumption and vanity of man have thrown around it shall be cleared away, as they assuredly will one day, it will shine forth like "the faithful witness in heaven," in its original perfection and majesty, and we shall wonder how that which we now see to be so grand, so sublime, and yet so simple, could have been made to appear through the infirmity of the creature, so intricate, dark, and unintelligible.

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