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Notes on the Book of the Revelation

by John Nelson
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This is John Nelson Darby's commentary on the Book of Revelation. This is the text of the second edition (the first edition was published in London in 1839); Material added to the second edition is apparently marked by square brackets in the text. Note that this book originally had no chapters; the internal divisions into 'parts' is arbitrary. These divisions were added by the redactor to assist low-bandwidth users of this site.

[Title Page](#)

[Part One](#)

[Part Two](#)

[Part Three](#)

[Part Four](#)

[Part Five](#)

[Charts](#)



[Sacred Texts](#) [Christianity](#) [Index](#) [Next](#)

NOTES

ON THE

BOOK OF THE REVELATION;

TO ASSIST ENQUIRERS IN SEARCHING INTO THAT BOOK.

BY

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[Next: Part One](#)



[Sacred Texts](#) [Christianity](#) [Index](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#)

p. 3

NOTES ON THE REVELATION. [1](#)

Part One

THE following pages pretend to be nothing more whatsoever than what is presented in the title. There is no attempt at a general exposition of this most instructive and important book: and those who seek for an exciting application to surrounding and past events will not find it here. The writer has noted down, in reading, what struck him in the text (often, he believes, overlooked in the framing of some general theory), and he has published what has struck his own mind for the purpose of drawing attention to the book itself. He has added some notes containing more the expression of the light thus elicited from the text; and in these and in the commencement, as he was writing really for the use of christian brethren, he, has not been afraid to communicate freely what thus struck him, desiring it to be as freely weighed, by this and other scriptures, before the Lord. In *teaching*, he would feel it wrong to teach anything which (however still fallible) he could not affirm was the Lord's mind, without doubt in his own. Here, he has not exactly restricted himself to this, because he does not present himself as a teacher, but merely as seeking to help on others, who are enquiring with him. At the same time he has stated nothing he believes unweighed; nor, when a difficulty presented itself

p. 4

connected with any statement, has he allowed the statement to stand without the difficulty being solved. Many very simple statements have, in this way, been connected with much enquiry throughout scripture; though neither the difficulty nor the solution appear, perhaps, in what follows. But he has found abundant instruction and enlargement of judgment in scripture in the research occasioned by it. He believes that the book, in the body of it, views the Church as either *mystically*, according to Ephesians ii., or *really*, according to 1 Thessalonians iv. 17, in heavenly places; and that the want of observing this has much obscured the study of it. He conceives that the scriptural estimate of Ephesians ii. has justified an application of it to past events (though on ground of which those who so applied the prophecy were, in the wisdom of God, scarcely conscious),--an application which had its force in a period now nearly,

though not quite, passed away; while the application of it, consequent on 1 Thessalonians iv. 17, clearly has, as to the substance of it, to begin. I say, the substance of it, because, in tracing the evils to their sources, and developing the various subjects, there are many connecting links, with antecedent facts and events; and this not only in the more hidden sources, but, while the dispensation of judgment is quite distinct from the dispensation of patience, the tares which are judged in the one are often to be spiritually discerned in the other. And hence it is that the book is given to the Church. The judgment of God in power supplies force to the conduct and judgment of the Church in patience. It seems to me, then, that they are both alike *practically* wrong who have slightly rejected the one or the other, and thus respectively deprived the Church of each.

A difficulty may perhaps present itself to some. It will be found, that many points, familiar to modern students of

p. 5

the prophetic words, are taken for granted; as, for example, the idea of a personal Antichrist is assumed to be just. The answer to such an objection, if these papers should be subjected to such, is, that they are not written to demonstrate truths already elementary to those to whom they could be interesting. The writer is presenting what has occupied his own mind to those who, with him, stand on such points as admitted, and seek to make progress. It is possible some inconsistencies may be found. The writer has found his own mind grow clearer, and make progress in the research occasioned by the study of the book; and it is possible that some immature idea, assumed unconsciously, but not stated in the word, may be found. He is not aware, however, of any. He has found disencumbering himself of his own or others' assumptions a main point of progress. Finally, he would say, that there are certain great outlines and truths of a definite character in the word of prophecy--safeguards in every research. If in any details he has erred against these, he trusts any such idea may be at once rejected. He commends what he has written to the blessing of God, whose the Church is, and who loves it; and to the thoughts and enquiries of those brethren who are led by the Spirit of God, to search into and be instructed in these things.

We cannot, I think, interpret the divine word in the Book of the Revelation with the same confined sense that the ancient prophecies carry; because the Church has the mind of Christ, and is supposed not merely to have particular facts communicated to it, but to understand the thoughts of God about, or as manifested in, those facts.

To take an example: I read in Isaiah, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be

p. 6

remembered nor brought to mind. But rejoice ye for ever in that which I create; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." Now here, I find this vast and blessed expectation of the

new heavens and the new earth brought down to a definite joy connected with earthly associations, and resulting from known though new enjoyments and blessings; coming indeed fresh from the hand of God, and, therefore, real and divine blessings, but restricted to a given and earthly sphere, and to definite facts.

Could the Church confine itself to this sphere? or are such its apprehensions created by the testimony of a new heavens and a new earth? Clearly not. The mind of God--the glory of Christ--the deliverance of the whole groaning creation of which (in the marvellous love of God, and the power of that worthiness which makes it due to Christ, according to the counsel of grace and glory which unites them to Him) the Church is a fellow-heir with Christ--the being like Him, and seeing Him as He is, displayed in the same love of the Father in which He is, that the world may know it--the savour of that love which can delight not only in its own blessing, but by its divine nature, in the blessing of others--and the filling of all things with the divine glory, first mediatorially, and then directly--these are the thoughts (with the blessing of banished sin, perfected holiness, and the restoration of all things) which would occupy the mind of the Church as having the Spirit.

Whoever, then, would set about to present the contents of the Revelation with the same confinedness of interpretation as Old Testament prophecy at once puts the Church out of her place as the hill confidante of God and the wonderful counsellor, as having the mind of Christ, and narrows the glory and the counsel to the feebleness of that

p. 7

state with which the Church's position is expressly *contrasted* (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10; see that whole passage). We may indeed know in part and prophesy in part, and so learn from time to time; but, in another sense, we have an unction from the Holy One, and we know all things, because we have the Spirit of God who *formed, ordered, and reveals* them. We are of one counsel with Him, have the mind of Christ, and are not merely the objects of that counsel, as they of old. Being children, the family interests are ours as well as His, though we may be but feeble in the detailed apprehension of them. Now the Revelation has particularly this character, because it was left for the Church (not a communication between living apostles and living men, but left for the Church), as having the Spirit and dependent on the Spirit, and so, as having that Spirit, to use it in time to come; and so only.

Consistently herewith, the address is not an address of personal relationship, but the presenting of that which is the subject of knowledge. The most blessed truths of redemption may shine forth throughout it, yet it is not the address simply of the Father, by the Spirit, to the family, as to the things which concern them within the family. The Father 1 is not spoken of in it, save in one place, as the Lamb's Father (or we, save as kings and priests to His Father); never as in intercourse with the children as His children. This difference, and the corresponding characters of the operation of the Spirit, I find constantly maintained in the scriptures.

p. 8

Accordingly we find (with much additional light, indeed, for the sphere is much wider, and the

foundation of divine conduct on a much fuller and more widely extended base) that the position and imagery of the Revelation are all Jewish in character, though not Jewish in place. Neglect of this last point has misled many whose views have been contracted, and who have not in this, I believe, been led by the Spirit of God.

It is not the Father we have here (at least not in that character), but the temple and temple circumstances--He that was, and that is, and that comes. It is a throne and not a family: but it is not, on the other hand, the temple on earth at all, but the mind of God acting there on the throne, but in the perfection of that provident wisdom, in which the seven spirits are before the throne. *He that sat on the throne* [1](#) is the character and leading title of the Almighty in the Revelation; but that throne is not at Jerusalem, and has nothing to do with it immediately as the place of its establishment.

It is, in this sense, the Book of the throne when the King had been rejected upon earth.

We have, in conformity to this idea, not the Son in the bosom of the Father, but a revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him; and he sent and signified it by an angel to his servant John. All this is Jewish in its character. It is not the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost testifying, but God, Jesus Christ, and the ministration of angels to a servant; none of the other things, of course, ceased to be true; but it was not the character here developed.

p. 9

It is therefore the word of God, the testimony of Jesus Christ, and visions; and there is blessing on the reader. It is addressed to the Church in its full privilege; but the subject presented is governance, and order and control, not Sonship with the Father. God would instruct His *servants*.

The blessings to the churches are conformable to this: from One who bears the character of Ancient of Days, who shall come--who was, and is, and is to come; and we see the Spirit, not as on earth, the Comforter (come down here, and in the sons, looking up there), but in His various and manifold sufficiency and perfection, in the presence of the throne, and as afterwards sent in power into the earth (providential protection and power) and from the Lord, not as the Son, one with His Father (see John xiv. 20), so that we are with Him there through the union of the Spirit, but seen as in human character, as a faithful Witness, the First-begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth--glorious in all this, but human.

Still the Church is put in full confidence here, for the praise to this blessed One is praise in which this word of the Spirit "*us*" is ever found; and, seeing Him in the glory, she breaks out, by the Spirit in the apostle, into thanksgiving, for His praise cannot be passed by; for she is loved, washed, and will reign in nearness to God and His Father. [1](#)

p. 10

[paragraph continues] To the world and to the Jews, His coming will be sorrow. Here, then, we find the place of all these parties at the outset. This is its form, then, • •ν κ•ι ••ν κ•α• • •ρχ••ενοϛ 1--the perfection or fulness of the Spirit before the throne: Jesus known as faithful, risen to reign--all on earth. 2 The Church, meanwhile, knowing its own position in this, therefore says, not *Our* Father, but *His*--His God and Father: for so it is. The announcement of what the purport of Jesus' coming is to the world follows thereon, completing what He is and was on earth, the Church's portion thereby, and the world's at His coming. In verse 8 we have the announcement of His titles and character here, by "the Lord." Upon His name, thus developed, all the stability of purpose and government hung; and the Church had need to know this in all the circumstances which followed. Her place follows--as to the present, in the place of the instrument of this word of God and testimony of Jesus Christ (the word is God's, the testimony Jesus's,--in hearing Him we "set to our seal that God is true"); "your brother in tribulation, and partaker of the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." This is the Church's place through the recognition of Sonship, while the throne is *above*. But it is not in union and headship, but kingdom and patience. Still, in whatever form, the word she ministers is the word of God or the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Lordship in itself is not the highest title of Christ:

p. 11

[paragraph continues] "God hath made Him both Lord and Christ." To us there is but one God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ. But in this word the herald of God announces all the style of His ancient and future glory; for Lord here, doubtless answers to Jehovah. Further, this book does not present to us the Holy Ghost received of the Father, sent down to produce a public testimony to the world. Nor is it a gift received as needful for the maintenance of the Church, and communicated "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come," &c. But it is a revelation given to Christ, and communicated, when the Church had begun to decay (instead of growing), and had need, in its severed compartments, at very best to be reprov'd or encouraged, as so looked at apart--as these several candlesticks--the Son of Man interfering as the High Priest, but judicially: a revelation given (not the Spirit communicated) when all this darkness and (in principle) apostasy had come in. Each one of these seems another thing, and less immediate than the promise in John already referred to (xiv. 20): "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

There is the Sonship of Christ with the Father, in respect of which the Holy Ghost dwells in us (the Spirit of adoption and union, the Comforter) and looks up and places us before the Father even as He the Son is.

There is Christ, the Head of the body, the exalted man (the first-born among many brethren), in which character He receives the promise of the Father, and imparts it, as power for testimony. And there is the Lordship of Christ over the world, which is communicated subordinately to the Church, who reign with Him, are kings and priests to His God and Father, by virtue of the previous parts of blessing. This last, after the judgment of the Churches in

p. 12

their present state, is the subject of the book of Revelation. This state of the churches becomes thus very important and appropriately introductory.

After the heading, and four subsequent verses of introduction, including His work, our position (*i.e.*, as kings and priests), and His coming again, we find the announcement, that, come what would, the Lord was the beginning and ending, the Almighty.

Then we have the revelation to one cast out into the wilderness, the depository of the sorrows of the Church, and no of the providence of God, but in the Spirit, on the day typical of the rest of glory which remains. He sees Christ in the midst of the seven candlesticks (not as a servant with his loins girt, but) in holy execution of judgment as Priest, the symbols of the Ancient of Days being withal upon Him. It is not Christ on high. It is not Christ the Head of one body. 1 It is not Christ in heaven. But he turns and sees Him governing, judging and holding in His hand the destinies of the several churches; but while, with the symbols of the Ancient of Days upon Him, yet revealing Himself for the Church to the faithful disciple, as 'One that lived, was dead, and is alive for evermore, 2 having power over the gates of His enemies, the keys of hell and of death. This the apostle saw: such was the

p. 10

place Christ took now--a different place from being the communicating Head of the body, however that might also be. The seer was to write these things, and the things which are, and what should be after these things. In a word, we have the Almighty continuance which comprehends all things of the Lord, and the present position of the Son of man in the churches, yet he that lived, was dead, and was alive, and had power over the power of death. The churches are the things that are. There is a close connection between the things that are and those that were seen; for, turning to see the voice that spake with him, he sees the golden candlesticks. So often as in the judgment of "the woman," the chief part of the description is of "the beast" (Chap. xvii).

The addresses to the churches are not part of the things that are, properly; they come in by the by, and designedly so: "Until the angel, &c., write," and "he that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." Yet the existence of the churches themselves and the stars constitute the things that are, and are of all importance, as showing the transition from the state in which Christ, according to Ephesians iv. was the Head of the one body, making it grow by that which every joint supplied (in which its original state was connected with, and presented in, its theory and mystic perfectness--the results of which shall be manifested in that day when *it* shall be manifested as one with Him), to the state of ruin and apostasy into which it actually fell, so as to be cut off and spued out of His mouth: as a dispensation--a state of transition--in which He was not filling the one body with gifts, but judging details in the several corporate bodies, in different places, and judging the evil inconsistent with the moral design of the Church, maintaining a character absolutely necessary to their recognition as His--as churches at all.

p. 14

[paragraph continues] Hence they are moral addresses of the Spirit with promises and threatenings.

From this last recognized state, this place of transition, in which Christ can deal upon earth (but in a spiritual sense) judicially, we are necessarily caught up to the throne, on which all hangs subsisting always, but now the only resource; because the manifestation of acceptable grace, with which the Lord can manifestatively dwell in spiritual presence upon earth, had ceased. Hence this part is not properly prophetic, but connected with things that are; and the prophetic character that it has is entirely by the moral designation of the testimony of the Spirit; and we come back to the throne, •ετ• τα•τα. 1 If John was to describe the government of the world on the throne, the Church being lost, he must first trace the Church as subjected to this moral judgment. The picture of the word would not be complete, had we not, after the epistles which regulated the Church, as subsisting among the Gentiles, not only the practical account of the apostasy, as in Jude, 2 Peter, 2 Timothy, 2 Thessalonians, &c., but the moral judgment of the Church, as passing from the state noticed in the epistles,--evidences that Christ never lost sight of it, and that when it ceased to be a manifestative place of His presence--his epistle--He takes His place and title in the throne whence all things are governed--"the same yesterday, to day, and for ever;" "Him who was, and is, and is to come;" "the First and the Last," comprehending and ruling all things. The things that are, then, are the seven candlesticks and

p. 15

the seven stars--mystic perfection and actual imperfection; the Church never losing its mystic perfection in the mind of God, but when it has to be addressed on earth--to be addressed as figured in so many separate bodies then actually existing, and often with reproofs and threatenings.

The things that are, then, involve both these points.

The things that shall be hereafter, or after these things, begin when He that sits on the throne begins to act in providence, not when Jesus is in recognized Church relationship, or even in judicial testimony to the Church when the world (creation) is brought into view. It does not follow from this, that there may be no saints, or that they may not be faithful and give a testimony, but that the Lord does not stand towards them in this particular character of relationship.

The things which are, and the addresses to the seven churches, have (connected with this, *to my mind*) a double character; *i.e.*, accordingly as we look at actually existing facts, or facts dispensationally existing: an observation which has strictly the same application to the expression of the Lord to the Jewish economy: "This generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled"--the connection of which, indeed, with this subject is more strong than is at first sight apparent (for the fortunes 1 of the Church and the Jews are more coincident than we suppose as to dispensation, though for the same reason opposite in principle. The root bears us, though the branches may be broken off that we may be grafted in),

p. 16

and has its light increased by, while it casts light on, the passage at the end of St. John's Gospel, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" This was taken as if he in person would not die. But, says the inspired writer, that was not said by the Lord, but "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" The Lord, then, in that expression, left something for the Church's wisdom and spirituality to discover. He did not say he should not die, but "If I will," &c.

Now it appears to me that we have very distinctly, in Peter, Paul, and John, the three representatives of, first, the Jewish church, as planted, its tabernacle shortly to be put off; then, the Gentile church in its energy, as planted, and ministerially sustained of the apostle (*i.e.*, Paul), but, after his decease, the flock unspared, and perverse men arising, and so *that* departing too--Ichabod on that; lastly, John on the contrary is placed in contrast with the cutting off of the Jewish body, likened in the person of Peter to the Lord, and made to represent the extended protracted existence of the Church as one hanging on The will of the Lord, having lost and forfeited its real character, to which faithfulness attached blessing and sustaining power, as due to the character of God, and just hanging now on his secret counsel. And accordingly we have John here, who was in the bosom of Jesus and received the communication of His mind and secret knowledge, hanging over the fallen and falling fortunes of the Church--already fallen, if we compare them with their estate as planted, not now sustained by Paul's apostolic care and energy, but beset by wolves and perverse men, and failing, yet sustained by this word, "If I will that he tarry till I come." Now I take it that this suspended place had its form actually and externally at the destruction of Jerusalem. Then also "this generation" took

p. 17

its place externally: the earthly local centralization of the Church was externally set aside (it was really from the time of Stephen's death, when the first martyr left the world to go, as to his spirit, on high), and, the Lord's hand having set aside the earth as His place, all was in abeyance till He personally took up the matter again--coming again in connection with a similar overturning: the fitting of which two events together is what constitutes the force of Matthew xxiv. 1--43. In the meanwhile the throne was really set up in heaven, giving the evidence that everything had failed on earth, but that nothing could fail in the purpose and throne of God. With this the book commences; and the protracted condition of the churches is brought in after the throne is set up, as incidental before the unfolding of the actings, in the world, of the throne so set up in faithfulness.

I hold therefore that the things that are, and this address to the churches, give this double character, as to period, to the Revelation. If we take the things that are, as that which actually existed in the time of St. John, then it closes with the actual existence and state of those churches, as addressed by St. John, or rather with the life of St. John himself, who addresses them under the warning of removal for their failure. The throne of Jerusalem being gone, there was still, by him who had been there with the Lord, a recognition of the churches as something upon earth. There was nothing sealed in this. But if we take the apostle as the mystic representative of the dispensation in its condition after the departure of St. Peter and St. Paul, 1 then it is the protraction of that

p. 18

state of things, till the Church, as a dispensation, is spued out of Christ's mouth; and the things that shall be here-after are the actual intervention of the throne of God afresh in the government of the world.

I believe the Holy Ghost has ordered it so as to leave ground for both these applications; as the Church knows the throne mystically now in the exaltation of her Head, and actually in its future judicial and open intervention in the affairs of the world.

Accordingly, chapters ii. and iii. are addresses to the churches, but, on moral principles, extended to every one that had ears to hear; connecting the actually existing bodies with the condition in which the Church might find. itself in after ages. "The things that are" are, more

p. 19

properly, what then was; the addresses to the churches, the exhibition of the protracted prolongation of the dispensation of the Church, mystically perfect, yet ruined (the throne being set up already, but its full manifestation, as for the world, not yet brought out). Within this scene, the yet remaining attention of Christ to the churches, as to the formal manifestation in the body on earth, was in warning and judgment, not headship. This being their state on earth, in heaven they were only expecting with Him a glory which could not fail.

It is not my object here to enter into the detail of instruction given to the churches, though it be most personally precious; turning attention here rather to the structure and prophetic character of the Apocalypse. And, as briefly as I may, I add, therefore, here merely the order of the statements made to these churches, and their condition, that they may stand together before the mind of the reader of the Apocalypse.

First, declension from first love, and the Lord taking the place of examination and judgment.

Secondly, persecution: Christ the overcomer of death, a giver of the crown of life.

Thirdly, dwelling in the world, to wit, where Satan's throne is (the prince of this world), yet Christ's witness amongst them where Satan dwelleth, suffering faithfully: with this, the beginning of teaching error for reward, and allowance of evil and low practice. Christ would fight against them (to wit, as an adversary) if they did not repent.

Fourthly, a state of increased devotedness in patience, charity, and works: but Jezebel, teaching communion with an evil and idolatrous world; and suffered. Space had been given for her repentance, but she did not (note here it is a woman, not some of them). Judgment would

p. 20

fall on her followers, but discriminating--to every one according to his works, and no further burden laid on the faithful.

Here begins another distinction, that, whereas the reward promised was, previously, after the warning to hear, from this point it comes regularly before. On this fearful judgments, and the Lord's coming first introduced and the morning star, and the kingdom on the earth substituted for the professing Church.

Fifthly, a name. to live, but no reality; profession of being alive as something distinctive: but there were, however, things remaining and a few names. The Lord, if they did not repent, would come on them like a thief: here the Church, in this state, judged like the world.

Sixthly, weakness, but an open door, marked, not by detailed works, but keeping the word of Christ, of His patience, and not denying His name. They would be kept from an hour of temptation, which was coming on all the world to try the dwellers upon earth. (Comp. Isa. xxiv.)

Seventhly, the Church to be spued out of His mouth without proposal of repentance, because of what they had become, yet counsel given; and if any one who has remained within and heard when Christ knocked still at the door, that one would be with Him.

Such is the course presented by these churches in their moral character and condition.

These addresses, however, as we have remarked, come in incidentally. John was to write the things he saw. But this was not properly his vision, but came in afterwards, generally under the things that are, and that only as a consequence.

In the fourth chapter we come to the next branch of the

p. 21

subject--the things •ετ• τα•τα, or (as it is here translated) which must be hereafter, taking up i. 19.

If we take the former part as the protracted condition of the Church dispensation, then this will be the power of the throne of Him who was, and is, and is to come, 1 (the Lamb being still, however, there,) exercised over the world, after the close of this dispensation, yet properly before the beginning of the next. If we take the former part as the things which actually then were (and, doubtless, such actually existed), then it is the governance of the world, when the Church had no formal recognized existence on earth which could be called the habitation of God in any full sense, though just as dear to Him individually as regards salvation. I believe both these thoughts are intended for the Church. In the former case we have literal fulfilment of the prophecy which follows, in the latter analogies in a protracted period.

The apostle now is translated (in spirit) into heaven. Before, he had seen Christ, on turning round: a

newly revealed state of things, but on earth, and he there still. But the churches now were no longer so recognized; and the voice, which he had heard at the first behind him on earth, now calls him up to heaven.

Here, accordingly, for the first time, he saw the throne, for it is set in heaven (the earth, as addressing the Church, he had left), and there was One sitting on it.

Heretofore, it has been the Son of man judging upon earth: according to His various glory, in address; but in vision the Son of man. We have not the Son of man again, till the judgment in chapter xiv. 14. The Lamb only is concerned in the seals. The angelic power is connected

p. 22

with the trumpets. We shall see this more particularly; but I remark only, the Lamb is always in a higher or lower place (this latter by grace), not exercising intermediate providences; in the throne, suffering, or judging.

It was in heaven the apostle must learn the things which were to be hereafter. There only they can be learned; 1 and, by the habituation of the mind there, seen, as they are important to God, to Christ, and, therefore, to the Church, and to the Spirit for the Church. No one having the Spirit, so as to be interested in God's mind about the Church loved of Christ, could be indifferent to them.

But to follow closely the chapters. Chapter iv. sets up

p. 23

the throne in heaven, and One is sitting on it. The sign of the covenant *with creation* was around the throne. There is no statement of a veil, intercession, incense, or priesthood. It is government--elders on thrones. There were the seven spirits, the Holy Ghost in His energy and perfectness, the fixed moral purity which belonged to the place, the approach to the throne, and lastly (that of which most was said), four beasts, 1 which were the heads-of the genera of creation, and filled with the intelligence and activity of providence, celebrating Jehovah Elohim Shaddai, the covenant and dispensational names of God, not the relationship name of the Church, thus representing the throne of providence and creation, controlling all the springs of the state of things in nature; of which throne these living attributes of God formed the pillars and support; they were κ•κλ• το• θρ•βου. It was the temple; but the temple was the accompaniment of the throne, without veil or priest. The twenty-four elders may be taken as the representatives of the redeemed of the two dispensations; but it was not the essential character. They were on thrones. But I doubt they went beyond creature instrumentality, however sustained by divine power. The beasts or living creatures are more particularly noticed as connected with the living creatures of Ezekiel--the living supports of the throne of God, leaving (judging rather) Jerusalem, now found as parts of the circle of the throne in heaven. 2

p. 24

We may remark, that all dispensation, and that which is the source of it, is noticed (save the Church properly, *i.e.*, sons with the Father)--God, Shaddai (*i.e.*, God as with Abraham the Almighty), and Jehovah, the Governor, who is, and was, and is to come. A part of these living creatures, the eyes, are found elsewhere: first, in 2 Chronicles. xvi. 9--there service generally; in Ezekiel their connection is with the place of the throne which had been in Jerusalem, but a throne of God over all, the Spirit leading; graven on the stone laid, in Zechariah iii. 9, and again, in Zechariah iv. 10, resuming their course through the earth, and, as we shall soon see, as the eyes of the Lamb (as possessing all power in heaven and earth), the seven Spirits so sent forth.

This, then, established the throne, the Church not being (properly speaking as such) in the scene at all, save representatively in the enthroned elders. It was another subject. The throne of Him that liveth for ever and ever was the subject here. In chapter v. the book is introduced to us. The throne first established, whatever happened now was what hung on the throne. In the right hand of His, power who sat on the throne was a book.

There may be some allusion in this, and the little open book, to Jeremiah xxxii.; but it is (to say the least) very faint. A title to open a book is a distinct thing from a book containing a title, the evidences of a title. Besides, it was a book to be read, to be opened and read, as containing communications of the mind of God.

p. 25

But the death of Christ doubtless gave Him the title to the inheritance morally, and to open the book, and purchased and redeemed the joint-heirs.

It is not, moreover, here the kingdom merely of the Son of man, as given to Him, nor the title of the *Offspring* of David (*that* is not brought in until the end), but the *Root* of David, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, David's Lord, not his son--He hath prevailed. The redemption, or purchase, here, is of the Church 1--a new song, not a Jewish one. It was a book in the hand of God, of Him that sat on the throne, not antecedently revealed, nor the subject of ordered prophecy before, and founded, not on promise which man could have had on uprightness, as the Jewish promises, but solely on the exaltation of the Lamb that was slain; and His being on the throne who was rejected on earth, and specially in the character of the head of these promises to the Jews; and none, therefore, but He, could open it or look on it. The title, too, is one higher than the official or given inheritance of the Son of man, deeper in its ground, and much more exalted. It is a place and a title, held in the throne--the Lamb slain there. This was not a title properly given to a mediatorial person in peace; but a title, due, perhaps, as to person, but acquired by excellency, and humiliation, and perfectness.

In this place, the communication is with the elder, as representing, I apprehend, the Church cognizant ("for you hath he reconciled") of the title and glory of the Lamb.

We are then shewn the Lamb slain--He who did not resist evil, but gave Himself even unto death, and was led to the slaughter, "as he had been slain;" the full power

p. 26

actually, the seven horns, and full knowledge, seven eyes, being in Him, and this, universal [permanence](#) of knowledge. His eyes were the seven spirits sent forth into all the earth. Those spirits, the light and power of the holiness of God before the throne, thus characterizing His presence, were now the agents of the active discernment and power of Him who was justly exalted. It was not then the Son of man, in His titles of inheritance, but the Lamb who opened the book. To Him and to the Church, in measure, as one with Him, as suffering, rejected, and exalted in her Head, the opening of the book appertains. We have the mind of Christ--to us by the word.

He came and took the book. The moment He had done this, the beasts and elders (*i.e.*, in principle and title, creation, providence, and redemption) all own His headship, the headship of this humbled but exalted One; for, though the Lion of the tribe of Judah had undertaken it, yet the Church knew His titles as Root of David, and yet the Lamb slain but now exalted to the throne as such. The book unfolded what under His hand concerned their; all of it was the counsel of God to bring all out into the place they had in His mind and purpose. Verse 9 should be "they *sing*," not "they *sung*." This is what they do in heaven, as under the Lamb. This being so, "us" would be no difficulty. Perhaps we are bound to take the correction of Griesbach, which would remove even its appearance to the eye, the sense remaining the same. It is remarkable, that while the same confidence and title is expressed by St. John writing to the saints on earth in the first chapter, and here by those around the Lamb on the throne, they add here, to shew their state of expectancy, [1](#)

p. 27

[[paragraph continues](#)] "We shall reign." That was needless to say, though true, to the saints on earth: it was pretty plain to sufferers that they were not reigning. We might have thought that these were. They are therefore shewn to us in this state of expectancy. [1](#)

The four beasts are ever mentioned first, as connected with divine power, and entirely distinct from the angels. [2](#) I see not exactly, how one searching Ezekiel, and their places here, can doubt their general force. They are more intimately connected with redemption, because all that displays creation and providence being connected with, and come under, the power of evil subjectively, they are especially interested in it. The angels merely celebrate the person of Him that was slain, and His excellent dignity. And, after them, all the actual creation (of which as creatures they are head, they having owned the Lamb as worthy) celebrate Him that sitteth on the throne and the Lamb together. And the four beasts, who sum up all its moral import, say, Amen. And the elders, the intelligent redeemed, fall down and worship Him that liveth for ever and over This is His highest and essential character; and in this they close the doxology. First, redemption; then, the angels own the Lamb; then, every creature Him that sits upon the throne and the Lamb; the living beasts saying, Amen and then the elders Him that liveth for ever and ever, filled with all the fulness of God. This is particularly the portion of the elders, though it is the same

blessed One that is honoured by the beasts; but *their* word is continuance,

p. 28

rather Jehovah-continuance--was, and is, and is to come--relative continuance, not intrinsic life;--for, though the throne is the great head and source of all, yet redemption leads us more deeply into the knowledge of Him that sits upon it, and puts all things in their place. [1](#)

This, then, is a position which bears upon the whole to the end, though much intermediate important matter may come in under different heads; but the position of this bears upon all the intrinsic exaltation of the Lamb to the throne. Many dispensatory arrangements and providences may come in subordinately, but this is the key to the result. Further, this is connected with the immediate relationship of the Church with Christ. The Church knows Him as the Lamb, and should be the follower of Him, and representative of Him as such here. The Lord may act on the dispensation by many external circumstances and orderings; He does not act in it but in this character. As such, He is primarily glorified; as such the world is against Him, and Satan's rage in its deepest and intrinsic character. The Church is seen in its dispensed perfectness as kings and priests (seven is the number for its abstract mystic perfection); because, though all through this period, viewed in its protracted character of years for days, it was yet imperfect, yet here the government of the world is viewed, [2](#) not the dealing with the Church; and, therefore, in placing the parties (if I may so speak, the *dramatis personæ*), the Church is viewed as a complete distinct whole. Although it is the supreme throne which is above all, and

p. 29

the source of all (it is He that sits on the throne that makes all things new, and is the object of supreme worship), yet, relatively it is not the throne of God at Jerusalem. It is not the filial relation of the Church, nor the ordered throne of the Son of man, but the throne in heaven; [1](#) and there the Lamb in the throne, with the power, knowledge, and holiness belonging to it in exercise, and that over the earth.

There is a very distinct break, in the course of the book, at the close of the eleventh chapter, which, in the sum of its contents, closes the whole book. The time was come that those that destroyed or corrupted the earth should be destroyed. But in chapter xii. it resumes from the origin, to bring in the radical character and development of the last form of evil; and, as this will be manifested in fact at the end, as to the facts, it may be taken as a continuance of the previous visions. But there is another important division within the first eleven chapters. At the beginning of the eighth chapter, the last seal is opened by the Lamb. Now of course this closes the book; and though that which follows may come under it, yet it is a distinct course and character of events. The Lamb is not spoken of during the course of the trumpets; all is angelic. After chapter xii. we have the Lamb again: of that we can speak there. The Lamb is in opposition to man and the world; that is, *they* have rejected *Him*. And the suffering Church, at least, is rejected by the world; and what concerns it is what answers to Christ in that character. This, then, is

p. 30

what we have under the seals. In a certain sense, this is always true; for "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;" but it is not dispensatorily true (*i.e.*, as to the condition of the Church). We have then, looking at it as progressive history, three great divisions: the Church under the Lamb; the Church under the ministration of angelic providences; and the Church under and during the last great apostasy, traced from Satan's power at the outset. The world meanwhile, not the Church, is the subject of the statements contained in these portions. [1](#)

Upon this earthquake great terror manifests itself; but it is not the expression of God's revealed judgment, but of their *terror*. I do not say this may not have an application afterwards, and that the kings of the earth may have terror then; but this is not the kings joined to the beast, making war with the Lamb, and slain with the sword of Him that sat on the horse. It is terror on an earthquake, which they ascribe to the wrath of the Lamb, as if His clay were come. It is after this all the trumpets sound. On the ground on which I am at present interpreting (that is, that of the protracted period), it would be the upsetting of that heathen empire with its rulers, which had hitherto been in existence, with the consequent terror and dismay of the Lamb's enemies. The idea of an application to such a period is often unjustly combated, and the name of

p. 31

[paragraph continues] Constantine introduced to shew that what he did in the Church was of no consequence, or evil instead of good. But this anxiety proceeds on a false supposition that this is the history of the Church: whereas it is the history of the Lamb's government of the world in providence. And in this respect we should remember there never was such an event since Babel, and its consummation in the image at Babylon, as the setting aside the direct worship of Satan in the imperial nation. And this is what took place then.

The recognition of the Church, in spite of all, then comes in by the by: first, the full complement of the elect Jews; and, then, the multitude of the Gentiles with their portion. Nothing was allowed to be done till these were reckoned up or owned in their place.

The first tumult and storm of nations was arrested till this was distinctly done. Such had been the power of God in the Spirit during this period, in spite of all the persecutions and oppositions of ungodly men. The fifth and sixth seals shew the different result of the actually persecuted or rather killed, and the powers that had persecuted them; [1](#) the seventh, the great result, in spite of the persecution--the word of God had not been bound.

p. 32

The four winds, blowing on the earth and sea, shew the disorder and tumult of the spirit of nations. Here, not merely on the sea, wherefrom, consequent on it, Daniel saw the four great beasts or kingdoms emerge; but on the earth, here, because there was already a settled and ordered system which was affected by them as well as the mass of unformed nations--the sea.

This was arrested till it was shown how effectual the word of God had been in spite of opposition.

The seals, as well as the trumpets, and perhaps I might add, the vials, are divided into four and three. The four beasts call to see the consequences of opening the first four seals. The last three have their own special character. The division of the trumpets is well known; the last three being woe-trumpets. The seven churches are divided into four and three, by the different position of the promise and warning to all that have ears to hear. I think it will be found that no repentance is proposed to the Church after the first three. [1](#)

p. 33

Looked at in the light of the sustaining power and attributes of providential rule, the call of the four living creatures is very intelligible.

Taking the interpretation now according to the protracted course of divine government, the first four seals would be the history of the empire. I hold a horse to be the symbol of imperial or royal power in exercise. And such would be God's account of the course of the empire then existing. If it be asked, What avails this to the saints? I answer, Everything:--to know that all passes under the eye and knowledge of God. This lion, in whose mouth they were, had his days and ways all numbered and ordered of the Lord; and they were, indeed, in union with Him who governed, though they might suffer with Him. The understanding of this place of patience was, and to us is, of the very last importance.

In the fifth seal we have the estimate of those who had suffered during this period graciously taken notice of, although it had been enough to have shewn all was ordered. But it comes out here that many had been killed. Their place is ordered. This was not the last persecution.

The sixth seal has occasioned great difficulty. I admit the application of all this to an ulterior period, if "the things that are" be taken as the whole dispensation, which I recognize.

There was a great earthquake, [1](#) and the ruling powers

p. 34

shaken, convulsions of the prophetic earth, and dislocations of its governing powers; [1](#) and, to strengthen the saints, the consequence is shown.

The seventh seal gave occasion to the definite results of the state of things introduced by the fifth. There were those who had come out of great tribulation, and were fully owned--their robes were "white in the blood of the Lamb."

The seventh seal once opened, we hear no more of the Lamb, The Church, as a dispensation, had ceased to be in a suffering state. [2](#) Of the seventh seal nothing could be directly said: heaven could say nothing,

man perhaps much; but his thoughts are not as God's thoughts. The owning 3 of Christianity could not be condemned; the

p. 35

putting the Church into the world, its real effect, could not be celebrated. There was silence in heaven. But on this state of things, which heaven could not own at all, secret providence soon began to act. The angels began sounding. It was an action, then, *ab extra* in the providential state of things by angelic ministrations of providence, not in the known relationship of a suffering Church, and the world opposed, as it had crucified the Head. The growth of apostasy is traced, not in this second part, but in the third, as having its own importance.

But there was a feature in this not yet noticed. Mixed, as they might be (in a certain sense in spite of themselves) with the world, the prayers of the saints had not ceased, and much incense was given to the angel of the altar to add to them, or give them savour and efficacy with God. 1 The High Priest Himself wears the angelic character here: the nearness of relationship, and completeness of all in heaven as governing on known principles (known by man in the Church as his own to go upon), were gone.

This is the first mention we have of the altar of incense. The souls were under the altar of burnt-offering as whole burnt-offerings. Now, it was the whole resource of the saints to cry to God. The answer was judgments from the holiness of God against evil; and the definite course

p. 36

of disasters prepared to pursue its progress. We have, thus, at the close or at the beginning of the periods, an account of the state of the saints during the period (*i.e.* as to the principle of the dispensation in the period). The trumpets, then, would be the judgments of God upon the mingled state of things, in which the saints had ceased to suffer 1 and be identified with the character of the Lamb, in answer to the secret prayers of the remnant offered up as a sweet savour by the secret action of the angel of the covenant; but the known dealings, externally, upon principles which the Church could explain on the character of its existence.

There was alarm, the powerful acting of God in men's spirits in terror, and a convulsion in the condition of the earth; then the progressive course of Judgments:--

On the grandees, and universal prosperity and glory of man, by heaven-sent judgments;

Then, destruction by judgment, through power, on the mass of extern nations;

Then, some apostate power polluting and embittering the very sources of the moral popular condition; 2

p. 37

Then, the supreme authority smitten, but this in a confined sphere, with all dependent or subordinate light or authority.

There is then a term introduced, not previously used, save in the address to the Church of Philadelphia, "Woe to the inhabitants of earth!" an expression, I apprehend, taken from Isaiah xxiv., and used in the Apocalypse in contrast with dwellers in heaven (*i.e.*, persons within the range of the prophetic earth, or scene of God's immediate moral dealings, but not a stranger or sojourner there, that is, a spiritual, heavenly-minded man, but dwelling there). In chapter xii., it is contrasted with "Rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea;" (compare Eph. i. at the close, and chap. ii.) Here, accordingly, we have the last three trumpets announced as woes to these inhabitants of the earth. The rest might be providential judgments on the condition of things. These last took up these earthly-minded people fixed upon earth. Note, when the saints, though in supplication, live, as to their actual condition, not in suffering, but mixed up with the world, they 1 partake externally, and therefore in spirit sensibly,

p. 38

of the trouble and sorrow of the judgments that come; and come, it may be, just as wholesome chastenings, or at least warnings, in answer 1 to their prayers; and this in principle may, I believe, quite go on now. But there are judgments afterwards specially on these earthly-minded ones (the form in which they become now characterized, when, after the patient and separating chastenings of God, they are fixed in this character). Then come positive judgments on them specifically.

The first comes by apostasy letting loose the influences of what is beneath--what is of the abyss. The effect is to put out or darken the supreme authority and the healthful influences which acted on men's minds. 2 From this, a swarm of marauders spread themselves upon the earth--the prophetic earth, having a king, the angel of the bottomless pit: for though, having the active energy of imperial power, and towards others in face they were men, yet they had "power on their heads." When seen behind, they were not in the open dignity of man, as governing in civil power by the image of God; they were subject to some-thing, though they might press forward in prevailing conquest on others; and their sting their tail. It was not their energy that was their poisonous power of mischief, but what they brought in as a consequence. "The prophet and teacher of lies, he is the tail."

The next woe was a more open incursion of external enemies, as such--this army of prevailing, imperial, congregated

p. 39

power; and from the mouths of them (they carried it before them) what was judgment came forth: only it was by evil, and what was of the enemy positively. 1 They had power in their mouths, but in their tails too; for in that, also, was their planned mischief more settled than before, though not the introduction of it; "and with them they hurt." It was like Satan in form. This was more open and warlike in character; but

not the original evil.

But those, the rest of men, that were not killed by them, did not repent of their idolatries and evil conduct; many would be entirely destroyed from their profession, and their place set aside and filled up by others; but even so the rest repented not. The extent of the power of these was limited. The general objects of all the woes were earthly-minded people in the region of God's dealings. When the originating, darkening, and tormenting evil came in, those only were excepted who were manifestly owned of God as His--manifested to be of Him.

The trumpet angel--this announcement of the full time of God's purpose--looses these subordinate instruments of His providence to have power of destruction for the prescribed time.

All these, however, were dealings in which, though a remnant prayed, the Church had no natural place. [2](#)
For

p. 40

the growth of the apostasy is not the subject here. It is all mere angelic providential dealing. It is not the Son of man in judgment. It is not the Lamb in glory on the throne, but in sympathy withal with a suffering people, whom the world is against, and whom He ostensibly recognized. This was quite lost when the world recognized the Church: the Church wholly lost its place. It had gradually practically approached the world--it was now ostensibly sunk in it; such was its downward course, having lost the spiritual discernment, it was not capable of seeing its position in the outward blessing. So Abraham, when his wife was taken into Pharaoh's court. He had gone down into Egypt first. Then the Lord acts by angelic ministrations on the profession, first in external chastenings, then in direct judgment and woes. Present facts, as we proceed, will lead us to the extent (*i.e.*, geographical extent) of these two woes. I reserve the course of these passages more particularly, according to the protracted sense of "the things that are," as applied to the whole dispensation, for what presents itself farther on.

But before the third woe, or seventh trumpet, there is a large parenthetical revelation comes in; but it is still further angelic or providential [1](#) ministration. Nor is it, though it goes through manifestly the same scene, the account of the apostasy which we have afterwards, but the same scene historically, as coming under the course of events as

p. 41

prophetically declared by God. There was much that announced God's judgment against the state of things here-entered into, that was not revealed. But though this was not a sealed book which the Lamb alone could open, but the progress of the course of historic events in Providence, yet was it specially in the hand of that mighty angel, and the dignity of His person was sustained.

The manifestations of the judgment of God connected with the utterance of His voice, and what followed

on it, were not yet revealed. A voice from heaven sealed them up: for though the course of events went on, and was described, yet were there really principles in this of such a character and weight in the eyes of Him who could bring in the name of Him that liveth for ever and ever, that it proved that delay should be no longer. And these things were to precede the accomplishing of the mystery of God, which should be when the seventh angel was about to sound.

In this way the little open book is very simple. It is not the mystery of iniquity, brought all out in its character, but it is the historic course of events--a picture of that scene, by itself, in which the mystery of iniquity, and all its important principles, and God's acting on them, are developed, in order to the filling up of that which is finished at the sounding of the seventh trumpet. It is thus a step lower in its nature than the great sealed book. *That* was held by Him that sat on the throne; and it was given to the Lamb, who alone could open it. It belonged to Him by a title none else at all had: but this is in the hand of the angel, and it is given to the prophet. It was part of the course of progressive historic events. Its allusions, however, identify it with what comes after, as the beast out of the bottomless pit, &c.

There was a further point. The prophet could look at

p. 42

external events, and describe them; but here, though the taste of the knowledge of this was sweet, yet, when he saw what it really conveyed, when he digested it, when the sympathies of his own soul were concerned in it, painful and trying things concerning the position and ruin-state of the Church 1 were involved in it--disorder and evil, and departure from God, and trial connected with this in the saints. Ah! it was bitter in his belly. This term is ever used for the affections and inward thoughts of the man. Therefore, in the Church, the Holy Ghost is said to flow from the belly of the believer, because it is not merely a communication of known events, but the Spirit, as an earnest of what belongs to ourselves, and therefore filling the soul; and, from our own association with the things, the joy and testimony flow forth.

There was to be the wide-spread field of this testimony again resumed. This part of the testimony took the subject up afresh, and though connected in fact, a full subject and scene of itself.

Thus, this little open book gave the historical account (when it assumed its place in external history) of the state of things under the great apostasy, in order to closing the whole scene as a history in the seventh trumpet; while the detail of the apostasy, its origin and source (before it was matter of the Church's progressive history at all), the power and intent of Satan as manifested in it, were reserved for

p. 43

a distinct account (that is, all its moral workings and developments).

It is to be remarked, in addition, that the third woe is not given here at all. When the seventh trumpet sounds, there are voices in heaven celebrating the coming of the worldly kingdom of Christ; and the

scene is described in very general terms, as embracing its introduction and results; but the woe is not described. In truth, all the detail of circumstances is reserved for the accounts which would follow: but "delay no longer" is the thing here evidenced. I have only to add, that if "the things that are" are to be taken for the whole dispensation, then the twelfth chapter may be taken continuously 1 for the acting of the agents there described in their conduct in the crisis; only, that it traces them downwards from the state of things in the heavens--that is, as objects of the judgment referred to in the seventh trumpet. In this case, the first act would be the taking of the saints out of the way; then

p. 44

the casting down of Satan; then, after persecution of the Jews, the last struggle, including the judgment of the beast

p. 45

and the like. Otherwise the twelfth chapter is a tracing of the details of the source, principles, and actings of them, as in God's mind, and that from their nature, object, and outset.

I apprehend some of them, at any rate, as the two witnesses, partook of the heavenly calling according to Daniel vii., without being the Church testimony represented in the holy city. See the analogy of the Pentecostal Church at first (though that was in fact the Church), but its testimony is remarkable as to this.

Footnotes

3:1 "Notes on the Book of Revelation; to assist Inquirers in searching into that Book." London, 1839.

7:1 This is true also of the Hebrews, where sacrifice and priesthood are spoken of, which constitute relationship with God. Here it is supremacy (whatever be the circumstances), which is His character, not with the children, but over all things, over all creation, and ever the throne of Him that was and is and is to come.

8:1 See also (that is, as soon as we come to the prophecy) iv. 2, 10; v. 1, 7, 13; vi. 16. Note also vii. 10 (observe there is no allusion to this from viii. until xix. 4) and xxi. 5. Chapter xx. 11 comes in specially intermediately. As to the city, see xxii. 1.

9:1 The instant answer of the Church on the announcement of Christ in His titles as to His person, is exceedingly beautiful here. And, on the announcement of His coming glory (xxii. 16), the instant response of the Church, led by the Spirit, is equally lovely: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come;" and the Church then takes its full place, while waiting.

Christ's relative character is fully shewn and responded to--a faithful witness for God to man, the perfect representative and p. 10 Head of the Church, as the perfect new risen man before God, and the head of power to the world; and the Church sees Him, and then says what He is to herself.

10:1 [Note here, not was and is, but is and was, the One who is, and thus, in relation to time, was and is coming.]

10:2 *i.e.* The witness of God, as He was the conqueror of death, and the governor of the world in power.

12:1 It has therefore passed beyond the condition of the apostolic epistles, but not entered on the relation in which Christ stands to the world in government and lordship.

12:2 The first and the last. Christ as continuous, as Jehovah in power and nature, yet One that had passed through the vicissitudes of the Church's necessity, so that in all circumstantial changes it might know what and where its security was: so that it was security, not terror to the individual. So, come what would, the Church would not be prevailed over by her enemies.

14:1 [Note the wisdom of this. No delay was thus revealed; before the Lord came, the things were; but that was given which, as I doubt not, gives a full consecutive history of the Church till He comes.]

15:1 That is, the Church *dispensation on earth*, taking, as to time, the place of the broken-off Jewish branches, and therefore, in many respects, connected in dates, though the Church itself be just opposite in principle; for it is another and a heavenly thing instead of a failed earthly thing.

17:1 If we trace the actual order of church history in the Acts, we shall find the breaking up and scattering of the central and only Church of Jerusalem by the death of Stephen, gone to p. 18 Jesus--and then the Church on earth scattered; thereon Saul called for, an entirely new instrument to Gentiles, rulers, and the people of Israel; and thereon the union of the Church with Jesus *in heaven* for the first time mentioned, "Why persecutest thou me?" but after this (though the principle of Paul's mission and the union of the Church with Jesus was established), the patience of God continuing to work by the ministration of Peter. Æneas and Tabitha are the witnesses of his power; and the calling of the Gentiles is by his mouth, that the witness of the Jewish stock might still be preserved in grace, whatever the righteous justice of the dispensation might do in judgment (and so in dispensation the faithful partake of the ruin of the unfaithful, as Caleb and Joshua must wander in the wilderness), and thereon extraordinary intervention might effect besides in one born out of due time, the witness of prerogative grace in the disorder of the dispensation as to man. We find the lingering traces of habitual evil in the saints, for they objected to Peter his having gone to the Gentiles; yet this was the final sin of the Jews. Such was the patience of God, that they were not, historically, then shut up, till Paul's intercourse with them at Rome (Acts xxviii.); and even so, it was blindness in part, not stumbling to fall, and there was a remnant according to the election of grace.

[21:1](#) In the next, He is Son of man and Son of David seated on His throne.

[22:1](#) History was not written in heaven. I believe that the attempt to interpret prophecy by history has been most injurious to the ascertaining of its real meaning. When we have ascertained, by the aid of the Spirit of Christ, the mind of God, we have, as far as it be history, God's estimate of events, and their explanation. But history is man's estimate of events, and he has no right to assume that these are in prophecy at all; and it is clear that he must understand prophecy before he can apply it to any: when he understands it, he has what God meant to give him, without going farther. I do not admit history to be, in any sense, necessary to the understanding of prophecy. I get present facts, and God's moral account of what led to them, and thereby His moral estimate of them: I do not want history to tell me Nineveh or Babylon is ruined, or Jerusalem in the hands of the Gentiles. Of course, where any prophecy does apply to facts, it is a true history of those facts; but it is much more. It is the connection of those facts with the purposes of God in Christ, and whenever any isolated fact, however important in the eyes of man, is taken as the fulfilment of a prophecy, that prophecy is made of private interpretation: and this I believe to be the meaning of that passage. Of course, when any prophecy is fulfilled, the fulfilment is evidence of its truth, but the Christian does not need this; and evidence of truth and interpretation are two very different things.

[23:1](#) It will be found that they are intelligent worshippers--give a reason for their service; the angels never do.

[23:2](#) The four characters of beasts are the beads of the four genera stated in Genesis. Birds of the air, cattle, beasts of the field, and man; doubtless, they had specific characters as to attribute too. [The beasts will be found to unite seraphic qualities with the [p. 24](#) cherubic. Cherubic is earthly government. The seraph introduces the proper holiness of God and so brings in a principle of final judgment. In adding this note, I will add another recent impression, that up to the next chapter (where the Lamb first appears) angels had been the instrument; with the Lamb men take this, place, though the result be not brought out.]

[25:1](#) [The difference of reading throws doubt on this: at any rate, it was a new song in heaven, not a Jewish one.]

[26:1](#) [Many MSS read 'they shall reign;' but then I doubt as to 'redeemed [us].']

[27:1](#) This sets the saints in heaven but awaiting their inheritance--of the earth,--the place, in principle, of Christ now.

[27:2](#) [In the fourth chapter we have no angels, and the beast are apart from the elders; here the beasts and the elders are associated, and we have angels.]

[28:1](#) [This is true even if these honours of the beasts be transferred to the elders, as we know those of the

angels certainly will to men in the world to come. For the elders always represent the place of intelligent faith.]

[28:2](#) Viewed, that is, in its protracted character on earth.

[29:1](#) This can clearly apply but to two periods properly: the protracted period subsequent to owning the churches upon earth; and the preparatory scene of judicial and providential governance, subsequent to the taking up of the Church, and previous to the reign of the Son of man.

[30:1](#) As regards the crisis at the close, this would develop itself in, first, the period of trials and persecution of the saints (compare Matt. xxiv.); secondly, the preparatory or providential judgments on the despisers of the Lord (the wrath being simply announced, and not described, in the seventh trumpet); and lastly, a full account of the character, doings, and rise of the beast, with the final judgment of all that belongs to him.

[31:1](#) It would seem, from the [fifth](#) seal, just when the heavens are going to be changed, that, after the Church who have suffered are publicly owned and put in white robes, they are to rest a little season, because there are brethren and fellow-servants to be killed yet. Though, thus owned, therefore, vengeance could not be taken for this little space, till this was done. But then the heavens were changed to prepare for this vengeance. In the trumpets note that there is no evil on the saints, or any saints, but judgment on the earth or its inhabitants. The last suffering (*i.e.*, as to death) of these "brethren" seems a transition point, the act of the beast in its last state, as coming out of the bottomless pit, getting rid of them in that power, to the comfort of the inhabitants [p. 32](#) of the earth whom they tormented. They stood before the God of the earth.

Some would account this the time of the catching up of the Church; but this appears to me a mistake. It is the time, rather, of their public owning before the throne, consequent upon the change in the heavens previously spoken of, and previous to the commencement of the judgments. The hundred and forty-four thousand are, in that case, the Jewish remnant, then owned upon earth. Looked at as the Church, in its own portion, it is looked at, I apprehend, as in the heavens from the end of chapter iii. It is quite done with on earth there.

[32:1](#) [This is true in the main of the ecclesiastical body. It is said to Thyatira, "I gave her space to repent and she repented not," and the coming of Christ is then announced. But the call is renewed to Sardis (as I believe, Protestantism) in its turn, but, unless for individuals, in vain. It ends in Laodicea.]

[33:1](#) In the crisis, I do not believe it to be the judgment of Antichrist at all, but that subversion of Satan's power in the heavens, and consequent complete subversion and revolution of all the foundation and elements of all political arrangement and power, which are spoken of as preceding the day of the Lord. For the sources of power in the heavens must be changed before the day of the Lord come, though Satan may be raging upon earth; against whose earthly doings, and upon them, the day may come. [p. 34](#) (See Joel ii.; Mark xiii. 24, 25). The extent and importance of this revolution in the heavens I believe not to be

sufficiently attended to ordinarily. The earth may have been often shaken, and have reverted to its course, because the heavens are not. But when the heavens are, the sources of power are changed, and the enemy cast out; and he never regains that place, though, when loose, he may still act in opposition--fruitless opposition--on earth; for then the judgment is come, the heavens being so established and ruling.

34:1 The application of symbols literally seems to me to be very false in principle and a very unsuitable mode of interpretation. It is the denial that they are symbols. I believe the language of symbols as definite as any other, and always used in the same sense, as much as language is.

34:2 Or an expectant state as to themselves. Looking at the close, they had no longer to say "How long?" though the judgment might not yet be actually come.

34:3 So as regards the crisis, the heavens, as now filled by the saints, had no part in the Son of man's judgment. Their armies which are in heaven will follow Him; but these were the preparatory judgments of God's supreme providential power, in which the saints have no part at all. They could not open the bottomless [p. 35](#) pit to let the locusts out and Apollyon loose. They have the mind of Christ, and thus the character and ways of God in the Son of man, not His supreme government, though that ministers to them. It is entirely beyond them; and of that the trumpets are a part--the announcement of God's sovereign dealings and government, not His ways and purposes with them.

35:1 Hence I apprehend in the crisis this would be the intercession of the High Priest for those left on the earth--saints after (as we have been before led to see) the rapture of the Church--saints then connected with the condition of the earth.

36:1 Their corporate suffering was not characteristic of the contents of the trumpets, which dealt in judgments on those not saints; and there was no recognition of their present union and identification with the Lamb, though individually they might be so.

36:2 There is no symbol more difficult than the various uses of water. Living water is the Spirit; but, as this acts by the word, water (not exactly living water) is doctrine, and in a good sense the word. But waters are peoples, tongues, nations, and languages, and the sea the unformed mass of them. Hence rivers seem the different compartments of them, as "whose land the rivers have spoiled." But I take it, water is always viewed as under active moral influences of some sort, when living, in power; when the sea, it may be acted on merely; when fountains, it may be the [p. 37](#) spring of their influences, as the rivers would be their source; and therefore, according to the form of its use, it would be the source, or effects, of these moral influences on the mass of the population (what we call the "people"), and hence, the moral popular condition as a whole, the respective form of water indicating its particular character. The springs of waters, the sources of this influenced condition:--"From the fountain of Israel," looked at Israel as the source of the whole nation. Thus he stamped their relative character on all that flowed from him: and hence it might be applied perhaps directly to a teacher, or rather existing set of teachers--fountains of waters: for where they are, they characterize the people; as men say, "Like people, like priest."

[37:1](#) This will have its truth in the land withal in the latter day.

[38:1](#) Compare the spiritual process of the prophet Habakkuk, which just illustrates this.

[38:2](#) In the protracted view I see no reason to deviate from the ordinary interpretation of this (that is, the Saracens): in the crisis, it will have its accomplishment in the great last enemy, or Antichrist.

[39:1](#) As in the first woe in the long period, I take this as usually, as the Turks. In the crisis, it will be the inroads of the northern and eastern armies, headed up after into the Assyrian, and Gog, the prince of Magog.

[39:2](#) As regards the crisis, it is viewed as actually in heaven (*i.e.*, lost sight of on earth entirely, as it was actually, when it lost its place of testimony here below, as a city set on a hill). For all through, as to time, whatever the particular condition of the saints, from the moment the Church ceased to be owned by the p. 40 Son of man in judgment here, as in the seven churches, it was viewed either mystically (which gives the protracted period), or actually in heaven, when the latter-day trials and judgments, the crisis, as it has been called, takes place. In both cases it is lost sight of on earth.

[40:1](#) The rainbow round the head showed its connection with the restoration of creation--the covenant with creation at the time government was instituted.

[42:1](#) In the crisis, rather the apostate results of what was nominally the Church.

In the seals the Lamb is concerned, and the saints are still liable to persecution. The trumpets are providential judgments on the evil, in which the saints are not found (often by wicked men on one another, as in Jewish history). Then comes the display of the open enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ and their judgment, and in their full character, by the Son of man Himself.

[43:1](#) But the historical continuance is then not immediate; but from the state of things consequent on the position of the parties, more particularly from the flight of the woman into the wilderness, the previous verses being merely to spew what had brought the parties into this condition, that the strength of the man-child was not at first put forth, but taken out of the way--then there was a process by which the heavens were first cleared; and then that by which, after its full heading up against Christ, apostate power was put down. The thing to be noted here, as to order is, that the war seems to be before the powers of heaven were changed, with which the fifth, sixth, and seventh seals must be compared. I do not see that the owning of the saints, in the fifth, involves the changing of the heavens. The sixth seems, however, to do so.

The order which these passages would involve, as to the final crisis, would be this:--The three seals after the first are the beginning of sorrows; during this period the faithful witnesses on earth were liable to be killed, and the gospel of the kingdom was p. 44 preached among the Gentiles. At the fifth seal the heavens

are changed.

The abomination of desolation is set up in the midst of the last week.

A time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, the dragon persecuting the woman.

The woman flees.--Those in Judea flee to the mountains.

The sixth seal is opened: and, before the winds blow, the remnant are sealed, and the palm-bearing multitude seen clothed in white.

The cry of the remnant on earth brings judgment down there; as the cry from under the altar in the fifth seal had brought on the sixth.

Then come the trumpet-judgments in succession, the last involving the final judgment.

The only point that remains is, when is Satan cast down? The twelfth chapter takes in the whole course of the book, in its sources within, to introduce the last agents as objects of judgment announced in heaven on the seventh trumpet sounding. That chapter shews, as noticed, the first act to be catching clean out of the way Him who is to rule the nations; and the whole question all goes on after that. The next step is, not changing the heavens, but war there; and then the adversary and accuser is cast down. This is clearly before the last three and a half years when there is tribulation, and before the tribulation and fleeing takes place; at least it seems to me so. The changing of the heavens is after that, or rather thereupon. I only state, then, as to this, that upon these passages, the casting down of the dragon, as to the crisis, seems to be some time previous to the setting up of the abomination, after the catching up of the saints, *i.e.*, before or in the period of the first four or five seals. *

It is clear that the appearing of the Son of man is subsequent to these changes in the heavens, from Matthew, Mark, Joel; and indeed the whole course and order of these mighty dealings of God's judgment. The epiphany of His parousia destroys the man of sin. Isaiah xxiv. may be referred to here.

[43:*](#) [The sixth would be the effect of it.]

[Next: Part Two](#)



[Sacred Texts](#) [Christianity](#) [Index](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#)

NOTES ON THE REVELATION.

Part Two

But to return to the details of the eleventh chapter, what we find is this: all who had the priestly character and what concerned them, preserved--even their worship and the altar (that is, the holy place and the place of the priest's approach). But the outward profession--the holy city--is all given up to be entirely desecrated for the prophetic period of forty-two months. But it is not only the priestly associations which are preserved here, but the witnessing or prophetic character. That is, efficacy was given to their testimony, "given to the prayers of the saints," or given to "my two witnesses," which signifies efficacy to the subject of the gift [1](#)

p. 46

This witness was guarded, not by external worldly preservatives--far from it; during this period "woe" was on what might have been so. What was external was the subject of merely secret angelic interference of God; but judgment corresponded to their testimony. If any would hurt them, out of their mouth went fire. It was not the coming down of judgment by external manifest authority; the pretence, at least, of that was on the side of the false prophet. But they were answered in judgment, to preserve them according to the testimony of their mouth against those that would destroy them. This secret hand of God, according to the word of the faithful witness, when all was gone wrong and desecrated, has, I doubt not, been always in such cases afforded. It was not the time for open appearance in judgment, but always to interfere in watchful vindication of their testimony when needed. If they took the sword in such cases, it was an effort to alter the perfect order [1](#) of God's providence which always preserves His principles--they would perish by the sword.

What follows seems analogous to the circumstances of Moses and Elias, and the energy of their ministry, not a question of their persons. Moses ministered when the people were under oppression, when the world prevailed; and he had power to plague the earth, to which Pharaoh belonged, and of which he was prince, and which he sought. Elias shut up heaven on the apostate people, who ought to have been in connection and association with it;

p. 47

and the blessing was withheld from a land watered with the rain of heaven. Thus, it was power of calling in judgment suited to the respective position of the two: one, acting on the world out of which God's people were called; the other, judging the people which had become the world by arresting their enjoyment of blessings from heaven. Both have their application to the state of things alluded to in this short but comprehensive prophecy.

At the close of the three years and a half, their sackcloth testimony ceased by their death through the hands of the beast of the bottomless pit, when they shall have fulfilled their testimony. The eighth verse seems to me designed to afford the general and specific applications, both of which I have stated my belief to be, in the mind of the Spirit of God; first, the great city of the world, which was where Christ was crucified; and specifically Jerusalem, where religious apostasy, always the leader of the world's evil, locally committed the act.

As regards the interpretation, which would give one thousand two hundred and sixty years to this prophecy, enough has been said by others: a testimony, raised during the protracted moral apostasy, to which I believe the Holy Spirit attaches more importance than many are inclined to do; for God loves His saints. I believe it was of the last possible importance, but not of closing importance--not the great closing scene. I hold that it held, to the manifestation of the personal Antichrist, the same relation as the Church, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, does to the personal coming of Christ, the Lord; and that is not unimportant or immaterial, very far otherwise, or a light object of God's guardian and all-thoughtful eye. Slaughtered Saints, and worshipped demons, suppression, or at least degradation, of God's ordinance *de facto* in civil authority--these were not light things in God's

p. 48

estimate, though His patience might bear with them in that long-suffering which was salvation. But the sub-version of the true glory of the Church in the recognition of the Holy Ghost, was not unimportant, as proving the degeneracy of man, who apostatizes in all circumstances, though it were not the open war against the Son.

Further, I add, that the apostasy, and the revelation of the man of sin, are two distinct things. The apostasy is the introduction of the man of sin. Now the apostasy may not be ••VO•OÇ, the wicked one; but surely it is of some importance. I find much want of attention to the accuracy of scripture in those who seem most accurate themselves. The mystery of iniquity working, the apostasy, and the wicked one, may all be looked at as distinct things, though intimately connected; nor is •VO•OÇ identical with Antichrist, though it may be very likely 1 they may be the same person. 2

With regard to the denial of symbols, and the assertion that it is so literal a book, it seems to me untenable. Thus, when the third part of the sun was smitten, the day shone not for a third part of it; but this was not what would have followed in any literal sense. And a little investigation into detail will shew

that much of what has been recently said on the subject will not bear examination.

There is another point which the advocates of literalism [3](#) and crisis often insist on, which deserves notice (though I am unwilling to detain myself for questions)--days being

p. 49

put for years. This is denied, notwithstanding the plain suggestion of such an idea both in the passage in Numbers and in that in Ezekiel.

The seventy weeks, however, stand strongly in the way; and the ingenuity of criticism has been called into service to say that it is simply seventy sevens, not seventy weeks, and may thus literally be years. Now, if the conventional reading [1](#) be taken, it is simply weeks; if not, it cannot mean sevens at all, but seventy seventies. I think this criticism, therefore, cannot be maintained. It is either seventy weeks or seventy times seventy, not seventy sevens.

But, as regards the numbers here, there is another important question: it is alleged that, looked at as in crisis and literally, this is not the last half week at all. [2](#) In the last half week at Jerusalem, it is said they are not times of testimony, but of vengeance--not of testimony of any one, Christian or Jew. The disciples, who had been giving testimony, and called to possess their souls in patience, are then directed to flee; for these were the days of vengeance. This was at the setting up of the abomination of

p. 50

desolation, the commencement of the last twelve hundred and sixty days, or three years and a half. So in the twelfth chapter, after the casting down of Satan, his great wrath begins upon the earth; then heaven and its inhabitants are free; and the woman, accordingly, flees into the wilderness for the twelve hundred and sixty days, to be nourished from the face of the serpent. Antichrist does not assume his proper distinctive character in Jerusalem till then. He may, as the oppressive apostate head of the Gentiles, at the instigation of Jews, persecute the saints who have the testimony of Jesus--possibly tyrannically oppress even the Jews, as the holy nation, by times; but, strictly, their "covenant is with death, and with hell are they at agreement" (*i.e.*, as to the rulers who represent the nation). This last is true as regards the last half week; its character is a covenant of the beast with the Jews. But the Lord in Matthew xxiv. distinguishes the general testimony of the kingdom sent out into all the world, and which began immediately after His death, from the last half week only. What He speaks of is not a special testimony in Jerusalem, and we must not con-found the peculiar testimony of the two witnesses with the first fourteen verses of Matthew xxiv. That chapter knows no first half week. There is a general testimony and one half week, beginning with the setting up of the abomination of desolation, and ending with the Lord's coming. Daniel ix. does contemplate a first half week, in which the prince that shall come makes a covenant with the mass of the Jews, which he will break in the middle of the week. But Revelation xi. contemplates, I believe, only the last half week, that of Matthew xxiv.

We have another distinction here, which also runs through what follows, not duly noticed--people, tongues, nations, languages, and they that dwell upon the earth.

p. 51

[paragraph continues] I say not duly noticed, as the universality of Antichrist's dominion has been argued from the expression, "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him." But there, as elsewhere, they are in contrast with nations, kindreds, tongues, people. The case of the dwellers upon earth is always, I think, more aggravated.

Thus it is not merely evil conduct towards the witnesses here, but great interested joy at their destruction. There are three parties engaged in the evil: the beast, who kills the witnesses; those of the nations and kindreds, who do not suffer them to be buried, exhibiting the natural hostility of the human heart; and the people dwelling upon earth, whom the testimony of the witnesses had specially tormented. For the testimony of holy consistency and prophetic nearness to God is continual torment to them to whom the testimony comes for their apostasy. The prophet, in this character, is always a witness that, with all their pride and self-satisfaction, they are apostate; and this is torment, for they have really no peace with God, whatever their pretension. The return to life of the witnesses was a public thing, in which the judgment and vindication of God was plain to their enemies. They heard the voice from heaven, saying to them, Come up hither. They were first brought to life, and then called up to heaven openly.

These witnesses had stood before the God of the earth, the witnesses of God's title here. The affright which the public manifestation of God in their favour produced did not give efficacy to their testimony; but the affrighted ones glorified the God of heaven. There was the general effect of unrepentant religion--the testimony not received; for that would have broken their will. But their fear acted on externally was to honour God formally, but only as One in heaven. It was that which acted on themselves

p. 52

that did this--the earthquake and slaying of men, names of men, their pride and title put down. [1](#)

All this took place before the sounding of the last trumpet; but when it closed, the sixth woe was passed.

Although there may be an accomplishment of this more literally in crisis, there is nothing in the revival of the witnesses, which renders it strictly literal; on the contrary, the terms are, for the most part, symbolical. A spirit of life from God, though it may be applied, is not so strictly characteristic of mere quickening. [2](#) It was distinct, however, from a mere renewal of prophecy in sackcloth. The testimony now was by their exaltation publicly, not by their faithfulness in trial.

I would remark on verse 8, that it is properly not the street of the great city; but rather the highway or great street of the city, but the antecedent to which seems the whole idea. All this time the last great woe was on the eve of being manifested.

The witnesses then were a testimony--given previous to the last dire expression of the power of evil being let loose--an adequate testimony; and that of God's claim upon the earth, during the time that these dwellers upon earth claimed it as theirs, and therefore were tormented by the testimony. It was not necessarily during the prevalence

p. 53

of the beast out of the bottomless pit; for till the war (ver. 7) his existence is not in question. When he makes war on them, he overcomes and kills them; but they have power in testimony till then--till their testimony is fulfilled. Their testimony, 1 then, was not properly under the oppression of his power; at least that is not the way God distinguishes it. It is carried on in sorrow while the external sacred things are defiled, but the priestly remnant, and what pertained to them, preserved; and this for the forty-two months. And in these circumstances they fulfil their testimony: then the beast out of the bottomless pit makes war upon them and kills them. 2 When the question as to power comes on, and Antichrist rises up in his full form against the Lamb, he is finally cast down, and put, with the false prophet, in the lake of fire, and his followers killed. It is dealing with the witnesses in its principle, an antecedent act; the Lamb has not yet come upon the scene. For He comes personally victorious: but here, while the beast comes against the witnesses who stand before the God of the earth, they are overcome, because the Lamb has not yet come forth in power, nor the earthly kingdom come. Lucifer shall rise up against the Lord from heaven, and be cast down. When his representative rises against the witnesses and representatives of the Lord--these two anointed ones, they are cast down and killed, and taken to heaven where the glory and the Lamb yet were. It was the last external public act of testimony--whether for the dispensation or the crisis,--and therefore had definitely the character attached to it when prophetic

p. 54

witness had place in it--the prevalence of evil externally, and suffering of the witnesses--their rest and refuge being above.

Thus, the beast out of the bottomless pit does not appear here as the direct agent against the witnesses, till the three years and a half of their testimony are finished, though, as to their condition, they were in sackcloth. When the announcement of the last woe comes, heaven estimates it as the signal for the earthly kingdom coming; and the Church, anticipative, as having the mind of Christ, gives thanks to the Lord God Almighty, who, in the continuity of His being and counsel, was now taking His power; and therefore she anticipates all the results. The elders only speak here; for the things were not in the vision in their completeness or principles: but it was the actual anticipation of the facts as now coming in,--as having the mind of Christ.

It would seem that the last woe had a wider aspect 1 than the others--much, though containing the scene and object of them. In verse 12 of the succeeding chapter, after Satan is cast down, woe indeed is pronounced on the inhabitants of the earth, who were the former objects of the woes; and also, then, on those of the sea. Now it is true this does not come in, in proper historical continuity, from chapter xii.;

nor is it the final woe of chapter xi.; but it introduces the larger scene which is the subject of the judgment executed in that woe. But the expression of the woe there had been reserved; here, all are concerned in it under heaven.

Footnotes

[45:1](#) Power was given them that they should prophesy in sack-cloth for the period of the treading down of the outside holy place while the inner was preserved. It is given in days here, I apprehend, to shew the continuity and constancy of their testimony, not merely the term. The next point in the testimony was this, that it was without the attainment of order in the ministration of Christ's great offices on earth when He shall come; but it was a witness to them. If we compare Zechariah iv. we shall find, in the restoration of the Jewish economy on earth, the strictest order in all the parts; and in the arrangements of the one candlestick, and its two olive trees and pipes. But here there are two olive trees and two candlesticks. There they stood before the Lord of [p. 46](#) the whole earth; here they stand before the God of the earth--a witness to the truth, but not the accomplishment of it: not its order, beauty, and regularity, but a testimony to God's title to have it so. Such were these witnesses.

[46:1](#) It would be, in fact too, acting on the principles God was judging.

[48:1](#) As I suppose they are.

[48:2](#) [I have left out a passage here, referring to a work, containing the year-day views, which I cannot with any certainty point out.]

[48:3](#) The application of Old Testament allusions or prophecies in the sense in which they are used there, seems to me to be equally [p. 49](#) untenable; they are borrowed thence to be applied to heavenly subjects, just as in the case of Jerusalem; so the analogy holds throughout: the bringing down the Revelation to the same sense seems to me simply depriving us of them, and merely to amount to this, that when the apostle uses prophetic language to carry it up into further scenes, we are arrested where the former prophecy left us: simply, I conceive, darkening, instead of enlightening.

[49:1](#) *i.e.*, by points.

[49:2](#) [I have changed this paragraph, as I, at the time of writing these notes, followed the usual division in chapter xi. into two half weeks, applying it as an answer to the writers just alluded to. As I do not now accept this division, I have of course changed the paragraph into short observations on the question; but I have given what is alleged for it.]

[52:1](#) Babel's word was, "Let us make ourselves a name." God only is entitled to a name, or to give it.

Adam had title as regards the beasts, as set over them by God; "and he brought them unto Adam." The enemy may give a name, in derision, to saints, over-ruled of God; but they are gathered only to the name of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and should bear His name, and, in Him, the Father's only.

[52:2](#) Observe, it is neither resurrection nor changing them who are alive, but a special act. Man had killed them; but God quickened and called them up.

[53:1](#) [I say their testimony, because as to his general character the beast will persecute the saints.]

[53:2](#) To the joy of the dwellers upon earth; and thus, doubtless, he is their great friend.

[Next: Part Three](#)



[Sacred Texts](#) [Christianity](#) [Index](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#)

NOTES ON THE REVELATION.

Part Three

The nineteenth verse of chapter xi. should, I think, though a connecting one, more properly begin the twelfth

p. 55

chapter. Looking at the chapters as continuous, it is the direct manifest agency of heaven upon earth, the connection of the two. It is not now a seal opened by one who alone could do it, but the temple opened; "and there was seen," &c.

The first thing seen was the secure and unchanging witness of God's covenant mercy, on which all his thoughts and purposes were bent. After the sounding of the seventh trumpet, all the relationships of things, and their real principles and sources, came out. If we look at the eighteenth verse of chapter xi. as closing generally the whole history as it does, then the twelfth takes back the Church to see, abstractedly, the principles and sources of all the events, which, in fact, will be brought out in the last three years and a half manifestly.

These two points of view are in no way inconsistent; for the last crisis is a bringing to a head and manifestation these very sources of action in manifested agents and direct collision of action. On the contrary, none can understand the crisis that takes place, unless they enter into the sources, principles, and moving of (in some sense, we may say, interested) agents, which are here unveiled from the beginning; and, on the other hand, the workings of these agents and principles, and their results, are never clearly seen until brought thus out at the end in their very results, though faith may discern their principles long before. Thus the Lord says in the first displays of His power, "I beheld Satan, like lightning, fall from heaven;" and his great apostle reveals to us, that the mystery of iniquity did already work: only there was a letter, till he should be taken out of the way; and then the wicked should be revealed, whom the Lord would destroy. The unveiling, then, of these hidden, but real agents, was just the unfolding of what would be brought into crisis: and the

p. 56

crisis is the actual manifestation of these agents in their true character, no longer under the cover of mysteries. Hence the Church, as admitted into heaven, knows them, and explains their manifestations when they shew them-selves on earth.

This forms no part, properly, of the seals, then; but comes in, under the Church's proper knowledge, by the Holy Ghost, and His revelations of what passes in heaven; not in mere communion, as taking of the things of Christ, but in revelation, as showing what is connected with the manifestation of His glory. It is all based (come what will) on the immutability of the ark of the covenant. It was the ark of the covenant of God and the temple of God. The Church rests on this sure faithfulness, but its direct application is to Israel, though in peculiarly symbolical images.

This being fixed, the ways and purposes of Providence were then discovered. There appeared a great 1 sign in heaven. As the woman was for the man, so was the man by the woman; and here things were revealed, not in ultimate results (that is the knowledge of the Church always, in communion, whether as to Christ's glory as man or God all in all), but as administered by the way, and therefore, the man is by the woman here. So in other types of scripture. Hence, though we see her in the glory of God's mind at first, we soon see her in various circumstances and exigencies, to which she was, in His wisdom, and righteousness, subjected, even to fleeing away upon earth. Here, however, she is seen in her title of glory in heaven. The purpose of God is in the Church; but Christ is its great subject; and, in fact, she may be subject to ten thousand vicissitudes here below, for the world is not

p. 57

regulated otherwise than secretly. God may glorify her, but the woman's place is to be subject; she does not carry on the war, and cannot in this character. I have already mentioned, elsewhere, 1 that the activity of faith, or its failure, is, in typical scripture, spoken of as the man--the condition of the Church or the people of God (for in this sense the Church is the name for a condition of the people of God, this last being used in a general sense) is represented by the woman. 2

We have to look here, at the people of God, as in His own mind or purpose, and therefore glorified in that; yet, as we have said, entering into the detail of consequences, it is in the ministration of it, for it is the man by the woman, not the woman for the man. Both have their importance and their place. Hence the woman is seen clothed with supreme authority--the splendour of supreme authority, and all derivative light under her feet; 3 and derivative rule, all lesser authority, her crown, and that in perfectness. Thus it is viewed abstractedly, but in purpose with all God attaches to it, and about which all God's mediate purposes or plans roll--His own glory and Jesus ever the end. And thus shall it close, for it is true that $\bullet\rho\chi\bullet\tau\omicron\varsigma\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\bullet\alpha\varsigma\tau\bullet\lambda\omicron\varsigma\tau\bullet\varsigma\pi\rho\bullet\xi\epsilon\omega\varsigma$.

For we are not speaking here of God's returning into His own infinitude, which can hardly be called purpose: 4--Christ,

p. 58

then, the glory of the Son, was the purpose; but here, it being the ministration of it, the woman is presented and the man hidden.

If we descend to detail, we shall find the most marked contrast: the lowest state of the lowest condition of God's people--that under the law broken, and they ruled over by the last form of Gentile evil, as to its personality--that in which Christ was born; and so rightly. For by sin the glory was all reversed; all was reversed: the throne, which ought to be the instrument of God's justice, the instrument of slaying His Son, at the instance and instigation (intercession, if you please) of His priests, the leaders of His own people! What a picture of things! If we go to the time when the Jews will actually say, "To us a child is born," we shall see it is after the very last and manifested form of the last evil--the evil of the last days. The Church knows it now, for it has the mind of Christ; and we are renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us.

That which we find here, then, is the purpose of God concerning the condition of His people producing One who was to rule all nations; and, instead of His doing so, He is caught up to God and His throne; and the condition of His people is left exposed to trial, misery, and pursuit of the great enemy, who had been waiting and seeking to devour the man-child when born. It, however, entirely escapes from him. Such is the general picture, which throws much light on the whole of the detail. If we apply it to Christ in person, then its accomplishment as to heavenly purpose, whatever He might suffer here, is

p. 59

sufficiently manifest (the condition of God's people being suffering and trial thereon). If we apply it to the saints, who overcome here (as we read) as He did, and to whom it is given to rule as He has received of His Father, then we find that, though the object of the enemy was to devour them too, they are caught up out of his way to Him who was above his power; and the trial and persecution fall on those who are left here--upon the woman. The details of this are entered into in what follows in the chapter. After the child is caught up, the woman flees. In this there are no details. It is a description of the position of the parties, and that with all possible clearness, as with divine power and precision. There is one of these of which, as yet, I have said but little--this other wonder (who was opposed to the woman, this purpose of God in His people), the great red dragon. His object was to destroy the man-child to be brought forth by the woman whose pains of labour he perceived, and hating all that belonged to it; for the purpose of God and its fruits were his destruction. He failed in this, and turned his anger against that which, in a certain sense, was left in his power.

That the dragon is the hostile power of the adversary there is no question. We have the authority of this book (chap. xx.), I suppose no one will deny, for saying that.

If we look to the source of power, it is there; only without the description which gives it its formal

character. It was here seen in heaven (i. e., not in its providential forms and consequences by the will of man, but as the Lord viewed it in its will or power of evil), as a whole, identified in form with the beast (to which it gave its power, it is true), yet not the beast, and not identified with it in the specialities of its latter-day character; but the whole generic form of Satan's power, in that which took, at a given period, that character. It had the seven heads

p. 60

and ten horns, but the heads were crowned, not the horns. It was Satan, acting in the form of power, in which he countervailed--not simply the earthly purpose 1 amongst the Jews, or in which he attacks Jerusalem by an earthly instrument, but--the whole heavenly 2 purposes and the glory of God by Christ in His people. Hence, too, the death of Christ, which closed His Jewish and earthly career, is not noticed here; because the Jewish associations of Christ are not the question when things are seen in the heavens. The child was caught up to God and His throne.

The tail of the serpent, his moral influence--evil moral influence--characterized by the form of the Roman empire, the effects of his power, and the dominant religion of the state, put down a third of the rulers of God, and made them subordinate.

The effect on the woman was her retreat into solitude and sorrow, for so she is seen in actual effect.

Here are the parties: the seventh verse begins a new topic. There was war in heaven. This was not the war of the Church, but of divine power; not yet, however, in the manifested energy of the Son of man, the mighty man,

p. 61

the man-child; but in the more secret agencies of His will, angelic ministrations. The Church's war, carried on in the flesh, is carried on in suffering, and waged against the accuser by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; he being always there, and yet they above him, as an overcome enemy in Christ, in their flesh wretched, and as to that in its will, when it worked, under his power. But here it was power to expel in service to God--the question settled whether the dragon and his angels, should continue there: "And the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." 1 Then came the celebration; and in the thirteenth verse, what followed on the earth: and the change in all this is very important. The Church's estimate of it in heaven, too, is--"the accuser of our brethren;" 2 the consequence of whose accusations and power was trial 3 and persecution upon earth. They loved not their lives unto death, overcoming him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony--a time then of saints' suffering, and Satan having his place in heaven, in authority and power, and deceiving the whole world. From this the victory of Michael and his angels cast him down.

I apply here the same principle of providential working

p. 62

and manifestation in crisis as throughout; and I mention it here only particularly, and its application to the fall of idolatry, because by modern interpreters, entirely rejected. It is not his influence in the Church that is here in question, [1](#) but his power in the rule of the world, however that might act on the Church. The argument, then, that mischief might accrue to the Church by the ceasing of Satan's open power in the world, because the Church thereby sunk in the world, is nothing to the purpose: for my own part, I admit it in the fullest manner possible, though I am sure all was wisely ordered. But as the setting up the supreme power in Nebuchadnezzar, and his speedy connection of it with enforced idolatry, was very important in the divine government in the world, that power coming from God (though Israel was, or might not be, in question in this last act), so the entire relinquishment of idolatry by the governing power (for whatever man does, God looks to the conduct of the governing power) was a fact of great importance in the history of God's government of the world. It was a setting aside Satan's direct throne in the world; for the existence of power in the Gentiles is not Satan's direct throne (it was transferred to them by God); it is its use and character in sinful man that makes it Satan's. This may be merely by passions, or it may be by the direct worship of Satan and his angels, or by open blasphemy against God. The second of these is the open heavenly rule of Satan, looked at in providence: and this went on in Gentile idolatry. He may recover it secretly by what is called the Church: [2](#) but the thing itself was never restored. This appears to me a very plain and important distinction in the exercise of Satan's power, which

p. 63

we cannot pass by without leaving a blank in our knowledge of God's mind, and consequently its train lost and the Church misled. Taking this event in this point of view, it would connect itself with the providential course of things which the Church understands in heaven, though not yet outwardly manifested; and the consequent period would be a period of years, the period being the period of her nourishing there, not the date of her flight for this providential purpose. These things are given generally in their characters, not dates, because it was a course of progressively developed principles, although sometimes facts may have given particular dates. As regards that which takes place actually in the crisis, the facts are simple and plain. [1](#)

There was war in heaven. Michael, the archangel, and his angels fought, and the dragon; and the dragon was cast out of heaven; entirely and *finally* out of that place of authority and power which he had held, as ruling the world--"the rulers of the darkness of this world." As to who Michael is, we have mention of this exalted name in Jude, as contending with the devil; and in Daniel, as that great prince who stands up as the ruler of providential power, in favour of the Jewish people, who are the central object of providence in the arrangement of nations. I do not see that it is revealed that it is Christ [2](#) under a

p. 64

mystical name, but it is certainly the direct superior agent of God's providential purposes, and thus the immediate instrument of favour to His people in that character. The notion of archangels is not sustained in scripture. 1 There are seven angels, who stand in the presence of God, spoken of. But Satan was cast out, finally out of heaven; and the announcement given that salvation, strength, and the kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ was come; and the reason--that the accuser of the brethren was cast down. Satan, in his character of anti-priest, had been unceasing in his accusations against the brethren; though, in the course of God's dealings with the saints, during this time of trial, He had suffered their being even put to death here below; yet they had overcome their enemy there really as to all the questions which Satan could raise before God. The accusations were of no avail, through the blood of the Lamb. Satan could not over-throw their conscience; and by the word of their testimony they maintained the truth and righteousness against him as the father of lies. .So that while the great High Priest secured their cause above, Satan as a liar and accuser, seeking to deceive, was baffled and overcome; as a murderer, was submitted to, till Christ took the power, and he was turned out. The manner in which accusations and persecutions are connected, in principle, may be seen in the history of the book of Job. Thereon the dwellers in heaven--for this was the ground and place of the enmity and conflict (see Ephesians, chaps. i. ii. and vi.)--are called on to rejoice, for this conflict is ended. Christ, as the great High Priest, might have sustained them *in the*

p. 65

conflict with the accuser: but now the conflict 1 was ended. This is clearly what concerned the Church, in this matter, as identified with Christ in His priestly exaltation. Woe then comes upon the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea; for the devil, not yet shut up, but cast from heaven, is come down in great wrath, knowing he has but a short time. Here the second paragraph of this chapter ends: the first at verse 8, where the parties are stated, as we have seen, in the original idea and purpose; here the actings of heaven's deliverance from his power and the consequence of this to the Church, which properly sits in heavenly places (and indeed all heavenly saints); then, verse 13, what the devil did when cast down to earth, after he was cast out of heaven.

The dragon has now lost his place in heaven. He cannot rule the world, as thence, as the prince and god of it: but he comes as a woe and judgment from God upon those who dwelt on earth, had not followed the heavenly calling, where it was then; and he is in great wrath, because he has now but a short time. His enmity against Him 2 who has thus sentenced him, is exercised against that which has any connection with Him in the now sphere of his malice. He can no longer accuse the brethren; he persecutes the woman. And at this period, upon earth, the woman is the Jewish people owned of God, the woman that brought forth the man (for that was true of the Jewish economy as to Christ, looked at in His title of power upon earth--"To us a son is born"). But here, to

p. 66

the woman is given force and speed from God; but only to flee into the wilderness, where she is nourished for the allotted period, which, speaking as to the closing crisis, is three years and a half; for during this period the opportunity of her return was not afforded by the cessation of the dragon's power.

The dragon here takes the name of serpent, as having the form of subtlety, deceit, and malice, "that old serpent which is the devil and Satan." It is the enmity, we are to remark, of the dragon and serpent, not the woe on the earth which is described: that is reserved for more detailed account in what follows, at least as to the part material for the Church's instruction in its passage towards it. And here I must remark the extreme importance to us of connecting the events and agents in the crisis, in principle, character, and progress with what is passing and the agents we see around us, or it loses its main moral effect and its whole use for the Church. The Church is not under this woe, I believe, at all, in the final crisis. It is on earth, to the Jewish people, this Son is born: we belong to the heavens, whence Satan is east out. But, by the ripened fruit in that day, as more fully displayed in subsequent chapters, we learn the present nature and character of the tree that bears it, as God describes man by his fruits in Romans iii., though all men have not borne such. And thus I can judge my own heart, and know what man is. And if the last apostate be not yet revealed, he is but the head of a system of which God's revelation of him, as the full fruit, makes me know the sap and character. Though the serpent could not overcome the woman in war (for God preserved her, not by the mighty man, but by flight; and there his direct power was stopped; for heavenly power was in aid for her), yet the resources he had he uses, and pours forth these waters, animated by his energy, as a

p. 67

flood. I should suppose, from the explanation given in this book of waters looked at as on earth, these were armies of people directly under Satan's moral influence, flowing from his mouth, the expression of his mind and will.

But the earth--the scene of God's providential and prophetic agency--helped the woman by whatever providence for God teaches here the facts of Satan's agency, not the historical providences) and swallowed up and brought to nought this agency of Satan: it was frustrated. And he went to make war with the remnant of her seed, the godly Jews who might remain within his reach, who obeyed God's commandments and had received the testimony of Jesus Christ--for so (for I am now speaking of the final crisis) I believe the Jews, *i.e.*, the remnant, will. But I do not say further than a *prophetic* testimony; "for the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus." The dragon (for he is not now spoken of in his subtle actings, but identified again in his character and acting in the sphere and character of power) was wroth with the woman whom he could not touch, and went to make war with, to use violence towards, the remnant of the seed.

Footnotes

[54:1](#) At least is connected with a wider scope of results.

[56:1](#) Another sign begins chapter xv.

[57:1](#) "Christian Witness," volume iii., page 146.

[57:2](#) But as to direct historic application the woman here is the Jewish people (or Jerusalem) seen in heaven and glory first, then cast out and persecuted by the dragon--in God's mind, and then the object of Satan's enmity.

[57:3](#) Thus all the previous state of heart in which reflected light was shadowed out for the people is put under their feet.

[57:4](#) Purpose has rather the force of the thing purposed here, than intention. If I am understood, I have no anxiety as to metaphysical p. 58 precision. The word purpose evidently includes both, but may apply specially to either (*i.e.*, the intention and the thing intended).

[60:1](#) [The Son born was caught up, but was to rule all nations: the heavenly condition is here the answer and remedy for an effort directed against one who was to rule over the earthly. His rule and power is the matter in question.]

[60:2](#) This is true, even in Antichrist; for that is association with the Jews and possession of Jerusalem, to hold it as the centre of earthly power against the Lord, as coming from heaven. The "scornful men" that dwell at Jerusalem "have made a covenant with death and are at agreement with hell" [I have not altered the abstract applications: it would be changing the book, (and they afford a kind of dictionary to the symbols,) but I add here and there the particular prophetic events in which they are fulfilled--as I believe, that to which they apply.]

[61:1](#) [But they are not as yet replaced by the saints there.]

[61:2](#) [Note here, the victory is celebrated; they overcame, they are not therefore in this conflict any more.]

[61:3](#) I suspect it will be found that, while the suffering may be most blessed and glorious for righteousness', or Christ's sake, it is, nevertheless, always used by the Lord for the correction of some secret or manifest evil in the individual or in the Church.

[62:1](#) *i.e.*, even referring the passage to the protracted period.

[62:2](#) [In saint-worship, which is really demon-worship.]

[63:1](#) [Satan is cast down from heaven to earth, where he yet is in great wrath for Daniel's last half week, and persecutes the Jews owned of God, saved providentially as a body, whereon the enemy seizes all he can. The woman is, as I have said, the Jews owned of God, or Jerusalem.]

[63:2](#) I see a great deal to lead to the conviction that it is Christ as the head of angelic power, but not certainly, and therefore say no more than I do here. [Fuller enquiry would lead me to a different conclusion.]

[64:1](#) *i.e.*, in the plural number. Superiorities (as principalities, powers, thrones, dominions) are spoken of, but not directly archangels.

[65:1](#) Conflict with Satan, and trial, though used, perhaps, for chastening judgment, are very different from judgment in war, where Satan has power according to the fall of the first Adam, and a will to walk with him.

[65:2](#) It is the angelic head of the Jewish people who was the power that overcame him above.

[Next: Part Four](#)



[Sacred Texts](#) [Christianity](#) [Index](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#)

NOTES ON THE REVELATION.

Part Four

In this chapter, then, we have a very clear account, not of the details of providential historical acting, but of Satan's mind, and ways, and purposes concerning the purpose of God in its inceptive character; for, as accomplished, it is clear he cannot touch it. Although I have little doubt in my mind in what events these plans of Satan will specially shew themselves, I have entered into them here very little, because God is here instructing the Church what the plans are, rather than *how* they are accomplished, save as presenting severally the agents: and if we are not content to be instructed as God instructs us, we had better

p. 68

not learn at all. I desire in scripture not to explain but to receive, and, in communicating, to say what is there, not add thoughts. This may seem a slight distinction; but the effect of the difference will soon be seen in the formation of systems, instead of actual profiting by divine instruction

There are three distinct parts in the chapter. First, the agents; the woman in God's purpose to be delivered of a man-child (the depository of earthly power to rule the nations); the dragon ready to devour him, whose birth and character he partially knew (for scripture told it), and whose speedy bringing forth was now apparent. The result is, that the man-child, instead of acting in power at once, is hid, but in the place of Godhead and power, and the woman flees. Thus the direct agents are disposed of. We have, then, the second portion; in which the question is between his (the dragon's) place there, and the angelic ministrations of *God's power* ("His angels which excel in strength"); and the dragon loses his place in heaven (he who had deceived the whole world), and he is cast out into the earth, not properly the world. This is all the direct statement made in this portion: for the question was, ruling the nations. But then secretly this made a most important change in another thing not so open in the world,--the Church, dwellers in heaven, the brethren. This was the way heaven was specially affected by this event. Salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ were now come, 1 not *till* then in power. There was that which was hidden to the world and not understood, no more than Christ was, the heavenly-minded Church which understands God's leading and most important meaning in these things

(what was next Himself, if I

p. 69

may so speak). There was a witness to all Christ's glory on the terms and grounds of God's holiness in heaven, as walking in the light as He is in the light, having fellowship one with another, the blood of Jesus cleansing them from all sin, all the time that Satan was in the heavens drawing the third part of the stars--the ruler of the darkness of this world--a people who walked indeed on earth, but in spirit and title and nature, as given, dwelt in heaven; their Head being exalted above Satan, even before God, and who had suffered and shed His blood for them, though now, as yet, He had not taken His power ("all things were not yet put under him"); wherefore Satan could torment. This people Satan had been constantly accusing before God, for their inconsistencies, or falsely, in order to distract, trouble, and hinder their assurance with God, or their testimony for God. By the turning of Satan out of the heavenly places of power this conflict and accusation ceased; the heavens were cleared, that these might now declare His righteousness.

The actual catching up of the saints is not here mentioned, because the Church should always expect it; [1](#) and because the agents and their public acts being here in question, the Church (one with Christ before the Father, the mystery hidden from ages and known only by the Spirit) is not, as we have seen all through, the subject; [2](#) but the

p. 70

acts, as they affect the brethren, looked at in their condition here below, are noticed, because they are to reign with Christ, whose *power* was now come.

The Church united to Christ and interested in Him as her Advocate and Priest, and all those associated with the heavens, were now free. The question then was between the dragon's wrath against those who were the special scene of Christ's royalty, and the power of that Christ which was now come: the trial of the Church had ceased. The subject being the rule of the nations by the man-child, all the history of what passed in the Church as to this is unnoticed; only the dragon remains in heaven; the royalty not assumed: when it is, the change is noticed. Then, the power though come is not, however, immediately exercised (that is, on earth, for the heavens were already clear). The question then arises for the woman upon earth--a question of royalty and power. The sphere of this royalty and power in Christ being necessarily hated but rescued, [1](#) and Satan's hatred and animosity then directed against the remnant who were faithful to the light they had, keeping the commandments of God and having the testimony of Jesus, having the light there was--tile spirit of prophecy. [2](#)

The providential actual agencies follow; wherein these things are accomplished. As to the position and condition of the inhabitants of earth (of whom we have only heard as yet), for this period, thrice repeated woe (in the

p. 71

second, the wide unformed mass of people too included, the inhabitants of the sea).

We have further to remark, that (the moment the saints are introduced in their own position and character, suffering while Satan is in the heavens) the Lamb, its salvation, its strength, its joy, is at once introduced, and their victory celebrated on high. It is the natural association of the saints, as such--fellowship with the crucified One: and therefore if only one or two saints be in their place, their associations are with the Lamb. 1 It will be remembered that the Lamb has not been mentioned all through the historical part: that was providence; and the Church was, as it were, hidden. This, in the course of external history, is its real relationship--as Peter describes it, doing well, suffering for it, and taking it patiently. The Lamb led the way in this their joy; while, as to accusation, His blood gives them access to the throne where He is.

This account in chapter xii. of the dragon's doings, taking up the mind of God in the throne as to it, the conflict by which he is cast out of the heavens of rule, and his conduct upon earth when cast down there, was quite the suitable introduction to the history of the manner and development of it in human instrumentality; that the Church might know, not merely its history, outside in the earth, but the meaning and truth of it in its elementary and radical causes and facts in Satan's position, power, and actings, relative to God's purposes. It relates to the question of ruling the nations (*i.e.*, to Christ, as ruling, as He will, with the saints, the nations); and shows the

p. 72

relative position of the parties (while the man-child is caught up to God and His throne, or not actually in the scene), first in heaven, and therefore (the evil ceasing, when cast out, to affect the saints of the heavenlies) brought in thus, 1 by the by, when their position has changed; and then on earth as affecting the Jews, during the period in which God's purpose, and therefore those interested in it, as a body, flee, in consequence of the dragon's actings, into the wilderness, where they were nourished of God (*i.e.*, not in the order of God's regulated covenant blessing, apparent in manifested relationship, but of God supremely as such). All this time, therefore of the dragon's prevalence in heaven first, or on earth, is the time of the hiding and apparent disregard of God's relationship with His people. Yet the object of these relationships becomes visible when the earth comes in question, and the woman, though persecuted or fleeing, is seen on earth (*i.e.*, the Jewish body

p. 73

as such in connection with their place and promises, though, unfulfilled). To this many of the Psalms refer--those in which God and not Lord is used as the term of relationship with the Most High.

The saints may be united to the position of the man-child when removed hence and taken to Christ; but the great signal manifestation of the first statement of the chapter was, when Christ Himself was taken out of the way. All, except that fact which characterizes all, is the statement of the principles and relative position of the parties. There may be, therefore, any lapse of time between the catching up of the man-child and the subsequent actings of the Lord; for there is no note of time connected with it: the facts are resumed, or, as to results, commenced by the war in heaven. This is most signally fulfilled in this actual

final accomplishment when Satan is cast out (the commencement, in their source, [1](#)

p. 74

of the very last events, that change the position of the saints of the heavenlies; and when also the last events on earth relative to the Jews begin to have their course). The providential agents, as far as the moral prophetic earth is concerned, and the beasts, therefore, at this point, as we have said, are thereupon taken up.

The apostle now traces equally from its origin, the earthly circumstances of the power through which Satan operates; [1](#) and, as in the previous chapter, he first gives us characteristically the subject of the prophecy. It is not here of purpose necessarily, but of fact. Out of the floating mass of population, he sees a beast rise up. It was not now a vision in heaven, where the secret designs were carried on, but on earth, where the instruments of these designs are produced and act; here, not purpose, but fact.

The whole character of the beast, from beginning to end, is seen, but pursued to, and therefore having its agency in, its last form. This enables us to identify the beast all through, and brings him under the character of guilt which has attached to him from the beginning, or marked the course of his protracted progress, whatever unrestrained iniquity this may shew itself in at the close. He is there-fore seen rising out of the sea having all his heads and horns: on his heads names of blasphemy--he bore them

p. 75

high on his front; and the crowns were on his horns, which was the latter form (*i.e.*, the imperial power divided). I do not carry this farther than being definitely characteristic; for if it were carried into detail, as at the close, we should have, assuming the identity according to the ordinary interpretation of the beasts, [1](#) three of the horns fallen. Further, this beast had incorporated the characters of Daniel's three other beasts, but most of the Grecian leopard, though in ravening power and terror like the first. To this beast the dragon (he had not formed it, that is taken as the fact) gives his power, his seat, and great authority. Now, I doubt not, this has its full scope of positive action and manifestation from the close of the former chapter when, in its last form, it will do Satan's work in the place of his power. But as we have the elements of things in these chapters, we have seen the beast traced from his very rise out of the sea; and whatever he so characteristically does, [2](#) when formed, comes under the designation of holding the throne and power of Satan: It will be exercised according to the character of the place where Satan is, heaven or earth, each the scene of the conflict whether Christ and His joint-heirs are to have His creation, or Satan hold it by right of the first Adam's fall and sin, the great question agitated, along with the special redemption of the Church. Doubtless, when on earth it will be more definite and formal, not necessarily more important. Nor can I see why the conflict for the delivery of the earthly people and the inheritance is of more or exclusive importance,

p. 76

rather than what is of heaven, in which the victory and fate of the heirs is decided; though this be more

secret, and known only to the Church. Yet it must be remembered that that by which Satan troubles the Church, while here, is that by which he holds the world. It is, then, the great characteristic fact we have here as to the beast so formed: he holds the dragon's place.

I may add, I hold the beast to be simply and plainly the Roman empire.

The next characteristic of the beast was the destruction and healing of one 1 of the heads or forms of government. This, observe, was subsequent to, 2 and not preceding, the dragon's giving him his power. And there was admiration in all the earth at the beast. The Roman empire and its corporate power became in the earth the object of their admiration, and laid hold on their minds. And they worshipped 3 that infidel power and hostility to God, which had given power to the beast. The form in which this shewed itself in man was the pursuit of his own will, simply casting off the thought and principle of obedience. The shape which it assumed, or had in this history, was the dominant power of the Roman empire, not in its

p. 77

apostasy, but in its self-will 1 and self-aggrandizement--Satan's power without reference to God,--as the apostle expresses it, "the course of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Whether this arrives to any formal open act at the close is comparatively immaterial, save as an open act bringing down open judgment. They worshipped also the beast--honoured it as the place, and holder, and depository of power (God being thus really put out of sight). Pride here was the characteristic--personal pride and power; "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?"

There seems to me to be an analogy here, or contrast, in falsehood, with the gift of power and glory by the Father to the Son. On the dazzling influence of this false glory and power the world hang's, and takes it as that which holds the only place of power in it, shutting practically, as we have said, God out of it--"the inheritance ours." And they hang on this evil power, to hold and keep it in human will--openly man, secretly Satan; as openly it shall be (or manifestly) Christ, and hiddenly (*i.e.*, not in personal manifestation, save by the Son) the Father. And the world honoured the hidden and open power as we should honour the Father and the Son, save that in us it is in the knowledge of their persons. It was a false anticipation in deceit and power, by our evil of what we own in principle now, and shall be declared in millennial power and manifestation.

Thus far we have had the fact, and Satan's doings in it. We have, then, the power of mischief as it is conferred upon the beast, he being thus constituted and set up in power by Satan, and receiving Satan's place at his hand. He is then given power to show all his will and thoughts,

p. 78

and to act for so long; for all these things are controlled: this with its consequences from verses 5 to 8. Consequently, we have here what was done by the beast, as before what was done *to* the beast, and about the beast, whether by Satan or in the earth. First was given to the beast extraordinary prevailing

assumption to himself, "he spoke great things;" it is not here *doing* but *speaking* in pride; it is his character, not his acts: next, injurious words against others flowing from this pride--blasphemies; and he was to continue the characteristic period of forty-two months, or to practise, to act, for that period. 1 When we come to the literal use of it, then it is earthly and literal. So, on the other hand, they that dwell in heaven dwell literally in heaven. It is not merely their mystic character; otherwise it is obvious it would be the 1260 years; and they that dwell in heaven are the heavenly-minded remnant. We have then the application of this character of the beast to its objects; "he blasphemed God." It was not here mere apostasy: that might be its actual course on earth, just denying the Father and the Son; but here it is his formal character under Satan's power. He blasphemed the "name" of God, instead of in the place of power owning its source--"and his tabernacle," i. e., the presence of God among the saints, as of the wilderness, their heavenly place, for so it was (the tabernacle was not the wilderness nor was it the temple, as in chapter xxi. 22: the Jewish body was driven into the wilderness: in manifested and lasting glory, the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple). But it was the

p. 79

tabernacle or tent of God: this included the most holy and holy place. This heavenly dwelling-place of God with the saints he blasphemed; 1 he would have the earth, the inheritance, in his own way: this was an evidence there was a power beyond all this. He blasphemed also those who were characterized by this dwelling-place--dwellers in heaven, the saints of heavenly places. This, as regards heavenly things, was what characterized the Church which sits in heavenly places. Further, it was given him to make war with the saints and overcome them here on earth. Satan they overcame, see chapter xii. 11; 2 but in present physical persecution the beast overcame, and prevailed against the saints. It is not, however, here a question of individual death, but of prevalence, as in chapter xii. 11. But he had the day on earth, for this was not redeemed nor vindicated to Christ yet. This is true also as regards (within the range of the beast) the long protracted period of years, and on earth 3 in the crisis among the Jewish people. 4 The next characteristic was, "power was given him over all kindreds, tongues, and nations:" this still was characteristic. It was to be the dominant power on the

p. 80

earth, assuming and giving authority over the various subject nations.

There was another point connected with this manifestation, not exactly characteristic, as given to him, but a consequence, a resulting fact. All the dwellers upon earth should worship him. Their character we have already noticed--those who, living within the sphere of the application of the word and its light, the formed scene of God's revealed moral providence, have not their πολ•τεν•α •ν το•ς ο•ρανο•ς, are not dwellers in heaven, and as strangers and pilgrims seek a country, but "dwell upon the earth." These were not written (for such was the security of the others) from the foundation of the world, in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain--characterized, not only by the book of life, but by the sufferings 1 of the Holy One, with whom they were associated as strangers and pilgrims: "He that hath ears to hear let him hear."

There is a great principle connected with all this working and character of the beast upon earth, "he that

leadeth into captivity shall go there;" so it will be with him: but God will not depart from His principles. He that uses the oppressing power shall be oppressed: the Lord will judge it, be it where it may; "he that killeth with the sword shall be killed with the sword." The saints' part is to suffer, to endure the continuance of evil, while God permits it and power is given to it. If the saints meddle with its principles and avenge themselves here, they must suffer its consequences here: "they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Patient suffering is the saints' place, as Christ. 2 They are not to take the beast's character, because they suffer under it: it is warring with God's providential

p. 81

government, which leaves him thus to practise. The book of life is the book of life of the Lamb slain.

Such was the grand secular power recognized in connection with the purpose and plans of God during this time--to which Satan's throne and power was given. This is no description of a personal Antichrist at all, but the characteristic description of the corporate power of the beast. Antichrist's deadly wound, for example, was never healed. The haste which applies passages to an object (because there may be other passages which prove an important link of the subject of the former with that object), often deprives us of a vast deal of the instruction of the word of God, and deters those from pursuing that link, who have seized the neglected parts which are now, by a particular absorbing interest, all set aside. The terror of the day of Antichrist is not characteristic of the saint: he has, it seems to me, a consciousness of his union with the Lord and gathering to Him, which sets him above the terror of Antichrist's power, or of the day of the Lord upon him.

We have had the sign of Satan as the dragon in heaven, a secret for the Church, for those who saw things there.

We have had the beast arise out of the sea (the tumultuous movings of the nations, the mass of peoples), and, so formed, Satan give him his power, and throne, and great authority. Now, out of the formed arrangement of the scene of God's moral providence, the subject-place of light and darkness, the earth, we have another beast come up. *In form of power* he was like the Lamb, not in real meekness and suffering; but he took the *similitude* of His power; yet his utterance, his voice, his expression of himself, having this form of power, was like the dragon, the great hostile power of Satan himself, prevailing over the stars of heaven, and persecuting on earth: a very strange and singular combination--the similitude of the power of Christ,

p. 82

in form--of Christ in His kingly power as Messiah, yet who had been the rejected Lamb (it was not of the Son of man openly); but the expression of the character of Satan when he spake. We have still, as a beast, a corporate oppressing power, as such, though, in some sense, an individual may actually wield its power; 1 but it is not the force of the symbol "beast." Power so concentrated is rather a horn, though there may be close connection between them. This did not set aside the existence of the first beast, but was of another character; yet "he exercises all the power of the first beast," before the first beast, in his presence--

still a very singular position. His power, however, is not, as such, over kindreds and tongues and nations, but localized, and acting on men's minds in influence when subject--not subjecting secularly nations. He causes *the earth*, and them that dwell therein, to worship the first beast; but to worship him as bearing this character, "whose deadly wound was healed." [2](#) It is in this restored state or headship-form

p. 83

of government of the beast that he does this. It is not the horns he makes them worship, but the beast, whose deadly wound (of one of his heads) was healed. Such is his character. Lamb-like as he may be in the form of his own power, he wields the power of the first beast before him; that is one point: another, he makes the earth and dwellers on it--carnal-minded men--worship the first, whose wound was healed: these were distinct points; for the whole character is here given. As to his own doing, there is the open exhibition of judicial power *as* of God: it was not (like the witnesses) "fire out of their mouth," a testimony made good in judgment, but "fire down from heaven" in the sight of men--the apparent exercise of God's judgments

p. 84

[paragraph continues] (as Elijah [1](#) did) outwardly. All this, remark, is an ecclesiastical or spiritual power--a power ostensibly connected with divine things falsely, for it is evil--but ostensibly, and verified to the eyes of men by the exhibitions of power.

Moreover, he does miracles on the earth, by which he deceives those that dwell on it, whose character we have so often seen, and leads them to set up a resemblance of the beast whose deadly wound was healed--this great corporate system, with a formal headship--and to give breath to and thus apparently vivify this image to exercise controlling authority--not to kill, but to cause to be killed, those who did not worship this image. This was the doing of this second beast, the spiritual being; they had power to do this. It is not said, he had them all killed, but he had power to cause all this. [2](#)

But he did oppress in earthly things; he caused all to receive "the mark of the beast" (in profession or service, as slaves), and would allow no man to buy or sell, "save he that had the mark;" or if he had "his name" it would do, though perhaps not thus actually a slave--or "the number of his name." A person might be a ruler or leader in this system, and then, though not actually a slave, he would have the character of it yet more indelibly and intelligently stamped upon him. The name and the number of the name would be there. I do not pretend to wisdom--indeed, far from it; but I find, if the Lord means such a sense, tradition as well as apostasy gives the

p. 85

number of his name. As I have said in the note, these seem to me not the *last* actions in crisis, but the character of the *preparatory* agents: we shall see the results afterwards. [1](#) That which is formal, and not ancillary in their character, may continue and hold its place during the

p. 86

crisis--for example the blasphemy; for this was on his heads, it was characteristically part of himself, not particular subservient conduct. Both these parties are found at the judgment which closes the last three years and a half; but the last is found, not exactly in the same form, but, if I may so speak, in an exceedingly narrowed character; for the moral operations previous to the last critical period are very different from the conduct and its consequences which fill up that period, though the parties may be the same, and have just the same spirit really. The characters here are of much wider extent, having their description comprehensively given here, as Satan's designs previously.

The historical process of the Lord's dealings follows. Special details of the objects and character of His judgments succeed. In chapter xv., as I have said, there is a new great sign seen in heaven. The description of the secret agency and the providential instruments on earth has finished. The gracious effects of divine grace and spiritual power, with open testimony and judgment, follow here. Mount Zion is a modification of what was before seen. It is not yet the Lord returned in judgment--then he is the Son of Man. And here we have, subsequent to this, the patience of the saints under the prevailing power of the beast and his image, and afterwards "blessed are the dead," and the Son of man reaping the harvest of the earth. Moreover, we have a new song 1 sung before the

I see no reason to suppose that "they shall be given into his hand" (Dan. vii. 25) means the saints, but rather times and laws.

p. 87

throne, and before the elders, which song none but the "hundred and forty and four thousand" could learn; so that we are not dissociated from heavenly places, for this throne was set in heaven. Yet Zion was not the place of the temple, but the place of royalty: but, first, of grace--the place of God's connection, in grace, with the earth before the temple was built, where David had prepared a place for the ark--contrasted with Sinai, the place of law to the earth--whence, too, the law was to go forth in grace from the city of the great King, that Zion that bringeth glad tidings."

Here, then, anticipatively of the time when the Lord God and the Lamb should be the temple of the heavenly Jerusalem, when withal on earth Solomon's glory should be all displayed, stood a Lamb, maintaining still this character, not yet appearing in that of Son of man, but now drawing towards His royalty, towards the earth, yet associated with His suffering people still, and with the perfect number of the remnant, having His father's name on their forehead, the manifestation of the character plain upon them in grace connected with Him. 1 Their great

p. 88

characteristic was, having kept themselves pure. The dwellers upon earth, we read afterwards, had been made drunk with the poison of Babylon's fornication, but these had kept themselves pure though Babylon was not yet fallen. They were redeemed from among men, from the earth--a peculiar people in the power

of their lives, in the midst of those professors, while Babylon stood--not the reign of Christ in blessing, not the wide-spread promulgation of the gospel, but purity, as an undefiled few, following the Lamb, the holy Sufferer.

Though the world might have slighted them, as an unknown people, yet the full perfect remnant of them was here found assembled. And as Zion, as we have said, was the place where the ark was before the temple was built (and the temple was the type of the established glory), so here we find them assembled on Mount Zion; yet we are still in close connection with the heavenly places; for the new song is sung before the throne and before the elders. The harvest and dealings of the Son of man are subsequent to this and the fall of Babylon. These are redeemed from the earth (while the earth 1 went on, *i.e.*, the earth as described in the two preceding chapters) to be firstfruits to God and the Lamb. 2

p. 89

We meet with this connection for the first time formally expressed. It seems to me connected with fidelity during corruption, during which the mediatorial work of Christ was confounded, corrupted, or denied, as the mediatorial glory is described by the terms "Throne of God and the Lamb," 1 "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it," &c. So, in the true bride, contrasted with the great whore that did corrupt the earth with her fornication, we have the elect or heavenly Church (which is spoken of, therefore, as coming down from heaven) contrasted with that earthly system which connects itself with the kings of the earth. It is the Lord God that judges her. The kings of the earth have their war with the Lamb. "Firstfruits to God and the Lamb" seem to imply separation from the evil of the one, and suffering in faithfulness to the Lamb, from the unbelief of the other. They follow the Lamb wherever He goes, and are without 'fault before the throne of God. It is not properly the

p. 90

[paragraph continues] Father's 1 house they are received into, as identified with Himself--as hidden in heavenly places. It was deliverance from this corruption as regards worship, that formed a prominent part of the next of the seven messages of this chapter--a public general announcement for all to hear of the everlasting 2 gospel, declaring judgment on subsisting things; and calling for true worship to recognize God in the supremacy of His ministrations as the source of all things. The connection of the hour of His judgment being come and the call for true worship, supposes a gospel preached in the midst of apostasy and corruption before the judgment. I believe the *principle* 3 of this began at the Reformation (though it was by no means the accomplishment of it), and that it will not be fulfilled till the testimony to all--even the heathen nations--for a witness, be fulfilled. The striking feature is the announcement

p. 91

of the hour of God's judgment 1 being come. The next messenger announces the fall of Babylon. The particulars of this are more fully given us farther on; but getting its place in the course of events is of great moment, which is given us here. The beast and his image still continue, but things are now closing in; for the warning is next given, If any man worship him, he shall be made to drink of the wine of the wrath of

God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation. This, therefore, is the point of patience and faith now for the saints, keeping entirely aloof from all connection with the beast; for as yet it was a prevailing though judged power.

p. 92

But now the patience of the saints (who suffered even to death, at least) closed. They were the happy ones; they rested from their labours, and their works followed them.

On the announcement of judgment on those that worshipped the beast or his image, or received his mark, and of the trial being the point of the saints' patience, a voice was heard from heaven; not the next progressive providential announcement (for it was no part of providence or dealings below), but the heavenly declaration of the decreed state of the saints, to whom this place was now publicly assigned in the economy of God. Death of the saints was now quite done with; and the blessedness of those of whom this was the portion was brought to light (not yet by their public manifestation on earth, but by the announcement from heaven to the ear of faith, that the time was come): a blessedness to which the Spirit, who had been their secret strength in labour, and even to death, now, with the same understanding and sympathy in joy, adds its "Yea." This introduction of the Spirit is very beautiful in this connection. When the earth was coming into blessing, they could not be left out in the testimony of Him who had suffered with them. It will be seen that, on the introduction of grace to the earth ("the Lamb on Mount Zion"), all that follows in this chapter relates to the earth; but then, by the voice from heaven, the portion of the saints is thereon given. Their portion is given, too, as in the reward of glory, at least in announcement--"Their works do follow them." This refers to manifestation in glory. (Comp. 2 Thess. i.) [1](#)

p. 93

Anything the beast does after this is not mentioned here. It is the account of God's dealings as towards the earth (the condition of the saints having been stated in passing). The next step therefore is the "harvest of the earth"--the execution of separating judgment in it; which was the actual accomplishment of the announcement of the previous verse--at least as regards its consequences in earth.

Then comes the vintage, which is pure wrath, not discriminating judgment. All the grapes of that which had the form of His people upon earth are trampled in the wine-press of God's wrath. This was done "without the city," not yet mentioned since chapter xi. And there, notice, it was "men" were slain; here, it is "blood came out:" the destruction is dreadful. [1](#)

p. 94

This passes then from redemption out of the really apostate earth, seen in the one hundred and forty-four thousand, when redemption from amid profession was necessary, to the dealing of God, first in testimony, and then in judgment, with evil in all its forms as to men, the beast being reserved in judgment for a fuller description. This was rather the judgment of men, and their corruption under those circumstances, the Lamb's open war and victory being another thing. This is God's judgment of the state of things, not the

Lamb's war with hostile power.

p. 95

We have here, then, a general prospective view of God's dealings with the subject--apostasy (for subject it is to Him) first, saving His saints out of it, preserving them pure; then testimony; then judgment.

Chapter xv. begins a new sign and a distinct subject. No longer various parties in heaven with consequent effects--the child caught away, and the patience and faith of the saints--but the plain statement of the wrath of God being completed or fulfilled: not here, observe, the judgment and victory of the Lamb over the beast; that is all special and administrative, connected with the exhibition of the power and effect in their followers.

Here was "another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels" (this was providential government, not the Lamb or Son of man) "having the seven last plagues." The sea was seen before the throne. Here it was seen, not only in its fixed purity, but this connected with trial judicial trial. But on it, having now gotten the victory, stood those who had overcome the beast, and his image, and his mark, and the number of his name. Neither secular persecution nor deceitful power had prevailed over those faithful kept ones. They had the "harps of God"--divine and well-tuned joy. The song they sung was of a double character--the victory of God's power, the song of Moses--Jehovah Elohim Shaddai's works were "great and marvellous;" and the truth and justice of the *ways* of the King of nations 1--the song 2--of

p. 96

the Lamb. It was not only for power exhibited; but, as the saints, they understood, in the Spirit of the Lamb, the justice and truth of His ways: so they celebrate the coming recognition of the Lord. Now His judgments were made manifest, who should not fear Him? For He only was holy: all else had failed. The Lord alone was to be exalted.

These had gotten the victory over everything of the beast. They were conspicuous in joy, consequent on this, before the throne of God, the elect remnant, faithful under the beast's power. 1 There was a complete and final separation. They are not here seen as come forth to judgment with the Lamb, or on their thrones, for He is not yet so manifested, but singing His song. (Comp. Ps. xcii.) The judgments were on those who had the mark of the beast, not yet on the beast; that was by the Lamb coming with the saints. From these they were entirely exempt--seen in heaven. Faith may anticipate it; but the full actual accomplishment of this would be on the rapture of the victors, taking of the victors, to their scene of glory. They were not under the altar, nor necessarily

p. 97

killed; but they had the victory, refusing the mark of the beast.

The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony was now seen opened. In chapter xi. it was the ark of the

covenant that was seen securing all for His people, while the power of evil remained unpunished; here, the tabernacle of His testimony. For judgment was to go forth according to His word. His judgments were made manifest, but for the deliverance of His earthly people according to that word. The deliverance of the saints is judgment, the judgment of the wicked. This was according to His governing power over creation in providence. One of the four beasts gave the angels the vials--vials fall of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. The return is to past dispensation and circumstance in this wrath, to Him whom we saw sitting on the throne before they were opened, according to that character in which He judges by and from Himself. The glory of God now displayed itself (*i.e.*, not in bright blessing), but in the power and influence of His judgment, as Sinai smoked, and "there went up a smoke out of his nostrils." "The tabernacle of the testimony was opened," but not the callings of grace or warnings, but for the execution and manifestation of judgments. It was not a time of testimony, in this sense, but of judgment, and no one could come into the temple: and, as the Lord speaks of the land, telling them their testimony would close ("These be the days of vengeance, Flee!"), so here (the saints first removed), it is no longer a time of reception but of judgment. Separation having being made (*i.e.*, within the range of the beast's influence), no one could now enter into the heavenlies: and the earthly people who had taken and received the mark of the beast were judged.

The judgment as yet, however, was not one of destruction.

p. 98

[paragraph continues] The heavenlies 1 and the earth were now separated; and instead of entering into the former, judgment was flowing from them on the latter. But it was not the actual judgment of the quick by the Son of man, but providential dealings of the wrath of God as such, and the wrath filled up in them.

I do not say that this is the last woe. But we have-here that which was connected with it, "Thy wrath is come;" and I am disposed to think all that follows in that verse, though other things are mentioned also here.

But as the woe in chapter xii., pronounced on the descent of Satan, was on the earth and on the sea, when he was cast out of heaven, so here, on the distinction between heaven and earth and closing of the heavenlies (the saints being on the sea of glass), the judgment sent on the earth falls on the earth and sea too.

First, it was "poured" in the stricter sense "on the earth a grievous sore." A manifested plague from God fell on the men who had received the mark of the beast, and who worshipped his image.

Next, all form of life was turned into death in the mass of the population, "and every living soul" (they are not spoken of as written in the book of life; but those who externally had life) "died." The profession of being alive to God was blotted out of the mass of unformed nations.

The sources of the state of the population became also the form and power of death--the just judgment of those who had put the saints to death. These were general judgments on the mass and on their condition.

Griesbach

p. 99

reads, "I heard the altar saying." "Another out of the altar" would apparently mean another angel, which would be unsuited to all the force of these images. The force of "the altar" generally is clear; because the slain saints are looked at as offered, as burnt offerings to God. (Comp. chapter vi. 9, 10.) And the altar may be here heard to cry, as the witness of all this slaughter of the saints of God. I hardly think one saint would give this testimony from under or out of the altar. If the ordinary reading be correct, then an angel announces it out of the altar, recalling the mind to their having been in their death as burnt sacrifices to God.

The fourth angel deals with the supreme power over the earth. But its effect was only to make it hotter. Men suffered from intolerable tyranny now; they would not be subject to God--now they only blasphemed Him.

The fifth poured out his vial on the throne of the beast, which was really Satan's throne, the seat of his dominion and power. The effect was darkness and confusion; and they, the people of his dominion, "gnawed their tongues for pain." The beast and his armies, his active evil and mischief, are not in question now; the vial was poured upon his throne. There God's judgment reached him, in the other the Lamb's. The pains and sores here connected seem to identify this class with the first. God had still, to them, only the character of the God of heaven.

Under the sixth, that which flowed through, and gave its strength, character, and prosperity to Babylon was dried up; that "the way of the kings from the sun-rising might be prepared." The final destruction of Babylon and the final combats still remained.

There is reference here plainly to the position of the Euphrates. It is not, I conceive, the kings "of the east,"

p. 100

but the kings who came from the east, τ•ν •π• •νατολ•ν •λ•ου. This drying up of the great river Euphrates prepared their way. I suppose, from other passages, the Euphrates will, at any rate temporarily, be dried up for Israel to pass over; but I do not see that this passage applies to it in the midst of a symbolical prophecy, the vial being said to be poured out on it. It is commonly, from a previous passage, considered that it is the drying up of the Turkish power: it may be so, or at least there may be something analogous, taking the whole chapter in a subordinate and preparatory sense, which I believe it has had and is having in our own days (as I have expressed of other chapters, only over a longer period). Such application I believe this chapter has had; and this falls in consistently with the whole plan of the protracted scheme of prophecy, because the second beast loses its character as a beast and becomes a false prophet before the final close.

The saints in chapter xv. had their victory over the effort to make them worship the image of the beast; but it was the second beast, not the false prophet, who sought to make them worship the image of the first. But here he has the character of the false prophet, so that thus far (*i.e.*, in principle) the victory had been obtained and could be celebrated, by the Spirit, for the Church. But when we come to a more positive fulfilment of judgment, and the actual bringing it into effect, on the separation of the saints out of the scene, and the closing the testimony of grace which gathered into the heavenlies, then there must be something more distinct, something which makes way for the eastern kings to take their part in the great catastrophe. The barrier and resources of the western Roman empire were dried up, so that the way for this coming in of the kings from the east was prepared.

p. 101

[paragraph continues] Thereon it is, that the unclean spirits go out to gather the kings of the whole world to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.

Chapter xiv. had given, so to speak, the ecclesiastical dealings of the Lord; and testimony and grace was there. In chapter xv. we have the separation of the saints appropriated to the heavenlies; and then, in chapter xvi., the judgment on the earth, reaching primarily those who had received the mark: all this in relation to *God*--subjection and fidelity to Him--not the Lamb nor the Son of man wielding His power as King of kings and Lord of lords.

But upon this judgment 1 (the drying up of the Euphrates) the last struggle must commence; and Satan uses all his energies to prepare his forces: but it is only for the battle of the great day of God Almighty. This is done (being a vision in the midst of the course of the judgment) by the influence and principles of the positive exercise of infidel self-will and enmity to Christ's power, the concentrating spirit of empire in the beast (the Roman power), and the spirit of Antichrist here (having changed its secular power of a beast for its false influence on minds as a prophet). We see the sort of place this holds in Judah in Jeremiah's time, and with Ahab, &c.: the manner of it may be different, but it exercises this *guiding* character in apostasy (the power to be wielded being held by another),

p. 102

These three gather the kings (τ•ς ο•κου••νης) of the whole organized habitable earth to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. But now Christ was nigh at hand. All this went on with multiplied human plans perhaps, but to the saints it was the sign that Christ was at hand. And He gathered them together." Who is He? This was the power and providence of God by Christ, I apprehend: whatever the Satanic influence or instrumentality, it was done, if through that, by Him. The spirits were to go forth to gather; and they gathered: but it was really the Lord's doing in judgment (Comp. Mic. iv. 11--13).

This battle, the scene of the Lamb's judgments, against whom the hatred and opposition was, is reserved for His coming forth, and the display of His power. We have an intimation of its connection with Hebrew localities: the place has a Hebrew name, Armageddon. But this comes in here by the bye; for it is the account of God's wrath, and the gathering is all that has this character providentially. If there be allusion

to the place and term Megiddo, I should suppose it was, of the two, rather Judges v. than the case of Josiah.

The seventh vial was poured into the air, that which affected the whole scene below, the place of universal government and influence. The wrath was still in the earth: so, in fact, in all. And now a voice from the throne in the temple announced that all was finished (γ•γ•ο•ν•ε), and the power of God displayed itself in judgments and thunderings of His power; for "the voice of the Lord is mighty in operation." And never was so great an earthquake--so great a disruption of all the elements of organized social existence. "The great city" (that frame-work and centre of this organization) "was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell"--all the centres of organization of the nations extern to

p. 103

the great city. And great Babylon is here presented, not merely in its civil sociality, but its full character before--"great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath." The particulars of her judgment also are reserved for a fuller and exacter display, together with her character, as was that of the beast. The precursory judgments have been stated here, and the order of these final ones placed. The fall of Babylon is connected with chapter xiv., where testimony is going on, as we have seen.

Direct destructive judgment, in the way of plague, not proper judgment before the throne, came down on men, along with this bringing the corporate system of Babylon into remembrance. It was neither repentance, nor, as I have said, anything of the final judgment of the throne--an earthly thing; for men blasphemed God because of it, for it was very great. Such is the effect of God's judgments when the wilful rebellious heart is unchanged; such have all of us, unless in new life by grace.

Footnotes

[68:1](#) Should not this be, "Now is come the salvation and power and kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ"?

[69:1](#) [I have no doubt *it* is contained in the catching up of the man-child, as well as Christ Himself.]

[69:2](#) It is looked at corporately only as in heaven (as we have often seen) from the end of chapter iii. The accuser of our brethren, therefore, is spoken of; for the voice from heaven could not speak of suffering or accusation of saints there, but of those who have been liable to it on earth. On the supposition noticed above, these would be the class of sufferers still to be gathered as slain in the last testimony, or who would not worship the beast.

[70:1](#) The time of Jacob's trouble; but he is delivered out of it.

[70:2](#) We have here the important fact, that, after the celebration of the coming of salvation, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ, and the casting Satan down out of the heavenly places, three years and a half elapse before his trial and persecution of the Jewish people closes; and they are the object of his hatred; and Christ does not appear in their behalf.

[71:1](#) [The Lamb is always the suffering rejected One, who is after all the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the centre of glory. In the historical fact this takes place on the casting down of Satan, in which the kingdom and power are first displayed.]

[72:1](#) This passage is a remarkable one as regards the crisis; for the joy is properly in heaven. The Church, properly speaking, is not in question. A voice accordingly is heard in heaven; but it clearly expresses the mind of God in the Church above; for it says "the accuser of our brethren," and has the prospect of the kingdom as now come. It is as a gleaming out of the Church's joy in heaven, before the saints are manifested with Christ, on the cessation of the sufferings of those left on earth, and the clearing of the heavenlies. The voice of heaven, the Church, is here rather identified with the priesthood and expectation of Christ, but that in a triumphant character, because accomplished by the casting down of Satan, and the kingdom now come, though not yet established for three years and a half upon earth.

I apprehend the proper application of the catching up of the man-child, besides Christ, to be to the Church of the first-born--His body, and to be undated, save by its precedence of all ulterior events, *i.e.*, of all events below, and even of the war in heaven; for Christ and His body cannot take their new relative place on earth, till Satan and his angels are cast down.

[73:1](#) Although I say their source, which is true as to the administration of events and the moral state of things, yet there is passed by here (as not the subject of the chapter, and what can be hardly called an event, as changing the whole order of administration and divine government itself),--the shaking of the heavens, in order to the appearing of the sign and government of the Son of man there: but this does not properly come in here; and therefore I have only thus noticed it. Its date in the course of events may be seen in Matthew xxiv. and Mark xiii.; but it forms no part of the course of mere human events, but is a change in the heavenly administration of their order. But the war in heaven, and the consequent casting down of Satan to earth, do alter altogether the relative position of the saints, heaven, and earth. The direct administrative exercise of all this is deferred for three years and a half, to give time for the ripening of God's purposes, the separation of the remnant of the Jews in their tribulation, and the full Satanic rising of the earth against heaven: but heaven could announce its joy at once, and woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea. But, the administration not being yet changed, things otherwise [p. 74](#) went on unrebuked, until the earth being worse far by this, and in Satanic energy enlisted against heaven, the Son of Man has to take the power into His own hands, and the administration itself is changed. Then begins the administration of the world to come, whereof we speak. This last is a most important, and scripture speaks of it as a very seldom, event. It is what I apprehend is called the end; "Then shall the end come." Sinai was the manifest beginning; though there were other points connected with it in the world and earth, to wit, Noah and Nebuchadnezzar.

[74:1](#) Specially in his workings, in these last events.

[75:1](#) *i.e.*, of Daniel's fourth beast with this.

[75:2](#) [This is an attempt to connect by general terms the protracted period of the beast's existence and the crisis, or last half week; and till the clear light of the end, this served to guide the conscience in a general way.]

[76:1](#) [That is, it was seen in this state subsequent to the healing what had received the deadly wound.] I suppose the wounded head was imperial. Many considerations go, I think, to shew it, and make the point pretty clear. I doubt that it was fully developed as a beast till then.

[76:2](#) [Rather it was seen subsequent to it. First, he sees the general character of the beast as a whole, and where his throne and authority, there this particular characteristic in the state in which he considers him, not of the beast in himself, but of the beast as he then saw him.]

[76:3](#) Admiration implies the effect on a senseless imagination, though excited perhaps by a strong cause--not the judgment or affections.

[77:1](#) This, however, is the apostasy of power.

[78:1](#) This must be taken for the last period of half the week, if taken in crisis and applied to the full manifestation of his character, which the verse seems to do. It is no part of this passage to say it is the last half week, but merely to attach to the beast the characteristic period of his continuance. [But it gives that period as the duration of his practising.]

[79:1](#) [This is all he could do now. Satan the accuser was cast out of heaven, and indeed the saints there. The beast's tendencies would have pleased the Jews before. Now it persecuted the saints on earth too. The other Jews would be now in rebellion.]

[79:2](#) This had been previously to this period, which commenced on the closing of that by the casting down of Satan. Up to the that they had suffered actual death; at least they had not loved their lives unto death.

[79:3](#) But I doubt that there is any dated period connected with verse 7. It is characteristic, not a question of time.

[79:4](#) The elect there are saved as regards the flesh [save those who, being killed, get a heavenly portion, the saints of the heavenlies of Daniel and those particularly noticed as not worshipping him in chapter xx., here].

[80:1](#) This will have its literal force in crisis in the land.

[80:2](#) "If when you do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God," says the Apostle Peter.

[82:1](#) [As the eighth head was the beast.]

[82:2](#) The trials under the beast are distinct from the mere preservation of purity; and the final warning to have nothing to do with the beast comes after the announcement of the fall of Babylon. Hence, we have the celebration of the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have kept themselves pure; and afterwards, distinct, those who have got the victory over the beast. It does not follow that some of them may not have been involved in both trials, or have kept themselves from one, and suffered under the Other, but they are treated as distinct subjects; and there may be those who are under the trial of the beast's actings, in general, preparatory to his final conflicts in Judea, who have never been in the circumstances, at any rate fully, of the hundred and forty-four thousand. They are numbered before Babylon falls. The warning against the beast has its peculiar force after. That chapter xiii. has had accomplishment in the protracted period of years, may easily be understood; and if applied to what is closing, its application is rather preparatory, not final; when [p. 83](#) the second beast falls, as a false prophet merely (his secular character as a beast gone), this change has taken place in him; he has lost his secular character and power as a beast, and is merely a false prophet. It seems to me that all this is previous to the last actings of Antichrist in Judea as the wilful king: * they are quite distinct in character. This is preparatory in order to bring them, the dwellers on earth, into his subjection, and carry them with him. The whole, save the period of his blasphemous continuance, is not here date, but character, or doings. He may draw after him the Gentile dwellers upon earth in this way; and, when in the land, the same process may locally and specifically continue there. The only date to the second beast is the restoration of the wounded (as I suppose) imperial head.

[82:*](#) [p. 83](#) [This is a very important remark, which had long passed out of my mind. I doubt its being quite exact, in saying "all this is previous." It is distinct in character; but both may go on together and in its distinct form at the end apply to Palestine, though dwellers on earth be still characteristic. When the beast falls in Palestine, the second beast is merely viewed as a false prophet; his person as kingly seems superseded by the beast's presence. As in Isaiah xxiv. the difficulty is as to the force of earth. The whole passage requires maturer consideration. Note, the world, and kindred, tongues, and nations are not formally put under the influence of the second beast.]

[84:1](#) [Note here how solemn it is that he should give the sign, which under Elijah was test of Jehovah being God; and in 2 Thessalonians ii., what in Acts ii. is the proof of Jesus being the Christ.]

[84:2](#) I repeat the remark of the note on pp. [82](#), [83](#); all this is characteristic, not of time, save the restoration of the imperial head.

[85:1](#) We have the distinction of periods, I think, very distinctly marked in Daniel vii. The character of the little horn--the last evil form of presumption against the Most High in the beast--we have in verse 8: that is, its character before God. The prophet saw this till the thrones were set; in 9, 10, judgment set and books opened, not now the time of testimony. Then again he beholds till the beast was slain, verse 11, because of the little horn's great words. After this, the Son of man's kingdom is spoken of as given; this in connection with the Lord. The saints, whether of the heavenly places or simply saints, are introduced in the explanation, verse 21; the character of the horn, as to the saints, is given--saints, whether of the heavenlies or not--it is the horn's character. Then this is till, first, the Ancient of days comes; then, judgment is given to the saints of the heavenlies; thirdly, the saints, heavenly or on earth, possess the kingdom. As to the actings of the little horn explained, we have, first, his presumption against the Most High; next, he wears out the saints of the heavenlies, and takes the Jewish times and festivals into his power, and they are given up to him for a prescribed period; then, the judgment sits, as in the close of verses 10, 11. Verse 25 seems to me, then, properly the three years and a half antecedent to the commencement of the judgment or the judgment-sitting; after that a process goes on to take away, to consume, and to destroy; and then the kingdom, under the whole heaven, is given to the *people of the* saints of the Most High, thus connecting the earthly people at Jerusalem, the city of the great King, with the heavenly people.

Chapter viii. I conclude to be an entirely different and opposed enemy; and I believe the confounding the Assyrian and Antichrist * has much tended to obscure prophecy, and embroil the mind as to the simplicity of its statements. [p. 86](#) One is the enemy of Christ as coming from heaven with the saints; the other His enemy, as associated with the accepted remnant of the Jews at Jerusalem.

[85:*](#) [Or even the beast, for I do not hold the first beast as the personal Antichrist.]

[86:1](#) This is a very important epoch. In chapter v. 9, they sing a new song. There was new subject of praise when the Lamb who was in the midst of the throne took the book, and assumed the [p. 87](#) development of what was to introduce the inheritance. The redeemed could say then, "They shall reign," although the Lamb was still above, and the action of His power was only heavenly or providential. Here, the Lamb, not having yet laid aside this character and assumed that of Son of man, and judge, and warrior, yet is associated with earth, and stands on Mount Sion. And therefore they sing a new song before the living creatures and before the elders: these not themselves taking a part in it (for it was not the mystic Church's portion, nor the great witness therefore of redemption for creation), but a special occasion of praise on the Lamb's taking a place on Mount Sion, and associating Himself, though in a special manner with the earth [the once rejected Messiah].

[87:1](#) [This seems to me, as in John, the Father's name declared as He then revealed it, and as Christ said, "My Father, of whom ye say that he is your God."]

[88:1](#) The second beast had caused the earth to worship the first beast.

[88:2](#) This, taken in the crisis, would seem to imply that, besides the Church, properly so called, whose

place was in heaven, and, in that sense, the earth done with, there would be a remnant redeemed from the earth still connected with the Lamb (*i.e.*, the Sufferer owned by the name of His Father) and learning a song sung before the throne, and before the elders--a peculiar class, and having a song thus specially theirs. They were a firstfruits redeemed from the earth, redeemed from among men. The body of the Church, in its heavenly character, had passed out of the scene before--had nothing to do with the earth. The refusing the beast after is for p. 89 preservation in an earthly place--a preservation enforced by a warning of unmingled wrath in the presence of the holy angels, the ministers of His providence, and of the Lamb, the Sufferer, whose grace, and power, and title, they refused and rejected in the great controversy. These hundred and forty-four thousand are more circumstantially like the Lord in His earthly portion and taking up. They were not corporately looked at as the bride of Christ, but as holding a special place as virgins--still, as contrasted with the harlotry of evil in the protracted period, the remnant peculiarly and separately preserved--in the crisis, a special remnant which we have noted.

89:1 [We must not confound the throne of God and the Lamb, and the revelation of the Father in the Son: our revelation of God is the latter, blessed be His name. The former is governmental glory. There is an analogy in the protracted period; but salvation ascribed to God and to the Lamb, and firstfruits from the earth, introduce the millennium. See following note.]

90:1 They were, rather, a witness of the purity of the throne and of the Lamb, as King of kings, and Lord of lords, for what became Him in the earth, and therefore, in the full sense, are the dawn of that bright and blessed morning of the earth from the Creator and Redeemer of it.

90:2 Everlasting I take to be distinguished from any temporary or provisional good news. Canaan was a gospel to Israel; the birth of Christ in the flesh was good news to Israel. But this is the everlasting, $\alpha\bullet\bullet\upsilon\theta$ $\iota\varsigma$ --the full complete promise of the results in the Son of man, formed on the intentions and rights of God; and that as by redemption. It involved, therefore, the kingdom; though, in some cases, only the basis might be laid. Any diligent student of the gospels will see the transition, from promises presented to the Jews in the person of Christ in the flesh, to this everlasting gospel. Of this it is said, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God;" and then earthly things and heavenly are brought in.

90:3 [The time given to Jezebel to repent was, so to speak, run out then. Chapter ii.]

91:1 When the everlasting gospel then goes forth, it is not the bringing in a universal state of blessedness, but a call to fear God amongst wide-spread apostasy of all sorts, "for the hour of His judgment has come," as "this gospel of the kingdom must first be preached to all nations, and then shall the end come," *i.e.*, of the age. And this last, while I fully recognize what precedes as involving the principles, is the strong final sense of the passage, and therefore, as noticed in the preceding note, God is announced as a Creator, who had a right to His creatures, and presented Himself as such to men on the earth, as against all their idolatries, resuming (first in testimony) His place as God in the earth. Babylon, which had been the great corrupter of the earth, and the centre of idolatry, is next judged of God.

There is another point connected with the hundred and forty-four thousand and the everlasting gospel.

The hundred and forty-four thousand are redeemed from the earth, where the testimony is already a redemption from the midst of prevailing evil in the limited sphere so designated--in the crisis, probably, entirely confined to the land. Before the judgment ("the end") comes, the everlasting gospel goes out afresh to the nations (many of them, doubtless, in actual idolatry) to announce the coming judgment, and to testify the good news of the coming millennial kingdom and blessedness. These two spheres--earth, and people and tongues and nations and languages--we have noticed as contrasted in repeated instances.

[92:1](#) In the protracted period, verse 13 would refer, I apprehend, to the announcement of that blessedness of the saints, which the harvest, looked at as in Matthew xiii., in its application to them, would accomplish--in the crisis, to their manifestation in this. This distinction is only what we actually find in the interpretation [p. 93](#) of that parable in Matthew. In the parable, the tares are gathered in bundles in the field, and the wheat into the garner: in the explanation, the tares are burned in the field, and the righteous shine forth. This is precisely the difference, and only this, I make here. The harvest and vintage are two acts of judgment, the harvest being of much wider scope; and, accordingly, in it there is not clear riddance of the corners of the field as to the wheat. It may distinctively clear and take the wicked, leaving those spared for earthly blessing. The vintage is pure vengeance on a specific object (the religious system), which has its character from earth--in the crisis, I apprehend, Jewish. Its grapes are now fully ripe. This vengeance is actual earthly judgment: "blood came out of the wine-press" far and wide. It was an actual and dreadful judgment in the land. All these--all the contents of this chapter--are God's religious warnings or dealings with the earth.

[93:1](#) There may be an application of what passes in this chapter to the crisis; and, in such case, many dates would be ascertained, but the application is less particular of part. Thus the song, being before the throne of God, must be taken only as the commencing association of heavenly with earthly things, and the re-cognition of the earthly by the heavenly powers. The Lamb, [p. 94](#) standing on Mount Zion, would recognize the return of the Jews into suffering associated with the Lamb amongst them in grace (that is, of a remnant among them). The everlasting gospel would then be strictly that mentioned in Matthew, "the gospel of the kingdom," (*i.e.*, that Christ was just coming in His kingdom), which I have no doubt will so go out in all nations before the end. The fall of Babylon would precede the harvest of the earth, and then the last time of trouble would be to the Jewish people such as never was, and Michael would stand up for them, and the sanctuary at length be cleansed. In this case, I am inclined to think, the vine of the earth would be rather the Jewish part of the profession, as in Isaiah lxx., lxxvi. Such judgment is certain. But there will be also the apostasy to be destroyed; but that is rather in war against the royalty of Christ then, and has assumed a worse form than mere apostasy or profession. Viewed in this light, "without the city" would, in the general application, refer to the great city of the corporate Roman empire; in the application in crisis it would, as before, be taken for Jerusalem.

In the application in the text ([p. 90](#)) of the claim of true worship, there are most important principles--the acknowledging God, not man, as the source in creative power of every blessing, or order of blessing, or power, or streams and fountains of true influence, and consequent condition of men--than which there cannot be a more important principle possible for daily use. The sense given above in the text I believe to be the most important for the Church in the present time.

[95:1](#) [This is acknowledged to be the true reading.]

[95:2](#) Though this chapter be a distinct sign, yet, like the eleventh and twelfth, it is not unconnected. It seems to apply itself to those who have passed through the fire--not merely escaped corruption when Babylon prevailed. And the judgment is not now the fall of Babylon and a warning against any's receiving the mark of the beast, but judgment and plague on those who had; [p. 96](#) the faithful being out of the way on the sea of glass mingled with fire. They had suffered, but were therefore out of the way of the judgments: still the judgment is in the earth.

In subject it follows, but is not, I apprehend, chronologically consequent, but a distinct design, more secular in its general character of judgments and dealings. The last of the saints too, not left on earth, were now out of the way. Compare xiv. 13.

[96:1](#) The imperial head subsisted in the apostolic times--Cæsar. It may be noticed that the head was destroyed in the West, and, taken in the protracted sense, was restored and continued with the continuance of the hierarchy and the pope set up at Rome who had the character of the image here described. Any further or more literal accomplishment of it will have its place more fitly in a subsequent chapter.

[98:1](#) I doubt, as to the crisis, that the heavens were yet changed--whether these signs did not belong to the old heavens.

[101:1](#) Although I do not doubt this will have an actual physical accomplishment in gathering of the nations or their powers and armies to battle, yet, as that which concerns us all, I would say that in that which the Church is entitled to understand--the more hidden working of the enemy in principle--this is just going on: that a moral, and so far partial, fulfilment of what preceded has taken place, and there is that which morally gathers them now taking place, so that we have a date of locality as to the Church's spiritual judgment and position given: the separation then only marked in character, and morally also.

[Next: Part Five](#)



[Sacred Texts](#) [Christianity](#) [Index](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#)

NOTES ON THE REVELATION.

Part Five

The apostle is now called away to a fuller description of the woman and the beast, not called up to heaven at all now, for her place and her judgment are on earth. He is called by one of the angels, or messengers of judgment, that had the seven vials of the wrath of God. These angels had the character of perfect righteousness both divine and human: the golden girdle in which the certain energy and pure power of divine righteousness is maintained and vindicated; and white robes, in which the spotlessness of human sanctity and faultlessness, as of God, is expressed. One of these now comes to show the prophet the judgment of the great whore that is seated, in her malignant influence, on the masses of peoples. That is,

p. 104

the revelation is made according to the character and estimate of this judgment.

The interpretation of this chapter is clearly of the greatest possible importance, as to the form of the corporate power of man, as apart from God, and setting up for independence of Him in the latter days. However, the judgment (though much information be given of her, and of the beast that is found to carry her) is definitely of her in one character,--the great whore. She is judged as such, though much thereon depends; and this I certainly conclude to be mainly her ecclesiastical character, just as the bride, the Lamb's wife, with whom she is in eminent contrast, is the Church; though heavenly glory be her portion, as false earthly glory is the great whore's. But the union with the Lamb is the real distinction of the one; her meretricious conduct (ecclesiastical corruption) is of the other: doubtless the glory of the world is eminently and intimately associated with this. Had she not this in play, much of her grandeur and influence would be lost, and she would cease to have this character. Her union with the world was her whoredom. Babylon may have a king over it--so it is spoken of in the Old Testament; but this is not its character here--she rides the beast. In the Old Testament, she is never, accordingly, spoken of as committing fornication; for in a certain sense (though, perhaps, through him, an evil one), she belonged to the king of the earth: he had made her and builded her for his majesty and his glory. Here, she rides on

the beast, using him,. though afterwards hated and impoverished, &c., by the ten kings. Babylon of old had deceived the nations by the multitude of her sorceries and enchantments; but that is another thing: evil or good, she belonged to the king of Babylon; she rose by him, and fell with him. Here she has no king, but lives in evil, her own mistress, with the

p. 103

kings of the earth. Israel was an adulteress, 1 not Babylon, then.

For this she is judged, though other things and all worldly eclat might surround her, and give her influence over the minds of others.

In the Old Testament, fornication is attached, not to Babylon, but to Tyre, with reference to her merchandise.

The material feature here is, that Babylon is not the seat of earthly power, ruled over and headed at any time by him who exercises apostate royalty upon the earth, but an independent woman. So was Tyre in the world, as thus spoken of: and, where the Prince of Tyre 2 is spoken of, it is not in human earthly language, but the highest character of apostasy, such as can be reached in its full character only by the great enemy, and, it would seem to me, connected with a church or religious standing--a character and apostasy far more terrible than the apostasy of the world, headed by its king, in its full form builded by him. Worldly association, then, this has, and wide extent of merchandising and wealth--a great system of worldly prosperity; but its character for judgment is her fornication, not her purple, her scarlet, and the like,

p. 106

though all these were connected with it, and designated her. Judgment ruined her as to these; but they were not the cause of judgment. And this is always the case: the becoming worldly, and by this spirit, and to gain this wealth, pandering to the passions of the kings of the earth, is just the very cause of this. But, as in old time the blood of all righteous men was found in God's house, then apostate--not in the world's or the wicked one's outwardly--judged in Jerusalem, not in heathen Rome, so, ever: the ecclesiastical form of wickedness takes the lead, not the worldly. The gainsaying is recorded as the gainsaying of Korah, not of Dathan and Abiram, though the earth might swallow them up too; and the beast may be judged as well as Babylon, but not presented in the same sad terms in God's moral judgment, in the sight of men. Moral corruption is ever worse than evil power.

Babylon was also the mother of harlots, and of the abominations or idolatries of the earth. The invocation of a demon, under the name of Paul, was worse than under the name of Hercules or Theseus; and the uprooting of the mediation of Christ more fatal and destructive (as of the remedy itself), than that of the unity of the one true Jehovah. She was here a mystery. The apostasy of worldly power and grandeur was no mystery to the escaped remnant of Babylon, and the Patmos prisoner of Domitian. That the Church, which the apostle watched over, should assume this form, was a mystery indeed,--ruling that which he

was suffering under as a poor despised follower of the crucified Jesus, and corrupting a world of which the Church properly was the only true light. She was the mother of the abominations of the earth; but her sway was over the many waters, peoples, and tongues, and nations, and languages. Rome, I cannot help believing, was the centre of this system. The golden cup was in the

p. 107

whore's hand, not she a golden cup in the Lord's--she governed and rode the ten-horned beast, that was her long general character, but not her final one: she became the prey and spoil of the kings which had their power with the beast. They gave their power, not to her any longer, but to him. She, not the beast, was drunk with the blood of the saints, and that, as seen sitting in her full ease and comfort there. And this was matter of deep astonishment to the apostle, that she who connected herself in his mind with such a character and pretension should be such.

Thus far the vision: but the interpretation follows, and (as has been elsewhere remarked of Daniel and the parables) the interpretation carries the facts of the prophecy into a further scene, altogether consequent upon that in the prophecy. "The beast which thou *sawest*." The interpretation takes up the time of the passage into this further scene, which did not exist in the actual vision of the apostle; which saw (in order to give her her full character) the woman in all her splendour. "The beast which thou sawest, *was*" (to wit, the fourth great empire), "and *is not*" (*i.e.*, had not, at the noticed period, its united formal character), "and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit"--shall resume this formal character, under the direct influence of Satan, and then be destroyed. And all within the prophetic range of his power (the *earth*--the woman's influence extended farther, "she sat on the *waters*") should be amazed when they thus saw it. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman, not the whore, sitteth, "but that great city which reigneth." This cannot mean merely Babylon; for that was the whore's name already on her forehead, and therefore not an explanation to be given. That was her symbolic character; this her local explanation. There are also seven kings; these are p. 108

p. 108

not the horns, they were not moreover contemporaneous. "Five are fallen, one is" (I take this, from verse 9, to be a direct present explication to the apostle), "the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space." This made the seven. One brief-lived head of the beast was to arise before the last, after the apostle's days. The Spirit of God has not thought it material to give a special designation of this or the previous heads, as not in the present scene affecting the Church or purposes of God, but merely identifying the beast, and not suffering the Church to be led astray.

But there is that which is more distinctly noted, after all this is completed, and all that properly formed the beast in full--an eighth head 1 (which is the beast itself, as arising directly from Satan's power and influence) arises, which is yet of the seven, which is connected with and takes its place among the other heads and forms of the Roman empire, but is also a distinct, definite power, the resurrection-beast of Satan's power; and in this form it is that it goes into perdition.

We have now the woman, the beast, and its heads, described. We have then the conduct of the ten horns, the ten kings. These properly belong to the beast; they had received no kingdom at the time of the vision, formed no part of the then system, but would receive power contemporaneously with the beast. I do not see that this states that they would exist all the time along with the

p. 109

beast, 1 but that they would not be a power supplanting or without connection with the beast, but that they would exist themselves, contemporaneously, and while the beast existed. They would give their power to the beast. I have no doubt that mainly the beast in its last form is here spoken of, but it is their character generally. They give their kingdom and power to the beast; they have one mind as to this. But though they did this corporately, they had a mind of their own, or at least practically in action. These shall make war with the Lamb: this shall be their conduct and end. The Lamb shall overcome them, for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and then we have His companions the Church and armies of heaven anticipatively brought forward. He is not alone: they that are with Him are "called, and chosen, and faithful." This was the history and the end of the ten kings, but still characteristically; for, if we consult Daniel, three of them fall. Their Victor is then declared and His companions. As the confederacy of the kings gave (for it was man's will) their power to the beast, the Lamb's companions were, on the contrary, *called*, and *chosen*, and *faithful*. The "waters" are then explained so as to need little comment, save as reminding of the extent of general moral influence beyond the prophetic earth: she had her seat there, though she sat on the beast too. Another characteristic was, that she had this influence and place on the peoples and multitudes and nations; all this was an independent influence proper to the woman, and this in her evil character as the whore.

Another incident of much importance in the history is then brought forward. These ten kings are to give their power to the beast. So "God hath put into their hearts

p. 110

to fulfil his will," and "these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, and eat her flesh" (devour her wealth and fatness) "and burn her with fire." It was not specifically with these kings she had committed fornication; that had been her general character with the kings of the earth. These ten kings, however, desolate her: the will at this time acts in them, not in the beast. 1 They are the prominent and existing actors, that they may give their power to the beast, whose final character and end we have already seen. This goes on "until the words of God shall be fulfilled." The woman, not the whore, is then designated as that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth (the predominant associated power of the earth): 2 but if acting by corrupt religion, not doing so here as a false prophet, but as a city--a system in her secular, carnal, and worldly, and wealthy character; yet that secularity and wealth, the meretricious secularity 3

p. 111.

and wealth of an active, corrupting will--"the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."

Having thus seen her in her active will, in her connection with the will of others, and her end in wealth and fatness, the announcement of her fall as a corporate system is declared.

And here I find much more of the purely worldly part of the system; and this is its character, though the other be not denied. And here she is seen as fallen--Babylon the great, not spoken of here as the mother of harlots, the whore, or the woman, but simply as Babylon the great, as a city or dwelling-place. She had not ceased to exist, however, at all; but she was fallen, and become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every unclean spirit,

p. 112

and the hold of every unclean and hateful bird. This was her present condition and judgment--her condition morally--and as discerned by the Church, who, through the Spirit, knew all things on the testimony of God.

The fall of Babylon seems to be her losing the place of active, governing, or leading power, ruling as such the beast and many waters, involving her moral degradation, not destruction.

God now calls His people out of her. I do not say that this call had not application whenever the truth of the third verse was perceived: but it was now definite and positive, for the truth was declared judicially. Woe to them who remained! Her sins had reached to heaven, and they would receive of her plagues if they stayed. It was a warning on account of consequences now. The separation must be made, for God had begun to judge her. She had already fallen from power, the seductive power of wealth and corruption. She still, it seems, said in her heart, she should be a queen and see no sorrow--still maintained her pride, though she was fallen; and the Church knew God was now judging her. 1 The desolation of all the temporal prosperity of the great city is sorrow and trouble to the kings of the earth. This is a distinct thing from the ten horns hating her and burning her with fire. The kings of the earth are the royal rulers, not these specific ten horns, which give their power to the beast as kingdoms; the horns were the power of the kingdoms, exercised by the ruling power for the time, perhaps.

p. 113

[paragraph continues] But all those who had been dwelling in the security of the settled and ordered earthly system--the kings of the earth, as the inhabitants of the earth--those who had been committing fornication with the great whore--these bewailed her burning. 1 The ten were a definite class, brought forward with the beast in his last actings against the Lamb, for the accomplishment of which God puts it into their heart to get rid of the great whore. The ten kings are never, as such, spoken of as committing fornication with the harlot. The kings of the earth and inhabitants of the earth are mentioned as having so conducted themselves. The rising of the ten kings into active power is a distinctly noticed and subsequent event. Their specific description as active is from chapter xvii. 12--17.

The destruction and judgment of the great city involved the ruin of all mere secular interests--wealth--all

that was Tyrian in its character, though souls of men had been added to that renowned city's traffic; for the great city traded in them also. Anything to enrich characterized the conduct of the city, taught by direct and accomplished apostasy. The city was, in a certain sense, distinct from the merchants. *She* was the whole system; they stood aloof, from the fear of her torment when God was judging her; and the ship-masters withal. But heaven and the holy apostles and prophets were called to rejoice over her. She had been the enemy of heaven, as the whole lust of the earth, to shut out God; and withal the persecutor and enemy of the revelation and testimony of the heavenly glory, the judgment of the world, and the coming of the Son of man--in a word, of the great power of testimony by which the Church was constituted in the world. Then came the statement of the sudden and total manner of her

p. 114

final destruction. 1 Her worldly wealth, the power of riches, is marked as her great final character as thus judged and destroyed. And here she was like Babylon of old; and in her was found all the blood slain upon the earth--as in Jerusalem all that was shed up to her destruction--as being the chief and perfected form of apostasy from God.

In this description of Babylon we have the whole spirit

p. 115

and character of the world except power, royal power; for that is of God, however used, and that (in the hands of the kings of the earth) was corrupted by her; and then these ten horns or kings hated her and destroyed all its fulness and power. These were not Babylon; but they gave their power to the beast; so that power also which did come from God, might be found in open rebellion against Him to whose hand all power was intrusted and given--the Lamb; and thus the last and final form of evil be produced, involving (for it was then the question whose power was to stand) the destruction and setting aside of the form and subsistence of apostasy.

Thus, in Babylon we have wealth, corruption, sorceries, arts, luxuries, bodies and souls of men sold, fornication committed with the kings and dwellers upon earth, and they made drunk with it: 1 the principle of confederate will, but the corruption (not the exercise) of royal secular power as of God, though it might, by seduction, rule and govern this power, and thus separate it from its divine source, and actually set aside and hinder the unqualified assertion of its supremacy, as of God over all. This, as we have seen, is distinct from the direct apostasy of power, which is founded on the hatred and consumption of the whore, and has its place in the beast. Power was given to Nebuchadnezzar, and he built Babylon. But here we have the woman in the exercise of her own will corrupting and ruling, uniting the characters of Israel towards

p. 116

[paragraph continues] God (save that she was a harlot, not an adulteress, for she had been but espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ), and Tyre towards the world. When in exercise, we have always the ecclesiastical

taking the lead in evil, as in Kore and the chief priests: so here this mysterious woman sits on the beast and many waters. When the kings begin to act, and are going to give their power by their will, they begin by her destruction, or consumption at any rate. And note, the act of *Christ's* power is on the *feet* and *toes* themselves. *God* judges *Babylon* as a great moral system denying His supremacy, not in open hostility to *Christ's* power.

We have the *fall* 1 of *Babylon* distinguished, I think, from the *destruction* of *Babylon*. Her fall includes moral degradation, and being the dwelling-place of unclean spirits. This is judgment on her; and she falls because of her making the nations drink of the wine of the poison of her fornication. (Chap. xiv. 8.) This we find in the ecclesiastical course, so to speak, of closing facts. Her final judgment we find in the close of the filling up of the wrath of God. (Chap. xvi. 19.) The connection of the former seems to be with chapter xviii. 2; of the latter, with chapter xviii. 21.

Thus *Babylon* was judged--removed out of the way with her corruptions, which corrupted the earth; and the blood of the servants of the Lord God was avenged. This is celebrated as the work of the Lord God by a multitude in heaven, and the mystic representations of the redeemed; but the worship was of God as sitting on the throne, whose power and judgment had been thus exercised. The way

p. 117

was now made free; and a voice comes forth out of the throne for the voice of praise from all God's servants. His sons could always praise Him in spirit; but here (the prevalence of evil being removed and "delay no longer") they, in their character of servants, and all that feared God, can praise Him; for He now reigned as the Lord God Omnipotent--that character or those characters in which He dealt with the earth whether as God, Creator, Promiser, and Shield of His people while strangers, or the everlasting Accomplisher of all He had promised, Jehovah Elohim Shaddai. All these He took now in power and reigned. This time takes us back to chapter xi. 17: 1 we have had, in the interval, the source, character, and form of evil, and judgment of all but the beast, and open power against the Lamb, which is earthly. All secret or mere corrupt evil, all evil that had its place in heaven, being removed, it was a question of open power--Satan's last and hopeless resource on earth. The praise, accordingly, is returned to God in this character of Lord God Almighty who reigneth; and gladness and joy immediately came forth.

Then His first and immediate purpose manifests itself, before even the Lamb's judgment of His earthly enemies; "the marriage of the Lamb is come." This is a matter of ordinance and dispensation. We are now His children; but the marriage of the Lamb is not yet come, nor is His wife made ready. It is not here, then, children with the

p. 118

[paragraph continues] Father. But the time for the Lord's manifest glory being come, the Lord God takes His power, judges and removes the evil worldly counterpart, and (the Lamb's wife made ready) the time for it is come: these, however, were heavenly things, 1 and they are passed by. The time, and readiness and nature of her robes only, are passingly mentioned as an important circumstantial characterizing the

progress of events: and it closes with pronouncing blessing on those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb; and the prophet returns to the course on the earth again, where the white-robed ones are found the companions of His glory in judgment.

This closed the scene of what was properly heavenly, *i.e.*, the time during which the Lamb (and His followers) were not manifested upon earth. It closes with "these are the true sayings of God." The angel was his fellow servant 2 and the fellow servant of his brethren that had the testimony of Jesus; for the spirit of prophecy still testified of Jesus. God was to be worshipped; this was the great end of the book--to keep the Church in the holy simplicity of true worship in the midst of ruin and apostasy.

Now the heaven is opened. It is not John caught up

The marriage supper seems to be rather the manifestation, as His companions in glory; as the "blessed are the dead," &c., is the rest from their labours, and reception of reward; I do not say the time, but the peculiar blessedness is different. I have some notion that the blessing, chapter xiv., has special connection with xiii. 10, and the blessing here with xiv. 12.

p. 119

there. It is not a sign there. It is not the temple opened to him there; but heaven is opened and One comes forth. 1 Heaven opened for the Holy Ghost to descend on Jesus here. It opened for the angels of God to ascend and descend on the Son of man. It opened for the Church (to wit, in Stephen closing that period and scene) to see into heaven and be received there. It now was opened, that the King of kings and Lord of lords Himself should come forth thence to act on the earth--to judge and make war in righteousness. It was now the time that power was to be applied to righteousness 2 in the earth. He came in the manifestation of faithfulness and truth; He came with scrutinizing and purging judgment; He came in the assemblage of many royalties; and in the secret of His own power, which none knew but Himself. His armies were in fine linen clean and white--heavenly righteousness and purity--the priests of God. He came with divine vengeance (His garment was dipped in blood), and in that title of the manifestation of the power of God which was from creation downward, "the Word of God." Thus He had created, thus revealed, thus judges. The armies in heaven followed. None were in this conflict with Him on the earth--His own arm brought salvation: He smites, rules, and treads the wine-press of God's wrath. The power and title, in which He is now publicly manifested, is "King of kings, and Lord of lords:" this recalls to xvii. 14.

The birds of the air are summoned to the great supper of destruction.

p. 120

The ten kings were specially marked in their war against the Lamb; and they did take a lead in it; but the expression here is more general. The beast is found here, and the kings *of the earth*. Those who ruled the earth were generally found refusing to submit to this royal conqueror--to the Lord. The beast is first and

prominent; then the kings of the earth withal and their armies. It was the general character of the state of the earth then.

The beast and the false prophet are *taken* and put in the lake of fire. The prophet, by his characteristics, is identified with the second two-horned beast which arose out of the earth, which has lost its secular power, but not its character as counsellor of mischief in the latter day. The remnant was slain with the sword of him that sat on the horse--it "proceeded out of his mouth." For, though it was the actual execution of judgment, and no longer merely the sword of the Spirit, but of the Lord, in active imperial judgment of the quick, it was according to the word. It was the judgment of the word which proceeded out of His mouth: they died by that. The proper application of this is to those who were against Him, as coming from heaven to judge those who were directly under the influence and power of apostasy. Still, the *kings of the earth* is wider than the *ten kings*, 1 and left general. I doubt, however, whether it includes Gog, whose aim is against the land rather than the Lamb, or even the Prince of princes. With Gog, it is the gratification of covetousness, the lust of possessing. He goes against the land of unwalled villages, and perishes in the mountains of Israel, after Israel is brought back and dwelling in peace.

The beast and the false prophet, these delegates of Satan, the active enemies of the Lamb, were finally judged: but

p. 121

it does not appear that the deceiving of the nations by Satan thereupon ceases, because he is not yet bound. Still, he cannot now reproduce anything that had before flowed from his place in heaven. On his casting down, his place became, as we have seen, that of *open* opposition to the Lamb. This is the character of the action of the nations ever afterwards under his influence: nothing like the great previous system. So, even after the thousand years, all is on earth and of this character. He never regained heaven again at all. The beast and the false prophet, the resulting form of the apostasy while Satan was god of this world, never re-appeared either. He established himself evidentially prince of this world by what led to the cross, that being the climax of it. When that was departed from, the Church only became the instrument of his power; sin and the world resuming their dominion under her name. This was maintained in active apostasy by the use of a corrupt church, still on the earth as to means; and, when he was cast down from heaven, it could then only be by open war, as we have seen, against Him who came in His royalty to claim His inheritance. I believe it will be found that the early commerce and colonization of the earth were most intimately connected with idolatry--the children of apostate though once rescued Ham. His first act was casting off or degrading authority as of God; and ere long we find, at the river of Cush, 1 idolatry in practice, and extending even to the Shemitic race, whence Abraham was thence called out.

The *former* state (*i.e.*, confederacy, trading, false religion)

p. 122

is spoken of as a woman: 1 this may, as to part of the ideas, be subjected to Christ. Nebuchadnezzar may

rule Babylon (the city of confusion); so the Lord Christ "the city of the great King," where God is well known; and Jerusalem may be the queen in gold of Ophir. The *latter* state of earthly opposition is, either the beast, once subject to the former, and it is by the will of the kings, or in the hands of the wilful king, the fallen and hostile carnal man rising up against the Lord. The former point much explains to me the prince of Tyre in the prophet Ezekiel.

We have, accordingly, to remark that Satan is not bound by him that sat on the horse; but an angel comes down from heaven. It is not the immediate judgment here on Satan by *Christ*, but the divine power, and providence, and intervention of *God*, which sets Satan aside and incapacitates him from any further deceiving of the Gentiles till he be let loose.

In verse 4 we begin a new scene--the thrones. It is not judging and making war here, but sitting in royal judgment on thrones. This passage, it seems to me, alludes to the thrones being set (so admitted to mean, I believe, as in Septuagint) in Daniel vii. 9; in the interpretation of which, in verse 22, we read, "judgment was given to the saints of the most High," or of the heavenly places. Here, not only are the thrones set, but he sees people sitting on them: the thrones were filled. This Daniel did not see--it was a *period* with him: with us it is *our glory* with Christ. These thrones were set before even the King and His armies came forth; but they formed no part of the actual visible earthly scene (nothing yet of the connection of heaven with the earth); and therefore they are not mentioned. The thrones were set

p. 123

before the judgment of the beast in Daniel; and those who come forth with the Lamb are sitters on the thrones. But, I repeat, though filled, they are not brought into the scene till they form properly part of it. "When the Son of man shall come in His glory . . . then shall He sit on the throne of His glory." They do not take this place properly till He takes it openly (the power being given to Him as Son of man, which is connected with earth): and so these thrones, though seated in heaven. As, in Daniel, "the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High," so this is consequent upon His taking His power and reigning. They reign with Him the thousand years. What follows in the verse is an additional intimation that the others had lost nothing but the enmity of the world, 1 and of Satan even to death, or by their refusal to worship the beast. Their souls were seen. There might have been power to kill the body, but they had never died to God, and now they enjoyed the fruit of it--"they reign in life by one."

The reigning on the thrones *actually* is consequent upon the removal of the deceiving power of Satan: and so with Christ. He comes first, and then actually takes the throne of the world: His companions have been hidden with Him meanwhile; and though glorified (so I speak of them now), the thrones were not seen till the war ended. The title was full, they were gone to Him. But they did not,

p. 124

before that, actually possess the kingdom; nor did He Himself. The horse and the throne are distinct things--imperial, active, subduing power; and full, peaceable, judicial power as king. For Christ's act so coming is not a mere passing act. The throne of His glory continues till, as a mediatorial king, He gives it

up. On this throne of the Son of man the saints will sit, occupying thrones with Him and judging the world: and this is a reign of peace, but of righteousness withal (this latter Jewish properly): for heaven and earth meet in peace now--peace on earth; because the face of heaven, in its own character through Christ the mediator, and the saints with Him, shines on it now.

In this part there is little mention of the nations, though it be left general; because Christ deals with the nations as identified with earthly Jerusalem: whereas here He is looked upon as coming from heaven to act upon the main scene and agent of Satan's hostile power--the beast and his followers. The nations at this time are more the subjects of Old Testament prophecy; which, while it recognizes the fact of the Lord's coming from heaven with all His saints, occupies itself with the earthly Jerusalem and what passes there. Here we have the display of the first resurrection,--the main subject. Blessed and holy are they! they shall be priests of God and of Christ: there is their highest place, as seen in this book; and they shall reign with Him a thousand years, for He is a priest on His throne. It would be hard to make priests of principles, though, by a figure, we might say principles reign.

After this when the nations form the body of hostile agents, we have Satan's actings in them; but it is no revival of the beast, nor anything in that character. Blessed be God, there was a final ending of that dark and subtle apostasy which resulted from Satan's being in

p. 125

heaven; but this is a mere exhibition of open, hostile enmity in those whom he has been able to deceive here. We must on no account, therefore, lose sight of this character of present evil and rebellion and apostasy, that it flows from Satan's being in heavenly places (though the Church, in the knowledge of Christ's exaltation, may know His and its entire victory over him). The wrestling, however, is not now with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. In chapter xii. Satan is cast down from heaven; but here, what he raises on earth against the Lamb is cast into the lake of fire and Satan himself is bound in the bottomless pit, the history of the earth not being yet finished. The coming of Jesus, whose judgment acts on the beast and false prophet, is not the same as the angel of God's providence and power casting Satan into the pit.

The glory and reigning of the Son of man seems to vindicate God as regards the failure of the Noah world. The blessing of the Second Adam, as the Head of a re-deemed race, takes the place of antediluvian evil and wretchedness, in which the children of fallen Adam displayed their character: *this* closed by the judgment of water, *that* commenced by that of fire. In the reign of the Son of man with His saints, "a King shall reign in righteousness." In the blessedness of the Second Adam, as Head of the new race when God's tabernacle is with men, therein "*dwell*eth righteousness," its peaceful and constant habitation without force maintaining it. Partially the principles of these two states mingle, by virtue of the power and influence of the heavenly Jerusalem and its great Bridegroom (and so we have Psalm lxxxv. accomplished): still are they different.

Upon the close of the thousand years, Satan is let loose--deceives

p. 126

the nations--a separation takes place; and he brings up the deceived against the camp of the saints and the beloved city, to wit, the earthly Jerusalem. Then the devil is cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet are already, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

The judgment of the beast and his armies, it appears to me, is not the judgment of Matthew xxv., nor is Matthew xxv. the judgment of the great white throne. That judgment in Matthew appears to me to be the judgment of the nations at large, when Christ is not making war, either as coming from heaven, or as going forth in connection with Jerusalem; but when he is sitting on His throne, having come, and judging the nations for the manner in which they have treated the preachers of the gospel of the kingdom in that going forth which shall specially take place at the close. It is not, "He shall send forth his armies," but the calm and solemn session of the throne on those who have despised Him in His messengers.

Although the fact of the resurrection of the just is mentioned here to separate them out of the judgment, the millennial state itself is little dwelt upon (the chapter being properly the account of the session of judgment). From this we see the partakers of the first resurrection entirely exempt. Then Satan's actings, as introducing the millennial judgments are mentioned, and that judgment 1 itself. On the great white throne (for there were no thrones now) sat One from whose face heaven and earth fled away.

p. 127

[paragraph continues] This, therefore, was not coming at all--no judgment $\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \omicron\bullet\kappa\omicron\upsilon\bullet\bullet\nu\eta\varsigma$, of the habitable world as a scene, nor a judgment of the quick. The dead, small and great, stand before God; and they are judged out of the books, according to their works. We have therewith, a general statement of the portion of those not written in the book of life. Whatever differences there may have been in measure, they were all cast into the lake of fire. This was not now a place merely prepared for the devil and his angels. The devil was there. The false prophet and the beast had been there long before: now, all those who were not written in the book of life.

There was now not merely an economic change. The great white throne had no reference to any dispensation, but to the dead. There was an actual physical change--a new heaven and a new earth, and no more sea. And here John sees a new object, new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven. This general fact, I conceive, is presented here to give the object. Its bearings are taken up apart: and first the historical progress or result is stated; and we find the tabernacle of God, not the throne or heavenly dwelling of God and the Lamb, but God all in all--the tabernacle of God with men. The race, man, now are blessed with God's presence; and grace had provided a way in the which (with no desolating enquiry of "Where art thou?") God could visit, yea, have His tabernacle among men, now headed up in the blessed last Adam--the risen and glorified Man, not in the first fallen one. The millennium, as we have said, is the contrast to Noachic failure, when Satan is cast out of the heavens, and government comes in, righteous and effectual for blessing and peace. To man's fall, the ruin of the first Adam, is here contrasted the perfect, unfailing, and new and durable blessing of the second--all things made new--no

p. 128

more death--all evil put in the lake of fire. Chapter xix. 9 is the special recorded blessing of the former state, the marriage of the Lamb: xxi. 5, the blessing of this.

The condition of the earth during the millennium is more properly the subject of the Old Testament prophets--the restitution of all things spoken of by them. The connection of the heavenly blessings with it, during the millennium, is, however, taken up in what follows, to complete the picture, and give the saints the joy of their own portion in it, which, in its own proper and intrinsic character, moreover is eternal. This account is from xxi. 9 to xxii. 5, 6. 1 On this I have but few remarks to make, having so far prolonged this. It is not here the children in the Father's house; it is not dwelling in God as love (and thus, through Jesus, in whom all fulness dwells, filled with His fulness, we in Him, and He in the Father), but the glory of God, the order of all dispensation. Glory is taken up in it (*i.e.*, that which constitutes the glory of each), as displaying the character, foundation, and ways of God, the excellency of mediation, and the basis of righteousness and true holiness, firmly established as the very streets of the city. These constituted the characteristics of the city.

But there is another very interesting point in this character of the heavenly Jerusalem, the Lamb's bride, the perfection and blessedness of mediatorial glory. First, God and the Lamb are the light of it: they enjoy the light of glory; the nations of the spared ones walk in the light of it (*i.e.*, of the heavenly Jerusalem, the Lamb's wife, the glorified saints). It is not merely "nations shall come to the brightness of its rising"--the acknowledgment

p. 129

of a new and dominant power owned of God and glorified in the earth; it is proper blessing, "they walk in the light of it." And yet more distinctly does it preserve its character of grace, and the immense privilege of grace; and what it possesses in common, it has on incomparably higher ground than even Paradise of old. The Tree of Life has healing in it now. Not merely can the innocent eat and live, but there is remedial blessing in it for those on earth. They worse perhaps in some sort than Adam, but far more glory, and blessing displayed even in glory. The Lamb's bride, answering as a help-meet to the Lamb's heart of love, is minister of blessing to them that need. It is now full blessing, and we ministers of it, "for His servants shall serve Him . . . His name shall be on their foreheads." Far other is the minister of strict earthly righteousness, the earthly Jerusalem--"the people and nations that will not serve thee shall utterly perish." Now this heavenly rule, withal, is recognized as the source of power. The kings of the earth bring their glory to it (not to corrupt Babylon, to their disgrace and ruin). None enter this that defile, but those written in the Lamb's book of life. It is not now merely "the Lord shall reign for ever and ever," but "*they* shall reign for ever and ever."

From the time of the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God, and the association of the Church with Him, Christ has been ready to judge. There were many antichrists, whereby it was known that it was the last time, as this same apostle teaches us. And now, in the manifested failure of the Church on earth unfolded in the first chapters, though the Bridegroom might tarry, the Church, knowing His mind, had

but one cry, "Come quickly!" In this position, therefore, the Church is practically set.

From the time the prophecy took its course, all was

p. 130

remediless. When it took it absolutely and definitely in the crisis, it became absolutely and definitely so as to individuals, as regarded the dispensation of judgment--"the door was shut." The Lord declares He has sent His angel to testify *these things in the churches*. Here we are brought back to what went before the prophetic sayings (the churches being thus made cognizant of the prophetic sayings). The Lord presents Himself to them, as the root indeed, but as the offspring of David, ready to inherit his throne; and the bright and blessed witness of millennial day, and, in one sense, eternal day to the Church. This was the next thought to the Church on this failure. Accordingly, knowing it, the Church is only lifted up into better hopes, and the Spirit, 1 which, as Comforter, abides for ever, takes the lead; and, in its character of Bride, abstracting itself from circumstances and earthly progress and associations, the Church joins its guiding Spirit and says, Come--calls on all who hear, whose ear is open to divine truth, to join in this as its cry, its first utterance, now born into a world of sorrow even for the Church, which sees its desolation (still, however, maintaining its character of grace, ministerial grace, to the world): "And let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." While the Holy Ghost remains filling the Church, no change of circumstances can prevent it or us from being the ministers of this calling-grace in the midst of a ruined world.

p. 131

Strictly speaking, then, verse 17 returns to the things that are; verses 10, 11 to the prophetic period, which has closed the hope and testimony of grace, and assumed the testimony of judgment, either preparatory or final. Verse 20 gives the individual seal, as it were, of the apostle's faith to the personal application of the book by the Lord.

As the Church instantly broke forth in answer on the church revelation of Jesus, in exactly corresponding praises to His then revealed character, so now, on the revelation of His millennial and glorified character, it breaks forth by the Spirit, which never leaves it let it be ever so desolate, but rather inspires it with hope in the answering and suitable cry of "Come!" and then looks round, in the sense of this, to renew its service of grace to the world.

In chapter xxi. 9, we have Jehovah sitting on the throne, declaring Himself as Alpha and Omega; here, in chapter xxii. 12, 13, we have Jesus doing so (there *closing* the millennium--here *introducing* the millennial times)

Footnotes

[103:1](#) Fornication seems to consist in living in wealth and luxuries, through intercourse with others, not the cultivation of her own resources; therefore it is referred to union with, and dependence on, the world in the case of the Church, and to enriching commerce with other nations in the case of a city, as Tyre. Jerusalem is termed "adulteress," not whore, because she was married to the Lord; but in all these cases there will be found, I conceive, a worshipping of Satan, in this world, as its god, a seeking the power $\tau\omicron\alpha\upsilon\upsilon\omicron\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\kappa\omicron\sigma\omicron\upsilon\ \tau\omicron\tau\omicron\upsilon$. Power national or imperial is a distinct thing, though it may be abused: it is given of God, though it may end in open rebellion.

[103:2](#) The prince and king of Tyre are, however, different. It is the king of whom the position is so astonishingly traced by the Divine hand.

[108:1](#) I feel that probably this has passed, if we take the protracted course, in Charlemagne; if the closing scene, in Buonaparte, because the Roman empire had been destroyed in its full character before Charlemagne; and his was a renewal of what was not. Nominally it continued until Buonaparte, who, as the agent of the French republic, broke it to pieces and renewed the imperial power for a little season.

[109:1](#) [It may have that force as to the last form of the beast out of the abyss.]

[110:1](#) [The better reading, however, adds 'the beast.']

[110:2](#) Such as Rome, for example, before even imperial times.

[110:3](#) I know that many take Babylon as merely a great worldly system. That it is a great worldly system is freely admitted. But the exclusion of the ecclesiastical character in this place seems to me a great error: it is the virus of her active will in this place, though clothed with the world. She is not viewed here as the city of the apostate king at all, though, in the worldly sense, she may be the beginning of his kingdom. He comes in here, as the eighth head of the beast, supplanting the woman. The kings lay her waste to give their power to him; for power, not wealth, is the last form of evil presented, and that against the Lamb, which is true, active rebellion, and more than mere apostasy. God therefore judges Babylon; and the destroyers of her wealth and importance are those who give their kingdom to the beast: thereupon and then the war against the Lamb comes. I have no doubt the principles of Babylon were manifested in her--not royal power. Though Babylon was the beginning of his power in whom royal power was first displayed, yet it was specially what the confederate [p. 111](#) will of man had done; its first form was confederate will in independence of God. This is shewn in the character which constituted the whore, yet had its development by her corruption and fornication: and the effects of this are supplanted by another confederacy, which is not only apostasy, as all human will apart from God is, but active war against God's King, the Lamb.

As to the ten kings, I would here also notice, what, not being the direct subject of the book, I have not noticed hitherto. It appears to me a mistake to include the Grecian or eastern part of the Roman empire in the ten kings or direct power of the beast, though he may seek to possess himself of it as his dominion,

and in a measure may do so. The little book of the eleventh chapter takes up the beast in his last Satanic character, in order to complete the scene of the final catastrophe and woe; but the first two woes seem to me to embrace the eastern or Grecian part of the great scene of the prophetic earth. When we come to the geographical divisions and actings at the close (for all are aware that the catastrophe of all the powers of the earth is in the east, in Judea), then the king of the north and the king of the south seem to me to occupy the Grecian part, not the ten kings, though the beast may be seeking to possess himself, as of old, of their territory, and may in part succeed. I allude here to Daniel xi., as may readily be seen.

[112:1](#) The full judgment comes after God's people are come out of her. Her fall is a warning to them, these are rapidly brought together here at her judgment. [I have left this statement as it is, though its full force may be questioned, because it is a very nice point of interpretation, and it was no harm to have this view before us.]

[113:1](#) See Ezekiel xxvii. 35, 36, and the previous verses. The prince of Tyre sits in the midst of the seas.

[114:1](#) There seems to me, an intimate connection between the continuance of Babylon and the serpent being in heavenly places. He exercises his power thus as influence, secretly, as false worship. He is the object of false worship; and hence, in this dispensation, he works by the corruption of christian profession; and yet this still as the god of this world, which title he cannot lose, for it is all he has:--"the course of this world . . . the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." This is said of him as still is $\nu \tau \circ \varsigma \pi \circ \upsilon \rho \alpha \nu \circ \iota \varsigma$, in the heavenlies.

False worship, as the source of power, would be its heathen character; false worship, as the source or means of fellowship, its Babylonish character in the christian dispensation. In a word, this is rather his anti-priestly character and spiritual influence: the man of sin, or lawless one, is not revealed. Power continues outwardly owned of God, and the letter [he that letteth] remains. When he is cast down, he loses this character, which is opposed to Christ as Priest, and to Him as acting by His Spirit in maintaining the holy communion of His saints and washing their feet. He then raises power as of earth (the king doing according to his will) against the heavens, for he has no place in them even falsely. He could render his influence as anti-priest paramount to supreme civil authority, which is of God, using the name of God falsely in religion; but he cannot, save in open rebellion when cast down, bring power against God. [The substance of this note is of great importance: only it must not be supposed that the first sentence is to be taken strictly as the existence of Babylon. But I apprehend there will be a total change when Satan is cast down, perhaps practically prepared before. The principles, I have no doubt, are already at work.]

[115:1](#) The character of Babylon as whore seems lost by the enmity of the ten horns, because she cannot help it. The religious mischief is, after this, done by the false prophet, the other form of the two-horned beast. Thereon the character of Babylon becomes more purely secular; but the devil dwells there, or it is the habitation of demons, and not therefore simply worldly interests.

[116:1](#) [I have still left this, though it may be too precise as a system. Still both are spoken of. There is an

excessive degradation; the fair form of ecclesiastical character is gone, and it is thorough demon wickedness. In this case, xviii. 4-8, and as above 21, would seem to coalesce with xvi. 19.]

[117:1](#) When God takes to Himself His power and reigns, and the worldly kingdom of our Lord and His anointed is come. It is taken up here on the actual judgment and removal out of the way of Babylon, as the earthly mystery opposed to the heavenly bride of Christ: so that, as the Lord God Omnipotent takes His power, the Lamb thereupon takes His bride. Her fall, which seems more connected with the fall of Satan from heaven, is a previous thing.

[118:1](#) The marriage of the Lamb was not before the world; though, having espoused her in the heavens, He may then in the gladness of His heart bring her forth in glory.

[118:2](#) Note, sonship is not the point of this book, but dealings on earth: therefore the angel says, "fellow servant" to those who, in their higher character, are really sons and joint heirs.

[119:1](#) I have long felt, and it is clear from this passage, that the Church is actually with Christ in heavenly places before this; for they come forth with Him. [See Colossians iii. 1-4.]

[119:2](#) "Judgment shall return to righteousness; and all the upright in heart shall follow it." Psalm xciv. 15.

[120:1](#) [Only that the kings of the earth compose the ideal completeness of the earth under the beast.]

[121:1](#) Of this idolatrous and worldly power, Egypt, Babylon, and Tyre (from which last the worldly and apostate character is specially drawn) were the great centres mentioned in scripture. The last committed fornication with all the kingdoms of the earth (this in connection with her trade, &c.).

[122:1](#) As Babylon, or the great city, Tyre: adulterous Israel and idolatry.

[123:1](#) I think I see here an assertion of threefold presentation of those who shall occupy the thrones, or at least live and reign with Christ a thousand years. First, the general body of the saints of the heavenlies, including the Church,--they sat on thrones; next, those beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and the word of God; thirdly, those who had not worshipped the beast. This is important as shewing the place of all these classes.

[126:1](#) If any ask what comes of the living saints as to their change at the close of the millennium, the answer is--scripture says nothing, save that from other passages we know, on principle, they will have incorruptible natures in that scene when all things are made new.

[128:1](#) Chapter xxi. 8, closes the historical statement: what follows is description, and that of the millennial effect of the city as well as of the city itself.

[130:1](#) The Spirit saying it seemed that it was not merely a holy though untaught desire, but the mind of the Spirit itself, in and to the Church, who, what He hears, speaks. It was the divine mind, but, so taught, all the bride's affections, separated in heart and spirit to Christ, centre and express themselves in this desire. "He that heareth" is he whose heart is opened to the truth, but has not learnt the separated bridal state of the Church, espoused as a chaste virgin unto Christ.

[Next: Charts](#)



[Sacred Texts](#) [Christianity](#) [Index](#) [Previous](#)

NOTES ON THE REVELATION.

Charts

A screenshot of a software application window titled "NEW TESTAMENT--VIEWING THE REVELATION ON THE PROTRACTED OR HISTORIC SCALE". The window displays a complex grid with multiple columns and rows, representing a timeline or scale of the New Testament. The text is small and difficult to read, but it appears to be a detailed chart or table.

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New Testament.--Viewing the Revelation on the Protracted or Historic Scale

A screenshot of a software application window titled "SYNOPSIS OF THE REVELATION--THE PROTRACTED AND HISTORIC SCALE OF THE REVELATION, CONCEPT OF THE REVELATION IN THE LIGHT OF THE REVELATION, CONCEPT OF THE REVELATION IN THE LIGHT OF THE REVELATION". The window displays a complex grid with multiple columns and rows, representing a synopsis of the Revelation. The text is small and difficult to read, but it appears to be a detailed chart or table.

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Synopsis of the Revelation