

THIRTEEN LECTURES ON THE APOCALYPSE

By Robert Roberts Fourth Edition, 1921



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Thirteen Lectures on The Things Revealed in The Last Book of the New Testament Commonly Known as "Revelation, but more appropriately distinguished as The Apocalypse showing their bearing on the events of those mightier events of the near future to which they have all been leading.

PREFACE

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PREFACE

The following lectures were reproduced from brief notes, made by several shorthand writers, during the course of their delivery. They were not delivered with a view to publication. Their publication is due to the importunities of those who heard them, and others who heard them. They were addressed, in almost a private way, to the believers of the Truth in Birmingham (known as Christadelphians), with the object defined in the few printed announcements that were issued: viz. "to make known, in a simple and colloquial manner (for the benefit particularly of believers of the Truth), the meaning of the symbols exhibited to John in the Isle of Patmos, in their bearing on the events of history and those mightier events in the near future to which they have all been leading." The lectures were delivered in the spring of 1880; and the book was published in the autumn of the same year.

The Author, in the original preface, acknowledged his great indebtedness to Dr. Thomas's Exposition of the Apocalypse, in three volumes, known as Eureka. "The publication of this volume of lectures," he said, "may serve to draw attention to that work, and to prepare the general reader for the understanding of it. In face, it may prove a stepping stone to Eureka. Some find Eureka too deep and diffuse to allow of their grasping it with the limited time for study at their disposal. It was to meet the wants of this class in Birmingham that this course of lectures was delivered."

The Author of Thirteen Lectures died in 1898.

A Second Edition of the book was issued in 1900, and a third in 1908.

A Fourth Edition is now issued in the hope that many more may be helped to understand and obey the Revelation, and to hope for the great salvation about to be revealed.

Birmingham, August, 1921.

LECTURE 1: REVELATION 1

See also Eureka

The general neglect of the Apocalypse -- a good reason why it is not understood -- the recent exposition by Dr. Thomas -- Origin of the Apocalypse -- to whom sent -- its symbolic style -- the use of sign and symbol in previous divine communications -- the advantage of symbolism -- the futurist theory of the Apocalypse -- its baselessness -- John in the Isle of Patmos -- "in Spirit on the Lord's Day" -- not Sunday or Saturday -- the first object seen -- the Son of Man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks -- the order to send the Apocalypse to the seven Asian ecclesias -- the message to each -- the structural beauty of each -- brief and hurried analysis -- the angels of the ecclesia.

THERE is no more conclusive evidence of the truly unchristian state of the professedly Christian society around us, than the ignorance and aversion that prevail with regard to the Apocalypse--the last book of the New Testament. The opening sentences of the book show us how it is regarded by Christ--(and this is the true standard of judgment in the case). Christ does not directly speak in these opening sentences; but he has said with regard to the apostles, of whom John, the writer of this book, was one, "He that heareth you heareth me". Consequently we hear Christ speaking when we hear John describe this book as a revelation sent from Christ (who first received it from God), in order that his servants might know the things that would shortly come to pass. We hear Christ speak when we read in verse 3: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy". We hear him speak directly at the end of the book thus: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches". If this book of the Apocalypse is a message from Christ, sent for the enlightenment of his servants, to be testified in the Churches, among whom those are blessed who read and understand it, how are we to estimate a state of society in which it is not only generally unknown and not understood where known, but in which it is an increasingly popular sentiment that it is "unknowable", and that any profession of ability to understand it is evidential of latent if not active insanity on the part of the professor?

There are very good reasons why the Apocalypse is not understood. Those reasons are known to all who know the truth. In brief they may be said to lie in this, that people come to the Apocalypse with ideas that cannot be harmonized with it. The Apocalypse deals with scenes and events belonging to the earth and to the nations upon it--scenes and events which, in their general outlines, are the subject of Old Testament prophecy from the beginning, and which constitute the subject matter of the gospel of the kingdom. No marvel, therefore, if people whose theology fixes their attention upon heaven and hell, and an imagined disembodied state of existence after death, cannot get into the groove of a correct understanding.

We must not stay to discuss the problem how it comes to pass that professing Christendom should have come to discard the first principles of primitive Christianity. This has been discussed before. It is sufficient to note the fact as the explanation of the otherwise inexplicable phenomenon, that the last book of the New Testament should be deemed unintelligible, useless, and even dangerous by multitudes professing subjection to the book as a whole. If we are in a different position in the matter to those around us, we owe it to the kindness of God in having brought us into contact with the labours of a man who has been instrumental in our age in removing from the Scriptures the veil of misapprehension which hides them from the general understanding. Having received the benefit of these labours, it is our duty to do the best we can to extend it to others.

The object of the present course of lectures is to exhibit in a simple way the meaning of this (at first sight) apparently inscrutable book of Revelation. It is customary and more appropriate to speak of it as the Apocalypse. To speak of it as "Revelation" is to clash with the fact that there is much other revelation besides, and that the Apocalypse is only a part of revelation. To speak of it as the Apocalypse is to

identify a particular part of revelation.

The first thing to be noted is its own description of itself in the opening verse as “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him.” The conviction following from this description is that before God gave it to Jesus, Jesus did not know it. This conclusion may not be in harmony with the common idea of Jesus which attributes to him co-equal knowledge with the Father; but it is in harmony with Christ’s own declaration while on earth. He said of a certain time: “Of that day knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father” (Mark 13:32). Jesus knows as much as the Father pleases.

The next point to be noticed is, that Jesus sent it for the information of a certain class: “To show unto HIS SERVANTS things which must shortly come to pass”. It was not sent to all the world. It was sent to his friends. This accounts for the difficult form in which it was communicated. It was intended for a class who in their knowledge of the purpose of God, as revealed in the prophets, possessed the key for the opening of this enigmatical and more elaborate exhibition of it in detail. None others could understand or make use of it. This was one reason why it has been so little understood by the world at large. If it has been sent by Christ to the friends of Christ, obviously everyone desiring to be numbered with the friends of Christ will feel desirous of understanding it.

Next we have to consider the form adopted in the conveyance of this revelation. We are not left to speculate on this point. It is not an open question whether the things seen by John were literal or symbolic. The nature of the revelation is defined in the same verse that tells us whom it was sent to. “He sent and SIGNIFIED IT by his angel to his servant John.” It was not sent in a plain form but in an enigmatical or sign form. To SIGNIFY is to represent by sign or symbol. That that is what is meant by the use of the verb “signify” in this case, is shown conclusively by what John saw and heard. He saw certain things which he describes, and concerning these he is repeatedly informed that the mystery or meaning of what he saw was this and that. Thus, the very first object he saw was a luminous personage standing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, and having in his hand seven stars. That this was an exhibition of something in symbol would be suggested by the thing itself, but is put beyond a doubt by what was addressed to John thus (chap. 1:20): “The mystery of the seven stars: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches (the churches enumerated in verse 11) and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches”. Explanations such as these are scattered through the book, and furnish the clues by which the whole may be worked out and understood. To have given the signs without any explanation of their meaning, would have been to give that which would not be a revelation but a concealment and a bewilderment.

The use of sign or symbol is very characteristic of the divine mode of communication. The literal is the basis, but there is much garniture of figure from the very beginning. The Mosaic system was one elaborate system of symbol, as we learn from the New Testament. The messages of the prophets are largely figurative in their dress, though literal in their structure and in their bearing. The Apocalypse is not the first time pure symbol was employed to represent events. The book of Daniel is almost entirely of this character. The vision of the image and the stone, the vision of the four beasts, the vision of the ram and the goat, will occur to everyone acquainted with that book as pointed examples. Even in the plainer prophets, there are examples of pure symbol. Jehovah alludes to the fact in Hosea thus: “I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes by the ministry of the prophets” (chap. 12:10). If the similitudes were employed without any clue to their significance, their use would not be enlightening, but the clues, in almost all cases, are supplied--if not in the immediate context, in some corresponding part of the word. Diligent search and comparison will find them.

In some cases it requires no such search; they lie on the surface. Thus Jeremiah, at the commencement

of his ministry, was caused to see an almond rod. He was asked what he saw; he said, "I see a rod of an almond tree". "Then said the Lord unto him, thou hast well seen, for I will hasten my word to perform it" (1:12). Here an almond rod is constituted the symbol of speed in the execution of the Lord's purpose, so that every time it was seen, it would carry that meaning with it, in the same way that the scales in modern allegory represent justice. The same prophet was shown a seething pot with its face towards the north, the explanation of which was added in these words: "Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land"--namely, a military invasion, as the next verse shows. Consequently a seething pot would become a symbol of the affliction arising from the war. Amos was shown a basket of garnered fruit (chap. 8:1), and informed that it signified the ripeness of Israel's iniquity, because of which Jehovah would bear no longer with them.

At first sight, it might seem a matter of regret that symbol should be employed at all. It might seem so much better that all matters should be set forth plainly. This thought will give way before experience. Purely literal talk lacks the colour and zest of communication spiced with figure and concealed meaning. This is apparent in even ordinary conversation. The man who signifies more than he actually says, and who by a slight obscurity of style imposes upon the mind an effort to penetrate his meaning, is a more interesting talker than the man who lets all out in a plain way. The effect of symbols after understanding is attained, is to make the matter set forth much more vivid and striking than it would be in a merely literal presentation.

The symbols of the Apocalypse are very graphic of the things symbolized; but it is necessary to realize that they are only symbols. Thus John, when he saw seven candlesticks, saw something that had no actual existence. The actual things signified were seven communities of men and women in Asia Minor. He saw a drying river, he saw three frogs, he saw a seven-headed dragon. But there was no literal river or frogs or dragon. These were the signs of something else. Unless this discrimination be carefully exercised, the effect of the contemplation of the objects exhibited in the Apocalypse will be to bewilder and daze, whereas when it is the meanings that are kept before the mind as the important thing to be looked after, the effect is enlightening and calming as intended.

You may think these are needless observations. They will not appear so when you remember there are people who say the Apocalypse is to be understood literally, that Babylon is Babylon; a dragon, a real dragon; the prophets, two men, the locusts, locusts, the fire, real fire, and so on. Such people teach that the Apocalypse is a revelation of something that is to happen after Christ has come. The baselessness of such an idea will be manifest at once when it is recollected that the Apocalypse was sent to seven ecclesias existing in Asia Minor in the time of John for the information of all who should afterwards listen. All were pronounced "Blessed" who should keep the things written in it (verse 3, and frequently throughout the book). Now, of what value could the pointing out of this blessedness be to the seven ecclesias in Asia and all the brethren of Christ who should live after them till his second coming, if the things set forth in it were things to be developed after Christ shall come? The force of this becomes very strong when you consider the character of the class to be accepted when Christ comes as described in the Apocalypse. They are described as "those who have gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark and over the number of his name" (15:2). How could this be descriptive of the saints if there were no beast and his image and his mark and his name to overcome before Christ had come? I will not enlarge this argument, though it might be enlarged. This indication of it is sufficient to show the groundlessness and mischievousness of the futurist idea.

We will now proceed to the consideration of the subject in chief--the Apocalypse itself. In the lectures to follow, we will take the book seriatim, chapter by chapter, seeking to exhibit, not only the meaning but the evidence of the meaning, for it would be of no profit to assert that the meaning was thus and so, unless the proof that it is so were produced at the same time.

The book opens with the picture of John in the island of Patmos, a small desolate isle on the west coast of Asia Minor. To the solitude of this place he was banished on account of the faith of Christ, by the Roman Emperor Domitian, who it is said first tried unsuccessfully to destroy him by immersing him in boiling oil. He tells us that before the vision began, he was "in spirit on the Lord's Day." Some people take this to mean that the vision came to him on Sunday. There are various objections to this. First, Sunday is never called the Lord's Day in the Scriptures. Even under Moses, the sabbath was the "seventh day"--not the Lord's Day--the sabbath of the Lord, but never the Lord's Day. Still less was such a description employed under Christ who was the end of the law for righteousness to everyone believing (Rom. 10:4), and who liberated believers from the law of the sabbath, as well as the other parts of the law (Col. 2:14-16; Rom. 14:5). The only use to which we ever find "the Lord's Day" put, or "day of the Lord" (for the latter is the more correct form of the phrase), is to express an appointed day of the Lord's manifestation in some form or other, particularly the day appointed for the judging of the world in righteousness by Christ. This last is the day most commonly expressed by the phrase "day of the Lord" (Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14; 1 Thess. 5:2; Phil. 1:6).

Then the intimation: "I was in Spirit", is conclusive against the common way of regarding this passage. The meaning of this phrase is illustrated unmistakably a little farther on. At the close of the first series of things shewn to him, John heard a voice addressing him thus: "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things that must be hereafter" (4:1), "and," says he, "immediately I was in Spirit, and, behold, a throne," etc. What this means exactly is shown in the case of another prophet, Ezekiel, who being also addressed on the occasion of being about to receive visions, says (Ezek. 2:2): "And the Spirit entered into me when he spake to me;" and again, "So the Spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness in the heat of my spirit, but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me" (3:14). To be "in Spirit" is to be seized, covered or held by the Spirit of God for the particular purpose in hand -- generally a purpose of vision and revelation. Now, for John to be "in the Spirit on the day of the Lord," was to be present on that day in vision by the Spirit. The Spirit was John's constant companion, as Jesus had promised (John 15:26; 16:13) -- a Comforter, an Instructor, a revealer of things to come. When was the comfort of this illumination more needed than in the solitude of Patmos, when John was compelled to pine away for the truth's sake? What more suited to the needs of the spiritual man than that he should receive this comfort in the shape of a preternaturally-engendered contemplation of the day of the Lord, when all tribulation should cease? and what more natural than that such a moment should be chosen for the communication of a further and larger revelation for the benefit of the whole household of God?

John, then, in Patmos, being, through the power of the Spirit, en rapport on a particular occasion with the day of the Lord, hears behind him a loud trumpet-toned voice, saying, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and what thou seest, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia, unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea". Turning to see whence the voice proceeded, he saw "one like unto the Son of Man", whom he describes in detail. On this it has to be remarked that the figure seen was not Jesus himself. The nature of the figure -- (with sword proceeding out of his mouth, etc.) -- itself shows this; but it is more evident from the statement of the first verse concerning the whole Apocalypse, that Jesus "sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John". This statement is repeated at the end of the book (22:6) that "the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to shew unto His servants the things which must shortly be done". It was an angel and not Jesus that visited John in Patmos. John refers to this angel visitant thus (22:8): "When I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, see thou do it not, for I am the fellow-servant of thee and of thy brethren the prophets" etc. The angel visiting John in Patmos, so operated upon him by the power of the Spirit of God as to cause him to see and hear things that had no real existence, but which to John seemed real, just as things seen and heard in dreams seem real to the dreamer, with this great difference, however, that dreams are the interfusion and confusion of

ideas already impressed upon the brain by natural means in waking hours--the vision caused to appear to John was the exhibition, in signs and symbols, of things that were really to come, the knowledge of which had been received by the angel from Christ, to whom the Father had communicated it in the first instance.

The Son of Man then, seen by John when he turned to see the source of the voice, was not the actual Jesus, but a symbolic representation of him in certain relations which become apparent in the messages sent to the churches or ecclesias of Asia.

Here it is well to realize that though sent to seven congregations contemporary with John, the messages were really intended to be of world-wide application so far as saints are concerned. It was not only for them: it was for all the friends of Christ. We learn this from the addition of this clause to every message: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear". We also learn from this that Jesus, in sending the messages, contemplated the possibility of some not having ears to hear. This apparently unimportant deduction may often be of great practical value. We are liable to be depressed and even diverted from right conclusions by the general apathy and want of interest shown towards the great matters involved in the Apocalypse. We are liable sometimes to feel as if this mass of public inertia were in some way or other in the right, and that the holding of definite and interested views on the subject is a sign of narrowness and a mistake. It will help us to resist this (at bottom) unreasonable feeling, to see that Jesus appeals to the discerning only. He always speaks disparagingly of the spiritual attainments of the mass of mankind. In his prayer, for example (John 17), he plainly says "The world hath not known Thee," and again, "I pray not for the world," and again, "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15). In this very Apocalypse, the spectacle is prominently and strikingly exhibited of all nations being in the wrong. All nations are said to be figuratively drunk with the (symbolic) wine of abomination ministered to them by the Roman ecclesiastical adulteress of Europe (Rev. 18:3; 17:18). All the world were to wonder after the beast (13:3). Consequently, enlightenment, instead of finding it a difficulty, will rather recognize it as one of the characteristic features of the present situation of things, that Apocalyptic matters enlist no sympathy and rather excite the contempt than the attention or even the opposition of mankind.

Why was the Apocalypse sent to only seven ecclesias? There were many more than seven in the world at that time. There were the ecclesias at Jerusalem, at Rome, at Antioch, at Corinth, at Colosse, at Philippi, and many other places. The seven golden candlesticks take no note of these: Why not? Because seven represents all. The seven golden candlesticks in the midst of which the figure of the Son of Man was seen, represent the entire community of the saints as a light-bearing community. They did this in representing the seven ecclesias in Asia which stood for all the ecclesias everywhere, as shown by the intimation appended to each message, that what was said was intended for everyone having ears. Seven were chosen whose states differed, and who therefore called for seven different messages, applicable to all the states in which professedly Christian communities could be found.

Here we have to notice that the Apocalypse was not only sent to the friends of Christ, instead of being published to the world, but that its prophetic delineations, as relating to the course of events in the world, are prefaced by a message peculiar and private to themselves. The second and third chapters are wholly occupied with the messages to the seven representative churches, with respect to their condition and Christ's views and intentions with regard to them. This shows the position the friends and servants of Christ occupy in his estimation. It shows the force of Paul's statement on the same head: "All things are for your sakes." The drama that has been enacted in Europe during a long and dark series of centuries, in harmony with the programme sketched in the Apocalypse, has the body of Christ as its ultima ratio. At the beginning of that programme, and during its evolution, the body of Christ is developed, and at its close, it is seen in glorious and triumphant occupation of the earth and all its

honours and glories. The messages to the churches have the first place because the body of Christ is first in the regards of Christ, and because of the important work they are intended to effect in that body during the ascendancy of evil appointed to prevail during his absence.

We will take a glance at the messages before going into the political forecast involved in the seals, trumpets, etc. Very great beauty reveals itself as we study the structure of these messages. They appear at first sight to be haphazard and without plan: they are the reverse of these. They are complete, symmetrical, unique. The description of the Son of Man seen by John (contained in the first chapter), is the basis of the messages. Each message is prefaced by an allusion to some separate feature of the Son of Man so described: and in each message, the feature selected is not only different, but has a direct bearing on the nature of the message to be communicated. Thus,

The message to Ephesus is said to be from him "who walketh in THE MIDST of the seven golden candlesticks." This allusion to his omnipresence among the churches was an appropriate prelude to the declaration "I know thy works and thy labour and thy patience and how thou canst not bear them that are evil, etc." It was also appropriate to the promise that the victor should be permitted to eat of the tree of life in THE MIDST of the paradise of God.

The message to Smyrna is said to be from him "who was dead, and is alive:" and who therefore naturally promises a crown of life to the faithful, and that the victors shall not be hurt of the second death.

The message to Pergamos is said to be from "him who hath the sharp sword with two edges," in harmony with which the threat is uttered, "Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."

The message to Thyatira is said to be from "the Son of God who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire (penetrating sight) and his feet like fine brass" (to tread down and destroy), in harmony with which, the object of the things threatened in the message is said to be that all the churches may know that Christ is "he who searches the reins and hearts," and the promise made that power will be given over the shivered nations.

The message to Sardis is said to be from him "that hath the seven Spirits of God"--(the unmeasured control of the Spirit of God). The promise is the clothing with white raiment -- (investiture with spirit-nature) and acknowledgment in the presence of the Father and the angels.

The message to Philadelphia is said to be from him "that hath the key of David; he that openeth, and no man shutteth: and shutteth, and no man openeth," in accordance with which, there is a promise of the exercise of this kingly prerogative in the incorporation of the victor as a permanent constituent of the glorified house of David in the age to come, described under the figure of a temple and new Jerusalem.

The message to Laodicea is said to be from "the faithful and true witness," and the message is a testimony of the true state of the Laodiceans in contrast to their own complacent views of their attainments.

This brief and hurried analysis will illustrate the meaning of the remark that the seven messages are not haphazard and formless, but are carefully constructed upon a principle of symmetry and appropriateness, which while giving play to various general aspects of truth in a brief compass, at the same time admits of their applicability to the actual facts existing in the midst of the ecclesias to whom the messages primarily applied. This is an element of beauty to admire. It is a mark of divinity which will be appreciated the better the longer it is contemplated.

THE ANGELS OF THE ECCLESIAS.

You will observe that each message is addressed to “the angel” of the ecclesia to which it is sent. The common way of understanding this is to suppose that by “the angel” was meant the presiding bishop of each particular ecclesia. But there can be no doubt that, as in most scriptural things, popular exegesis is wrong here. Dr. Thomas’s exposition is demonstrably the right thing--that “the angel” is the Apocalyptic figure for the eldership in each ecclesia, appointed and endowed for their office by the Spirit, ministered by the laying on of the hands of the apostles. This is proved by the recognition of the angel as a plurality, in the messages themselves. Thus, the seven messages, though addressed to the angel of each particular ecclesia, are said to be “what the Spirit saith to the ecclesias” (chap. 2:7, 11, 17, and so on). If each message was addressed to each ecclesia, then the “thou” and the “thy” addressed to “the angel” were plural in their scope. This is finally and conclusively established by the express mention of “some” being included in the ecclesial “thou.” Thus, to Smyrna, it is said, “The devil shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life” (chap. 2:10). Here “thou” and “you” are used interchangeably. To Pergamos, it was said that “Antipas” was “slain among you” (13); and to Thyatira, “I will give to every one of you according to your works” (23).

Illustrations might be multiplied, but these are conclusive. If it be asked how the eldership should be figured as an angel, we have the answer in the fact that, as men miraculously endowed with the powers and gifts of the Spirit of God for the perfecting of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11,12), they were collectively an angelism from Christ in the midst of each ecclesia--a messengership --men sent for a particular purpose, and officially representing the body in each case.

It would be interesting and profitable to look at the messages with regard to the practical lessons they contain, and the meaning of the promises enigmatically conveyed. This would be a long process to be done thoroughly. We must be content with a summary. And this summary we must defer to the next lecture. If you desire to see the matter thoroughly and vigorously done, I cannot do better than refer you to Eureka, Dr. Thomas’s exposition of the Apocalypse, in three volumes. To this I for one am indebted for my understanding of this most difficult part of the testimony of God. Before reading that exposition nearly twenty years ago (so far as the first volume is concerned), I understood only snatches of it. Now I am thankful to be able to follow it in its entirety. Do not be tempted to think that we lean upon a man’s judgment in the matter. Dr. Thomas not only gives you his conclusions but the reasons which have led him to those conclusions. We are thus able to make his conclusions our own by a process which makes us independent of all men as to the ground on which we hold them. The best proof of the soundness of the views advanced by Dr. Thomas lies in this, that once a reader is directed by him to the Bible and becomes a Bible student, he can dispense with Dr. Thomas’s books altogether so far as steadfastness of conviction is concerned. The Bible nourishes that conviction from day to day. It is not like Swedenborgianism and some other systems in which you have to keep reading the books to keep “posted” in the system. The Bible keeps you “posted” in the truth, if you never read another line of the man who may have directed you to it in the first instance. My own experience is an illustration of this. I read Elpis Israel twenty-seven years ago; I read it only once: I have never read it since: but I have read the Bible daily all the time since, and have remained of one judgment with Elpis Israel in consequence. So with the Herald published by the Dr., I read it only once. Eureka I have read only once. The Bible to which these books direct their readers I have read always, and consequently realize a strength of conviction totally independent of the man now in his grave, by whom the conviction was generated in the first instance. Nevertheless, it is a great advantage to read the books at least once. If you have never read Eureka, I advise you to do it, at least once. I know it is a large book. It is inaccessible to most of you as regards price, and its bulk is beyond the leisure allowed you from your various occupations. Still, friends will be found willing to lend, and a judicious use of the time possessed will enable a resolute reader to accomplish wonders. In some cases, even this may not be practicable. Such cases I hope in some measure to benefit by an attempt at simple exposition in the course of thirteen lectures now commenced.

LECTURE 2: REVELATION CHAPTERS 2 AND 3

The message to the seven ecclesias -- the suggestive position they occupy as the preface to the Apocalypse -- the obscure and not the great honoured by Christ's communication in the first century -- the poor called and not the rich -- the rule of action still the same -- Effect of the vision upon John -- his fear and the comfort -- the message considered in detail -- to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, to Laodicea -- value of the messages -- the view that they were prophetic as well as preceptive -- the Laodicean state of contemporary Christendom

LAST Thursday evening we made a beginning in the consideration of the subject of the Apocalypse. We deferred till to-night a glance at the messages Jesus sent by the hand of John to the seven ecclesias of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Those messages are much more interesting than they at first sight appear to be. The position they occupy is very suggestive. They come first in an exhibition of things that were shortly to come to pass among the nations of the earth. Before Christ proceeds to unfold these things, he addresses himself to his own brethren, through one of them exiled in Patmos. Nothing could be more significant of the position the friends of Christ occupy in relation to himself and the purpose of which he is the centre. We do not realize it quite so distinctly perhaps in the nineteenth century as we should have as contemporaries of John. We are apt to think of John as a very exalted personage, occupying a high place among the renowned of the earth. This view is doubtless right in a certain way, but not in the way referred to. John was truly one of the great, but not of this world. Like his master, he was in his day of no account -- despised and rejected of men. Whence came he to Patmos but as an outcast? He was one of the small, not of the great; one of the poor, not of the rich; one of the lambs, not of the lions. And it was to him and not to the great and prosperous and esteemed of men in his day, that Jesus condescends from the height of eternal glory to communicate confidentially the Father's purpose concerning the kingdoms and great men of the earth. This brings to us with much force the truth proclaimed by Paul: "All things are yours;" "All things are for your sakes" (2 Cor. 4:15). The very activity of the nations everywhere--their commerce, their political revolutions, their social transformations--are all so many elements in the preparation of the earth for transfer to the government of Jesus and those among mankind whom he honours with his approbation and selection as brethren in the day of his arrival in glory. Those meanwhile are to be found among the poor and the down-trodden as at the first. They are those who have faith in the testimony of God, and who submit daily to His commandments, or as it is Apocalyptically expressed, "who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (12:17). This class is not to be found among the respectable and the learned, though there is nothing intrinsically incompatible with submission to the truth in respectability and learning. The respectable and the learned are surrounded with the views and influences from the very cradle, which bring men into bondage to the traditions and practices of the world, and withhold them from the enlightening power of the testimony of God. The poor are no better off so far as the positive tendency of their surroundings is concerned; but in their poverty, they are at least free from some of the impediments that beset the path of the well-to-do, and their minds are more flexible to the divine bent than where riches foster pride and harden the heart. However we may reason upon the subject, it is the fact that God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be the heirs of the kingdom promised (Jas. 2:5); and to this class the Apocalypse was sent in the first century and is addressed in the nineteenth.

When John, hearing the first voice that broke upon the meditative solitude of Patmos, turned to see the speaker, he was overpowered with the glory of the symbolic spectacle that presented itself to his view. He fell at the feet of the sunblazing personage standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. The power and glory stunned him. Had we been with him we should have been similarly affected and shared in his fear. But presently words of comfort fell upon his ear: "He laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the First and the Last. I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore". How often this cheering adjuration occurs in God's communication with men: "Fear not". There is something to fear in the awful greatness of the unmeasured power of God: but the comforting words in question remind us that this great power is allied with a kindness as tender as that of a father for his children. God is love, as well as

a consuming fire. We must pick up the crumbs of comfort as we go. We shall find this comfort grow upon us as we follow and consider the messages addressed to the seven representative ecclesias. Let us take them in the order in which they are rehearsed. Let us take first, the message

TO EPHESUS

Christ introduces himself as “He who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks”. The lesson of this is powerful in view of the interpretation, that “The seven candlesticks are the seven churches.” Christ walking in the midst of these candlesticks means that all things among the brethren are as open to his sight and knowledge as they are in each ecclesia to those who constitute that ecclesia. It means more than this. It means that he has not only power to see, but power to control, and to affect everyone as he sees fit. As he expresses it in the message to Thyatira: “All the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.” This power the Lord Jesus possesses by reason of his possession of the Spirit. “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9). “He is the Lord of Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:17). Consequently, what Paul says of the “word of God” (which he is, made flesh) is true of him: “He is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the hearts, neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:12-13). This fact is attested by his description as “he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks”. He walked in the midst of the brethren in the days of John, in the sense of knowing, and watching, and affecting all their affairs. It scarcely needs to be remarked that if true in the first century, it is true now, and that, consequently, the affairs of the brethren are everywhere open to his view and subject to his manipulation.

“I know thy works:” this fact follows from Christ’s relation to the seven candlesticks. It is a comforting fact to everyone who is striving to walk acceptably before God, and perhaps failing to secure the approbation of men. It may seem to us as if our affairs were unknown and unheeded. Time goes on and nothing comes of it, and we may become “weary and faint in our minds”. Perhaps there were some in Ephesus who felt like this. They had been forty or fifty years in existence as an ecclesia before receiving this indication of the Lord’s mind concerning them. We have not had so long a career as that. Let us bear up against the effects of apparent delay. The Lord is noticing, and so to speak, recording proceedings from day to day. When he comes, He will let us know what He thinks, and give us the results in a very substantial form. He will express His approval if our course admit of it. He commended the Ephesian ecclesia for some things. He approved of their “labour and patience:” “Thou hast borne and hast patience, and for My name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.” He also spoke approvingly of them on this head: “Thou canst not bear them that are evil, and thou hast tried them that say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.” This is the best answer to those who accuse us of uncharitableness on account of our hostility to that which is opposed to the revealed will of Christ, and because of our application of the test of truth to the modern professors of apostleship or successorship to the apostles. If the Ephesian attitude in these matters secured the approbation of Christ, a British attitude will do the same if righteously sustained. And if we secure Christ’s approbation, it matters nothing if the whole world condemn us.

Christ had “somewhat against” the brethren in Ephesus. They had “left their first love”. We must understand this in the light of scriptural definitions of love, and not according to the modern notion which limits love to sentiment. It means more than affection: it means love in practical manifestation. “This is love”, says John, “that we walk after (in accordance with) his commandments” (2 John 6). Jesus also says, “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me” (John 14:21). Hence a return to first love is a return to first acts. This is the interpretation Jesus gives of it in the message, “Repent, and do the first works” (verse 5). Christ requires a continuance -- a patient continuance, in well doing (Rom. 2:7). He declared it expressly in this form, “He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved” (Matt. 24:13). This is reasonable: for where would be the value of a man’s friendship which cools off with time and tires in those practical manifestations which give it value?

Jesus threatened the removal of the candlestick in case of non-reformation (verse 5). As the candlestick stood for the ecclesia, this was equivalent to saying that he would break up the ecclesia if the brethren were not earnestly attentive to his requirements. This is another indication of Christ's control of providence; for how would he remove the candlestick? Not by open visitation but by the disintegrating action of adverse circumstances regulated by him. As he said to Sardis: "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (chap. 3:3). The threat however involved a further point.

That is, it meant more than merely interfering with the existence of the community. It referred particularly to the withdrawal of that symbolic oil for the combustion of which in light-giving, the candlestick was a mere apparatus, and without which it was of no use. To withdraw the oil was practically to remove the candlestick. Oil symbolically used stands for the Spirit of God, as proved in many ways which we need not refer to. The Spirit of God was bestowed upon the ecclesias in the first century. It was this that constituted them the Spirit's candlesticks. Hence the threat was a threat of the withdrawal of the Spirit. The threat was duly carried into effect. The reformation desired did not set in. The Apostasy, which Paul declared to be in active progress before his death, got the upper hand everywhere, and the candlesticks were removed in all senses, since which day, the light of inspiration has been extinct, except in so far as it survives in the writings of the Spirit -- the oracles of God which are to us a treasure beyond price.

Jesus expresses his satisfaction that the brethren in Ephesus "hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes" (2:6), which he adds he also hated. Who these were in the specific sense, is a matter of some doubt. The name is a compound of two Greek words, *nikh* and *laos*, signifying victory and the people; and the Dr. [Thomas] suggests that it stands generally for those who obtained the victory over the people by their corruption of the truth. The objection to this lies in the mention of Nicolaitanes as a class extra in addition to the corrupters of the truth in general. They come after the reference in this message, to "them which are evil" and those "who say they are apostles". Also in the message to Smyrna, they are mentioned in the same special way after the enumeration of other corrupters. "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which THING I hate" (chap. 2:15). This seems to point to a special feature. In the enumeration of the early sects to be found in ecclesiastical history, mention is made of one Nicolaus, who taught the community of wives among Christians, and whose followers are said to have been called Nicolaitanes. If there was such a doctrine and such a sect among the ecclesias, it would be easy to understand how it came to be singled out for such emphatic reprobation in the messages sent by Christ to them; for nothing could more powerfully tend to the demoralization and disruption of society or the corruption and destruction of individuals than the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes.

The promise to the Ephesian ecclesia, like the other parts of the message, is couched in the language of symbol: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (2:7). The meaning of the symbol is plain to those who apprehend the truth concerning Christ as the giver of eternal life. In this capacity, he likened himself when on earth to manna and also to a vine, without which a man must die (John 6:27-35; 15:4-6) How true we find this to be! All men are mortal. One by one we must fail and wither and die. Nature holds out no hope of renewal of life for animal organizations. Hope lies in the direction of Christ alone, who proclaimed himself to be the Resurrection and the Life, and who is, therefore, appropriately likened in this promise to a tree, having the power of imparting immortality to the eater; after the figure of the tree in Eden, of which had Adam partaken, he would have lived for ever (Gen. 3:22).

TO SMYRNA

Jesus introduces himself as "the first and the last, who was dead and is alive". In this, he presents his origin and history in a phrase. He is the First,--the Father, the Eternal in manifestation. You say, "That is intelligible, but how can he be 'the Last'?" Well, if we realize that when God's purpose with the earth is finished, Jesus

will be the occupant and possessor thereof for ever, at the head of ransomed mankind, we can understand how, in relation to the history of the earth, he is the final--the Last. His having died and risen are incidents in the history that leads from the "First" state to the "Last" state. It was natural he should place these in the foreground, because he was about to promise a crown of life for faithfulness unto death. He tells the Smyrneans that, among other things, he knows their poverty, but immediately adds, in parenthesis, "but thou art rich". The destined possessors of the kingdom of God may well be said to be rich. All things are theirs, as Paul says (1 Cor. 3:21). It is only a question of time, their coming into possession. Meanwhile, like Paul, they have to "suffer the loss of all things". He accuses some of blasphemy in saying they were Jews when they were not (verse 9). This is not a form of blasphemy of which the moderns are liable to be guilty. They have lost sight of the fact that "salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22), and are under no temptation to call themselves Jews. They have forgotten, if they ever knew, that in the apostolic system, "He is a Jew that is one inwardly" (Rom. 2:29), even though originally "a Gentile in the flesh, a stranger from the covenants of promise, and an alien from the commonwealth of Israel" (Eph. 2:12). Even the blasphemers of the first century were more enlightened than the pious of the nineteenth.

Jesus forewarns the Smyranean brethren that they would suffer, and that "the devil would cast some of them into prison". This shows who the devil was in Christ's view of things. The authorities that wielded powers of imprisonment and death were, collectively, the devil. This was not the orthodox devil, but the diabolism of human nature incorporate in organized authority. The promise to faithfulness is expressed negatively: "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death". The second death is that repetition of death which will occur at the appearance of Christ in the case of those who rise from the dead to experience the shame and punishment of a divine repudiation. This will be a far more terrible visitation every way than the first occurrence of death. The second death is prefaced with the agonizing knowledge of a divine rejection publicly proclaimed. There is no hope in it, and it comes at last with violence and pain.

The promise of exemption from it, coming from him who has power to inflict it, is a "great and precious promise". It is a promise, like all other promises, to those who "overcome", that is, to those who get the upper hand in the conflict created by the reception of the truth. This is a conflict with clamorous propensities within, and importunate interests without. That which overcomes, John says, is "our faith" (1 John 5:4); and Paul tells us that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). So that the man who overcomes is the man in whom the word of truth dwells richly by reason of its being caused to indwell abundantly through the constant reading and study of the Scriptures. A full conviction of the things written therein is faith, and faith gives power to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world", and "he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

TO PERGAMOS.

The possessor of the two-edged sword naturally calls attention to that instrument as a preliminary to threatened hostility. It stands as the symbol of Christ's power to execute the behests of his will. He addresses himself to brethren dwelling at Satan's headquarters (verse 13) -- not the popular Satan, but the Satan of the Bible, the adversary of the truth and the people of God, a Satan who always consists of men -- sometimes a man. Jesus commends the Pergamian brethren for their constancy in the faith in the presence of active persecution, but finds fault with them for tolerating Balaamites in their midst. Peter defines the character of those in saying they had "an heart exercised with covetous practices, which have forsaken the right way, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Peter 2:15). Hence the Balaamites were men of sinister aim, who not only made use of the truth for purposes of gain, but conformed with wrong and unscriptural ways for the sake of earning money which could not otherwise be earned. The Nicolaitanes also flourished in their midst. He threatens to fight against the ecclesia with the sword of his mouth, that is, to command evil against them if these offenders were not reformed out of their midst. To him overcoming, he promises the eating of the hidden manna, that is, participation of the native life and glory of Him who is the manna (meanwhile hidden) that came down from heaven to give life to the

world; also a white stone, with new name engraved, which no man could know but the receiver. This is the symbolical pledge of acceptance and friendship in the judgment. It is based upon customs in the East both judicial and social. The judicial custom is to hand in court a white stone to an accused person acquitted in token of his acquittal, and the social custom is for a host to divide a white stone in two halves, and engrave the guest's name on both, retain one, give the guest the other as a passport to future favour and friendship. In the case of Christ's friends, the name is a new one, intimating that both nature and designation will be changed in the glorious declaration of friendship that will take place in the case of those who overcome. Jesus gave his leading apostles new names (e.g., Peter: Cephas; James and John: Boanerges: etc.). He will probably re-name his accepted brethren in harmony with the new age to which he will introduce them.

TO THYATIRA

The Son of God, with eyes piercing and destructive as a flame of fire, commends the brethren in Thyatira for their works and charity and service and faith and patience, and again for their works, more abounding at the end than at the beginning. Notwithstanding, he condemns their toleration of Jezebel. Who was Jezebel? Was she a literal woman? No, for a variety of reasons. First, the symbolic character of the Apocalyptic communication in general, involving peculiarly the symbolic use of women (chap. 17:18; 14:4). Secondly, the surroundings of the statement are inconsistent with the idea of a literal woman. The Jezebel in the case is said to "teach and seduce the servants of Christ" (2:20), and to have children and paramours who, in default of repentance, are threatened with a bed of tribulation and death, by the operation of which "all the churches" are to discern the retributive power of Christ. This could not be understood of a private person; it refers to something of a public character having a bearing on all. Space to repent is said to have been afforded her, which would be inconceivable as applied to the abandoned prostitution portrayed in the language understood literally; for such a thing could have no pretence to occupy a place in the church of Christ at all. Finally, the teaching attributed to her identifies her with the Balaamites of Pergamos. She is said to "teach and seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." This is exactly the teaching set down to the credit of the holders of the Balaamite doctrine in Pergamos (verse 14). The tendency of this teaching was to draw the brethren into connection and fellowship with the popular Paganism by which they were surrounded, in opposition to the doctrine of Christ that his brethren are "not of this world" (John 15:18-19); and that friendship with the world is an impossibility if the friendship of God is to be retained. Such a communion of light with darkness is very commonly spoken of as fornication. In Pergamos, the upholders of such a time-serving doctrine are said to be "those who hold the doctrine of Balaam": in Thyatira, where they made special pretensions to divine authority, they are lumped under the figure of "that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess". Addressing those who had not come under the power of their sophistications, Jesus speaks of them as "many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak". Here the phrase "the depths" is quoted from the mouth of the Satan--a teaching plurality consisting of the Balaamites and the Jezebelites. It shows that they had a very complacent estimate of their attainments. They spoke of their views as "the depths", by which, of course, they would mean that their ideas were advanced and profound as compared with the elementary propositions of the gospel with which the simpler members of the congregation were content. What would there be in their doctrines of which they would speak as "the depths"? We may form some idea from the peculiarities of mysticism both ancient and modern. This system of thought scorns proximate and concrete forms of truth, and dives, or makes profession of diving, into the "essence" and "inner self" of things. It professes to see in the external world but the expression of a universal "soul," in which the "spiritual analogue" of all things exists. It governs its views of externals by its theories of the assumed internal. Hence, it can respect everything as the symbol of the so-called "eternal good." It can see something to tolerate and even admire in idolatry and in every form of superstition. Christ it praises, but can also adore Juggernaut, Confucius, and Mahomet. It gives a high place to "Christianity", but would place Greek philosophy on a level with it. It considers the love of Christ good in its place, but a weakness if exalted over the appreciation of other forms of "goodness". To condemn Paganism is bigotry in the language of this school; to "know nothing but Christ" is narrowness; to believe that salvation is the exclusive association of the gospel, is shallow,

superficial, childish. To hold its views is to plumb “the depths” of wisdom and knowledge in its estimation.

The real state of the case is defined by Paul when he says that “professing themselves to be wise, they become fools”. Their notions are the mere vagaries of speculation: their pretentious language is the gibber of ignorance in its worst form: ignorance that thinks itself informed: shallowness that thinks itself profound. The true philosophy is in the Bible: the true depth in its simplicities. We want nothing deeper than God -- inscrutable, granted, but sufficient as a fact, and an explanation of other facts. In all systems, there must be an inexplicable fact to start with, even in Darwin’s, which shallow thinkers think so free from mystery. The “unsearchable God” is more satisfactory and philosophical as a starting point than anything presented to us in Pagan metaphysics or modern science. And what more do we want than proximate facts: concrete relations? They are the practical conditions of life and well-being. The Bible gives us them, deals in them, enlightens us in the use of them.

The Bible is the true deep. But the Satan babble complacently about “the depths”. Jesus prefers those who are not thus sophisticated, but whose wisdom consists in the recognition of facts natural and revealed and adaptation to them. He says to “those who have not known the depths of Satan as they speak,” “I will put upon you none other burden, but that which ye have already (the faith of the gospel), hold fast till I come”. The faith of Christ is to every human being embracing it the ladder to immeasurable heights of well-being. He that by its power overcomes will yet wield iron-rod power over the nations first broken, like crockery-ware, in virtue of the glorious covenant of the eternal Father, which ensures to His Son the proprietorship of the earth for ever (Psalm 2:8). Such, as a qualification for the iron rule, will receive “the morning star” (Rev. 2:28). As Christ is the morning star (Rev. 22:16), this can only mean that the victor will be transformed in nature into conformity with the luminous and indestructible body of power, beauty and purity, now possessed by him who was once “crucified through weakness” (2 Cor. 13:4), but in whom now dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9).

TO SARDIS

“He that hath the seven Spirits of God” -- the symbolic affirmation of omniscience -- has little to say in the way of commendation to the brethren in Sardis. “Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” Men knew the reputation of the Sardian ecclesia: the possessor of “the seven stars” -- the seven Spirit lights kindled in the seven ecclesias, knew their state. “I have not found thy works perfect before God.” Jesus watches and discerns the developments of probation. He requires not to bring men to the judgment seat to know, though he will bring them there to reveal them. There were a few exceptions in Sardis: “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy”; from which we learn that membership in a dead ecclesia will not interfere with individual acceptance where worthiness exists. Even those who are lacking have an opportunity which they are exhorted to use. “Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die . . . Repent.” There is this encouragement to repentance: “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life; but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels”. The white investiture is readily recognizable in that clothing of the mortal body with immortality from heaven, of which all accepted saints are to be the subjects at the Lord’s coming. The “righteousness of the saints” is said to be the meaning of the “fine linen, clean and white”, with which the symbolic bride is arrayed; but this cannot be the meaning of the white raiment in this place, because this is promised as the recompense of the righteousness (or overcoming), and, therefore, cannot be the righteousness itself. It is a fit symbol of the pure incorruptible that will result from the transforming action of the Spirit of God upon the mortal bodies of the saints who stand before Christ accepted. Of course it is not literal; white raiment of this sort could be purchased at the milliner’s. There may, however, be a blending of the symbolical and the literal. That is to say, the immortalized saints may wear white clothing. The angels, to whom they are to be equal, almost always appeared habited in white (Matt. 28:3; Acts 10:30, etc.), and the garments of Jesus in transfiguration, became “white and glistening”, “so as no fuller on earth can white them”. The apparel of

the immortal state is an interesting matter of detail, but not of practical moment. The thing that is of practical moment is the fact that it is possible for a man's name to be blotted from the book of life, that is, expunged from the divine recognition as an heir of eternal life, after having once sustained that relation. Jesus promised to the Sardian ecclesia that this should not happen in the case of such as overcome, but that they should be confessed by him before the Father and the angels. This is an honour the greatness of which we cannot estimate because it is yet unseen, but which will be appreciated at its true greatness when the hour arrives for the muster of the chosen, and the inauguration in glory in the presence of multitudes of the angelic host and the manifested glory of the Father.

TO PHILADELPHIA

The Holy and the True, holding the Key of David, speaks comfortably to the ecclesia in Philadelphia. Why Jesus should be described as the Holy and the True we know well; but why should he be said to have "the key of David"? The truth has enabled us to apprehend this as well. The house of David is the pivot upon which the purpose of God in the earth turns. The covenant was made with him, out of which salvation grows (2 Sam. 23:5). It concerns his house (2 Sam. 7:25-26). "Upon the throne of David and his kingdom" is the Messiah to sit (Isa. 9:7). To possess the key of this house is to have power to decide its destinies. Using this key, we are told he shuts and no man opens, and opens and no man shuts. He has shut the house of David in the earth, and no man can enter it. He will open it in due time, in restoring again the kingdom to Israel, and not the leagued forces of every nation under heaven will be able to shut it again any more. When Christ re-opens the house he will open it for all of whom he approves in the day of his appearing; for his purpose is to invite them to the participation of his glorious throne (Rev. 3:21), which is the throne of David (Luke 1:32). The allusion to the key of David is an allusion to this gracious purpose. It was his present door-opening graciousness, however, that he wished to make known to the brethren in Philadelphia, of his power to exercise which his possession of the key of David was a guarantee: "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it". The reason of this was: "Thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name", on account of which also he promises a special exemption from the ten-year-days of tribulation that were to come upon all the world, saying, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth" (3:10). Here are two striking illustrations of Christ's providential control of the affairs of his brethren -- the keeping open of a door against the power of man, and preservation in the midst of evil circumstances bearing hardly upon the people in general. These things were not written only for the generation that saw the first publication of the Apocalypse; they were written for the encouragement of brethren in whatever country or age Jesus should have any during his absence. Consequently, we shall rob ourselves of comfort if we refuse to appropriate the evident lesson -- that if our ways please him, though we see him not and the age of spirit gifts has not returned, he can and will keep open a door for us when man would fain close it, and can shield in the midst of public evil, greatly affecting and distressing the people around us. Another promise made to Philadelphia is also probably of general applicability: "I will make them (of the synagogue of Satan which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie), to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee". Faithful men in Christ may be misunderstood and misappreciated and calumniated by the carnal professors of their day and generation, whom, for the time being, they are commanded to judge not, and be patient and forbearing with; but the day is coming when He who saith "Vengeance is mine" will vindicate faithfulness and worth in a very effectual manner. The cringing obeisance of enemies and traducers will in that day attest the righteous judgment of God.

The promise to Philadelphia is permanent pillarship in the temple of God. "Him that overcometh I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name." The figure of an edifice is very serviceable to illustrate the relations of a community. It is a favourite figure in all styles of writing and language, and is peculiarly characteristic of the Scriptures. The saints are said to be stones, and the apostles foundations on which they

are built (1 Pet. 2:5; Eph. 2:20). In the case before us, we have a temple to express the corporate existence and functions of the saints in glory. To be a pillar in this temple is to be a principal part of the building, or to occupy an important position in the community. A pillar never removed from its place is illustrative of the stability appertaining to an immortal constitution of things. To have the name of the city is to be made a constituent of it -- to be a part of it in the municipal sense. The city is Jerusalem: for this is the city which God chose from the beginning to place His name there (1 Kings 14:21, 2 Chron. 12:13), the city of the Great King (Matt. 5:35), which though now forsaken, is to be re-married and re-established (Isa. 62:1, 4). But it is new Jerusalem, because Jerusalem under a new constitution of things, -- abundantly set forth in the prophets (Isa. 52:1-10; 65:17-19; 66:10-15). This new constitution of Jerusalem is from heaven, for it comes with Christ from heaven. Therefore the coming Jerusalem, though a manifestation of power and glory on the site of the old Jerusalem, is "new Jerusalem which cometh down out of heaven from my God". To be made a constituent of this new Jerusalem is the highest pinnacle of glory conceivable to our imagination. It is the glory promised by the Lord to the brethren in Philadelphia; and he appends to it the adjuration which extends the offer of it even to us. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith to the Churches."

TO LAODICEA

Introducing himself as "the faithful and true witness", the Lord, in this message, bears testimony against the Laodicean ecclesia, of which he says, "Thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Nothing could be more valuable to us than this message as indicating the standard of the Lord's tastes, so to speak, with regard to the attitude of his disciples towards him. He wishes them to be one thing or the other. He cannot suffer moderation in the appreciation of spiritual things. Heartiness, thoroughness, enthusiasm may express what he means by the state of being "hot". There can be no mistaking his meaning. He hates lukewarmness: he demands a warm affection towards himself as the incorporation of the things of God. He said this even when on earth: "If any man love father or mother, son or daughter, more than me, he is not worthy of me". It is unwise to discourage the exuberance of the spiritual affections. It is easier to become Laodicean than to rise to the Spirit's glow. What prudent people may regard as propriety may easily become lukewarmness, which the Lord detests. There is not much danger of the extreme of love for things of the Spirit. There is greater danger of coming short. Shortcoming in this respect is generally the result of what the Lord found fault with in the Laodiceans. He declares them self-satisfied: "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing". Thus they had a very good opinion of themselves. This self-complacency, bordering on self-conceit, is a very great enemy to spiritual enthusiasm. Spiritual enthusiasm is due to the admiration of that which is extraneous and divine. When people are well satisfied with themselves, their powers of admiration are personally absorbed, and cannot outflow to superior objects. And this self-satisfaction is generally a great obstruction to self-discernment. People think themselves well-conditioned when they are in fact petty, meagre, small, insignificant and lean of soul. So it was with the Laodiceans to whom Jesus said, "Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked". There is hope, however, for people even in this self-deceived condition, or Jesus would not have counselled the Laodiceans to "buy of him gold tried in the fire (a robust faith), white raiment (righteousness), and eye salve (spiritual discernment)". Men roused to a sense of their deficiency on these points will resort to those remedies in the reading of the word and prayer which will tend to supply the deficiencies pointed out. There is always room for hope with time and opportunity. Jesus speaks encouragingly in this sense even to the Laodiceans. He exhorts them to "repent", and informs them of his solicitous friendliness towards them all: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me". To those who respond to his invitation and obey his voice, he makes a glorious promise: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne". The gospel of the kingdom enables us to understand this promise. Though men scorn the idea as the conception of fanaticism, it is a promise of association with Jesus in the kingly honours, glories, and joys of the new and glorious government which Christ is to establish in the land of promise for all the earth at his coming to restore again the kingdom to Israel. This promise also, though

offered to the Laodiceans in the first place, is extended to every believer by the postscript appended to every message: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches."

And with this, these highly interesting messages to the Churches conclude. They are of immense value to the friends of Christ in all ages. They were of value doubtless to the individual communities to which, in the first instance, these messages were sent, but they have been of more consequence to the ages coming after; at least to that class in the ages described in the messages as "having ears". For this service they were intended, and we cannot suppose they have failed of their purpose. There is an idea entertained by some that besides being a faithful description of the condition of the seven Asian ecclesias contemporary with John, these messages also shadowed forth in prophetic outline the history of the churches of Christ in general, from its Ephesian loving, labouring, zealous state developed by the labours of the Apostles in the first century, to the Laodicean state reached at last as the result of the triumph of the apostasy foretold -- a state in which it was cast out and rejected of Christ (spued out of the Spirit's mouth) as a nauseous and disowned thing. Whether the messages had this prophetic scope in the intention of the Spirit of God cannot be determined from any information to be derived from the messages themselves: but certain it is that the history of the community established by the labours of the apostles, has followed pretty much in the groove of these messages, and that for a long time (so far as the reputed Church of Christ in the world is concerned -- the various state-endowed denominations of Christendom), the spued-out and rejected state has obtained in the world. The professing Christian Church rejects the faith and disobeys the commandments of Christ while professing submission to him. Lukewarmness is the universal order of the day. An earnest and practical interest in the things of God is regarded as something phenomenal and calling for pity. What can we do but take Peter's advice and "save ourselves from this untoward generation"? Fortunately for our good cheer, it is revealed that Christ at his coming will find some waking and ready. That we may be assisted in our endeavours to be of this number is one of the objects contemplated in this course of Thirteen Lectures on the Apocalypse. God grant His blessing on the effort and give us edification and peace.

LECTURE 3: REVELATION CHAPTERS 4, 5, AND 6 (TO VERSE 6)

A new division: "Things which must be hereafter."-- John "in spirit" -- gorgeous scene -- the throne in heaven, the four living creatures and four-and-twenty elders -- The Kingdom in symbol -- origin of the symbols in the heraldry of the Israelitish nation -- the details -- the rainbow -- the sea of glass -- the crowned or "stephaned" elders -- the beasts full of eyes -- Israel enlightened and glorified -- an apparent difficulty -- the kingdom and the seals contemporary -- impossible explanations -- the right explanation -- the kingdom past and future, and germinally contemporary with the times of the Gentiles. -- The seals -- their number -- what the opening of them means -- worthiness on the part of the Lamb opener -- the Seven Horns and Seven Eyes -- the anthem of praise when the Lamb took the Seven-sealed Scroll. -- The FIRST SEAL -- the white horse and its arrowless rider with the bow. -- The SECOND SEAL -- the red horse and his dagger-armed rider. -- The THIRD SEAL -- the black horse with the balance-holder -- a fiscal proclamation.

WITH this chapter we enter upon a new division of the things exhibited to John in the Isle of Patmos. The first three chapters deal with the affairs of the friends of Christ, as organized in separate communities in various parts of the world. Christ in these gives his opinion or judgment of the condition and deportment of these various communities, and advice according to their needs, in such a way as to be beneficial to all his friends afterwards, as we have seen. He now turns John's attention to the future. "I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." John thus addressed finds himself "in the spirit", and a spectator of the scene which becomes visible to him as the result of being in that state.

The picture is a very gorgeous one. It is a picture of over-powering glory and loveliness, symbolic though it be. Nothing more sublime and beautiful could be conceived than the brilliant scene that burst upon his view. A human figure, of dazzling brightness, sits on a shining throne, over-arched by a rainbow of glowing colours. Before the throne, stretching away on all sides, an outspread ocean of glassy splendour and crystalline translucency, on which are grouped before the throne strange but glorious objects; four curiously-formed living creatures glistening all over with eyes, and twenty-four venerable men wearing crowns. Surrounding them on all sides is a countless multitude of the angelic host, forming an outer fringe of glory (chap 5:11). John watches and listens. He sees movements and hears voices among the living symbols. The elders do homage to the central figure, casting down their crowns: the Four Beasts are instinct with life and give forth sounds of praise. The angelic environment take up the anthem, and the vault of heaven rings with the joyous and melodious outpourings of glorious myriads.

What portion of "things which must be hereafter" can be represented by this opening scene? The symbols themselves would almost bring the answer. It is a kingly picture. There is no mistaking the meaning of a throne anywhere. But it is not an ordinary throne. It is a divine throne: for there are seven lamps burning before it to symbolize the Spirit of God, as explained in verse 5, chapter 4. And the occupant of the throne is proclaimed Creator for whose pleasure all things have been created (verse 11). The most superficial consideration of the picture would suggest that the kingdom of God is here symbolized. This View becomes certain when we look at certain details.

Consider for example the words that are sung by the symbolic four living creatures and the twenty-four elders: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." We know who literally answer to this description. Christ did not die to redeem twenty-four elders and four nondescript creatures: he died to redeem those that were under the law (Gal. 4:4), and also to gather together the children of God that are scattered abroad (John 11:52) -- the other sheep he had which were not of Israel's fold after the flesh (John 10:16), viz., of the Gentiles, whom he afterwards visited by the hand of Peter and Paul, to take out of them a people for his name (Acts 15:14; 26:17-18). Consequently the twenty-four elders and four nondescript living creatures, who in song affirm these

things of themselves, are but the symbols of that element of the kingdom of God which consists of the glorified brethren of Christ in their numerical totality.

But why should they be symbolized by four beasts and four-and-twenty elders? There is a very good reason which those only can appreciate who know “the hope of Israel”; and all who truly know the gospel know this. In their corporate completeness, the community to be glorified constitute “the commonwealth of Israel”. So Paul styles them (Eph. 2:12), saying that by nature the Gentiles are “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel”, but by the gospel become fellow-citizens therein (5:19). The hope of the gospel he styles “the hope of Israel” (Acts 28:20). The man who, though a Gentile, is adopted into the commonwealth of Israel, becomes a Jew, being a Jew inwardly; so Paul says (Rom. 2:29). The Gentile so adopted is likened to a wild branch grafted on the good olive stock of Abraham (Rom. 11:24). The salvation to which he stands related is by Jesus said to pertain to the Jews (John 4:22).

But in what way do these facts furnish an explanation of the employment of four beasts and four-and-twenty elders to symbolize the glorified community of the saints? The answer will be apparent when certain facts are called to mind concerning the house of Israel in the divinely-accomplished and recorded history of the past. When they came out of Egypt, the congregation was divinely organized in four camps, each camp having a standard on which was displayed a beast as the heraldic symbol of the camp. You will find the particulars in the 2nd chapter of Numbers.

1.--THE CAMP OF JUDAH

(consisting of the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun), numbering 186,400 men (verse 9); and each man was to “pitch-by his own standard with the ensign of his father’s house” (verse 2).

2.--THE CAMP OF REUBEN

(consisting of the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad), containing 151,450 men (verse 16).

3.--THE CAMP OF EPHRAIM

(consisting of the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin), 108,100 men (verse 24).

4.--THE CAMP OF DAN

(consisting of the tribes of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali), numbered 156,700 men (verse 31).

The ensigns of the four camps were the four animals incorporate in the symbolic cherubim--the lion, ox, man, and eagle. These therefore become symbolic of the Twelve Tribes in four camps. The divine encampment, consisting of the tabernacle and the Levitical families, pitched in the midst of the four camps (Num. 1:53; 2:2). These Levitical families were in the days of David divided into twenty-four priestly orders surrounding the throne and conducting the service of the kingdom, which was a service of worship, in due alternate order (1 Chron. 24). Four beasts and twenty-four elders were therefore the fitting and already-appointed symbols of the kingdom of God: for the kingdom of God, as we have learnt from the gospel, is the kingdom of Israel to be restored. The throne of Christ is the throne of his father, David (Luke 1:32; Isa. 9:7): the throne of David was the throne of the kingdom of Israel (2 Sam. 5:1-5). The rearing up of Christ’s throne on the earth is therefore the “raising up of the tabernacle of David that is fallen” (Amos 9:11); the raising unto

David a righteous descendant who as “a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth” (Jer. 23:5). Now Jesus promises a participation in the throne to all who secure his approval at the last (Luke 22:30; Rev. 3:21). The scene before us represents in symbol these things accomplished. The four beasts and four-and-twenty elders are eloquent on the subject. They are the heraldry of the kingdom of God, that is, of the kingdom of Israel, past and future. They as distinctly

identify the kingdom of David, as the lion and the unicorn and the quarterings of the British shield identify the kingdom of Queen Victoria. The gospel of the kingdom--the hope of the restoration of the kingdom again to Israel under Christ (Acts 1:6; Luke 24:21)--this gives us the interpretation of the splendid symbolism seen by John. You know how powerless the popular theologies are to yield a clue.

See how the details of the symbolism harmonize with the doctrine of the kingdom which it exhibits. The rainbow for example was the appointed token of a covenant of peace between God and the earth's inhabitants (Gen. 9:12): here we have it a prominent object--the canopy of the throne as it were. There is more in this than may appear. It is a pledge of the stability of the glory to be revealed. The revelation of that glory is due solely to the purpose of the Creator. So far as man is concerned there is no reason why it should come, and when it comes, there is no reason why it should stay. The only reason we have for believing it will endure for ever is God's own covenant: "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, as a faithful witness in heaven" (Psa. 89:34). This covenant is the foundation of our hope, and as we behold the gorgeous arch of coloured light over the throne seen by John, we see a guarantee of the perpetual stability of the salvation that will come with the establishment of that throne on the earth.

Then the rainbow brings another idea. It is seen after storm and when peace has come to the elements. There is storm connected with this throne, for as John looked, he saw "that out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices." These in all languages and among all men stand for the symbols of war. When the throne is established, there is war. The nations league themselves to overthrow it (Rev. 19:19). The "war of the great day of God Almighty" ensues (Rev. 16:14).

There is no doubt as to the issue: "the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev. 17:14). The result is to overthrow the power of them everywhere (Psa. 2:9; 110:5-6; Isa. 24:21; 52:13-15; Ezek. 39:17-22; Zeph. 3:8; Hag. 2:21-22; Zech. 12:1-3; 14:1-9). What comes of this devouring outburst of judgment? "The inhabitants of the earth learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). They come from the ends of the earth, and admit they have been entirely led astray in former times (Jer. 16:19). They repair in humble desire to Jerusalem to be instructed in ways of wisdom and righteousness (Micah 4:2), and follow no more "the imaginations of their evil hearts" (Jer. 3:17). Jesus speaks peace to the nations (Zech. 9:10; Ps. 46:9). They abandon war and walk in the light of the Lord (Isa. 2:4-5). After the storm comes sunshine and the resultant rainbow, speaking of peace and stability and of the blessedness with which all the families of the earth will be blessed in Abraham and his seed.

The rainbow over-arching the thundering throne seen by John, tells us of all those things.

Next, take the sea of glass. We might be at a loss to conjecture the significance of this part of the symbolism were we not informed further on (Rev. 17:15) that the oceanic waters shown to him stood for "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues". Though this interpretation did not apply to the sea of glass, but to the turbid sea which formed the base of the symbols representing the Roman polity, still it gives a clue. It gives us the idea of population being represented by the sea, and from this it is easy to extract the conclusion that a difference in the state of the sea represents a difference in the state of the people. Thus if a troubled sea of water stand for a mortal population with its constant uncertainties and vicissitudes, what can a fixed and vitrified translucent sea stand for but for that state to be finally reached by the agency of the kingdom of God, when the human race will be one family of peace and light? "Mingled with fire" we may understand more easily when we know that the state of the verb in the original describes a past accomplished action submitted to, and not a present state. "Having been mingled with fire" gives us the idea more accurately, intimating that the national translucency and peace

will have been attained as the result of the purifying fire of judgment.

Another modification of the original will make the language of the symbol more apparent. The elders are said to have “had on their heads crowns of gold”. This ought to be stephans of gold. The stephan was a crown of a certain sort; still it was not what we understand by a crown. It was the floral wreath awarded to the victors in the Greek games--a “corruptible” wreath, as Paul terms it; in contrast to the incorruptible stephan that will be bestowed on the faithful. Its significance as contrasted with crown lies in the fact that it is only awarded after a struggle. A crown is an affair of hereditary succession: a stephan can only be acquired by individual prowess. Hence, the fact that the elders were stephaned with gold rather than crowned, intimates that the wearers had been in a previous state of conflict in which they had obtained the victory.

The four beasts were “full of eyes”, and they rest not day nor night, saying, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty; which was, and is, and is to come”. Eyes, besides representing individualities, are indicative of perception and enlightenment. They may be regarded here as representing the enlightened state of the finally established and glorified commonwealth of Israel, when all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest (Jer. 31:34), in contrast with the blindness of Israel according to the flesh. The continual ascriptions of the four beasts speak to us of an Israel that recognizes its true position and God’s relation to all, unlike Israel under Moses, who “with their mouths drew near to God, but their hearts were far from Him.”

Surveying the things as a whole--the first scene witnessed by John in the exhibition of things which were to be in John’s “hereafter”--it is plain that as the seven candlesticks represent the seven ecclesias, so this more complete and more glorious symbolism represented the commonwealth of Israel in its glorified and perfect state--the state contemplated in the statement by Jeremiah: “Though I make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee”. People in general are aghast at the suggestion of any connection between this symbolism and the Jewish race. They look at the Jews as they know them in their midst, and they say, “What! are these the heavenly commonwealth?” The mistake they make is in not discriminating between various parts of truth. They overlook the principle laid down by Paul, “They are not all Israel that are of Israel”, or rather they misapply this principle. Because the bulk of the Israelitish stock is no part of the finally glorified commonwealth of Israel, they tacitly come to the conclusion that there is no Israel at all, but only so many immortal souls to be saved. They look at Jews who are not really Jews, lacking the character of Abraham, and deny that there are any Jews. The truth will rectify this mistake. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets (Luke 13:28) will awake from the sleep of death when the time arrives for the setting-up of the throne of David; and they will assuredly be joined by myriads of accepted Jews of their stamp, and of as many adopted Gentiles as the Lord may approve at his coming. They will be one Abrahamic polity, and that polity--a royal institution--is symbolized by the glorious throne of four heraldic beasts and four-and-twenty elders.

But here there is an apparent difficulty. The throne was the first thing seen by John. Many things seen after have come to pass, but the kingdom is not yet established on the earth: how can the throne have symbolized the kingdom in that case? The question is answered in two ways by different classes of objectors. There is first the futurist who, accepting the kingdom as an explanation of the throne, says, the kingdom having not yet come, it follows that all the other events--in connection with the seals, trumpets, vials, etc., are all future, because they come after the kingdom in the order of vision. Then there is the orthodox objector, who grants the seals, trumpets, etc., are all past, but insists that the vision of the throne and the elders must be past too, because coming before things admittedly past: this objector contends that in fact, what John saw was a vision of what was in heaven in the days of John, and therefore a proof of the existence of multitudes of the redeemed at that time, and therefore of the

existence of men in the death state. The contention of these objectors is that we must either have the seals future or the throne past--that we cannot have the seals past and the throne future--that they are both past or both future.

Looking at the matter from a merely scenic point of view, there would appear to be considerable cogency in this representation. But we must not judge the matter superficially. The right treatment of truth is carefully to give their logical place to the leading facts, and follow the conclusion to which these facts so placed lead us. Treating the matter in this way, we cannot allow unqualified futurity to a vision which connected itself with events actually occurrent in the days of John: as in explanation of the seven heads and the ten-horned beast of the sea: "five (Kings or sovereignties) are fallen; one IS: and the other is not yet come" (Rev. 17:10); and again, "The woman thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 17:18). There are other reasons against the futurist view which we glanced at in the first lecture. As to the orthodox objector, we cannot allow him to claim unqualified actuality in the days of John for a vision shown to him under the express intimation that he was to be shown "things which must be hereafter" (Rev. 4:1). Nor can we allow that dead men are alive (Heb. 11:13; Eccl. 9:5; Isa. 38:18), nor that a kingdom to be manifested at the appearing of Christ (2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Peter 5:4; Jas. 2:5) had actual existence in the days of John. The only interpretation admissible is that which suits all the facts of the case. What is that? How comes it that the kingdom should be shown first, and as an institution apparently contemporary with all the events exhibited in the succeeding parts of the Apocalypse?

The answer is to be found in the fact that in an important sense, the kingdom of God has been contemporary with human history from the beginning. Christ expresses that sense in the words which he says will be addressed to the accepted in the day of his appearing: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world". All God has done from the beginning has been the preparation of the kingdom to be entered by the saints at his appearing. Christ illustrates this in all the parables which represent the kingdom as having a present relation to the affairs of men and a present operation among them. He speaks of it as a mustard seed planted, as leaven hid; as a net submerged in the waters; as a marriage feast for which invitations have been issued; as a vineyard let out to husbandmen, and so on (Matt. 13:13, 33, 47; 22:2; 21:33). If it be asked how he could speak of a kingdom not yet established as a something existing all the while, it has to be remarked that although never yet established in the form in which the saints will be invited to inherit it, it has in point of fact existed since the day that God organized Israel into a kingdom by the hand of Moses (Psa. 114:1-2; Exod. 19:6). The kingdom of God is the kingdom of Israel (Acts 1:5; 2 Chron. 13:8; 9:8). Jesus told the twelve disciples that it was their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom (Luke 12:32), and when they inherit it, how do we find them enthroned? "Sitting on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30). The kingdom of God is the kingdom of Christ, and (Eph. 5:5) the kingdom of Christ is the kingdom of David (Luke 1:32; Isaiah 9:6; Jer. 23:5). Consequently, we are enabled to understand what Christ meant when he said to the rulers of the kingdom of David 1,800 years ago: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43).

Now because of these things, it is by no means so unnatural as it would otherwise appear for the Apocalypse to represent the kingdom as contemporary with the events that were to transpire among men during the absence of Christ. Christ's own existence supplied this element of coincidence. The person of Christ as the son of David and the Son of God was the kingdom in a nutshell, so to speak. He was the power and essence of the kingdom. This kingdom is his power spread out. While this power is unspread out, the kingdom may be considered as bound up in him, as recognized by the people on his triumphal entry into Jerusalem when they sang "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Mark 11:10). Though withdrawn from the earth, he has had to do

with all that has been going on in the earth. He did not abandon the earth to itself. In fulfilment of his promise (John 15:26) he sent the Spirit upon the apostles, and through them, conducted a great work in the midst of Israel. He established an encampment among them in the order of things founded by the apostles. This encampment became a potent fact in relation to the affairs of men. It was brought to bear on all the habitable in the divine message and invitation it heralded everywhere. It became what dealers in phrases call the *raison d'être* of European politics in their divine regulation. It was the representative of the kingdom of David in relation to the Gentile powers. It was the representative of the kingdom as a coming institution--as a foregone conclusion: not a contingency--not a potentiality, but a certainty, and therefore to be spoken of as all divine purposes are spoken of, in the language of accomplished fact. It was therefore exhibited first in order in the vision of "things which must be hereafter"--first as a fact in a certain form, supplying the starting point of the vision of what would transpire during the times of the Gentiles, and second, as the upshot of all the events that would so transpire. It was the enigmatic illustration of the fact that the purpose of God is the first and last in the affairs of men, and the explanation of the course of those affairs, and the termination of that course in the proposed age of glory. It proclaimed heraldically that that purpose hinges on the kingdom of David. In relation to the times of the Gentiles, the kingdom of David was first and last; and God has regulated those times with reference to the exigencies of that kingdom. The Gentiles exalt their horn over the land of Israel--not by their own prowess, but by divine permission and arrangement because of Israel's sins. -- (See *Ways of Providence*). When they have accomplished the whole work of God upon Israel; the kingdom of David will re-appear. Therefore, it is in harmony with the fitness of things that the kingdom of David should be the beginning of the vision shown to John in Patmos, and the end thereof in the establishment of the Holy City as the Ruler of all the earth.

The symbols employed to represent the kingdom combine both this past and future. They recognize the political reality of the throne of David in the past as the pivot of the divine plan, and at the same time exhibit the divine purpose to establish that throne in the hands of Jesus and the saints as the basis of universal empire in the age to come. Both features are combined, and thus place is found for the apparently incompatible elements of co-existence and futurity, and escape provided from the contradictory theories of the Apocalypse already referred to. The details of the vision throughout are also by this means harmonized.

As an illustration of the difficulty created by other theories in connection with those details, we may point to the fact that the time for raising and judging the dead, and rewarding all the servants of God "small and great", arrives only under the seventh seal in chapter 11:18. How is this to be reconciled either with the idea that the redeemed were in a state of reward in heaven in the days of John, or with the idea that all the seals and all the vision comes after the exaltation of the saints at the coming of Christ? So also with the slaying of the witnesses of Jesus under the fifth seal (chap. 6:9), and the overcoming of the saints by the beast of the sea (chap. 13:7); and a number of other features that may come under our attention in succeeding lectures, all inconsistent alike with the futurist and the orthodox theory. A recognition of the Davidic character of the symbolic throne and its environment of four living creatures and twenty-four elders, relieves the subject of all difficulty on this head, and shows us a programme of intelligible and harmonious events, with the kingdom of David as its basis and starting point, and the kingdom of David as its landing place. We have now to consider
THE SEALS.

This is another subject, yet a subject arising out of the first scene that John saw. The first scene represented the kingdom in its past, present, and future. The second scene refers to the powers possessed by Jesus as the possessor of the key of David, and the regulator of Gentile affairs, with a view to the kingdom. John says, "I saw on the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud

voice, 'Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?'" The occupant of the throne is Jehovah [Yahweh], for the throne of David is the throne of Jehovah [Yahweh] (1 Chron. 29:23). David occupied it only as a vice-gerant or deputy (1 Sam. 13:14). Jesus is Jehovah [Yahweh] manifested, the Lord as well as the son of David (Luke 20:44). The Father (greater than all) had reserved a knowledge of the times and seasons, and their events filling the interval between Christ's departure and returning (Acts 1:7; Mark 13:32). This is symbolized by a sealed book or scroll, which is the scriptural symbol of inaccessible knowledge, as may be learnt from Isaiah 29:10-11. The existence of seven seals may be taken to signify perfect secrecy, besides furnishing a convenient basis for the structure of the vision. The right hand was the symbol of power: the sealed scroll in the right hand was a perfect symbol of the fact that the knowledge and control of the future was entirely in the power of the Father up to the moment that both were imparted to Jesus. The impartation of the knowledge and the control to Jesus is dramatically exhibited in the scene described.

To get the idea expressed by the opening of the seals, we must realize what is meant by the "book" in the hand of him that sat upon the throne. It is not what we are familiar with as a book, but a scroll--a number of sheets of parchment rolled round a roller one after the other, and separately held in their place by a seal to each sheet. When all are rolled round and sealed, it would be a seven-sealed scroll. Let us suppose such a scroll sealed up and containing valuable information which no one knew, we should have the ideal state of things illustrated at the moment John heard the question as to who was worthy to unloose the seals and open the scroll. To get at the information, one would have to break the seals one by one. Now suppose the information contained in the scroll was in the nature of a programme, the knowledge of which would enable the Opener to carry it out, we shall be enabled to comprehend the relation between the opening of the seals and the development of the events following. The opening of the seals may be taken as the attainment by the Opener of the knowledge of the divine purpose, and the development of the events following as his carrying that knowledge into effect in causing the events to transpire.

It is worthy of note in passing that the opening of the seals required worthiness on the part of the Opener--that is, on the part of the personage to whom should be confided the knowledge of the divine plan and power to carry it out, for this is literally what is meant. There was of course no literal scroll anywhere to be opened. There was no more a literal scroll than there were seven literal candlesticks. These were but symbols of certain realities. John heard the question, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" At first there was no response." No man... was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." This caused John great distress. He says, "I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon". A man feels strongly before he weeps. John must have felt a very strong desire to become acquainted with the contents of the scroll before he could weep at the absence of a man worthy to open it. No wonder considering that the scroll contained a delineation of the course of affairs on earth in relation to the affairs of Christ in which John was so supremely interested. All his brethren in all ages have a similar interest, but in John's case, there was a special urgency in his desire, due to the fact that he was now old, and had long been looking for the Lord's appearing; instead of which he saw only the prevalence of apostasy, the downfall of Jerusalem, and the undisturbed prosperity of Gentile power. He was permitted to be distressed for a moment that his joy and gratitude at the provision made in the case might have their proper edge. "One of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." Jesus, thus introduced as the lion of the tribe of Judah, was presently exhibited as a lamb, with marks of slaughter. "I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." Why did John see a lamb instead of a lion? Because the worthiness of Jesus to open the book was proved and manifested in the lamb-phase of his mission, even during his sojourn among men as

the Lamb of God in the days of his flesh, taking away the sin of the world. His obedience unto death is the feature symbolized by “the lamb as it had been slain.” Because of this obedience, Paul informs us (Phil. 2:9) “God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name”. We may not comprehend why it was necessary to put to the proof the obedience of a personage so exalted as Jesus it is sufficient that we accept the testimony that it was so: that “he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15; 2:18); that he learned obedience by the things that he suffered, and overcame with strong crying and tears, making supplication to Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared (Heb. 5:7; John 16:33; Rev. 3:21). All these things are testified of Jesus, and illustrated here as the basis of the great honour conferred upon him by the Father as the Opener of the Scroll, or the regulator of God’s providential work upon earth.

The lamb as it had been slain had “seven horns and seven eyes”. This connects Jesus with the power and penetration of God. “Horn”, as you know, constantly stands for the symbol of power, and eyes for sight and intelligence. Seven horns and seven eyes therefore symbolize omnipotence and omniscience. They are said to be “the seven spirits of God”. If this were not a symbolic book, we would be at a loss to understand this. We might suppose there was a contradiction between this statement and Paul’s declaration (confirmed by all the Scriptures) that there is but one Spirit (Eph. 4:4), and that God is that Spirit, filling heaven and earth with His immensity (John 4:24; Jer. 23:24). But being a symbolic book, there is no difficulty. Truth is expressed enigmatically. Seven, we all know, is not only characteristic of the Scriptures in general, but is peculiarly so of the Apocalypse itself--seven candlesticks, seven stars, seven ecclesias, seven lamps of fire, seven spirits of God, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials, seven thunders, etc. Seven covers the whole ground of anything dealt with. It is the numerical symbol of completeness. The seven spirits of God is the enigmatical definition of the One Spirit, and intimates possession and harmony with that One Spirit in its whole power. It is the idea expressed by Jesus when he says “I and my Father are ONE”, to which also he gives shape when he says in prayer “Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee.”

It may seem superfluous at first sight that this unity of Jesus with the Father should be symbolized. In the days of John it might not have seemed so superfluous to us. Society was accustomed to the idea of sub-divided and antagonistic divinity, so to speak. Paganism, then in the ascendant, recognized a variety of gods, each god independent of the other, and having control of a separate force. Thus there was a goddess of love (Venus), a god of war (Mars), a god of thunder (Jupiter), a god of fire (Vulcan), a god of water (Neptune), and so forth. The purport of this symbol was to show that there is but one God, that all power has its centre with Him, that the apparent diversity of power is only a diversity in the manifestation of one power, and that power the Father of all, and that Jesus was himself a manifestation of that power. Jesus is far mightier than all the gods of Paganism, supposing even they were realities, for while they each possessed but a limited power, Jesus, as the possessor of “the Seven Spirits”, had received “all power in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18). This truth is more strikingly exhibited in the symbol before us than if plainly defined. A lamb with seven horns and seven eyes may appear an uncouth symbol, but it is not more so than the symbols with which men are familiar in the various secret orders. Uncouth or not, it is an expressive intimation to us that in our brother and high priest, Jesus of Nazareth, the glorified Son of God, we have one who is in association with the boundless power of the Creator of the universe.

Then the Lamb takes the book out of the hand of him that sits upon the throne, which indicates the moment he receives from the Father the knowledge and power to execute the programme represented by the seals. This symbolic act is accompanied by the expression of universal homage. The four beasts and twenty-four elders fall down and sing to him that he is worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof, for reasons which they recite. It is the dramatic illustration of the great love and esteem entertained for the Lord Jesus by all standing related to the matter. This is manifest by the little word of

interpretation concerning the twenty-four elders dropped in at verse 8 (chap. 5): “having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints”. The saints are in the praying state--the probationary state as represented by the twenty-four elders. The elders represent the saints not only in the final glory that awaits them, but also in their contemporary adoration of Christ in their several generations, while yet in the flesh. They represent the camp of the saints--the house of David--in contemporary relation with the kingdoms of men. Therefore they say prospectively, “We shall reign on the earth”,--showing that at the time of this part of the vision, they are in the position of hope: “now hope that is seen is not hope” (Romans 8:21). In addition to the four beasts and twenty-four elders, John “heard the voice of many angels round about the throne”, joining in the ascription of blessing and honour and glory and power to him that sat on the throne and to the Lamb; and also every creature everywhere took part in the mighty chorus of praise. Now as the universal exaltation of Christ, and glory to God in the highest, represented in this symbolic scene, has never yet occurred on earth, it follows that we here have linked with the incident of giving to Christ the power to open the seals because of his worthiness, a representation of the universal exaltation that awaits him, when his whole seal-opening work is completed. It is one of several instances in the course of the Apocalypse (and indeed in the Scriptures generally) where the end of a matter, ages apart from its initiation, is introduced along with its initiation as if it came immediately after. In the case before us, it gives dramatic completeness to the scene exhibited. It would be a misunderstanding however to read it as descriptive of an actual occurrence at the preparation of the opening of the seals. On no theory of the matter could such an understanding be admissible; for whereas the scene represents the praise as absolutely universal, the opening of the seals introduces us to wickedness and blasphemy on earth, on such a scale that “all nations” are exhibited in the aspect of spiritual debauchery, and repent not (Rev. 9:20-21; 13:3-4; 17:1-2). The whole work of the seals will bring the earth into a state of praise--the state depicted in the prophets as a filling of the earth with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea; and the renown of such a wonderful transformation will be “to him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb”; but at the actual opening of the seals, the state of things was that described by John in his epistle, as applicable to his own day. “The world lieth in wickedness.”

Let us now look at the opening of the seals. We cannot in the short time that remains look very thoroughly into the subject. Still, much may be done in a few minutes by condensation.

The Lamb having taken the scroll in his hand, breaks one of the seals: John is summoned by a loud voice to “come and see”. This is worth a moment’s consideration. It was one of the four beasts that said “come and see”. Now in view of the fact that the four beasts represent the commonwealth of Israel, we here have the community of the faithful exhibited as having an interest in the signs of the times. They invite John to look as the events unfold themselves. The suggestion contained in this incident is that the servants of God are always interested in the signs of the times, and watch public events from a divine point of view. They have always been of this watching class, because they have both understanding and a strong desire for the accomplishment of the purpose of God in the earth.

John responds to the invitation to “come and see”. He looks and sees something occur, at which we shall presently look. But there is a peculiarity to be considered before going on. When a seal was broken, a parchment would be unloosed from its place. This is what would literally happen in what John saw: but what connection could there be between this act and the occurrence of a scene which John could witness,--the movement of figures, the occurrence of incidents, the sounding of voices, etc.? We could readily understand how the unloosing of a seal would put the Lamb in a position to know what was written in that part of the scroll unloosed: but how could it set events in motion that John could witness? This question we have already partly considered. There is evidently a missing link between the two things. We conjecturally supply that link if we suppose the scenes to be caused by Jesus as the result of the knowledge and power acquired by the opening of the seals. Jesus, so to speak, reads

in the opened scroll and knows what to do or cause to be done in consequence, like the conductor of a drama who requires the MS. before he can put a piece on the stage. We disrelish the comparison exceedingly, but perhaps it illustrates what is involved in the opening of the seals better than anything else. The opening of the seals is, of course, a pure enigma. Literally, it means the communication by the Father to Jesus of knowledge which enables him to reveal events as destined to run in the channel of the Father's purpose; and not only so, but to conduct those events to their predestined issue.

THE FIRST SEAL

Being opened, John, responding to the summons "Come and see", beholds a white horse with a stephaned rider holding a bow, going forth on a conquering mission. Remembering that it was declared that the time was "at hand" for the beginning of the future things shown to John, what event or phase of things is there in the time immediately after the communication of the Apocalypse to answer to this symbol? We will best obtain an answer by asking what we are to understand by the horse. It is common to employ animals to represent political powers; e.g., the British lion. What power represented itself by the horse? Strictly speaking, there was but one State in the days of John, and that was the Roman State (leaving the barbarous parts of the earth out of the account). If the horse is a symbol of the Roman State, we ought to have no difficulty in discovering in the Roman State in the days of John a condition of things answering to the arrowless and victorious Bowman astride the white horse. As a matter of fact, the horse was one of the symbols of the Roman power. This is conclusively shown by Mr. Elliott, who cites extant coins and other evidences to show the use of the horse as the symbol of Roman power. The horse being white would indicate a work of righteousness and peace, to which the body politic of Rome was being subjected by the party represented by the rider with the stephan, having a bow but no arrow. What party could this be? The apostolic enterprise at once suggests the answer. This enterprise was a conquering enterprise of a certain sort, having the Roman Empire as the arena of its operation. It was an enterprise achieved without bloodshed, so far as the aggressions of the apostolic party were concerned. As Paul said, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" (2 Cor. 10:4). Again he said, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities and powers (that is, the ruling authorities--see Titus 3:1), against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). The bow is a symbol of speech: the victory was to be won by the use of the tongue, but without arrows as weapons of offence. This was the nature of the war carried on by the Spirit of God through the body of Christ in the days of John. It was a war of ideas,--of truth against error, of righteousness against wickedness, therefore fitly represented by an archer without arrows, and an archer wearing the stephan, the token of victory; for the apostolic testimony did in the end vanquish Paganism in the Roman state. True it is, that the faith was soon corrupted and overborne. Still, a great change was accomplished in the Roman Empire by the apostolic enterprise. Paganism was driven from the throne, and the world was brought into a nominal subjection to Christ and the apostles, which was a great gain and a preparation for the more effective form of their work which is yet to come.

If it be asked why the work of the apostles should appear to be restricted in the symbol to Rome, the answer is found in the fact that their mission was essentially a mission to the Roman habitable which comprised the entire civilized world at that time. The Roman empire, as shown in the map, supplies the geography of their work. Their "sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Rom. 10:18). It was proclaimed to every creature under heaven, in the apostolic sense of the words (Col. 1:6, 23). The apostolic work continued after the death of the apostles by means of the ecclesias founded by them, conducted as they were by spiritually-endowed leaders. While it was in progress throughout the world, peace and liberty prevailed to a great extent during the first seal period (about eighty years) represented by the reigns of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and of the Antonines, called the family of the Antonines in the same way as we talk of the family of the Georges. Historians speak of this as the happiest period in the history of mankind on account of the absence of war and the prevalence of general prosperity--a period fitly represented by the white horse ridden by the predestined

victor of the arrowless bow.

When the Antonines ceased to reign, a great change came over the Roman world, as indicated in the symbolism of

THE SECOND SEAL

Here the horse is red (signifying bloodshed), and the rider is not an arrowless Bowman, but a man with a machaira in his hand. This ought to be translated a dagger: the implement most commonly used in assassination, and most appropriate to represent a time when assassination became the order of the day. Marcus Aurelius, the second of the Antonines, was succeeded by his son, Commodus, a mere youth, who differed from his predecessors in being a dissolute tyrant, who shamed public decency, and who squandered the resources of the State in debauchery and profligacy. The senate grew secretly impatient of his ways, but dared not for a time show their feelings. At length, one of its members waylaid Commodus in a passage as he was leaving the theatre, and presenting him threateningly with a machaira--the great sword or dagger of the second seal--said, "The senate sends you this", and attempted to kill him. The attempt failed and the emperor escaped. Direful consequences followed. Fired with feelings of revenge against the senate, whose hostility he had suspected, he attempted to effect their destruction by wholesale assassination. Terror reigned for a time, and the best blood of Rome flowed in torrents. At length Commodus himself fell a victim to the flood of violence he had let loose. Then there was more red-horse work. Commodus, falling before the assassin's stroke, left no successor. The senate appointed one in the person of Pertinax, who after two months endeavour to reign wisely, was assassinated by the discontented soldiery, whose allowance he abridged. The imperial purple, after being sold to the highest bidder by the soldiery, then became a bone of contention between the three leading generals of the army. A time of intestine war and confusion ensued, and paved the way for the experiences of

THE THIRD SEAL

In this the horse was black, and its rider a man holding a pair of balances. When bread is eaten by weight, it is a sign of scarcity and famine. The blackness of the horse shows distress, and the words addressed to the balance-holder indicate its source. John heard a voice proclaiming, "A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine". These are high prices for wheat and barley, when worked out according to modern standards, and point to scarcity. But how came the high prices and the scarcity? Not from bad harvests but from heavy taxation on the part of the government, the official balance-holder of the Roman horse. This heavy taxation was the result of the reckless extravagance of the reigns of Caracalla and Elagabalus--dissolute monsters--who for ten years, first one and then the other, lavished away the treasures of the people and exhausted the resources of the empire in their prodigal favours to the army among whom they lived, and on whose support they depended. Taxation was brought to such a pitch that vast tracts of country went out of cultivation--the tiller of the soil feeling no encouragement to raise crops merely to hand over to the revenue officers. The result of this was public distress on a large scale. It became common for parents to expose their children to destruction rather than burden themselves with the impossible task of providing for them. An idea of the extent of the taxation, which crushed alike every part of the empire, may be gathered from the fact that when a change in the government was brought about by the exasperated people, taxes were instantly reduced to one thirtieth part of what they were during the reigns of Caracalla and Elagabalus.

Alexander Severus came to the throne after the assassination of Elagabalus, and his reign illustrated the admonition of the voice that John heard: "See thou hurt not (or act not unjustly by) the oil and the

wine". As much as to say, that although wheat should be at famine prices owing to the fiscal extortions of the first part of the seal, there would be an amelioration of the burden towards the second part. This is what happened. Severus practised rigid economy in every branch of the administration: he relieved the provinces from the oppressive taxes invented in the former reigns, and reduced the price of provisions and the interest on money. He sought to promote learning and the love of justice in contrast to the profligacy of his predecessors, and acted on the conviction that the best way to secure the love and loyalty of his subjects was to promote their well being. All his efforts, however, to change the colour of the horse were finally unavailing. The evils resulting from the previous reigns were too deeply planted to be removed in a short time, and though for a few years there was considerable relief, the army, becoming discontented with the economy of Severus, proved a final obstacle to his reforms, and by their hostility paved the way for the dreadful experiences of the fourth seal, which we must defer till the next lecture.

LECTURE 4: REVELATION CHAPTERS 6 (VS. 7-17); 7, AND 8 (VS. 1-6)

The confusion and bloodshed of history -- The beauty of the Apocalypse in constructing a distinct programme out of chaotic materials -- A literal element in the symbolism -- a help to its elucidation -- The horse of the seals -- its colour under each -- The fourth seal -- the pale horse--its rider, Death -- fulfilment in the awful experiences of the Roman world, and particularly Italy, under Maximin and his successors -- Half the human species destroyed with the sword, famine and pestilence -- The fifth seal -- ten persecutions under Diocletian and Galerius, who attempted to extinguish Christianity -- peculiarities of the symbolism as appearing to favour popular views of the death state -- The sixth seal.

IN contemplating the various scenes and transactions of European history that stand related to the symbolism of the Apocalypse, we cannot help feeling as if that history was a monotonous stream of confusion and bloodshed, undistinguishable one part from another. It seems one mass of depressing detail, a constant repetition, age after age, of intrigue and violence and bloodshed -- one long, horrible dream of evil without beginning, middle or end. To a great extent, this impression is a correct one. The same passions and ambitions are seen in operation century after century -- the same violent means resorted to of attaining their gratification -- the same train of calamities resulting to large sections of mankind from their indulgence. Names and times and places may differ: but in essence, the historical incidents are but the same thing over and over again, like the whirlings and fightings of kites and crows.

It is this fact that enables us to appreciate one beauty of the Apocalypse that is not seen at first sight, viz., its construction out of this vast mass of chaotic material of a distinct programme in which each generation or so is distinguished by symbols and events peculiar to itself. It would not have seemed possible that such a uniform scene of the social and political turmoil should be mapped out into distinct sections, and represented by separate and appropriate sets of symbols. The Apocalypse accomplished this feat to perfection. The Spirit of God selects from the struggling mass -- so to speak -- one or two leading features in each age, and portrays them in a bold and distinctive symbolism, which becomes increasingly graphic with increasing acquaintance, and excites at last the highest admiration. At first the Apocalyptic symbolism is depressing, but as the mind learns to penetrate the obscurity of the symbols, and to apprehend the literal things signified, a totally different effect is produced. Satisfaction springs from intelligence, and comfort from things discerned by enlightenment.

Most of the scenes have something literal about them, though essentially symbolical in their construction. At first sight this might seem a difficulty in the way of their understanding. Practically, however, it is the reverse. It is a kind of mixture that really helps to make the symbols intelligible, after the example of Punch's cartoons, where the countenance of the head of the Government -- Beaconsfield for example (a literal element) -- is often to be found in combination with pure symbol, -- the British lion, to wit. The facial resemblance in that case is a clue to the significance of the other part of the picture. So when we read of nations and tongues in juxtaposition with a lion-mouthed seven-headed monster, or a bewitching woman, it is an intimation that the thing signified by the monster is to be found in connection with national affairs. We shall find frequent illustrations of this as we proceed.

We have already looked at the symbolism of the first three seals. In these are to be found illustrations of the feature just mentioned. The machaira or dagger in the hand of the rider in the second seal, for example, is a literal object used as a sign. That is, the dagger was to be freely used in assassination, at this time, and here becomes a symbol of that which it was literally employed to accomplish. So in the third seal: wheat, wine and oil are literal ingredients of the hieroglyph. That is, the hieroglyph, of which they form a verbal part, signified the fiscal extravagances in which these articles would be literally involved, with the result of distress to the people. Their literal use in this way does not confuse the symbol, but rather helps its significance.

We have considered the horse. This is a pure symbol as we have seen. That it signifies the Roman State is proved independently of the employment of that animal in Roman heraldry: it is proved by the fact that what is done by the rider of the horse affects the population of the earth -- the civilized habitable -- which was ruled by Rome and Rome alone. For example: to the rider of the horse in the second seal, "power was given to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another". The earth under Roman jurisdiction is here presented to view. No other power than the Roman is admissible. The colour of the horse we have considered: the first -- white -- a work of righteousness going on during circumstances of public prosperity; the second --red-- bloodshed and assassination the order of the day; the third -- black -- distress and want throughout the empire, in consequence of the rapacious exactions of a succession of profligate emperors.

THE FOURTH SEAL.

We now look at the fourth (chap. 6:7) -- "And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat upon him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth". The colour of the horse agrees with the work assigned to the rider. It is a colour characteristic of approaching death. It is not pale in the sense of whiteness; that was the colour of the first horse, having to do with righteousness and prosperity: in this, the paleness is a green paleness. The word translated pale conveys the idea of green as the tint of the paleness. And well does such a colour agree with the events of the next phase of the history of the Roman world. This phase covered a period of nearly seventy years. During that time, there were thirty-nine emperors or men claiming to be emperors, and not one of them died a natural death. With the exception of one who died of pestilence, and two or three who fell in battle, they all died of assassination. Death was an appropriate name for the Roman ridership during this period--seeing that as sure as a man attained to it he was doomed to death, sooner or later, and in most cases it was death in a very short time -- but Hades followed with death. Hades, as we know, is the grave. Here we have the grave personified, following Death, to receive the victims. This is an intimation that multitudes would be affected by the events so fatal to the lives of emperors. And it was so. The history of this period is a history of constant bloodshed on a large scale: It began with the promotion to the emperorship, of one Maximin -- a Thracian peasant of immense stature and great strength, who came into notice and obtained popularity in the army through these qualities. Through this popularity he succeeded in procuring the assassination of Alexander Severus (the "hurt-not-the-oil-and-the-wine" emperor of the third seal), and was himself proclaimed emperor. He was a man not only of mean origin, but of savage appearance and gross ignorance, and the noble families of Rome were outraged in their feelings at the appointment of such a man as emperor. Maximin was aware of this, and dreading the result of their contempt, he sought their destruction. He singled out Magnus, an eminent and accomplished senator, and put him to death, with about four thousand of the more respectable classes who were suspected of sympathy with him. He filled the empire with spies and informers. We read that "on the slightest accusation, the first of the Roman nobles, governors of provinces and commanders of armies, were chained on the public carriages and hurried away into his presence (on the banks of the Rhine or Danube, according as he was in one camp or the other). Confiscation, exile, or simple death, were esteemed uncommon instances of his lenity. Some of the unfortunate sufferers he ordered to be sewed up in the hides of slaughtered animals, others to be beaten to death with clubs, and others again to be exposed to wild beasts". Having devastated the ranks of respectability, he turned his hand upon the common property of the public. He appropriated the local taxes and revenues of towns to provide funds for his own use and the use of the army. "The temples were stripped of their most valuable offerings of gold and silver, and the statues of gods, heroes and emperors were melted down and coined into money." These measures excited public tumults, and led to organized revolt against his authority throughout the empire. This led to civil war and bloodshed everywhere. In Rome,

the senate threw off their allegiance and appointed another emperor. But a party in Rome (comprising the principal soldiery -- the Praetorian guard) were favourable to Maximin, and between them and the rest of the citizens there was fighting which lasted many days, and filled Rome with desolation and death. The soldiers, besieged in their own camp by the citizens, sallied forth and set fire to many parts of the city, and filled the streets with the blood of the inhabitants. Maximin himself, after marching the army into Italy on his way towards Rome, was killed by his troops, and the civil strife ceased for a while.

It will be observed that the seal speaks of "the fourth of the earth". This becomes intelligible in view of the fact that the empire at this time was divided into four parts, called prefectures, over each of which a prince, styled a prefect, exercised authority in subjection to the emperors. The four parts were: -- 1, the East (including Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, etc.); 2, Illyricum (answering to modern Turkey in Europe); 3, Italy, and 4, Gaul (comprising France, Spain, Britain, etc.). THE fourth of these, that is, the principal fourth, the leading fourth, was the prefecture of Italy -- the headquarters of the Roman Empire. The events of the fourth seal were in a special manner to affect this section of the empire. The events already recited show how signally this was the case. Rome and Italy were the scenes of its leading events.

[That is, when the lectures were given, in 1880.]

In addition to the sword, the death-rider of the horse in this fourth seal was to "kill with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth". This shows that famine and pestilence were to result from the acts of the government. And it was so. It could not fail to be so in such a disturbed state of things. With a constant change of emperors, and constant fighting among the people, together with the effect of rapacious exactions of public officials, who were compelled at the peril of their lives to find supplies for the government, industry and agriculture fell into neglect, and supplies began to fail. History testifies that there was a long and general famine of a very serious kind, and that pestilence came as the result of scanty and unwholesome food. From A.D. 250 to 265, a plague raged without interruption in every province and city, and almost in every family in the Roman Empire. For some time five thousand persons died daily in Rome, and many towns were entirely depopulated. It has been computed that at this time, within a few years, war, pestilence, and famine consumed nearly one-half of the human species. The imagery of the fourth seal seems exactly adapted to express this fearful time of public calamity -- a death-pale horse, ridden by Death and followed by the Grave.

THE FIFTH SEAL.

The fifth seal changes the scene. "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our brood on them that dwell on the earth'? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them that they should rest for yet a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (6:9). Plainly on the face of it, this symbolism carries with it a picture of persecution, and this exactly coincides with the phase of public affairs in the Roman empire. Diocletian, who, in a great measure, terminated the public calamities of the fourth seal by the vigour of his administration, proved a great persecutor of the Christians, who were increasingly numerous as a party throughout the empire, though increasingly degenerate from an apostolic point of view. His animosity towards them originated in the idea that the calamities of the fourth seal period were due to them. This idea was fanned by his associate in the government Galerius, who was a zealous devotee of the gods of Pagan Rome, and stirred up Diocletian to attempt the destruction of the Christian name. After many importunities, Diocletian assented, and an imperial edict was issued, enacting the punishment of death to all who should hold secret assemblies for religious worship -- (that is, who should obey the commandments of Christ to meet for the breaking of bread). It was also ordered that

all who had possession of the Scriptures should give them up to be burnt, and that anyone refusing to make a profession of Paganism should be incapable of holding any office, and should be put beyond the protection of the law. Twice, within fifteen days after the issue of the edict, the imperial palace was found to be on fire, and as this was attributed to the action of the Christians, it greatly increased the severity of the measures adopted against them. A great number of the most respectable of society were thrown into prison. Every mode of torture was put in practice against those thus imprisoned, and many bloody executions took place. While multitudes of professors saved themselves by renouncing Christianity, and giving up the Scriptures to be destroyed, many remained faithful, and were put to death. These terrible visitations upon believers extended throughout the Roman Empire, and added thousands to the number of victims under the altar. The sufferings of the saints, both in body and mind, were of great severity during this terrible season, and are fitly expressed in the prayer put into the mouths of the dead souls under the altar: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

You are aware that the sects around us make large use of this prayer to prove that the dead are alive and conscious. They forget that the scene of which it is a part is a hieroglyph or symbolical representation. Even taken literally they might see, if they would but reflect, it cannot favour their views. They imagine souls to be in heaven: but here they were under an altar. They imagine souls to be invisible and immaterial, but here John saw them, and white robes were given to every one of them. It is a piece of symbolism in perfect harmony with the truth that man is mortal, and that slaughtered saints are dead. The harmony is seen when we ask "What is the altar?" It is a symbol of Christ, as we learn from Paul's teaching in Hebrews generally, and notably in chapter 13:10. What is meant by the souls being under the altar? We discover this in Paul's other statement, that "our life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:2). Christ has the power to bring all his people to life again, and will exercise that power (John 6:39-40; 17:2). A dead saint, especially one put to death for his faith, is in a peculiar sense "under the altar", in Christ's safe keeping for resurrection and vindication at the appointed time.

But what about the dead souls speaking, and making this prayer and receiving answer about those not yet slain? It is the dramatic and enigmatical illustration of their position and relation to the purpose of God. It is not the stultification of literal truth. It is not an uncommon thing to impute words to things incapable of speech by way of expressing their moral relations. Thus God said to Cain, "Thy brother's blood CRIETH unto me from the ground"; commenting upon which Paul remarks (Heb. 12:24) that the sprinkled blood of Jesus "speaketh better things than that of Abel". Thus also the corpses in the tombs are represented as rising to greet the king of Babylon at his burial, and saying, "Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like one of us?" (Isa. 14:10). Thus also trees are considered as speaking one to another (Judges 9:8-15). The souls under the altar, their speech, the answer to them and the clothing of them with white robes, is the symbolical presentment of a time of persecution that prevailed during the reign of Diocletian, and the promised investiture with immortality that awaits all who suffer death for Christ's sake. Literal truth must govern all our interpretations of symbols and parables.

THE SIXTH SEAL.

The sixth seal shows us a different state of things altogether. It introduces us to something that we may look upon as in the nature of a retribution for the evil deeds performed under the fifth seal. "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (6:12-17).

What is there in Roman history, succeeding to the reign of Diocletian, at all corresponding to this symbolic picture of a universe in tempestuous dissolution? Looking at the political universe which was the subject of the symbol, we have not to go far to see. Following close on the fearful persecutions of the fifth seal, we behold the Pagan world in a state of violent and revolutionary turmoil ending in the overthrow of Paganism, and of the entire system established on the basis of the national idolatry, the old order of things in Rome (a thousand years old) upset, and a new order of things established. The son of one of Diocletian's colleagues was the instrument of this momentous revolution. His name is of world-wide renown. Constantine, the son of Constantius, who ruled the west, was brought up with a bias in favour of the Christians, inherited from his father. His father very much disapproved of the persecutions ordered by Galerius and Diocletian, and successfully used his authority in shielding the Christians from the extreme measures dealt out to them in other parts of the empire. His son Constantine early took their part, and perceiving them a growing party in the State, proclaimed himself their protector. On the death of his father he was proclaimed His successor by the army of the West, to the dismay of the reigning emperors in Italy and the east, who were supporters of the Paganism of the State, and who viewed with alarm the elevation of a man of known capacity who had proclaimed sympathy with the Christians. The difference of feeling between them soon led to war, and this was ended in the ruin of Paganism. Constantine exhibited a celerity and skill in his movements which baffled and overpowered his enemies. He marched to Italy and was over the Alps before almost the of his intentions had reached the Imperial Court in Rome. Every battle was for him a victory, and in a short time he found himself in Rome the unchallenged ruler of the principal part of the empire. This was a great change for the Christians, who were emancipated from all their disabilities and received into imperial favour. After a short peace with his colleagues of Illyricum and the East, the war was renewed. It was felt by all that the issue was between Paganism and Christianity. The two elements had long been fermenting one with the other throughout the State, and the hour had come to decide which was to have the ascendancy. The question was effectually decided by the extraordinary success uniformly attending the arms of Constantine. The armies of the Pagan emperors were completely defeated; and Constantine, the befriender of the persecuted Christians, became sole master of the empire. The constitution of the world was completely changed. The earth had been the subject of a great quake, lasting for years and resulting in all the effects portrayed in the symbolism; the sun of the political universe -- the Pagan emperorship (both high-priest and defender of Paganism) had become darkened or eclipsed; the moon, or ecclesiastical element of the Roman polity -- the Pagan clergy -- the priests of the gods -- shining by the borrowed light of the throne, even as the moon by the light of the sun -- disappeared in blood; the stars of the political firmament, the numerous magnates of various kinds and degrees exercising authority in the empire, by the goodwill of the emperor, fell out of their places with the overthrow of their master, to give place to Christian successors. The heaven or whole sphere of established imperial authority, was rolled up and put aside as a thing of the past the various mountain and island kingdoms and principalities subsisting under Rome, moved out of their places, and all orders and ranks of Roman society, having participated in the persecution of the Christians, recognized in the public calamities occurrent, the retribution inflicted by "the God of the Christians", and were panic stricken to the extent of desiring concealment, even in death, from the terrors that swept through the length and breadth of the Roman Empire. One of the Pagan emperors of the time, dying in torments, protested in his agony that he had not been guilty of persecution of the Christians. It is to be gathered from the writings of the age that all recognized the Constantinian revolution as a retribution from the God of the Christians, which it doubtless was.

This change was one which affected the entire civilized world. Rome wielded universal empire over

the civilized races of men, so that what affected Rome affected all the earth, and a change so radical, effected so violently, could not better be represented than by the symbolism of the sixth seal. It was a change that took considerable time to accomplish. It was not the work of one year. It occupied several years. When accomplished, it wrought a wonderful change in the position of the friends of Christ. From being proscribed and hated and hunted down and destroyed, they became the favourites of the authorities, upon whom were lavished the revenues and the favours formerly bestowed on the Pagan priesthood. Such a change naturally gave enlarged scope for their development and consolidation. This appears to have been one of the providential purposes served by the overthrow of the Pagan adversary, as we may gather from the symbolism immediately succeeding the sixth seal, viz.:

“And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads”.

Wind when used as a symbol signifies trouble in the form of war. This may be seen by reference to Jeremiah 4:11-13. “Angels holding the four winds” is an intimation that the events leading to war are subject to divine control. This control is in the hands of Christ (Matt. 28:18), to whom the angels are subject (1 Peter 3:22); and to the angels the present world hath been put in subjection (Heb. 2:5; Psalms 103:21; Daniel 10:20-21; 11:1-2). “The four winds” stand for all winds, or war from whatever quarter; consequently, in the picture before us we have human turbulence all over the earth in divine restraint, causing peace, that there might be a situation favourable for the performance of the work of sealing the servants of God. What is this? We have been caused to know this experimentally.

A seal is an implement for making an official mark of identification or authentication on prepared substance. Wherever the seal is impressed, it makes the same mark. If the substance with which it is brought in contact is not suitable, the seal does not make a mark, or makes a defective and therefore useless one. This is the literal, of which it is easy to see the spiritual counterpart in the operations of the gospel. Speaking of these, Paul says to the Ephesians concerning Christ, “in whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance” (Eph. 1:13). God gave the holy spirit to believers in confirmation of the gospel (Heb. 2:4; Mark 16:20). In this way, He attached His seal or sanction to the work. But there is a higher operation to the seal. The truth contained in the gospel given by the Holy Spirit in the apostles is the seal of God, which, when brought into contact with “honest and good hearts”, makes a mark or impression thereon which is God’s seal on the man, by which all the called or sealed are distinguished from other men, and because of which, God will claim them. The seal-mark is the state of mind caused by the knowledge of the gospel. This is the explanation of the seal being applied to the forehead in the symbol. The forehead is the symbol of the understanding; and to be sealed in the forehead is to have the truth impressed on the understanding by the preaching of the gospel. Such a work on a large scale requires a time of peace; for when war is in the air, men’s minds are too pre-occupied to give the requisite attention. This is the reason of the peace that followed the Constantinian revolution -- a peace divinely provided and preserved -- that the sealing work might be effectually done.

It was to be done by an angel who, in the common version, is described as “ascending from the east”. This ought, however, to read, “having ascended from the east”. The work was to be done in the west, among the Roman populations, but the agency performing it was from the east, even from Jerusalem, in which the work was begun (Luke 24:47). Consequently, an angel, “having ascended from the east”, was an appropriate symbol, the more so when we realize that in the east where the work began, the apostasy had prevailed to its near extinction.

The work was to result in an Israelitish development. John “heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.” The tribes are enumerated, and out of each tribe were twelve thousand. What is the enigmatical significance of this? We have already seen it in the consideration of Christ’s allusion to “those who say they are Jews and are not but do lie.” “Salvation is of the Jews” (Jno. 4:22). The hope of the gospel is the hope of Israel (Acts 28:20). It is based on promises made to the fathers of the house of Israel (Rom. 15:8), “unto which promise,” said Paul before Agrippa, “our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night hope to come.” The extension of this hope to the Gentiles was not an alteration of its character, but an alteration of those to whom it was extended. Every Gentile receiving and submitting to it became engrafted into “the good olive tree” of the stock of Abraham (Rom. 11:17). He ceased to be a Gentile and a stranger (Eph. 2:12), and became a fellow citizen in the commonwealth of Israel, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Eph. 10:19-20).

Consequently, the work of the gospel, where it is really done, must always have an Israelitish result. It turns Gentiles into Jews, making them partakers of the hope of Israel, and no longer “strangers from the covenants of promise” (Eph. 2:12). This is a very different thing from the popular work of “saving souls” so-called. It is a work of saving souls truly, but not immortal ones, and not by asking them to feel themselves great sinners and believe that Christ died for them, but by asking them to become enlightened in the covenants of promise confirmed by the Lord’s death, and summoning them to surrender to the claims and commandments of the truth -- claims appropriating a man’s entire individuality in the present evil world, and commandments affecting the shape of his every-day life and the state of his every-day affections. When the work is successfully done, the development of “children of Abraham” is the result. Now how better could this be enigmatically expressed than by representing the sealing as affecting the twelve tribes of Israel?

When the work was performed, John saw as the result of it, “a great multitude which no man could number of all nations, kindred and people and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.”

Here we require to pause a moment. Does this mean that the result of the work to be done in the Constantinian era was to be visible in the Constantinian era? Were the people sealed in their foreheads to be seen in a saved state as the immediate results of their sealing? Were the symbolic 144,000 to be manifested in their glorified completeness in the generation that saw the overthrow of Paganism and the removal of all impediments to the execution of the work of the gospel? The placing of this scene immediately after the sealing, makes it seem as if it were so: but it cannot be so for a variety of reasons. A consideration of the context is sufficient of itself to enable us to see this. John, contemplating them, was informed in answer to a preliminary question “Who are these who are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?” “These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple, and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more nor thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

It is evident from this that the sealed multitude, as John saw them, were the whole multitude of the redeemed in that state which is only introduced by the Lord’s coming. The 144,000, whether we understand the number literally or figuratively, is comprehensive of all the redeemed, as is evident from what we read of them in Rev. 14:1-5. Consequently, as seen in Rev. 7, they were seen in the state which they are finally to attain long after (even at the end), and not at the time of the sealing. Their

constituent members are several times seen in the succeeding portions of the Apocalypse, in the very tribulation from which in the seventh chapter they are said to have "come out." Thus in chapter 8:7, they are "made war against and overcome;" and in chapter 17:6, the Roman harlot is "drunk with the blood of the saints." Most conclusively, of all, we know that the dead in Christ are the DEAD in Christ, and that not until "the Lord himself descend from heaven with a shout "shall" those who are asleep rise first, "to ascend, with the living to the state in which John saw them (1 Thess. 4:13-17). Why then was the scene of the saints in glory introduced in connection with the process of the sealing to be accomplished in the Constantinian era? Doubtless, to show the real result contemplated in the sealing. The two things -- the work of the gospel and the end to which God purposes it shall lead must always be taken together. The one cannot be understood with out the other. No reasonable explanation can be given of the process through which those who are called in Christ are put in the present life apart from the life for which it is intended as a preparation. Paul well observes "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable." The spectacle of the sealed class in the victory over death to which their sealing leads, is a natural companion picture to the representation of the sealing work. The two things are divided in time, but connected in reason. Therefore, John saw them in connection, yet as separated scenes. Though John saw one after the other, it does not follow that the one comes immediately after the other in fact. He says, "After this, I beheld, and lo! a great multitude," etc. How long after is not indicated. Doubtless John would see the one scene next after the other; but as this was only to show that glory came after sealing and suffering, we must look to other sources for information as to the interval separating the one from the other. When Paul says, "If we suffer we shall also reign with him" (2 Tim. 2:12); and Jesus, "Blessed are ye that hunger now: ye shall be filled", and "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10) -- in these and many other such cases, it seems as if the two things were immediately sequential. They are sequential in their relation, but not in the succession of time, as we know. The reigning and the comforting are when Christ comes.

It remains to ask if the Constantinian era was characterized by the sealing work shadowed forth in the hieroglyph? The answer is in harmony with what would seem natural under the circumstances. What more natural than that the testimony of Christ should become more extensive and effectual under the protection and encouragement of the authorities than when the authorities were arrayed against it for its suppression? We have not much reliable information of what went on: but so much as we know from writers of the Constantinian era, is in favour of the conclusion hinted at. The people answering to the sealed were not to be found in the eastern section of the Roman empire. Of that part of the world, Dr. Thomas says (in Eureka, vol. ii., p. 328): "I have searched through Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret, the Greek ecclesiastical historians of the period of the sealing, but have been unable to find any footsteps of angel-sealers contending for the faith delivered on Pentecost. All in the east seem to have been occupied on one side or the other of Homoousianism, evincing thereby the absence of any divine sealing operation in their foreheads. The countries whose vernacular was the Greek tongue seemed to have been abandoned of the Deity to the darkness of superstition, which was rapidly intensified by the controversialists of Nice. I turn therefore from these to those parts of the empire where the Latin was the prevailing language of the people -- the Roman west in which John saw the sealing angel in operation."

It is in the African portion of the Roman west where the people in question are to be found. When I speak of Africa, you will of course understand that it is not the Africa of David Livingstone's travels that is meant, that is to say not that portion of Africa that has become so prominent in connection with his name. It is not the Africa of Zulus and missionaries and elephant hunts, but the Africa of Carthage and Rome -- the extreme northern part of Africa where it borders the Mediterranean Sea for hundreds of miles. If you look on the map, you will see the Mediterranean Sea is nearly a lake, with Europe on the north and Africa on the south. When you understand that the Roman Empire embraced all the countries bordering that lake and therefore a belt of northern Africa, you will understand what is meant when Africa is talked of in this connection. It was not a country of wild men and savage life, such as we

associate with the name of Africa, but a Country of civilization, embracing towns and villages and farms.

In the African portion, then, of the Roman empire, appeared in the early part of the fourth century (the time required by the symbol) a people apparently answering to the work of the angel-sealer. We know little of them except from the testimony of their enemies; but this little is illustrative of their character. The Dr. says they were an intensely anti-Catholic people. They denied the christianity of Catholics and would have no fellowship with them. They rejected Catholic baptism as null and void. They repudiated Catholic dogmas and contended for "the simplicity which is in Christ". They were uncompromisingly hostile to all things not according to the testimony of Jesus Christ. They declared to the Catholics that they were not Christians, and could not be saved as long as they continued members of Constantine's church. Ecclesiastical historians write of them as schismatics and heretics, but what they say as to their principles points to their identity with the community founded by the apostles. They were a numerous people extending, almost as numerous as the Catholics, to many towns and villages, and even provinces in northern Africa. They were known as Donatists, and though much connected with them is unsatisfactory and obscure, it is evident that this large community of people contained, in their bosom at least, the faithful and apostolic element of the professing Christian body of the age. They claimed their faith to be Apostolic as distinct from the Catholic, and declared that the true church had ceased to exist in all parts of the world where they were not. Their separation from the Catholic Church began upon a question of discipline. They maintained, at a time when it was proposed to elect a questionable character as a bishop, that the Church of Christ should consist of just and holy men, or at least of those who appeared to be such, and that men of manifested wickedness should be put away -- a principle distinctly apostolic in its character. It would be interesting to go into further particulars about them; but for the purpose of these lectures it is sufficient to take notice of the fact of the existence of such a people at the time of the world's history requiring it, under the symbolism of the chapter we are considering. We must pass on to the conclusion of the present lecture. We shall reach this in the consideration of the first five verses of chapter 8. These record the opening of

THE SEVENTH SEAL.

The things exhibited as the result of the opening of this seal are more numerous and complex than the events of any of the other seals. It would have been clumsy and confusing to have exhibited them simply as the elements of the seventh seal. They are therefore divided and sub-divided under several heads, so to speak, but all these separate heads forming part of the seventh seal. There is also a striking appropriateness in the introduction of a new set of symbols: they were to mark a new system and relations between God and the people of the Roman Empire. Up to this time, Europe had been the avowed adversary of Christ under the leadership of Paganism. But now, those peoples, organized under the leadership of Constantine, were professedly subject to him. The name of Christ and the law of obedience to him were adopted as the basis of the State religion. This was a great change. It was natural therefore that the change should be recognized. The Seals merely exhibited the experience of Pagan Rome during her conflict with Christianity; with a profession of Christianity, there was a more direct political responsibility to Christ, so to speak. It was therefore seemly that the prophetic seals should now be succeeded by other symbols, intimating a more direct causation of the evils that were to be inflicted on the European body politic. This we find in the seven trumpets.

The seventh seal having been opened, "there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." Peace in the ruling realm is here foreshadowed as the result of Constantine's triumph over Paganism. The half-hour is, of course, not a half-hour by the clock. It is a larger half-hour than even the day for a year principle of interpretation. The actual interval of peace was close on fifteen years. What sort of a day of twelve hours (for this was the duration of a day with the ancients) would be required to make nearly fifteen years "about half-an-hour"? Call fifteen years half-an-hour, and thirty years would be an

hour, and this multiplied by twelve gives us 360 years for a day. Three hundred and sixty days was the length of the ordinary ancient year, and as a day was prophetically used to represent one such ordinary year, we here have one such year treated as a day by the clock, but each day of it taken to represent a year. It is duplicated so to speak. A day of the clock is taken for a year, and then this year as consisting of 360 days is again taken to stand for 360 years. This is condensing time in harmony with the fitness of John's situation as a listener and beholder of the symbolic things seen in Patmos. For John to have witnessed a fifteen years or even a fifteen days silence would have been unnatural; but by drawing in the time twice, fifteen years were condensed into half-an-hour. Revelation Chapter 8

LECTURE 5: REVELATION CHAPTER 8 (VS. 7 TO END OF CHAPTER)

The seventh Seal, containing the seven trumpets -- ribald mirth at Apocalyptic technicalities -- the jest of ignorance -- the Apocalypse a great deep -- an enigma of exquisite construction -- The breaking of the seals -- change of figure under the seventh seal -- introduction of trumpets -- the significance of trumpet-blowing as a figure -- the reason of introducing the trumpets -- a change in the situation -- a higher national responsibility of Rome -- more direct judgments for her sins -- The preparation for the sounding of the trumpets -- Development of the power of the barbarians in preparation for the trumpet judgments -- Sounding of the FIRST TRUMPET -- the area of its operation -- the third of the earth -- the ravages of the Goths -- defeat of the Roman armies by Alaric -- subsequent devastation of the empire and the sack of Rome itself -- The SECOND TRUMPET -- a burning mountain in the sea -- the Vandals under Genseric -- their ravages on the ocean, and the maritime coasts of the empire -- The THIRD TRUMPET -- the star "wormwood" -- the locality of its fall and the embittering of the waters -- the verification in the career of Attila, the king of the Huns -- Disruption Of the Roman Empire -- Providential purpose served by this -- the FOURTH -- eclipse of the Roman Sun, moon, and stars, in a third of the system -- extinction of the Roman Empire in the west -- the woe trumpets.

IN the last lecture, we completed our survey of the events symbolized by the imagery of the seals, and in the consideration of the seventh seal we were introduced to the seven trumpets -- that is to say, we found the events of the seventh seal to consist of the sounding of seven trumpets by seven angels and the events ensuing upon those soundings. The seventh seal consists of the multitudinous details connected with the sounding of the seven trumpets. To-night it will be our duty to look at the things represented by the trumpets. The common run of people laugh when we talk of the seals and trumpets and vials, and the uncommon run of people too -- the respectable and the learned take part in the jest. Their mirth is entirely misplaced. Granted that these terms are so much jargon to the generality: their uncouthness is due not to the subject itself but to the general non-acquaintance of the people with them. They are the technicalities of the most advanced chapter in the Bible. The technicalities of any subject are barbarous to those who are not acquainted with them; but to make them the ground of scorn is an aggravation of ignorance. It reminds us of the words of Solomon: "Wisdom is too high for a fool". The Apocalypse is a great deep. There is a wisdom and beauty in it that impart an ecstasy of admiration when the mind opens to them. It not only imparts knowledge of the future, but it does so in a system of symbolism that is symmetrical in structure, complete in plan, distinct and vigorous in detail, and perfect in the appropriateness of its figures.

This is not obvious all at once. It is not obvious at all to those who are ignorant of the first principles of divine truth as revealed in the writings of Moses and the prophets, interpreted in harmony with the apostles, and even to those who know the truth, it is dark for a while; only after patient study of the Book of God for a long time, the excellence of the Apocalypse is appreciated. For a time, the matter of the Apocalypse seems wild, austere, high, hard, perhaps inscrutable -- something unpractical, something not useful. Such impressions are due to spiritual infancy. Men ought to condemn themselves for such feelings. They ought to be very modest. They ought to assume, even if not able to perceive, that the Apocalypse must be wise and useful because an emanation of the divine mind. We must not set ourselves up as the standard of judgment. We are all fools to start with, if not to finish with. The first step in true progress is to know that we are ignorant. There is hope when we realize this. "But seest thou a man wise in his own conceit?" Solomon says, "There is more hope of a fool than of him." When we start with a right idea of ourselves, we shall be "as little children" as Jesus prescribes. We shall not measure everything by our impressions and conceptions. We shall not set ourselves up as the standard. We shall recognize that there must be things as much higher than our conceptions as heaven is higher than our puny stature of five or six feet. Recognizing this, we shall be prepared to ask what they are, if we can know them, and receive them in humility, however hard of apprehension, instead of scornfully rejecting them because higher than ourselves. This is a long step in the direction of wisdom -- to know

that we are small and know nothing. Any other attitude is the attitude of fools, and it is written that God "taketh no pleasure in fools." God is wise, as manifest in our own mechanism and in all nature around. Because the Apocalypse is His, it bears the impression of His wisdom, which, however hard to receive at first, becomes a cause of joy and thanksgiving.

We have looked at the significance of the seals. We found a scroll introduced, sealed with seven seals, as illustrating the concealment in the mind of God of certain knowledge of future events, affecting Christ and his people. We found that Jesus was alone esteemed worthy to unloose those seals, or obtain access to that knowledge, the impartation of which by the Father to him qualified him to carry out the programme written in the symbolic scroll. We have seen him break seal after seal, or exhibit one after the other the events destined to occur in the various periods covered by the seals. We have come to the seventh, and find the figure changed. It is no longer a mere disclosing of what course affairs would take in the Roman Empire as affecting Christ and his brethren; it is a blowing of trumpets to summon events, so to speak, to bring judgments on the scene.

We all know what a trumpet blast is and for what it is used. It is mostly an instrument of military use -- to direct the movements of large bodies of men who could not otherwise be made aware of the will of the commander. Such an instrument, when used as a figure, must mean the urgent causing of unpeaceful events. The Apocalypse is not the first place in the Bible where the figure is used in this sense. Thus we read in Jeremiah 4:5: "Blow ye the trumpet in the land; cry, gather together, and say, Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the defenced cities." Again (Hos. 8:1), "Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord, because they have transgressed my covenant". Again (Joel 2:1), "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain;" and again (Isa. 27:13), "The great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come who were ready to perish in the land of Assyria."

Doubtless these allusions to the blowing of the trumpet originated in the use of trumpets in the convoking of the assembly of Israel in the wilderness, as they came out of the land of Egypt, in the monthly blowing of trumpets at the new moons, as enjoined. Still they exemplify a figurative use which finds its boldest illustration in the seven trumpets blown by the seven angels of the seventh seal.

But what was there calling for a different style of symbolism from the seals? The contemplation of the events of the sixth seal will supply the answer to this question. There was an entire change in the situation. Up to that time, Paganism was on the throne of the world, and the Roman Empire an empire of idolatry in consequence. Now concerning nations in that position, it is written that God had suffered them to walk in their own ways (Acts 14:16) on the principle that to whom little is given, little is required, and that the ground of condemnation is divine relation and responsibility (Amos 3:2). Nations, like men, though in honour, if they have no understanding are as the beasts that perish (Psa. 49:20). This was the relation of the Roman polity to the divine law under the Pagan Caesars. Rome was the political incorporation of the ignorance that is natural to man in relation to all divine things. But there was a change when Constantine came to the throne, and when the State was organically allied with the profession of the name of Christ. The friends of Christ for a time found themselves under the shadow of the throne, the Scriptures were accepted as the law of the State: a new order of things arose with the name of God written upon it, so far as professed subjection was concerned.

It was therefore natural that with such a change in the constitution of things in the world, there should be a change in the symbolism expressive of its divine relations. It was appropriate, too, that the new symbolism should be representative of a higher degree of responsibility than attached to Pagan Rome. The trumpets certainly were so. They intimated a direct bringing or causing judgments on the Roman body politic in its new relation, on account of its wrong doings against Christ, instead of merely an

unfolding, by seal-breaking, of things that were to come.

The use of the trumpets is related to judgment. Of this, we have already looked at some illustrations from the prophets. It finds a rudimentary type in the destruction of Jericho. In fact the scheme of the Apocalypse would seem to find a foreshadowing in the mode adopted to bring that destruction about. The Israelites were to march round it seven days, the priests blowing trumpets of rams' horns as they marched. On the seventh day they were to march round the city seven times, after which the city should fall into their hands. A certain analogy will be perceived between this and the seven seals, the last of which contains the seven trumpets, the last of which again contains the seven vials, and the last of these the seven thunders, as the result of all of which, Babylon falls, and the world comes into the hands of Christ and his brethren. The Bible abounds with beautiful analogies, and this seems to be one of them.

We are introduced to the sounding of the trumpets in verse 7, chapter 8. Verse 6 informs us that the angels who received the seven trumpets on the opening of the seventh seal, "prepared themselves to sound." A careless reading would pass this over: but by the hand of Dr. Thomas, God has taught us to read the Apocalypse with carefulness instead of carelessness. There is nothing superfluous in the wording -- nothing put in to fill up. There is a meaning to everything. The preparation to sound has a meaning. There was in point of fact a period of providential preparation for the judgment events of the trumpets. Each of the trumpets brought invaders upon some part of the Roman Empire -- so exactly appropriate was the use of the trumpet to this part of Roman history -- the trumpet summoning armies to move. There was a preparation for these invasions -- an opening of the way to the invaders. These invaders in the first instance were mostly the barbarians who occupied the northern parts of Europe. The way had to be paved for their incursions, and for their ultimate triumph over the military discipline of Rome.

This occurred during the reign of Jovian, successor to Julian, who came first after Constantine. The Roman Empire was confined to the south of the river Danube. The territory to the north of that river was as little known to the Romans then as Central Africa is to us. The most that was known was that it was occupied by fierce and warlike tribes, whose barbarism and want of discipline, however, rendered them somewhat powerless. From these causes, they were for centuries easily kept at bay. But a change came when the time arrived to prepare for the judicial trumpets. This change occurred in its most marked form during the reign of Jovian, just before the commencement of the trumpets -- a reign that we must consider as the preparation period of verse 6. It originated in a struggle that took place between two of the barbarian races -- the Goths and the Huns. In this struggle, the Huns obtained the advantage; and the Goths being hard pressed, asked permission of the Roman generals to cross to the southern side of the Danube, to escape from the molestations of their successful enemies. The Roman generals consented, and the Gothic nation came over, and settled in Illyricum -- a district corresponding to modern Bosnia and Herzegovina, of which the world has recently heard so much. This was the beginning of the trumpet visitations, or rather the preparation for them. The Romans no longer had the Danube as a barrier between them and the barbarians. The barbarians were in their midst so to speak. The Goths grew numerous and formidable. To avert the danger of their presence, the Romans decided to take them into their pay as military auxiliaries. They gave them arms and money, and taught them the art of war, and used them as an addition to the Roman army. The measure, which was intended to make them harmless and allies, had the opposite effect. It converted them into a formidable foe. The Goths gradually woke to a sense of their power, and as the hour was approaching for the blast of the first trumpet, the Goths were getting into position for the work they had to do, in obedience to its summons.

THE FIRST TRUMPET.

"The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up." Just realize the

scene. After a getting-ready pause, a clarion blast breaks upon the stillness of the air: when the notes die away, there is a descent of hail, and you observe the forked lightning gleam and hiss here and there in its midst, and on the ground you see streamlets of blood, and scorched vegetation. This is a striking piece of symbolism. Let us glance at the events symbolized.

You will observe that the hail and fire were said to be “cast upon the earth”. That this was the Roman jurisdiction, we have already seen under the seals. There is nothing strange in limiting the earth to the Roman Empire. It was the seat of civilization, outside of which, all was social waste and desert. It was the arena upon which the Spirit of God was developing its work by the gospel. Therefore, it was natural to speak of it as the earth or habitable in contrast with the regions and countries outside of it, from which came the elements of the judgments brought on Rome by the trumpets.

You will observe, however, that only “a third part of the earth” was affected by the trumpet. This ought to read “the third”, which gives the key to what is puzzling at first. In the period to which it refers, the three sons of Constantine divided the Roman world among them -- the eastern, the western, and the central. Thus the Roman Empire was in three parts. The central third was THE third -- the Roman third peculiarly, because comprising the seat of government. Upon this, then, our attention is fixed as the part of the empire to be affected by the hail and the fire. What came as a matter of fact? In answer to this, we look at the barbarians admitted to the south of the Danube. There were the Goths, escaping from the Huns. But the Huns and the Goths became friendly, and the Huns wanted to emigrate southwards as well. They applied for the permission of the Romans. The Romans refused, but the Huns came without their consent, and added a new swarm of very dangerous neighbours to those already too near them. The Goths, nurtured by the Romans, and perceiving the growing weakness of their masters, became exacting in their demands. They wanted more pay and privileges than the Emperor could consent to, and his refusal was the letting loose of the judgment-events of the first trumpet. War broke out between the Romans and the Goths. A series of battles were fought, in which the Romans were worsted, and the Emperor himself finally slain. The result was the establishment of Gothic independence under a chief, who became their king -- Alaric -- a barbarian of fierce nature and considerable military talents. By and by, this Alaric felt his strength, and resolved, without the delays and circumlocutions of diplomacy, to lay the greatness of Rome in the dust. He assembled a large army of disciplined barbarians, and marched for the northern entrance of Italy. Prior to passing into Italy itself, he went westward and ravaged the beautiful provinces owing allegiance to Rome in that direction. The hail and the fire did their work effectually. The banks of the Rhine, which were crowned with elegant houses and well-cultivated farms, were laid waste. Suddenly, without warning to the unsuspecting inhabitants, the scene of peace and plenty was changed into a desert, and wide prosperous districts in an instant became smoking solitudes. Seventeen provinces of Gaul were subjected to this devastation. In two years, the horde of barbarians, increasing in violence by new accessions, swept over and desolated the whole of the country lying between the Alps, the ocean, and the Pyrenees. They drove the inhabitants before them in frightened crowds everywhere--that is, such as could escape their ruthless swords, carrying with them as much as they could rescue from the wreck of their houses and churches.

In A.D. 408, Alaric turned his march towards Rome itself. He passed the Alps and the Po, and proceeding along the eastern seacoast of Italy, made an easy prey of many cities, which he gave over to the pillage of his soldiers. Arrived before Rome, he commenced siege operations against a city which had been the unquestionable mistress of the world for ages, and had never been dishonoured by the presence of a foreign enemy. The experience of Jerusalem at the hands of Rome four centuries previous was now returned upon Rome's own head. Famine prevailed in the city: hunger dissolved the restraints of law and order. They murdered one another and devoured the bodies of their victims. Even mothers ate their slaughtered infants. Many thousands of the inhabitants expired in the streets and in their own houses for want of food, and the stench arising from their unburied bodies revived the scenes of Jerusalem.

At length, Alaric accepted an enormous sum of money to retire; but it was only for a short time. The negotiations for peace fell through, and Alaric returned, and another siege followed with increasing horrors, and a third, in the next year. In the third siege the Goths obtained admission, and the city was given up to pillage. In six days, the Goths marched southward and carried fire and sword into the southern provinces of Italy. While so engaged, Alaric died, and the "fire and hail, mingled with blood" had expended themselves, to the destruction of the green grass and trees -- the respectable population -- of the central third of the Roman earth.

THE SECOND TRUMPET.

After this, there was an interval of peace. In twenty years, the time came for the second trumpet to sound. This was to affect the sea. "A great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures that were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed." We have already had to notice the mixing of the literal and symbolic as a characteristic of the scenes of the Apocalypse. The sea used symbolically stands for the populations of the earth (Rev. 17:15): but here, the sea is used geographically as indicative of the section of the Roman Empire next to be affected, viz., the maritime parts all along the coasts of the Mediterranean. Further on, the Euphrates is used symbolically of the power occupying Euphratean territory, and yet its employment is a literal indication of the territory where the power is to be found. In this there is mixture without confusion. The public are accustomed to it in the political cartoons of the day. Mr. Gladstone digging a grave for religious texts within sight of the Houses of Parliament in the background, is a picture misunderstood by none, though blending the literal and symbolic in a very marked manner.

The symbolic mountain of the second trumpet was to be cast into the literal sea. The "sea" of the Roman Empire is the Mediterranean Sea. What mountain was cast upon this sea with the destructive effects exhibited in the symbolism? The next page in the history of Roman troubles supplies the answer. It brings before us the Vandal nation which, under the first trumpet, had settled in Spain. This was the mountain as the sequel will show. It is no uncommon thing in the prophetic Scriptures to employ a mountain in this political sense. Babylon is styled "a destroying mountain" (Jer. 51:25): the kingdom of God a great mountain filling the whole earth (Dan. 2:35-44). The Vandal mountain was thrown upon the Roman sea in this way. In Spain, where the Vandals were established, jealousy broke out between two of the leading generals of the Roman army. This led to war between the two sections of the army owning their respective leadership. In the conflict that ensued, one of them enlisted the aid of the Vandals, who, becoming thus aware of the weakness of Rome, formed the purpose of subverting the Roman power in Africa. In execution of this purpose, the Vandals crossed the Straits of Gibraltar. The breadth across is only fifteen miles. Across this narrow neck of sea, Genseric, the Vandal leader, led his people, and proceeded with wonderful rapidity and vigour to overthrow Roman power all along the Mediterranean margin of Northern Africa. His career was a most successful one and mostly maritime. He formed a large navy, with which he scoured the coasts and islands of the entire Mediterranean, almost without opposition. His devastations were widespread and grievous. He carried horses and horse-soldiers in his ships, and wherever his ships came to anchor, these were landed, and carried fire and sword in all directions. Tidings of these grievous visitations reaching Rome, Rome attempted to stop them by fitting out a rival fleet, and sending it to Carthage to attack Genseric's fleet, which lay there on a certain occasion. Genseric heard of the approach of the Roman fleet, comprising hundreds of ships. He got ready fire ships, which were let loose among the Roman ships on their arrival. The Roman fleet caught fire and was destroyed amid scenes of terrible confusion, aggravated by the attacks of the Vandals. The Romans got together a second fleet, but Genseric anticipated their movements by sailing to Rome, and subjecting it to calamities of a like nature with those inflicted by Alaric. All these evils affected the Roman third of the empire. They involved the sweeping of all Roman ships from the sea and the destruction of

all Roman opposition to the Vandals, within the maritime area of the Vandal triumph. Such events could not better be symbolized than by the precipitation of a burning mountain into the sea, to the destruction of the ships and souls. They occupied a period of twenty years, and bring us to the middle of the fifth century, and the sounding of

THE THIRD TRUMPET.

When the third angel sounded, "there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of waters. And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters because they were made bitter." Ordinarily, a star falling from heaven means the fall of an eminent personage from power: but that cannot be the only meaning in this case, because of the effects following the fall. It fell upon a region described as "the third part of the rivers and fountains of waters", with the result of inflicting great and fatal bitterness on the populations of the country so described. This does not usually follow as the result of a fall from power. Therefore, it is the military motions of a political personage, who inflicts great suffering before disappearing from view, that are exhibited to us -- not only a star but a great star, a blazing meteoric body -- not fixed in the regular heavens, but having a wandering and short-lived place in the heavens -- a powerful military leader of brilliant but brief career. These features exactly answer to the case of the next chapter in Roman history: when the woes of the second trumpet had subsided, Attila, the king of the Huns, established in the Illyrian third of the Roman Empire, with the recognition of both the eastern and western sections of the empire, became a terrible scourge to the Roman or western third. His devastations were principally inflicted on the Alpine regions of Northern Italy, to which the description "the rivers and fountains of waters" is peculiarly applicable. As a characteristic description, it could not apply to any other region of the Roman Empire. The earth is cut up in that region as it is nowhere else with multitudinous rivers and streams, forming a complicated network covering the land. These are fed by the inexhaustible supplies descending from the eternal snows and glaciers of the Alpine mountain range. On these "the rivers and fountains of waters" in the Roman Empire, Attila's hand descended heavily. It is needless to recount particulars. Repeat the history of Alaric, and you have substantially the story of Attila. He made war on the Roman Empire on a formidable scale and with terrible effect. Success everywhere attended the march of his barbarian hordes, and desolation marked their track. Several provinces were depopulated by his armies. The only exception was on the eastern frontiers of France, where the Roman troops and their Gothic allies inflicted a check in the obstinate and bloody battle of Chalons. It was merely a check, however. It diverted the course of Attila's victories, but did not put a stop to them. It was necessary perhaps to give them the right direction. It sent him into Italy, where his work particularly lay. Here his power was irresistible. Wherever he went, according to an historian, "all was flight, depopulation, slaughter, slavery and despair."

Figuratively, he made the waters of public and private life bitter everywhere, with fatal effect to the drinkers. Wormwood was an appropriate name for the agent of such effects. But there seems a geographical reason for this name in addition. Wormwood (*Apsinthos*) is the name of a river in the Illyrian region ruled by Attila. This river would therefore be as characteristic of Illyria and the Illyrian ruler as the Nile is of Egypt or the Thames of England. It is a happy combination which in the same name gives us the local origin of "the great star" and the effect which his movements would produce on the western Roman third. When his work was done, his power and family disappeared. He was a great star while on the scene, but only a wandering star -- not a fixed luminary in the political heavens -- a meteor, which rushed and blazed with destructive brightness, and then disappeared in the midst of the destruction he caused.

Though, the destructive "great star" of the third trumpet thus twinkled out, the effects of its course were

not of this meteoric character. The Roman Empire was going to pieces under these repeated blows. The successive inroads of the Goths and Vandals, Huns, etc., were disintegrating the empire of the Roman iron, and introducing the clay of the image feet. And they were laying the basis of the modern system of nations. In this respect, they fulfilled an important purpose in the plan of Providence. It was not the purpose of God that there should be another universal empire. The triumph of a succession of barbarian leaders, besides inflicting merited retribution on the destroyers of His word and His people, prevented the continuance of power at one centre. It broke up the vast fabric of human power erected by Augustus, and scattered the energies of the human race over a wide area, with the result of forming numerous centres of industry and refinement in the various capitals resulting from the subdivision of power. Thus was more effectively promoted that work of subduing and replenishing the earth as a necessary preparation for the kingdom of Christ. If we contrast the world of that age with the world of this, we see what has been done. The countries of Europe were at that time largely covered with forest and uninhabitable; now, they are ripe and ready for transfer to that government which is to break in pieces all human governments. It is another among many illustrations of the diversity of purposes served by one and the same divine instrumentality.

The 12th verse of chapter eight introduces us to what every reader of the Apocalypse has felt to be the obscure symbolism of

THE FOURTH TRUMPET.

“And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.” The meaning of this apparently impenetrable enigma is to be found in a contemplation of the events succeeding to those of the third trumpet. Those events involved the eclipse of the Roman sun, moon, and stars, in a third part of them: that is to say, a third part of the Roman Empire -- the western third -- was extinguished, and its place occupied by the kingdom of the Goths.

The events of the first, second, and third trumpets, as already remarked, had reduced the power of Rome to the last extremity -- the semblance of empire, but with none of the vigour that had for centuries controlled the world. There was still an emperor in Rome, but the barbarians whom the first three trumpets had called into the empire were the virtual masters of the State, and soon became its nominal and actual masters. The Emperor at this period was in fact a nominee of the barbarians. He was the son of one of Attila's ministers -- Orestes, the foreign secretary, and placed on the throne by that official. The name of this shadow of an emperor -- this last of the emperors -- was Romulus Augustulus. He was a weak man, and a mere tool in the hands of the barbarians, who finally disposed of him in this way. The barbarians demanded that the third part of the revenue of the country should be divided amongst them. To this, Romulus Augustulus and Orestes his father, would not consent, whereupon the barbarians revolted under the leadership of one of themselves, named Odoacer, in the war ensuing upon which, Romulus was overthrown. Romulus was then compelled by Odoacer to send his resignation to the Roman Emperor of the Eastern third (Zeno, reigning at Constantinople); and at the same time, to make request that “the throne of universal empire should be transferred from Rome to Constantinople”, and that Odoacer should be appointed the representative of the Eastern Emperor in the west. This resignation and petition were accepted, and for fourteen years Odoacer, king of the Goths, reigned in Rome as the representative of the Eastern Roman Emperor.

But even this lingering light of Roman imperialism in the west was to be extinguished as the symbols required. Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, made his appearance from the north, and in a succession of battles, overthrew the power of Odoacer, on whose assassination, A.D. 493, Theodoric set up the

kingdom of the Goths in total independence of the Eastern Emperor. The Roman Empire then ceased to exist in the western third. The result was a state of things exactly answering to the symbols. The Roman sun, moon, and stars were shining in so far as the Roman Empire continued to exist in other parts; but they were under eclipse in the western third, which, historically considered, was the principal third, and therefore these bodies, considered as political symbols of the system, shone not for a third part of the Roman day and night. Plainly speaking, the fourth trumpet foreshadowed the extinction of the Roman Empire in the west, in a manner intelligible enough when it is recognized that a political system is considered as the figurative counterpart of the natural universe of sun, moon, and stars. The Roman system in the third part was brought under total eclipse by the events following on those of the third trumpet, which is the key to the otherwise dark symbols of the fourth.

The first four trumpets having accomplished their work in the west, attention was drawn to the remaining three, in words of foreboding which were amply justified by the terrible events that harassed and afflicted Europe for many centuries after the darkening of the third part of the Roman day and night. John “beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound”. The meaning of this it will be our duty to consider in the next lecture. **LECTURE 4:**

LECTURE 6: REVELATION CHAPTERS 9 AND 10

The woe trumpets -- the vastness of the changes involved -- the fifth trumpet, or first woe -- the opening of the abyss -- the issue of the locust-cloud -- its relation to the appearance of Mahomet -- his prophetic pretensions and military measures -- over-running of European countries by his Saracenic hordes -- their special animosity toward the Catholic idolaters -- the scorpions they used in war -- their mission to torment but not to kill for five months twice told -- the chronology of their mission -- Dr. Thomas's historical paraphrase of the fifth trumpet -- The sixth trumpet, or second woe -- the four angels -- their Euphratean boundary -- The Turkish inroads in four great movements -- the length of time appointed -- an hour, a day, a month, and a year, or 391 years -- the secondary application of that period -- the enormous time occupied by the fifth and sixth as compared with the preceding trumpets -- the description of the horsemen -- their enormous number -- The fire, smoke, and brimstone surrounding them -- the introduction of gunpowder by the Turks -- the desolations of the East under Turkish rule -- the termination of these by the advent of the mighty rainbowed angel of chapter 10:1 -- The seventh trumpet, or third woe, not so protracted as the other two -- the seven thunders -- why John was not allowed to record them -- the open book and the eating thereof -- the interesting work to be done by the saints at the coming of Christ.

IT will be recollected that the consideration of the eighth chapter of Revelation on Thursday evening last, brought under our review those terrible visitations upon the western Roman habitable, which are associated with the names of Goths and Huns, Vandals and Visigoths and Ostrogoths, and so on. At the close of that series of judgments (represented by the first four trumpets, and culminating in the extinction of the Roman Empire in the west), we enter upon another phase of events -- a more terrible phase -- one affecting the eastern section of the empire more particularly, though in truth bearing vitally on all parts of the civilized world. It is a phase so well marked in history as to constitute an epoch, and the starting point of a new order of things in many countries. It was to Europe in a measure what the arrival of Israel under Joshua was to the Canaanites. The Roman world was about to be visited by a scourge far transcending the inroads of the northern barbarians, who at least professed the same religion and assimilated with the populations of the countries they overthrew. Because of the appalling nature of this visitation, attention was called in a special manner to the trumpets heralding its approach: "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound."

John hears the first of these three trumpets. Let us imagine ourselves by his side. We hear the loud clarion blast. Then there is a pause. We wait to see the effect. First a star shoots from its place in the sky, and falls upon the earth. Having landed there, it appears as a man, and receives a key with which the star-man proceeds to a certain part of the earth styled the bottomless pit, or, more properly speaking, the abyss. This he opens, and thereupon there issues from the abyss so opened, columns of dense smoke, out of which come locust clouds of horse-like form, having bearded riders wearing yellow crowns, and marshalled in military array -- cavalry ready for the charge. John's description is as follows:-- "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they, should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads: And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair

as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.”

Let us consider this striking symbolism seriatim. First the star that fell from heaven. This is self-evidently a personage or power: for the star is given a key. You could not give a key to a literal star. A key being representative of opening power, the star to whom the power was given must be the man or organization that would have power to perform the opening. You recollect the seven stars are declared to represent seven angelisms (or men sent) in the midst of seven churches, or organizations of men. These were stationary stars in the hand of Christ, because the spiritually-endowed men sent and sustained by him, peacefully ruled in the midst of the ecclesias. But here is a star descending to the earth, symbolizing a very different function. Such a star under the third trumpet symbolized the destructive descent of Attila from the country where he ruled upon the Roman earth, as will be recollected. What is meant by the key-using star of the fourth trumpet? We discover the answer in the contemplation of what he did. He opened a pit -- not a bottomless pit, for there could not be such a thing as a pit without a bottom -- but an abyss -- a deep place of the earth, whence there emerged upon the countries of the Roman habitable swarms of yellow-crowned or turbaned cavalry. This at once fixes our attention upon the Arabian Peninsula, where at this very time Mahomet appeared, and whence the Saracenic hordes poured forth under his inspiration to offer the affrighted nations of Europe the Koran or the sword.

That this region should be termed the abyss is not inappropriate in view of the topographical configuration of the Holy Land, which is its door of egress in the direction of Europe. You will perceive by a glance at the map that the Holy Land, at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, lies between Europe and the Arabian Peninsula. Now there is a peculiarity about that part of the surface of the earth which is not to be met with anywhere else. You may have seen it noticed in the recent lecture by Canon Tristram, an extract from which appeared in *The Christadelphian* a month or two ago. The country gradually slopes on the east and north towards the basin of the Dead Sea, with the result of forming a huge depression, which may well be described as an abyss. The Jordan descends along the centre course of its bed from its source in the Lebanon, until it empties itself in the waters of the Dead Sea; and the hill country after leaving Jerusalem to the eastward goes down quite precipitously in the same direction. The depth of the geographical hollow thus formed may be estimated from the fact that the water of the Dead Sea is 1,300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. The mountains enclose it on the eastern side, and complete a depression which presents the idea of an immense valley without an exit; for the mountains at the lower end of the Dead Sea close it on the south. In this valley -- the valley of the Jordan -- the climate is of a tropical heat in certain parts. In fact, all the climates are to be found in it -- from the temperate atmosphere of the upper regions to the oppressive heat of the lower valleys. The vegetation gradually changes as the land rises from one point to the other corresponding with the climatic conditions. The products of the whole earth and every order of landscape beauty are to be found gathered into this remarkable depression or abyss.

This abyss was the door through which the Mahometan myriads passed from Arabia to Europe. Consequently, it was appropriate to take it as representing the whole region to which they belonged, of which it formed a part. We have simply to ask if the history of the case corresponds with the symbolical opening of the abyss which John witnessed, and the issue of locust clouds which ensued. The answer of history is very clear and distinct.

The preparation of the abyss for the opening was going on during the closing events of the fourth trumpet. A preparation was needed, for prior to this, the Arabian peninsula was divided up into a large

number of petty principalities whose separateness and independence were incompatible with the unity necessary to form the Arabians into a moving cloud of locusts. It was needful to fuse them into one power. This was done by the wars that ensued among them upon the publication of Mahomet's pretensions. These pretensions were at first very obscure and feebly put forth. A dreaming visionary -- (unlike the prophets of God in every particular) -- whose writings in the so-called Koran are the manifest effusions of a weak, egotistic and fanatical mind, biassed with a desire to imitate the Scriptures whose characters he frequently refers to and endorses -- at last gave himself out as a prophet having a divine mission. His pretence was correct in a certain sense. Though by no means sent from God as the prophets of Israel were, he had a work to do and a place in the programme. He was to organize a terrible scourge for the Papal idolaters of Europe. This was the work providentially assigned to him. He was a servant of God as Nebuchadnezzar was -- a servant without knowing or being known of God. His special work probably required his special idiosyncrasy. As a result of his craze, he secreted himself for a time in a cave and pretended to receive divine revelations. These revelations are published in his books. They are terrible trash, as anybody taking the trouble to read the Koran will find. He laboured for three years, and by the end of that time had made fourteen converts, family relatives. At last, he succeeded in attracting around him quite a number of adherents.

The attempt of their townsman (at Mecca) to put them down, at first resulting in the flight of Mahomet to Medina, led to strife, in which Mahomet and his friends made free and successful use of the sword. Success enlarged their ideas, and led to demands of allegiance on the surrounding tribes. The resisted demands led to further war, and war working favourably on his side, Mahomet attained a position of power and importance, until finally the whole of the Arabian nation were subdued to his pretensions and lent themselves to his ideas.

During these events, we contemplate the abyss in a state of preparation for the emission of the locusts. Without it, no amount of opening of the abyss would have sufficed for the providential work to be performed. It wanted the fire and the smoke: and these were generated by the internal dissensions of the Arabians, which elevated Mahomet from the position of a private member of a tribe to a leader of a nation, and prepared the whole Arabian people for that wonderful onslaught on the Roman Empire, which is renowned in history as the wars of the Saracens.

The pit, being ready for opening, the occasion for the use of the key duly arose. The Roman emperor Heraclius, on his way from Persia homewards, having heard of the Arabian turmoils and the upshot of them in the elevation of Mahomet, sent to salute Mahomet, as one sovereign does another. Mahomet, who considered the Catholics idolaters, sent back a message, demanding Heraclius to give up the worship of idols and become a worshipper of the true God. Mahomet's messengers, by whom this message was sent, were assassinated -- whether by Heraclius's orders or against his will is not known. The effect on Mahomet was the same as if it had been a deliberate act. He resolved on the invasion of the Roman Empire. With this object, he set his army in motion towards Palestine, at that time subject to Rome, and forming the political abyss (symbolized by the geographical) out of which the locusts were to issue.

Why were the armies of Mahomet symbolized by locusts? This seems to be answered by two facts: first, Arabia is the native country of locusts; armies issuing from which, are fitly represented in symbol as clouds of locusts: secondly, the Hebrew word for locust is the same as that for Arab, as regards its radical elements, locust being *arbeh*, and arab, *arbi*. It is a third fact that in some parts of Arabian literature, the locust is introduced as the heraldic symbol of the Saracens. It is a fourth fact -- (not very strong to be sure, but pointing in the same direction) -- that Mahometans say that in the course of his revelations, locusts dropped into the hands of Mahomet, bearing an inscription on their wings, describing them as the army of the Great God.

Palestine, in its eastern borders, fell before the sword of Mahomet, and he died while contemplating further military measures. His death, however, instead of stopping, accelerated the opening of the abyss. His relative, Abu Beker, took the command as his successor, and entered with great ardour on the work that had been begun by Mahomet. His army was principally composed of cavalry: cavalry was not merely an arm of his force, as in the case of the Romans, but cavalry was the army. The result was to give his movements a celerity that baffled Roman calculations. An immense body of horse flew from point to point, and carried all before them like a cloud of locusts.

Their devastations, however, were not general and indiscriminate, but confined to certain objects. You will observe in verse 4, "It was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads". It is interesting to note the feature in the Mahometan enterprise corresponding to this command. The command was a providential command, of course: that is, a commission providentially assigned and not a command oral and express according to the ordinary meaning of the term. We learn this sense of the word "command" when God employs it, from even the un-symbolical part of the Scriptures, such as where God said to Elijah when instructing him to move to Zarephath: "I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee" -- a widow woman who knew nothing about the matter when Elijah arrived (see Ways of Providence).

The command of God to the Mahometan locusts, to confine their depredations within a certain channel, though not direct and express, was well marked in the form it took in the natural course. An address issued to the Saracen troops after Mahomet's death, by Abu Beker, Mahomet's successor, intimating his purpose to prosecute the war against the Romans, whom he styled the infidel, contained the following passage: "Let not your victory be stained with the blood of women or children. Destroy no palm trees nor burn any fields of corn; cut down no fruit trees, nor do any mischief to cattle You will find another sort of people that belong to the synagogue of Satan, who have shaven crowns: be sure you cleave their skulls and give them no quarter till they either turn Mahomedans or pay tribute." This was the historic illustration of the command recorded centuries before in the pages of the Apocalypse, of which, of course, Abu Beker was ignorant. The enmity of the Mahometan squadrons was officially directed against the supporters of Roman Catholicism.

"Their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man." So we read in verse 5. In verse 3, there is an earlier allusion to the same point. "Unto them was given power as the scorpions of the earth have power." Scorpions strike with their stings with tormenting and sometimes with fatal effects; but the scorpion power in this case was not to be unto death (verse 5). "To them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months." What was the scorpion power possessed by the Saracens? We find an answer in the fact that they employed in their military operations formidable missiles which they styled scorpions. These missiles were of a chemical mixture, which was the forerunner of gunpowder. An Arab writer thus speaks of them in 1249: "The scorpions surrounded and ignited by nitrated powder, glide along like serpents with a humming noise, and when exploded, they blaze brightly and burn. Now, to behold the matter expelled was as a cloud extended through the air, which gave forth a dreadful crash like thunder, vomiting fire on every side and breaking down, burning, and reducing all things to ashes." Armed with this power, known as Saracen fire and afterwards as Greek fire, because finally adopted by the Greeks, the Saracens had power to injure with scorpion-power; but their mission did not extend beyond the infliction of torment. They were not to kill the eastern Roman empire in the way the western had been killed by the Goths. They were only to injure. The men of the eastern or Greek third of the Roman empire were to retain political life in the midst of their torment, but against the will of the majority; the bulk of the people were desirous for the sake of peace to submit to political death and accept the Saracen yoke. But death fled from them: because

it was not in the divine purpose that the locusts should kill in the symbolic sense of the term, but only injure five months twice over (see verses 5 and 10). Why not ten months instead of twice five? Because locusts only appear five months in the year; and it would not have been in harmony with the natural history of the symbol to express it in any other way. But they could not be literal months as applied to the events of the symbol. Ten months are not one year, and the afflicting career of the Saracens in European countries extended over 300 years. The explanation is found in the fact with which all present are more or less acquainted, that literal days in symbolic use stand for years.

To the Saracens, then, was assigned the mission of harassing and afflicting the countries of the Catholic apostasy for the long period of three centuries, but not to prevail to the extinction of its political independence. Let anyone read the history of the Saracens from the appearance of aggressive Mahometanism in A.D. 632, and he will recognize the features of this hieroglyph in their historical exemplification.

“They had a king over them.” This is not the star of verse 1, which opened the pit, but is rather to be taken as the official or head under which the Saracenic locusts were organized after their issue from the pit. The historic parallel is found in the Caliphs of the Mahometan system. The Caliph was styled the “Commander of the Faithful.” In the Papal system, you have the Pope: in the Mahometan, the Caliph. The Caliph was a destroyer: this was his providential function: his name is expressed in Greek and Hebrew (see verse 11) denoting that his destroying operations were principally to bear on the Hebrew and Greek areas of the Roman Empire, which historically was the case.

The following paraphrase by Dr. Thomas of the first twelve verses of the chapter, presents the interpretation in a striking and obvious form:

1. “And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw one who had acquired power, and become a king, precipitate the forces of his kingdom upon the territory of the Eastern Roman empire. And to this king was yielded the power of Arabia. 2. And he removed the barriers by which Arabia was shut up from the world without, and a fiery host issued forth, and, by reason of the smoking fierceness of their wrath, subverted the imperial Byzantine authority, and changed the political aerial constitution of the Catholic countries they overran.

3. “The wrathful hosts that invaded the eastern Roman empire were Arabians like locusts for multitude; and they had power fatal as the power of scorpions. 4. And it was commanded them by one, styled the Commander of the Faithful, that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only those men who have not the truth of the Deity in their understandings. 5. And to the Arabians it was given that they should not extinguish the sovereignty of these men, but that they should be tormented in war during one hundred and fifty years, with a scorpion-like torment.

6. “And in those days shall these ignorant professors of Christianity seek political extinction, and shall not find it; and shall earnestly desire to be a conquered people, and political death by conquest shall flee from them.

7. “And the resemblances of these Arabians when embattled, exhibit them as cavalry prepared for war; and on their heads they wore yellow turbans; and their faces were bearded, and they had long flowing hair like the tresses of women; and their spirit was ferocious as lions. 9. And they had on polished steel cuirasses; and the sound of the right and left wings of their armies was of multitudes of cavalry rushing into battle. 10. And they trailed in their rear, or tails of their hosts, scorpion artillery for destruction; and their power to hurt the rest of men westward was also one hundred and fifty years.

11. "And they had over them a king styled a Caliph, the messenger of destruction among the subjects of the eastern Roman empire, or 'the abyss'. In the land of the Hebrew, he earned the name Abaddon, or Destroyer: and in the land of the Greek, that of Apollyon, which signifies the same.

12. "One woe, that of the fifth trumpet, is passed away after three hundred years; and, behold, there come two woes more before the consummation -- the sixth and seventh trumpets, after these things."

"One woe is past": it was a long one, and of a nature fully to justify the awful imagery in which it was symbolically foreshadowed. "Two more woes come hereafter." With the first of these two we will now concern ourselves for a short time, viz.:

THE SECOND WOE

"And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying . . . Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone; and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (Rev. 9:13-21).

Here we have a representation of something that came after the Saracenic affliction, but of as terrible a nature. The Saracens overran and subdued the eastern and southern provinces of the Roman Empire in 150 years, which are five months of years, viz., $5 \times 30 = 150$. In another period of 150 years, their power had declined to the collapsing point. It took them 150 years to rise and 150 years to fall, which was according to the two periods of five months mentioned in the prophecy of the fifth trumpet. But what further great Oriental military eruption upon Europe is here represented in the sixth trumpet? The answer will naturally spring to everyone's lips having the least acquaintance with history. It is suggested by the geography of the sixth trumpet just read. The river Euphrates is mentioned. This is the geographical basis of the symbolism, and takes our attention at once to the east. Four angels bound within or on the eastern side of the Euphrates are summoned; not literally four angels of course, but military powers. That is shown by the fact that when they were "loosed" in compliance with a command ordering them to be loosed, John saw, not four angels, but myriads of horsemen. Our attention (fixed upon the east, when the Saracenic torment had died away) beholds the Turkish hordes in muster, and sees them in four great waves pour into the provinces of the eastern third of the Roman Empire, spread over a period of nearly four hundred years. It is needless to go into the particulars of these four military tornadoes that carried desolation and death into the heart of the eastern Roman empire. They are associated with names famous in history -- Togrul Beg, Alp Arslan, Timour, or Tamerlane, Bajazet, and so on, the leaders of the Ottomans or Turcomans. The particulars may be found in Eureka, at great length and clearness. It is sufficient for our purpose to see the general form of the fulfilment. The four angel powers did not come into operation simultaneously but one after the other. Their mission was to "slay the third part of men". The Saracens were not allowed to kill the eastern empire with political death, but only to subject it to scorpion-torment. But the Turks were to "slay"; they were to prevail over and extinguish the eastern third of the Roman habitable as the western had been by the Goths. To this end, they were employed to deliver four successive assaults, so to speak, the last accomplishing the

work for which the way had been paved by the work of the first three. All four were necessary; the work to be done was therefore the mission of all; and for the performance of the work, they were prepared” for an hour, and a day and a month, and a year”. This is symbolic time, which, reduced to literal time, gives the following result:--

An hour ... 1 month
A day ... 1 year
A month ... 30 years
A year ... 30 years

391 years 1 month

How do we apply this period to the work performed by the Turks against the Greek Empire -- that is, the eastern third of the Roman Empire? This will be seen readily. As a matter of fact, the Turkish assault on the eastern remnant of the Roman Empire extended over nearly four hundred years. Constantinople, with the capture of which the Roman Empire in the east was extinguished, fell into the hands of the Turks, A.D. 1453. This was the accomplishment of the mission of the four angels; and if we reckon backwards 391 years, the time “for which” they were prepared, we find ourselves at the beginning of the Turkish power when Togrul Beg, their first military leader, being married to the daughter of the Caliph of Bagdad, the head of the Saracenic or Mahometan religion, became the head of the Mahometan faith, from whom the Turkish Sultans have to this day inherited the title of Commander of the Faithful. This is a sufficiently satisfactory illustration of the chronology of the otherwise obscure phrase, “an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year”. It seems probable, however, that there is a secondary application of the period, according to the analogy of some other scriptural cases; that is, that it not only signified the time that would be occupied from the commencement of the preparation of the four angels to the completion of their work, but also the time during which the work accomplished would last from the date of its accomplishment. It took 391 years from the time the Turkish power was fully organized to the extinction of the eastern Roman third by its means; and it has taken a similar period to fulfil the course of the Turkish power from the time of its establishment to the time appointed for its drying up. If we add 391 years (the hour, day, month and year) to the date of the capture of Constantinople (1453), we are brought to the year 1844, when the Turkish Empire had fully entered on that downward course that at the present moment (1880) threatens its total extinction. This would give twice 391 years for the full work of the four angels -- of the sixth trumpet -- nearly 800 years. This is a long period compared with the time of the preceding trumpets, except the fifth, which occupied twice five months of years, or 300 years. The disparity may strike us at first sight as strange. We must remember, however, that a difference is marked between the first four and the last three trumpets, by the fact that when the first four had been blown, an angel bewailed the fate of mankind in prospect of the remaining three. The protracted duration as well as the severe nature of the woes of the remaining trumpets would seem to be intimated by this preface. However this may be, the fifth and sixth trumpets bring their chronology, with them. They contain specifications of duration for their events. There is no mention of time in any of the other trumpets, while in these two, we have periods defined which harmonize with the historical facts of the case.

The number of the cavalry will strike everyone as enormous -- verse 16, “two hundred thousand thousand” -- two hundred millions! Here there must be some exaggeration, surely, some one may say. Perhaps such an one may think another thought on the subject if he understands that what is meant is, not the number employed at the commencement of the Turkish power, but the number spread over the entire course of the Turkish career. The number of horsemen used by the Turks (whose soldiers were nearly all horsemen), during four hundred years would not be likely to run far short of the immense figures of the sixth trumpet; and if we add to them the horse men used by them during

their ascendancy in a second period of four hundred years, the number ceases to have the impossible aspect it possesses at first sight.

The description of the horsemen may also appear at first sight a difficulty; breastplates of fire, jacinth and brimstone, heads of horses as the heads of lions, with fire, smoke and brimstone issuing from their mouths, by which three things -- the fire, the smoke, and the brimstone -- the mission of the horsemen was accomplished, viz., the third part of men was killed; having also tails with heads in which their power lay, and with which they inflicted injury. All this is very hideous and appalling if taken as a description of literal things. Doubtless the demonology of popular theology borrows some of its conceptions from this description. The pictures of hobgoblins and evil creatures with which the youthful fancies of the present generation were scared into "piety", have doubtless part of their roots in the dreadful imagery of the sixth trumpet and other parts of the Apocalypse. It is only an unenlightened treatment of the Apocalypse, however, that can yield such results. When the great fact is kept sight of -- that the Apocalypse is a condensed and symbolic exhibition of literal things, we escape the difficulties into which a literal reading inevitably leads, and are kept on the look-out for the meaning of the symbol instead of being overpowered and bewildered by gazing on the symbol itself as a literal thing. There is only so much of the literal throughout as serves to give character and clue to the symbolism. Here we have horsemen and the Euphrates as literal elements in the imagery that at once identify the symbol with the Turkish apparition that scared and afflicted Europe over seven centuries ago. The details of the picture exhibit other literal elements hieroglyphically. The whole Turkish career during centuries is condensed into one immense army of cavalry, which John sees and hears enumerated. The means by which this army prevailed to the extinction of eastern Rome, are illustrated--gunpowder. The Turks prevailed over the Romans by the use of gunpowder at a time when it had been recently invented. The Turks were the first to use cannon. It was by this they killed "the third." Had their foes been similarly armed, their success, humanly speaking, would have been doubtful. Now the principal thing that would strike anyone witnessing an army of cavalry, using field guns, would be the three things mentioned by John, "fire, smoke, and brimstone", and a description of the new weapons dragged after the horses at a time when they had no name, would be a tail with a head to it, in which lay the power to hurt. These same tails would, however, when the artillery came into action, become the mouths of the formidable horsemen of the vision; for of course, when the artillery vomited fire and smoke and brimstone, the horsemen would be in the rear of their pieces, which accounts for "their power" being said to be both "in their mouth and in their tails." The roaring of the guns would also account for their mouths being said to be like lions' mouths, and their breastplates or protection behind which they would fight, being of fire and brimstone. Even apart from these special explanations, which are doubtless the proper ones, the destructive power of the horsemen in relation to "the third" would be a sufficient justification of their highly wrought description, after the analogy of Scripture example (see Hab. 1:8; Joel 2:4-8; Isaiah 5:21-30, etc.).

"The rest of the men", we are told, "that were not killed by these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands" -- a statement illustrated by the fact that notwithstanding the terrible affliction and the overthrow of eastern Rome by the Turks, as the instruments of God's vengeance, the populations of Western Europe continued addicted to the doctrines and practices of Mother Church, which God has stamped with His execration. The eastern section of Christendom was given over to the desolating Turk, because of its long-standing and patiently-borne but increasing abominations; after the example of the seven nations of Canaan which, for a similar reason, were given over to the sword of Joshua.

The eastern section of Christendom comprises all the countries that were anciently the scenes of divine visitation in a special manner -- the Holy Land, where God wrought openly and the prophets delivered their messages; and Asia Minor where the apostles laboured and the Spirit shone in the midst of the ecclesias in the miraculous endowments it conferred on leading brethren. Thus it comes to pass in

our day [1880], that all the lands of hallowed memory are blighted and desolate under Turkish rule. The horsemen of the sixth trumpet summoned by the trumpet blast of divine providence, swept over “the third”, to its extermination and the consequent desolation of the lands over which they threw the blighting shadow of their subsequently established government.

The seventh trumpet, however, will end this state of things. Though itself a trumpet of woe for mankind, its woes are of a healing order; for John heard an angel proclaim concerning the seventh trumpet, “In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets”. What this “mystery” (or formerly hidden secret) is, those are aware who are acquainted with those writings of the prophets wherein it is “declared.” It is the recovery of His land from desolation (Isaiah 61:4), the establishment therein of a divine government for all the world (Jer. 3:17), and the consequent blessedness of all the nations of the earth walking in the light thereof (Micah 4:14). This glorious mystery (for which there has been a preparation in all past ages) will be finished, accomplished, or established “in the days of the voice of the seventh angel”. Its accomplishment will be preceded by woes transcending all former human experiences consequent on the fact that in the course of it “Jehovah [Yahweh] (in the person of Christ) comes forth out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity” (Isa. 26:21). This causes the seventh trumpet to be classed with the woe trumpets; but in its ultimate effects, it is only good. Its general character is proclaimed in the “great voices in heaven” which John heard when the seventh angel sounded (Rev. 11:15): “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.” The seventh trumpet changes the face of the world. It puts an end to human rule, and establishes the kingdom of God in all the earth. This is a glorious change, but not to be effected without the putting forth of much destructive power, “dashing the nations in pieces like a potter’s vessel” (Psa. 2:8-9; Dan. 2:44-45) and causing a time of trouble such as never has been (Dan. 12:1).

It might be supposed that the fifth and sixth trumpets (the Saracenic and Ottoman) having occupied such a long time, and the seventh being with them one of the three woe trumpets, it must be a long time yet before the saints attain that salvation which is to be brought to them under the seventh trumpet in the establishment of the kingdom of God. Any dreary conclusion of that sort is excluded by the 10th chapter of the Apocalypse, which comes within the lecture of this evening. The ninth chapter covers the entire period occupied by the rise and fall of the Saracens and Turks. The tenth chapter takes up the thread where Turkish history closes, and exhibits a symbol which shows that at that juncture the promised divine interposition, which overthrows the kingdoms of men, takes place.

John sees (chap. 10:1) a cloud-clothed angel descend from heaven, with face of sun-like brightness and head encircled with rainbow-like beauty and glory. His feet, like pillars of fire, he places one on the sea and one on the land, and utters a shout like a lion’s roar. His shout is followed by seven thunder peals, in which intelligent voices are audible, declaring certain matters which John wished to write, but was forbidden. The angel lifts his hand to heaven and “swears by him that liveth for ever and ever . . . that there should be time (delay) no longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished”. This declaration and the symbol taken together, show that the third woe (or seventh trumpet) is not to be protracted like the first and second (or fifth and sixth trumpet), a conclusion further confirmed by the remark in Rev. 11:14, “The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.” It may be asked, how does the symbol support this conclusion? The answer is, it does so by its manifest identity with Christ and the saints in their corporate relation to the world in the day of their glory. The angel, of course, is a symbol, standing for a class sent, for it is clothed in a cloud -- the symbol of a multitude. It is a class exercising conquering power on sea and land, for the angel places his right foot on the sea and his left on the land. It is destructive power, for his feet are fiery. It is for beneficent purposes, however: for a rainbow encircling his head speaks of

sunshine after rain. It is an effective class that can command the world's attention, for he cries with a voice that resembles a lion's roar. It is a voice controlling executive authority; for seven thunders (the symbol of war) are let loose by its utterance. It is not a fallible human community; for the thunders so loosed divulge revelation. It is not an earthly or mortal class, for the face of the angel shines with the lustre of the sun. It does not originate among men, but is of divine origin, for the angel comes down from heaven.

Now, when we ask what class, according to the plainer Scriptures, appears upon the scene at the close of the Turkish desolation, with authority to proclaim the dispensation at an end and the time arrived for the accomplishment of God's prophetically-enunciated purpose in the earth, and to set warlike agencies in motion for the enforcement of their decree, there is but one answer: Jesus comes to be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe (2 Thess. 1:10). What is his promise to them at that time? "To him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Rev. 2:26). He and they, head and body, then form one powerful community of whom it was testified in Daniel concerning this time: "Judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the Kingdom" (Dan. 7:22). Consequently, the mighty angel seen by John to descend from heaven at the close of the Turkish plague, cannot be understood in any other light than as the symbol of the One Body in its manifestation in power and great glory at the advent of Christ.

This view enables us to understand why John was forbidden to record what the symbolic thunders proclaimed. What is recorded is recorded for the guidance of the servants of Christ during his absence. But at the time of the seven thunders he will not be absent. He will be amongst them and they will be gathered around him, and will themselves be the executioners of the seven-thunder or nation-breaking programme. The knowledge of what they will do then, in its details, would be of no special value to them now when they are on probation for a place in the mighty-angel community; while the publication of those details in advance might interfere in some way with the execution of the divine work then as regards the nations of the earth.

As to the little book or scroll, open, in the angel's hand, there cannot be any difficulty in view of the fact that a closed or sealed book or scroll is always in scriptural usage the figure for that which is either not revealed or not understood (Isa. 29:11-12; Dan. 12:4). An open book in the hand of the multitudinous angel manifestly tells us that in that day there will be no more concealing or nonperception of the divine counsel, but such an exhibition of the glory of the Lord that all flesh, even the unwilling (Isa. 26:10-11) shall see it together (Isa. 40:5; 66:23), with the result that the veil shall be taken from the eyes of all nations (Isa. 25:7), and they shall confess, coming from the ends of the earth, they have been the victims of darkness and imposture (Jer. 16:19).

The incident of the eating of the book by John (verses 8-11) is confirmatory of this interpretation: John was commanded to go up to the angel holding the open book in his hand, and take it. Having done so, he was commanded to eat it, which he did -- a symbolic transaction: for men do not eat literal books. Men are said to eat words in the sense of receiving and embracing the instruction they afford (Jer. 15:16; Psa. 119:103). To eat a book is intellectually to appropriate its contents by reading. The eating of the open book in question by John shows that the angel was the symbol of the class to which John belonged: for whereas the book was first in the angel's hand, it was transferred from the angel to John, and thus an identity was established between them. What followed the eating is further instructive in the matter. John relished the act of eating, but the effects produced after the eating were disagreeable. This harmonizes with the fact that every saint even now in measure experiences, viz., that while the reception of Jehovah's [Yahweh's] truth is itself a source of pure sweetness and peace, it makes us the subject of great bitterness afterwards in the feelings with which we view the state of the world and

the wickedness of men around us on every hand. John having eaten the book, was told, "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" (verse 11). This shows that the book stood for divine knowledge: the eating for the act of acquiring that knowledge: and the purpose of its impartation that it might be communicated to others. We may take this as affording a hint to ourselves even now, for John is our brother if we are brethren of Christ. But there can be no doubt that the ultimate significance of the book-eating is of a future application, both as regards John and those for whom he stood. John was an old man when he was told he would have again to prophesy before nations and kings. He was close on a hundred years of age: and there is no evidence that he ever appeared in public after receiving the Apocalypse. His death occurred shortly afterwards. Consequently, the prophesying in question must refer to what he will have to do after his resurrection at the coming of Christ. This would follow from the conclusion that the angel out of whose hands he received the book was a symbol of the saints in their post-resurrectional relation to the nations. An open book in that angel's hands must stand for the things to be further revealed at the coming of Christ, the time having then arrived for the realization of Paul's words: "Now we look through a glass darkly, but then face to face.... then shall we know even as we are known" (1 Cor. 13:12). How interesting is the reflection that comes out of this interpretation of the case--viz., that John, and therefore his brethren, and therefore we, if we are acknowledged of the Lord as such in the day of his coming -- will be mediums of communication between the Lord and the nations in the great epoch of the end during the process by which the government of all the earth is transferred from its present holders to the King of kings and Lord of lords, who shall reign for ever. This means much interesting work and many sweet revenges in the day of Christ. The brethren of Christ are now despised with a fervid abhorrence. They are hated of the World because they are not of the world. They are looked upon as utter and irreclaimable rubbish, or as Paul expresses it, "the offscouring of all things", and this is by no means agreeable to them. But how completely will the situation be changed when those brethren appear throughout the earth as the authorized messengers of Jesus returned! Doubtless, at first they will be opposed and slighted as Moses and Aaron were by Pharaoh, but how easily they will bear it with the knowledge that they are immortal, and that they have Christ behind them in an open and visible manner, and that the time has come for the overthrow of the power of the enemy and the triumph of Christ in all the earth.

LECTURE 7: REVELATION CHAPTER 11

Westward bearing of the events of the fifth and sixth trumpets -- CHAPTER XI transfers the reader to the west -- the measuring of the temple and the altar -- the significance of the measurement -- the outer court that was not to be measured -- meaning of the temple -- Christendom in its relation to the apostolic work -- the treading of the holy city for forty-two months -- the two witnesses and their prophesying -- the two class-antagonists of the Papacy in the course of European history -- their dead bodies -- the exposure of their corpses for three and a half days -- the historic fulfilment -- events in France and throughout the Roman Catholic jurisdiction generally -- why France is so prominent in the matter -- the street of the City -- extent of the City "where our Lord was crucified" -- the joy among the nations at the death of the witnesses -- their resurrection and ascent to power in A.D. 1790 -- the French Revolution -- the Reign of Terror -- earthquake and fall of the tenth of the City -- the third woe cometh quickly -- its nature -- the coming of Christ -- resurrection and overthrow of universal human society -- the setting-up of the kingdom of God.

You will recollect that on Thursday last, our attention was occupied with the events of the fifth and sixth trumpets -- events affecting the eastern territories of the Roman Empire, and reaching from the uprising of Mahometanism down to the manifestation of the kingdom of God in successorship to the Turkish Empire. Those events principally concern a succession of extraordinary military eruptions from the east: first from the Arabian peninsula (the Saracens), and secondly, 300 years afterwards, from the desert steppes of Turkestan, whence the Moguls victoriously issued in hordes of horsemen subjugating nearly the whole of the civilized world. These events, establishing finally on the ruins of the eastern third of the Roman Empire, the empire of the Turks in Europe, kept our eyes on the east all the time, glancing on the west occasionally, only so far as these eastern events affected it.

To-night, in chapter 11, we shall find ourselves transferred from the east to the west. The fifth and sixth trumpets trace eastern events down to the days of the voice of the seventh angel, or the appointed epoch of the establishment of the kingdom of God. In chapter 11 we are not only transferred to the west, but we are taken backwards in point of time. This is shown by the fact that while chapter 9 brings us down to the end of the second woe and chapter 10 announces there shall be delay no longer in the finishing of the mystery of God, chapter 11 describes events which are concurrent with the second woe and form part of it in point of time, as evidenced by the remark on their accomplishment; "the second woe is past; and behold, the third woe cometh quickly" (11:14). That chapter 11 deals with events in the west is proved by the nature of the events when we come to consider them.

Specific proof is found in the allusion to "the beast" and "the tenth part of the City", both of which are identical with the Roman system, and that only, as we shall see. In the sixth vial, there is the same division between east and west. There is the drying of the Euphrates in the east, and the emanation of the frog-spirit from the west. In the sixth trumpet, we have the Ottoman hordes in the east and ecclesiastical events in the west. In the sixth seal, there is no such sub-division for the simple reason that the sixth seal had to do with the empire of Paganism, which ruled alike the east and the west in a common sway. These features are worthy of notice, as illustrating the historical accuracy of the Apocalypse.

As affecting the west, then, while the political locusts of Arabia and the fiery horsemen of Turkestan were for a thousand years between them over-running the east, John was given "a reed like unto a rod", and he is asked (verse 1) to "rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein." Let us first deal with the measurement. To measure off an area or space is to set it apart for a purpose. The area measured off for the purpose in this case, was the area containing the temple of God and the altar and the worshippers of God. An adjoining area John was told not to measure; "The court which is without the temple, leave out, and measure it not." For what purpose was

the temple of God measured off? We are not informed in so many words, but we are plainly informed for all that. The measurement, we are told, was effected by “a reed like to a rod.” In this description of the measuring reed, the object of the measurement is unveiled. A rod or rhabdos was the symbol of chastisement because the means of its infliction in youth. “Shall I come to you with a rod?” asks Paul of the Corinthians in a tone of reproof (1 Cor. 4:21); and “He that spareth the rod hateth his son”, says Solomon (Prov. 13:24). The temple of God and the altar and the worshippers then were measured off for affliction. The sequel of the chapter bears this out, for we find the Holy City trodden under foot (verse 2), and the saints made successful war against (verse 7). The “court without the temple” was left out of the measurement. The things represented by the outer court were not to be given over to affliction as were the things represented by the temple and the altar. What are these things? This is deserving of our most attentive consideration. It is a question on which we shall find it easy to get a deal of light.

Of course, you require not to be told that the temple and its courts are here used in a symbolic sense, just as the seven candlesticks that stood in the holy place of that temple were used in a symbolic sense at the outstart of the vision. What sense is that, for which we can find any application in the system of things existing in Western Europe? Just one or two New Testament illustrations of the point. First, you have Paul telling Timothy that his object in writing him was “that he might know how he ought to behave himself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). Now, the house of God and the temple of God were interchangeable terms in the description of the edifice erected for Jehovah’s [Yahweh’s] service in Jerusalem. Paul in effect therefore says that the Church or ecclesia is the temple of God. He plainly says this in writing to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 6:16): “Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them”. Peter makes a similar statement: “As living stones, ye are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood” (1 Peter 2:5).

The use of the temple of God in the Apocalypse to represent the body corporate of the believers in Christ is therefore in harmony with apostolic usage before the Apocalypse was given. So with the altar. Speaking of Christ, Paul says (Heb. 13:10): “We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle” All in the altar, therefore, are all who are in Christ; and when John was commanded to measure off the altar with a rhabdos or rod of affliction, it was an intimation that during the time concerned all in Christ should be subject to adversity. These symbols are all drawn from the Mosaic economy. You need not to be informed that that economy was a divine economy, and in all its mechanical details, a shadow or parable of certain living glorious realities to come.

You will say, what has all this to do with the system of things in Western Europe? A glance at the system will bring the answer. What is that system? Its most general name is “CHRISTENDOM”. What is the meaning of this? The dominion of Christ. How came such a character to be claimed for it? Because of the work done by the apostles in the first century, who laid the foundation of the ecclesiastical system of Europe by their miraculously-attested testimony for Christ. Paul writes to “all in Rome called to be saints” -- that is, called to be the temple of God in the Roman habitable. All those who become saints under the apostolic labours in every part of the Roman habitable were constituents of the temple and the altar. Though the apostles died, their work continued, and the generation of believers that went to the grave with them were succeeded by other believers who maintained the integral structure of the temple of God, founded in Europe. True, the work was marred and corrupted by the apostasy of the mass: still, a real work -- a real temple, existed, consisting of the remnant of true believers preserved by God as His witnesses in the midst of the prevailing corruption.

We have already seen that this temple-community as a whole (without discriminating between its false and true elements) prevailed against the Pagan adversary or Satan enthroned at Rome, and displaced him from his seat, and set a scion of its own in his place by the power of the sword -- Constantine, the so-called “first Christian emperor”. With such a change in its favour, it would have been natural

to suppose that the temple of God was secure of peace and prosperity. The reverse is shown by this measuring of it off with a rhabdos or rod of affliction. The real temple--the true Church, was to be a down-trodden institution -- the true believers an afflicted class -- notwithstanding an outward form of things apparently in favour of "Christianity".

The exception to this measuring off for affliction was "the court which is without", or "outer court." This court was a part of the temple enclosure, but here it was to be exempt from the lot assigned to the temple itself. It was to be "given to the Gentiles." There is a world of light in this as bearing on the ecclesiastical constitution of things in Europe. Here is a part of the symbolic temple -- "the court which is without" -- given to the Gentiles. Now, considering that the temple is the symbol of the Church of Christ, we are here face to face with a prophecy that an outer court of it was to be occupied by the Gentiles -- those not recognized as Israel; -- and that while the true ecclesia should be subject to affliction and down-treading, that part of the Church occupied by "the Gentiles" should be in prosperity and renown -- not measured off for affliction with the rhabdos. We look at Europe in the past (and in the present, too), and we see a "Church by law established" in various countries, enjoying the support and patronage of the State, and acquiring thereby a respectability so great that to be the meanest ecclesiastic is to have a passport to the highest society. In the light of this prophecy, we can rightly estimate these State communions as they appear before God. They are all parts of the outer court of the spiritual temple -- the court not measured -- not recognized -- given over to the Gentiles. This very prosperity is their condemnation. The friends of Christ are measured off for dishonour and affliction. The rhabdos is their sign for the present.

It is in this chapter plainly foreshown that the occupants of the outer court -- the nominal Christian element of European society -- should obtain the upper hand, and tread down the true and faithful saints who are also symbolically the Holy City: "The Holy City shall they tread under foot forty and two months." Forty and two months are 1,260 days, and stand for the 1,260 years during which it was the appointed lot of the true temple-community to be cast out, prevailed against, and down-trodden by the outer-court party -- the Gentiles to whom the court without was given without rhabdos-measurement. How signally this has been fulfilled the history of Europe testifies. The Gentiles, or outer court party, under ecclesiastical titles (Popes, cardinals, etc.), have enjoyed the emoluments and honours of the State, and have with one accord for ages persecuted and destroyed the true saints on the charge of heresy. These ecclesiastical Gentiles of the outer court have been allowed to have the upper hand everywhere, and to subject to severe rhabdos-discipline the poor and little flock in whom the Father, by the truth, dwells as in His temple. It is only for a time: the down-treadings limited by the forty-two months which we have the happiness of knowing are now in the past. The era of deliverance is at the door.

But while the 1,260 years were dragging their slow length along, it was necessary that the power of the adversary should be antagonized so as to prevent the total extinction of liberty and light. This was done providentially by the agencies symbolized thus in verse 3: "I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand, two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth There has been a good deal of controversy as to who these two witnesses are. They are further described as "the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth". The three symbols taken together -- witnesses, olive trees, candlesticks -- enable us to identify them. Candlestick we know is used in the first part of the Apocalypse to represent a community -- a church or ecclesia. Therefore the two witnesses must be found in two communities existing in the presence or dominion of the God of the earth, that is, the ecclesiastical ruler of the darkness of the present aion, blasphemously styled "His Holiness the Pope." Olive trees are by Paul employed to represent the two elements standing related to the commonwealth of Israel -- the wild olive and the good olive tree -- Gentile and Jew (see Rom. 11). Consequently, we are justified in seeking in the two witnesses two communities, one having the wild attributes and the other the good, though both standing related in some way to the commonwealth

of Israel. Finally, the term witnesses leads us to find in them two classes bearing testimony against the corruptions of the earth, presided over by the God of the earth. This bearing of testimony is a presentation of the truth, and consequently “prophesying” in New Testament phrase.

Now when we look back upon the history of the Papal tyranny, we find that the Papal authority, though supreme, was constantly antagonized by two classes corresponding to those features. They are not distinctly discernible as two classes, but they manifestly co-exist in the one class. As one class, we read of them as heretics. As two classes, the heretics consisted of 1, Themselves, and 2, Their supporters, men who, while repudiating the pretensions of the Papacy, were not subject to the law of Christ, but ready at all times to draw the sword in defence of civil and religious liberty. Speaking of these, Dr. Thomas says, “Without any treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, and without any direct mutual understanding, the ages and generations of the past found them (the two co-operative organizations against the Catholic Apostasy of the court) standing side by side in witnessing and prophesying with tormenting effect, against the blasphemies and abominations of them who dwell upon the earth. Each witness had its own speciality. Christ’s brethren testified the gospel, and laid before the court the way of salvation . . . and the other, with fire and sword, which was their testimony practically administered, tormented the minions of the oppressor. . . . This was their combined mission. The one was the military arm of the other, and both in combination were the two arms of the Spirit, holding the olive branch in one hand and the flaming sword in the other.” For the historic particulars illustrative of these statements, I would refer you to Eureka, Dr. Thomas’s wonderful exposition by which we have all been enabled to understand these things.

That this is the right view -- that the two witnesses represent some movement discernible in the history of the European system, and not two persons as some maintain, will appear upon a consideration of one or two points in the chapter we are dwelling upon. “They of the peoples, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations”, for example, are said to “see” their dead bodies at a certain stage. It is an international affair therefore. The witnesses were to be found among the nations; for how otherwise could “nations” see them? Then it is said (verse 7), that “when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.” This shows they were a community, for only against a community could war be made. It also shows it was a community to be found in the Roman dominions: for it is “the BEAST” that makes war upon them. We are able to identify this beast with Rome by reason of the particulars afterwards supplied -- viz., “seven heads and ten horns” (Rev. 13:1), explained to mean seven successive sovereignties on the hills of Rome and ten royalties contemporaneous with the Roman dominion (Rev. 17:12); a woman on the back of the beast, the great city reigning over the kings (v. 18) -- viz., Rome in her ecclesiastical relations with all the earth. Consequently in the numerous heretical communities that have in all ages, prior to their extermination by the Beast, antagonized and tormented the Papal god of the earth; and were finally prevailed against by a determined and energetic coalition of the Pope’s friends, in Europe, we find the two witnesses. The one fought the persecutor both in politics and on the field of arms: the other limited their warfare to that contention for the faith which supplied the inspiration of the other. “An arrangement of this sort”, says the Dr., “was absolutely necessary for the preservation and protection of the One Body, witnessing for the truth against the worshipping of the demonials and idols in the midst of the nations and before the God of the earth, the weapons of whose warfare were civil disabilities and the infernal tortures of anti-heretical crusades and inquisitions. The One Body, of which Christ is the head, is commanded by him not to avenge itself: not to take any other sword than the sword of the Spirit which is the word of the Deity; not to resist evil; if smitten upon one cheek to turn the other, and many other precepts of which his own individual conduct when in the hands of his enemies was an unmistakable illustration. In view of these commands, how was such a polity to devour its enemies with fire, to turn waters into blood, and to smite the earth with plagues? Manifestly, such a work of death and destruction was incompatible with obedience to such precepts of non-resistance. War and desolation

are no part of Christian duty. 'The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all'. This principle faithfully and duly observed by all the Lord's servants in his absence, will prevent them from avenging their own wrongs or lending themselves as instruments in the quarrels of others."

In the history of Papal abomination, we find, then, this double class, bearing testimony against it and opposing it and inflicting upon it disquietude and torment in various ways, reaching often to those connected with war. This providential antagonism -- this infliction upon the adversary of retributive evil, even during the days of his ascendancy, is the thing symbolized by the statement: "If any man will hurt them (the witnesses), fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, and have power over waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."

They were to prophesy in sackcloth -- (verse 3). This shows they were to be on the losing side, as indeed that which happened at the end of their prophecy shows. Though for a period successfully antagonizing the god of the earth to the extent designed by Providence and foreshadowed in this symbolism, they were to be on the downward side of things; they were to be of the class to whom it is not given to "laugh now", to be "full now", but to be prevailed against and to mourn and weep. This was illustrated in their final overthrow (verse 7): "When they shall have finished their testimony, the beast ... shall make war upon them and overcome them". This directs attention to the length of their testimony. How long was it to last? Verse 9 supplies the answer: "A thousand, two hundred and threescore days". The Papal Horn of Daniel's fourth beast was to prevail against the saints 1,260 days: but is this the same period? It cannot be, for whereas the power of the Fourth Beast to prevail against the saints ceases at the end of Daniel's 1,260, the beast overcomes them at the end of this period. How are the two periods to be placed then? That of the Papal power we know began A.D. 606-8, and has expired in our generation, as evidenced by the disappearance of the Temporal Power of the Pope; but that other period defines the length of the witnessing of the two prophets -- twelve hundred and sixty years. When did this begin and end? Let us see how the thing works in history. There is a very ready way of reaching the result.

From the overthrow of Paganism in Rome, by the victories of Constantine, "the first Christian emperor", by which the Christian community was lifted from the severest depths of persecution to the highest and serenest regions of imperial favour, to the organized attempt of Church and State to exterminate the heretics in France, was exactly a period of 1,260 years. Thus Constantine ascended the throne A.D. 312: add to this 1,260 and you have 1,572 -- the date of what is known as the massacre of the Huguenots. The question is, do these facts and figures correspond with the requirements of the prophecy? The answer is justifiably in the affirmative. The sackcloth witnessing of the two prophets undoubtedly commenced with the accession of Constantine to the imperial throne. This will seem strange when that event was favourable to the Christians: but the strangeness will cease if we remember that the witnessing was to be directed against authorities professing to be Christians but not truly so, as shown by their representation as Gentile occupants of the outer court, as we have already seen. Now, such a witnessing could not take place while Rome was Pagan. Paganism made no pretence to belong to the temple of God. It did not stand in the outer court or any other part of the mystical temple: it has no connection with it at all, but opposed and tried to destroy it with the terrible engines of persecution. It required a nominal Christianity to be on the throne before the testimony of the witnesses in the presence of the Gentiles of the outer court could commence. When Christianity did mount the throne, though it did in a certain shape become the favoured religion of the State, yet true Christianity became an outcast. There was a class that did not enjoy the imperial favour, but became as decidedly proscribed and bitterly persecuted as ever the Christians were at the hands of Paganism. Eusebius, who lived at the time, speaking of what happened after Constantine's accession, says: "Again the worshippers of God began to flee: again the open fields, the deserts, forests and mountains received the servants of Christ". On this subject, Dr. Thomas

says: "Constantine delighted to style himself 'The Deliverer of the Church'. He was truly the deliverer of the Catholic Church; but he was also the first to inflict persecution and death itself upon those who 'kept the commandments of the Deity and retained the testimony of Jesus Christ' . . . The dissenters from the Catholic Church were afflicted and oppressed. . . . Constantine easily credited the insinuation that the HERETICS, as they were called, who presumed to dispute his opinions or to oppose his commands were guilty of the most absurd and criminal obstinacy . . . Confounded with these so-called heretics as has been the case in all ages since, were those who held the testimony, and therefore the witnesses of Jesus. Not a moment was lost in excluding their pastors and teachers from any share in the rewards and immunities Constantine had so liberally bestowed."

From this time forth, the dissenters maintained a steady testimony and protest against the Established Church. From this time, therefore, it seems reasonable to date the days of their prophecy. As a matter of fact, there are just 1,260 years from Constantine's accession to the massacre of the Huguenots. This massacre was the massacre of a representative class. The Huguenots of France were representative of the witnesses in all "the earth" in which the Pope was god. They were more numerous and powerful there than in any other part of the Papal dominions, and therefore to attack them there, was to aim a blow at them everywhere. The blow aimed at them was terrible. It was not merely the outbreak of a formidable persecution: it was a deliberate attempt to exterminate them, an attempt which was persevered in at intervals for over a hundred years, and which ended in 1685, on the revocation of the edict of Nantes, in the persecution and death of the party for a season.

It strikes one at first as odd that this Apocalyptic tragedy should be identified so prominently with France. But the impression disappears on a full view of all facts. There are two reasons for this prominence of France in the matter. France as the first nation to submit to the Roman See, has always borne the title "the eldest son of the Church" (and what the eldest son does is done for all the family). But the second reason is more emphatic and decisive. The prophecy says, "The dead bodies of the witnesses shall lie in the street of the Great City, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified". Now, first identify "the Great City", and it will be easy to find "the (principal) street". It is not necessary for me to prove to you that the great city of the Apocalypse is Rome. But you say, there is a difficulty here. The passage says Jesus was crucified in the Great City of which it is speaking, and Jesus was not crucified in Rome. The answer is to be found in the fact that in the constitution of the Roman Empire, the City of Rome was finally made co-extensive with the Roman Empire -- that is, Rome was, so to speak, legally stretched out in all directions so as to cover every part of the Roman Empire. The whole empire was the city. This was by the decree of Caracalla many centuries before the death of the witnesses. Now the Great City in this sense reached from Persia in the east to the Atlantic on the west, and in this great city "our Lord was crucified", for Judaea was part of the Roman dominions, and Jesus was crucified within the Roman jurisdiction, by Roman officials, according to Roman forms. As it was a question of the death of the witnesses, there was something appropriate in referring to the fact that the Lord himself was slain within the same jurisdiction -- a jurisdiction only comparable to Sodom and Egypt in its spiritual relations. He was not crucified in the same part of the city, however. The dead bodies of the witnesses were to lie in THE street -- the principal street, thoroughfare, or section of the Great City. As the city is here used for the entire breadth of the Roman dominion, THE street must be the leading political sub-division of that dominion, and therefore France, "the eldest son". We see the same sense in the phrase "THE tenth part of the city" farther on (verse 13), when the overthrow of the French State is the subject of prediction. It is interesting to be informed that this view was entertained by a leading writer in the witness-community well on in the seventeenth century. Peter Jurieu, a Huguenot pastor, it seems, published a book "The accomplishment of the Scripture prophecies", in which he points out that the Great City is Rome in conjunction with its empire, and that the tenth part of that city was France. You will find an extract from his works in the second volume of Eureka on page 649.

When tidings of the final suppression of the witnesses by fire and sword reached Rome, the Pope was very glad, and held a procession of cardinals in celebration of the event, and appointed a Jubilee, and other public rejoicings. He also ordered a medal to be struck in commemoration of it, of which specimens are extant at the present day, exhibiting an angel with a drawn sword and the forms of a slain crowd lying before him. In this you will recognize the historic parallel to what is stated in verse 10: "They that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another". The medals, etc., also illustrate the meaning of the statement (verse 9) that they would not suffer the dead bodies of the witnesses to be put in graves. To put a thing in the grave symbolically is to bury it out of sight -- forget it. Instead of being thus buried away, the slain witnesses were kept in public view in the way referred to. It was particularly in France that their dead bodies thus lay exposed in the symbolical sense, for there it was a day to be observed as every year came round -- a day in which it was considered "the Church" in 1685 had finally triumphed over its enemies who had plagued it for ages.

How long this exposure lasted is stated in the prophecy, verse 9: "They of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half", at the close of which they were to have a resurrection. We should suppose that this meant three years and a half. Those who read public events at the time in the light of the Apocalypse were of this expectation: but history has shown it meant a longer period than this. The interval from the death of the witnesses (in 1685) to their resurrection (1790) was just 105 years. The difficulty is how this period can be compressed into a symbolical number of three and a half days. The solution was suggested at the beginning of the present century by a writer called Bicheno, viz., that the three and a half days were three and a half lunar days, that is, days of the moon instead of the earth. The moon turns upon its axis just once in thirty days, consequently one day of the moon is just thirty times longer than one day upon earth, and would represent thirty days. Three and a half days of the moon would therefore be 105 earth-days, which, on the day-for-a-year principle, would stand for the 105 years which elapsed between the death and resurrection of the witnesses. In truth, therefore, there is no departure in the case from the ordinary scale of symbolic time -- day for a year; only the days are compressed into a smaller symbol still. Why should this be? Obviously to suit the symbolic circumstances with which the time was connected in the case. The circumstance was the exposure of dead bodies. It would have been contrary to nature to speak of dead bodies being exposed 105 days; it involved no violation of decorum to speak of them as being exposed three and a half days, and these being lunar days, were an accurate measure of the historic time, though this was not perceived till events themselves made it manifest.

"And after three days and a half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of the names of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven." This was to come to pass at the end of the three and a half lunar days of 105 terrestrial days or years. Add 105 years to A.D. 1685 (the date of the revocation of the edict of Nantes and the final massacre of the Huguenots), and you have 1790. What happened then in harmony with the picture placed before us in the verses I have read? The most awful revolution that ever occurred in the annals of mankind. You should read the history of the French Revolution. You will find events unfolded themselves in the order of the symbols. The spirit of political life re-animated the people who had been ignored and powerless for more than a century. A great voice from heaven, -- that is, a summons from the throne of the tenth of the great city -- a summons from Louis XVI, invited the common people, who had not been publicly recognized since the massacre of the Huguenots, to "come up hither", or come together for the exercise of legislative power in the arrangement of the disordered affairs of the realm. They responded in a cloud, and in such a form therefore as to inspire great fear in

the mind of the king, nobles and clergy, who beheld them stand upon their feet. They had not been long assembled when they took possession of supreme power, disestablished the church, confiscated the estates of the clergy and nobles, imprisoned and decapitated the king, abolished all titles (the seven thousand names of men, spoken of in the original), proclaimed faith in God a superstition -- France no longer a kingdom but a Republic. They also executed thousands by the guillotine, who were in the least suspected of sympathy with the old order of things. Everyone has heard of the Reign of Terror: it is the description applied to these events. The whole population lived in daily fear of their lives. Over a million perished by violence in connection with the events of this terrible earthquake in which also the tenth of the city fell, that is, France as a royalty was overthrown and altogether separated from "the city" of which she was the leading tenth. The noise of her fall made the earth tremble, and sent a thrill throughout civilized life, the vibrations of which are active at the present hour. The leaders of the Revolution, to accomplish their reform, resorted to the terrible expedient of cutting off the heads of all who did not agree with them. The guillotine worked day and night, and heads rolled by the thousand. The slaughter at last came to be so indiscriminate that the guillotine could not work fast enough and its operations were aided by filling leaky ships with people, and sending them out to sea to sink. Such a time of terror was never known in the history of the world.

We read "the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to God". So it came out. In the reaction that set in when people were tired of these dreadful occurrences, a public decree was sanctioned, recognizing the existence of God and a future life, and convoking a national assembly in the Deity's honour. The assembly in honour of "the God of heaven" was held in the presence of thousands -- Robespierre officiating as priest. It all came out in the order of the prophecy.

The effects of that revolution are visible to-day. It has proved the resurrection of liberty in Europe, both political and religious, and the undermining of the position of the Papal tyranny which has gone rapidly downwards ever since, until the Papacy now is only a shadow of its former self. The very development of the truth itself is traceable to the forces set in motion by it: but I won't go into that. If you desire to comprehend these things in their details, I would advise you to read Eureka, in which there is a great mine of instruction.

"The second woe is past, and the third woe cometh quickly." This is the apocalyptic comment on the French Revolution. What is the third woe that comes quickly on the back of the French Revolution -- that is, "quickly" in the apocalyptic sense -- quickly as compared with the time taken by the first and second woes? The third woe is the seventh trumpet -- for the three last trumpets of the seven are the three woes, as you will recollect (Rev. 8:13). Well, John hears the seventh trumpet, and what are its effects? "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (verse 15). Hence, not long in the world's history after the French Revolution, a still greater Revolution is due--viz., the transfer of all kingdoms on earth to Christ at his coming -- a transfer not to be effected without "a time of trouble such as never was when this mighty revolution is announced under the seventh trumpet, John beholds the elders prostrate themselves before God, and give utterance in thanksgiving to a view of the situation which has received our attentive consideration: "Thou hast taken to thee Thy great power, and hast reigned." It is a time of divine actual taking of power in a way not occurrent previous to the seventh trumpet: a time when Christ returns to reign really on the earth. They go on to say, "The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them that destroy the earth."

Here we have a number of items characteristic of "the end" shortly after the French Revolution. They are divinely specified items. Believers in the word will seriously note them. There is anger among the

nations, succeeded by a manifestation of God's wrath against the long-borne-with wickedness of men, the resurrection -- "time of the dead", that is, time for the dead to awake, as Daniel says of this very time: "at that time, many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake" (Dan. 12:2) -- the rewarding of the prophets and the servants of God in general, and the destruction of all who tyrannize over and destroy the earth. We might conclude without further information that these events must involve the appearing of Christ, seeing the Scriptures always associate these events with his coming (2 Tim, 4:1; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; Matt. 16:27). A symbol is introduced expressly to show it: "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings and voices and thunderings and an earthquake and great hail." The "temple of God" measured off for down-treading in the beginning of the chapter is here at the end of it, exhibited as established "in heaven" -- in exaltation -- in the sphere of power. The saints glorified appear in their corporate capacity as a manifested power in the earth. The time has come for them to take the sword of judgment, as foreshown in the Scriptures (Dan. 7:22; Psa. 149:5-9; Rev. 2:26-27). But in their midst is One from whom they receive their entire character and position. "In the temple was seen the ark of his testament." In the midst of the saints is one who is the antitypical ark of the covenant, the blood, sprinkled mercy seat. They surround Him in great love and praise and glory, saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests." To say that this ark was seen at such a time is to intimate the Lord's second appearing in power and great glory, shortly after the second woe. "The lightnings and thunderings and voices and earthquake and great hail" following the opening of the temple in heaven, find their counterpart in the calamitous judgments by which the great revolution of the third woe is effected by Jesus and the saints -- a time of war, convulsions and trouble such as has not yet been witnessed upon earth.

We are enabled by this eleventh chapter of the Apocalypse to see in a certain way where we are now. The French Revolution of 1790 is a distinct landmark. As we think of it in the light of this chapter, and ponder the announcement that the third woe cometh quickly, we are made to feel that we cannot be far off the great consummation upon which our hearts are set. The same conclusion is warranted by many other signs, as we know. We are verging towards that crisis which to the world will bring a season of unparalleled trouble, but to the friends of Christ, the age of blessedness, life, and everlasting joy.

LECTURE 8: REVELATION CHAPTERS 12 AND 13

CHAPTER XII, compelling another backward journey in point of time -- the explanation of this zigzag construction of the Apocalypse -- a second view of the events of the sixth seal to show their bearing on the friends of Christ -- the woman clothed with the sun; her relation to the Bride, the Lamb's wife -- "the moon under her feet" -- her crown of twelve stars -- her child-bearing -- the dragon waiting to devour her son -- Constantine and the Paganism of the Roman Empire -- the crowns on the heads of the dragon and not on the horns -- the ascension of the woman's son to God -- the inapplicability of the prophecy to Christ -- the flight of the woman into the wilderness -- the war in heaven -- the conflict between the forces of Christianity and Paganism -- the overthrow and expulsion of the Pagan Dragon -- the rejoicings in the Christian camp -- the woman in her hiding place -- the serpent persecuting her -- The beast of the sea -- the dragon the source of its authority -- the slain sixth head and its survival from the sword-wound -- the blasphemous mouth of the beast -- the forty-two months of its continuance -- the two-horned beast of the earth -- the Holy Romano-Germanic Empire -- the image of the beast made to live -- the mark of the beast and the number of his name -- a solemn lesson.

WE have a somewhat difficult task to-night in the attempt to present a condensed and intelligible view of the matters involved in chapters 12 and 13. Our task, however, is somewhat simplified by the circumstance that some of the matters have already been under our consideration in connection with other symbols. The consideration of these matters again takes us backward in the course of time -- a long way back from the point we reached at the end of the eleventh chapter. You will recollect that at the end of that chapter, we arrived at the time for the dead to be raised, and for the kingdoms of the world to be transferred to Christ as God's viceregent upon earth. In chapter 12, we find ourselves again face to face with the age of Roman imperialism and circumstances of persecution, as, for instance, in verse 17, "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which kept the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." It must be evident that this is long before the transfer of the kingdoms of the world to Christ, for when that point is reached, all persecution will have ceased, power being taken from the adversary and vested in Jesus and his brethren. Hence, the conclusion is self-evident that as in the case of chapter 11, so in the case of this chapter 12, we are taken away back from the point reached at the end of the previous chapter, and brought to the consideration of other scenes having to do with the prior history of human government upon earth.

It may strike us as strange that there should be this zig-zag sort of order in the exhibition of the scenes of the Apocalypse. This feeling will disappear if we realize that there are various departments in the divine programme that have filled up the interval since Christ's departure from the earth -- various areas of the Roman habitable in which the plan has been worked out -- various channels in which providential superintendence has been actively giving shape to events with a view to the great consummation appointed, at one time east, at another west, at another both together. By these various roads, we are several times brought to the same general end to which they all reach. It is as if a guide conducted you by one route to some interesting spot, and then took you back through the air, if that were possible, to another outward place from which to conduct you again by a different route to the same spot, and repeated the performance for a third route, and so on.

The opening of chapter 12 takes us back to the place in history marked by the sixth seal, when a mighty revolution upset and abolished the Pagan government of the world, the avowed enemy of Christ, and established in its place a system based upon professed allegiance to Christ. This revolution, effected under the leadership of Constantine, "the first Christian Emperor", was a great revolution. It was in fact the inauguration of Christendom -- the commencement of the nominal dominion of Christ on the earth, to be succeeded by his real dominion. That nominal dominion was far from being a system of real submission to Christ; still it was a great improvement upon the empire of polytheism in a variety of

ways. There was hereafter at least a recognition (though in a corrupt form) of the God of Israel and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the adoption of precepts having a humanizing effect on society. In connection with this change, there were details which could not be represented by the sixth seal. The sixth seal merely exhibited the occurrence of the revolution under the symbol of a catastrophe in nature. It could not show how it affected the friends of Christ among themselves. This is what is done in chapter 12.

John sees a certain woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet. This woman, like all the women of the Apocalypse, was a symbolic woman. There is no difficulty in seeing whom she symbolizes. The woman represents that section of mankind which had come under submission to God through Christ, as shown by the statement in the verse already read, that the dragon "made war upon the woman's seed" who are explained to be "those who keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ." This use of a woman to represent the community of those who belong to Christ is common to the writings of the apostles, as you know. Paul writes to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 11:2), "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Again (Eph. 5:23), "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church." The Church is apocalyptically described as "the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Rev. 21:9), and his union with her at his coming is spoken of as "the marriage supper of the Lamb."

In this 12th chapter of the "Revelation", however, it is Christ's church or ecclesia in Christ's absence and in the land of his enemies, that is the subject of representation. Consequently there are features about the symbol that will not appertain to the Lamb's Bride in the day of her glory. In the day of her humiliation and trial many who are in her and of her do not belong to her, as the letters of the apostles show, and also the parables of Christ, and as the fact of a judgment for separation at his coming implies. It is while she is in this mixed state that the events of this chapter occur.

John sees her clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. The sun is always a symbol of power and prosperity. These in the Roman Empire were identified with the imperial throne. Hence; for Christ's community among men to be lifted from a position of proscription and persecution, into a position of political ascendancy and sunshine by the elevation of Constantine, the church's friend, to the throne of Pagan Caesarism, the church's enemy, was for that community, considered as a woman, to become a woman clothed with the sun. The moon as a symbol stands in the same relation to the symbolic sun as the literal moon does to the literal sun: it is co-ordinate with the sun but not equal to it. It shines with it in the same heaven but borrows its light from it. What power in the Roman State sustained this relation to the Roman sun of imperial power? The priesthood of the national religion undoubtedly -- the religion of the gods of Rome. The Pagan hierarchy stood in the same relation to imperialism as the modern established clergy do to the State. They were a power in the State secondary to the secular power and sustained by it. The ecclesiastical order is symbolically the moon in any system. In view of this, we can understand the significance of the Christ-woman having the moon under her feet, when we realize that the pagan priesthood were by Constantine placed under the Christian party, then elevated by him to place and power.

The diadem of twelve stars is the symbol of the Pagan Caesars. There had been twelve Caesars on the imperial throne, from Augustus, the first Roman emperor, to Domitian, the emperor who reigned when John received the Apocalypse. As a matter presented to John, therefore, the diadem destined to be placed on the Church's brow, as the result of her conflict with Paganism, was a twelve-starred diadem. There were other Caesars after John passed away, but the number at the date of the vision continued to represent the imperial prize of the conflict that was in progress.

We have next to consider the meaning of the woman so situated being in the state described in the second verse of the chapter we are considering: "She being with child cried, travelling in birth, and

pained to be delivered ... and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns ... and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born." We learn the meaning of this in the contemplation of the events characterizing the history of the epoch. Constantine did not at once ascend the throne of universal dominion. He was the woman's child -- political offspring of the Church -- for a considerable time before he grasped the reins of universal power. His career began in the West. He was the son of Constantius, one of the four Pagan emperors who ruled the empire conjointly at the close of the third century. Constantius, whose dominion lay in Gaul (France) and Britain, considerably sympathized with the Christians, and impeded the execution of the dreadful laws promulgated against them by Galerius, the chief emperor, who vowed he would obliterate the Christian name from the earth. But Constantius's son, Constantine, sympathized with the Christians more than his father did; and this being known at Rome, caused him to be regarded with great jealousy and aversion by the other emperors. When his father died (at York) in Britain, the army proclaimed Constantine his successor in the imperial purple. It was not the place of the army at this time in the history of the empire, to appoint a successor. The power lay with Galerius, the chief emperor, who, when he heard of the action of the army, was filled with rage. He, however, accepted the nomination, with the determination to set it aside by the sword as soon as it was convenient. He did not acknowledge Constantine in the full rank of emperor, but gave him the fourth rank among Roman princes, making, however, secret arrangements at the same time for the invasion of the dominions of Constantine (the western section of the Roman empire), with a view to his deposition and destruction.

Here we have the situation of the first four verses of the 12th chapter. The emancipated woman was pregnant with a political son, whom another power in the east was waiting to devour. This power is symbolized by "a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads". The identification of this power with Pagan Rome is not only easy, but inevitable. We have an explanation of the heads and horns, which leaves no escape. The heads are declared to represent (17:9, 10) first, the seven hills on which the woman, at a later stage of Roman history, sat enthroned -- (Rome is built on seven hills, and this literal feature is incorporated in the symbol by way of identification); and, secondly, seven sovereignties or forms of supreme power that had succeeded one another on the seven hills, of which the one existing in John's day was, in the verses referred to, declared to be the sixth. The ten horns stood for the division of the empire into ten contemporaneous independent sovereignties at a later time (17:12). The symbol was a prophecy, as well as an emblem. That is to say, it not only stood for the power of imperial Rome, in the way the lion stands for British power, but it exhibited details that were to be evolved in the course of its history. It is for this reason that we find Pagan Rome in hostility to the Christ-woman's political son, represented by a ten-horned monster, at a time when the ten horns had not as yet historically made their appearance. If there were no other evidence that the ten-horned dragon of the chapter we are considering stands for Pagan Rome at this juncture, it is found in the last six words of verse 3, which might easily escape the reader's notice as having anything in them: "seven crowns upon his heads." In the next chapter (13:1), the same symbol has ten crowns on the horns, and not on the heads. There is a very obvious reason for this difference. The crown is a symbol of sovereign authority. At the time of Constantine, the ten horns had not historically appeared. Therefore they are crownless; but the heads had appeared, and were in authority; for the emperorship was the sixth head, or form, of Roman sovereignty. The epoch current in Constantine's days was the epoch of the heads, and not of the horns, which had received no kingdom as yet; therefore the crowns are on the heads, which is, of itself, a convincing proof that the seven-headed dragon of Rev. 12 stands for Pagan imperial Rome in its attitude of hostility to the Christ-woman, or Church, who had in her midst a son, to whom she was about to give birth in the full-blown possession of imperial power.

The birth of this imperial son was brought about by the very attitude adopted by the Pagan dragon. When Constantine (the sun with which the woman had just become clothed), ascertained the hostile intentions of the Roman emperor, he resolved upon taking the first step himself in the war which was

about to be forced upon him. He threw his army across the Alps before Maxentius (who had taken the place of Galerius, deceased) was aware he had begun to move; and encountering the opposing army -- three times as numerous as his own -- he overthrew it with great slaughter, and marched towards Rome. Another army, and another, were collected to oppose him; but both dispersed before the celerity of his movements and the vigour of his blows; and the Roman senate, after his third victory at Saxa Rubra, threw open the gates of Rome, and proclaimed him Emperor of the Romans. Thus the woman's son was born after a season of acute parturition agonies.

But he was not yet what he was destined to become -- sole monarch of the Roman world. This destiny is expressed by the symbolism of verse 5. "She brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God and to his throne." Some apply this to the ascension of Christ. A moment's reflection will suffice to show this a mistake. What John saw was a representation of things which a voice told him (Rev. 4:1) "must come to pass hereafter." He was told this A.D. 96. How, then, could this scene represent an event that had taken place sixty years before? Besides, such an interpretation would ignore the primary characteristic of the Apocalypse as an exhibition of things in sign or hieroglyph. No; the woman in the case is the Christian community, and her son the imperial champion, begotten in her midst as the result of the operation. of her principles on Roman society. This son in being born and caught up to God and to His throne, was (1) to become developed as an acknowledged emperor, and (2) to be elevated in the operations of Providence into the position of sole monarch of the world. "God ruleth in the kingdoms of men" (Dan. 4:32). Hence, for Constantine to be placed over them all by the force of circumstances, was symbolically to be "caught up to God and to His throne This came about in due time.

Meanwhile, we have to consider the event of verse 6: "The woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand, two hundred and threescore days". This seems a strange sequel to the events of the early part of the chapter. It is, however, in harmony with the course of affairs as they developed themselves after Constantine's elevation in Rome. While the woman, or Christian community of which Constantine declared himself protector, continued in the sun-invested position in the heaven to which events had elevated her, the woman in another sense fled the position and became the object of persecution of the new and nominally Christian government. To see this clearly, it is necessary to realize that the community developed by the labours of the apostles contained two elements -- the real and the unreal, the actual and the nominal: those who were earnestly subject to the law of Christ and those who were professors without heart -- who accepted Christ as a tradition but were uninfluenced by it in a practical way. The latter were in the majority. It was by their means that the political revolution in favour of Christianity was brought about. They were not fastidious about the commandments of Christ which forbid the use of the sword or identification with the politics of the present evil world. Therefore they felt themselves at liberty to plot and intrigue and fill the army and offices of State, and set up a military champion in Constantine. The other class, described (verse 17) as "those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ", were the minority, an element -- a remnant in the midst of others. Broadly viewed, they were both one community and therefore in relation to the Pagan dragon, one woman. In another relation of things, they were two -- the one the shell, the other the kernel -- the one the shadow, the other the substance. To the one class, Jesus tells us he will say in the day of account, "I never knew you" (Matt. 7:23). To the other, he will unite himself in glorious marriage as a bridegroom to a bride. In the ultimate aspect of things, the latter class only are the woman -- the Bride, the Lamb's wife; and although in relation to the aspects of human history, the nominal are part of the woman as well as the true, yet in even the current recognitions of Christ, the true only are the woman. The false are finally symbolized in the Apocalypse as a shameless prostitute.

It is in view of these distinctions that we are enabled to understand how it came to pass that after the

woman had been invested with the sun of imperial favour, the woman should “fly into the wilderness”. As a matter of fact, ecclesiastically considered, the woman remained in the region of sunshine: the Christian party continued in the position to which Constantine’s success elevated her. But shortly after its elevation, there was a schism which resulted in the separation of the community into two parts -- one of which “fled “from the presence of imperial favour, and became the object of the persecution of the other. One party was zealous for the commandments of God, and the other were worldly time-servers. The schism, though long existing as a spiritual fact, only became openly visible on the appointment to a bishopric of a man who during the dreadful persecution of Diocletian and Galerius, had given up the Scriptures to save his life. The faithful could not brook such a violation of Christian decorum and refused to recognize the man that had been appointed. The dispute raged with great bitterness. It came several times before Constantine, who decided in favour of the reprobate, who was the favourite of the Court party. The particulars you may learn in Eureka, where they are very fully set forth. The decision resulted in the flight of the woman both in the spiritual and the geographical sense. She fled from the presence of the Court, saying through one of their leading writers, “What has the Emperor to do with the Church? what have Christians to do with kings? and what have bishops to do at Court?” And she flew from the Roman soil and took refuge in the African provinces of the Roman empire -- the territory forming the southern margin of the Mediterranean, and the northern fringe of the African continent. Here she was fed and nourished, and afterwards spreading herself into the southern parts of Europe, she sustained in the capacity of the two witnesses, that 1,260 days (years) testimony in the presence of her persecutors which we had to consider in the last lecture.

Here a question will occur to many: “Are we to consider, then, that the churches in Roman Africa in the fourth and fifth centuries, and the various dissenting bodies in Switzerland, France, and other parts, were the true brethren of Christ? If so, why is it that what we, the Christadelphians, consider the truth is not to be found in their writings?” Some make use of this argument to reject the truth. This is a great mistake. The question of the truth is not to be settled by reference to human documents or human constructions of history. We must enquire concerning this at the holy oracles alone: “To the law and to the testimony; if any speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.” Yes, yes, says the objector, very good: but how are we to deal with the question asked? The answer is that though these communions were not in the mass the body of Christ, they contained it: while the church ascendant -- the Catholic sun-invested woman, contained it not at all. There is evidence that the heretics as a class contained the brethren of Christ in their symbolization as the witnesses, but the same symbolization representing them as two, brings with it the evidence that, like Israel after the flesh, they were not all Israel that were of Israel. Fragmentary writings exhibiting affinities with the truth present the same evidence: they are quoted by Dr. Thomas in Eureka. But even if there were no such evidence, we should be unwise in allowing the uncertainties of history to weaken our perceptions of the truth. In all our conceptions of truth and duty, we must be governed wholly by the Scripture. We know we are safe here, whereas in dealing with matters of which there is no authentic record, we are on slippery ground. You cannot rely on the portraiture of ecclesiastical history. In after ages, Canon Bowlby, of Birmingham, would be accepted as a competent witness touching the Christadelphians: yet how little, as recent experience has shown us, could we recognize ourselves in his descriptions.

Going back to the days of her flight, before Constantine had yet become supreme ruler of the Roman world, we read (verse 7), “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony;

and they loved not their lives unto the death.” In these verses we have a symbolical representation of the struggle that elevated Constantine from the position of ruler of a third of the Roman Empire (in conjunction with his Pagan colleagues, who ruled the remaining thirds), to the position of sole emperorship. It was a struggle in which the testimony for Christ -- (sown in previous centuries of tears and blood) -- obtained final victory over Paganism, and banished it from the system of the civilized world. It was a struggle conducted “in heaven”, that is, it was war among the rulers. Maximin, the emperor of the eastern or Asiatic third of the empire, made war on Licinius, the ruler of the middle, or Illyrian third, with a fatal result to Maximin, whose dominions, on his overthrow by Licinius, were added to those of the latter. Licinius, emboldened by his success, and hating the pro-Christian policy of Constantine (the ruler of the western, or Roman third), resolved to put forth his power against Constantine; and to re-establish Paganism throughout the empire. This brought on war between Licinius and Constantine, which, after several great battles (each a victory for Constantine), ended in the complete overthrow of Licinius, and the expulsion of Paganism from the government of the Roman world. Constantine became sole emperor and Christianity the only recognized religion of the State, from Persia to the Atlantic. This was the triumph of (the symbolic) “Michael and his angels” over the “dragon and his angels.” Michael, meaning who like God, was the symbolic name of Constantine, as the instrument by which God cast the idols from the throne of the world, and substituted thereon, in a preliminary way, the name of His son. As opposed to this enterprise, Pagan imperialism was the political incorporation of the original diabolism of human nature, and, therefore, “that old serpent the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.” The wrath of this Devil, on his ejection from heaven, i.e., Italy (the heaven-proper of the Roman system), and the woe announced for the inhabitants of the earth and sea on his descent among them, refer to the stages in the process by which, during twelve years, Pagan superstition was driven by degrees from all place and power in the Roman habitable. In the latter stages, when Licinius, after his overthrow of Maximin, conceived hostile intentions against Constantine, the devil was filled “with great wrath”, knowing his time was short; and he “persecuted the woman that had brought forth the man child”, that is, he promulgated oppressive laws against the Christian community in his dominions. The literature of the times bears evidence that there was a general presentiment that Paganism was doomed, which stirred up its supporters, under the leadership of Licinius, to supreme efforts, which brought war and devastation on the inhabitants of the eastern and maritime districts of the empire. In twelve years from the commencement of the conflict, the political Michael was entirely victorious, and the “old serpent, the Devil, and Satan”, as incorporated PAGE 121 in the venerable Paganism of Greece and Rome, was utterly cast down.

When these events were consummated, there were great rejoicings among the Christian party surrounding Constantine, and throughout the whole empire, who from that time imagined that the kingdom of Christ had really come by the hand of Constantine. This was the loud voice of verse 10 -- a voice “in heaven” -- in the ruling sphere, saying, “Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God,” etc. It was only, however, in a preliminary, typical, and shadowy sense that this had come to pass. It is only when the seventh trumpet sounds that “the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of Christ”, as we have seen. The “loud voice” represents the exultations that actually took place, as ecclesiastical history testifies, but does not necessarily guarantee these exultations as representing the accurate truth in all particulars.

In verse 14 we have the flight of the faithful woman again introduced. We have considered the meaning of this in connection with verse 6. Verse 14 adds to the information of verse 6, by telling us where the woman was to be nourished. “Two wings of a great eagle”, or as it is in the original, “of the great eagle”, were given to her that she might fly into the wilderness state. Understanding the Roman power to be meant by “the great eagle” (and this was one of Rome’s leading symbols), the wings would indicate the outlying provinces of the Roman jurisdiction. The city of Rome itself was the head of the eagle; Italy its body; and the countries east and west, subject to its authority, its wings. History shows us that it was

in these wings where the witnessing community were nourished. Dr. Thomas, in Eureka, illustrates this in a very ample and satisfactory manner. I would recommend you to make the acquaintance of that wonderful work. Perhaps you may feel more encouraged to do so after the slight understanding of matters which these lectures may afford.

In verses 15-16 we have “the serpent”, also styled “the dragon”, exhibited as the persecutor of the woman for a lengthened period. After the overthrow of the Pagan dragon, the actual persecutor in the case was the government of Constantine, under the instigation of the bishops of the Catholic Church of the Court party. This creates a seeming difficulty in view of the fact that the Pagan dragon was finally disposed of by the victories of Constantine. It is staggering at first sight to find the dragon stand for Paganism, and then for the Christian government of Constantine, who overthrew Paganism. The explanation is to be found in the fact, that though in the conflict in which Constantine as the Christian ruler of a part of the empire, contended against Paganism as the champion of the Christian name, only Paganism could be considered as the serpent and adversary; yet, afterwards, when Constantine occupied the dragon capital -- Byzantium, afterwards called Constantinople -- and had absorbed the dragon territory into his dominions, and became, in his turn, an adversary and persecutor of “the remnant of the woman’s seed”: his government became transformed into the political serpent and dragon, as distinctly as his Pagan predecessors. Therefore, the vision, which has more to do with the nature of things than their nominal distinctions, retains the serpent-dragon as the symbol of the Church’s persecutors, when those persecutors were nominally the Church’s protectors. The vision is thus in harmony with events as they unfolded themselves in fact, though out of it with historical nomenclature from a human point of view. In this it gives one of many marks of its divinity. It is after the analogy of the symbol of the woman, which in one relation of things is the community of the faithful; and, in another, the apostate Church in adulterous association with the kings of the earth.

In the water mentioned in verse 15, which the dragon cast out of his mouth, to overwhelm the woman, we may recognize the military expeditions despatched by the Catholic government against the schismatics in the Roman “wings”. In the earth helping the woman and opening her mouth to absorb the flood and to save the woman, we see prefigured the aid that was rendered to the faithful Christian community by the lawless lovers of liberty in Africa -- emphatically the earth -- who resorted to violent measures in their defence. The particulars, which are very interesting, will be found very fully set forth in the third volume of Eureka. We cannot do more on the present occasion than indicate the interpretation.

“The dragon was wroth with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed.” In the carrying out of this war during the ages that followed, the ecclesiastical enemy of “the remnant of the woman’s seed” underwent various political transformations, which are the subject of representation in chapter 13. This chapter is full of interesting details. We cannot go into them with the minuteness which they deserve. We must be content to indicate the general outlines in a rough and ready way. They have to do with the new constitution of things in Europe springing out of the Constantinian revolution. Such as desire to attain a more thorough acquaintance with the matter will do well to avail themselves of the opportunity so wonderfully brought within their reach in Dr. Thomas’ Eureka. His exposition of this chapter alone occupies over 200 pages of the third volume.

John, standing upon the sand of the sea (chapter 13:1), sees a beast rise up out of the sea having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns. The seven heads and ten horns show the Roman nature of the power represented, and the crowns being on the horns and not on the heads shows the time or era. It is the new organization of the Roman world in the west long after the era of Constantine, when the days of a single imperial rule had passed away, and the ten kings had made their appearance, and acquired their sovereignty in Europe. “Upon his heads the name of blasphemy.” The Papacy is the name of blasphemy, and the heads, the seven hills upon which it is established.

The beast therefore has to do with Papal times. These had not arrived in the days of Constantine. The Popeship was in the germ even then in the office and pretensions of the Bishop of Rome: still it was not a developed institution. It did not become the name of blasphemy enthroned on the seven hills of Rome till nearly 300 years afterwards.

“The dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.” The dragon, as we have seen, first represented the political Paganism of Rome in its opposition to the Christian name in the west. This political Paganism was headed up in Licinius, whose seat of government was Byzantium (afterwards called Constantinople). Licinius in the east (Byzantium): Constantine in the west (Rome), presented at this time the historical counterpart of the dragon and his angels on the one side, and Michael and his angels on the other. When Constantine had overthrown Licinius, he transferred his capital from Rome to Byzantium, which he built anew and named Constantinople. Here he and his successors became what Licinius’s government had been before them -- the dragon. They did so by reason of occupying the same capital, ruling the same territory and assuming the same hostility towards the true witnesses of Christ. It was from Constantinople that the persecution of the Church emanated in Constantinian and succeeding times. Constantinople continued to be the throne of the dragon though professedly Christian in character. A recognition of this is necessary to enable us to understand the statement that “the dragon gave (to the beast of the sea) his power, and his seat, and great authority.” It was from the emperor reigning PAGE 124 in Constantinople in the east that the Papacy in the west received its constitution and recognition, or its “power and seat and great authority.” The history of the uprising of the Papacy will show you this. The dragon had the power to bestow, and bestowed it on the bishop of Rome after wavering for some time between the bishop of Rome and the bishop of Constantinople. It was not an instantaneous or a single act of appointment. The competition between Rome and Constantinople for the headship of Christendom extended over more than a century. It was terminated in favour of Rome by the emperor Justinian in A.D. 535, whose decision was finally confirmed and established by his successor the emperor Phocas, A.D. 606-8.

“I saw one of his heads as it were wounded unto death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.” The sixth head of the Roman beast -- that is, the sixth of its seven historic forms of government -- the imperial -- received an apparently fatal wound from the sword of the Goths, as we saw in the consideration of the fourth trumpet. The Roman Empire was totally extinguished in the west -- the kingdom of the Goths taking its place “for a short time”, that is for seventy years. At the end of that time, the forces of the dragon -- the armies of the emperor at Constantinople, restored the imperial authority in Italy by defeating and expelling the Gothic forces and putting an end to the Gothic interregnum. Afterwards, on the ground thus cleared, Roman imperialism was restored in the crowning of Charlemagne in Rome as Roman emperor of the west. Thus the sixth head of the Roman beast was healed, to the admiration and astonishment of the world, who rejoiced in the evidently perennial vigour of the ancient imperialism of Rome, re-invigorated from Constantinople. This state of mind is indicated in the statement that “all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast. And there was given unto him (the beast) a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given to him to continue (A.V. margin -- to make war) forty and two months.” To the Roman beast, in its Papal constitution, was given (by the dragonic imperial decree from Constantinople) authority to dictate to the world in spiritual things. The Roman Pontiff, in his official utterances, was this mouth, whose great speakings were blasphemies. Power also to wield the sword, in the enforcement of the ecclesiastical ascendancy, was accorded by the same settlement of things, by the Constantinople (dragonic) ordinance. The duration of that power was not defined in the dragonic decree; but it was fixed in the counsels of Providence. The Papacy was to possess the power for forty-two months (1,260 days or years). We are living at the end of the period, and can see that the word of God has been fulfilled. Exactly 1,260 years from its first institution by the Emperor Justinian, in A.D. 535, viz., at the close of the last century, during the French Revolution, it received a terrible blow, nearly

fatal, at the hands of the first Napoleon. But the first institution of Papal power was only preliminary, and therefore 1,260 years from that time could not be the full termination. Its confirmation and establishment by Phocas, in 606-8, supplied another starting-point for the forty and two months. Reckoned from this date, we are conveyed to the events of A.D. 1867, when the French, on their return, rescued the Pope from Garibaldi, took possession of the so-called "Holy City", and virtually terminated the Pope's power to make war against his enemies. Three years later even the shadow of THE TEMPORAL POWER disappeared in the conflict between France and Germany; and, at the present moment, [That is, in 1880] the Pope is known among his friends as "the prisoner of the Vatican." His power is gone. The government of the King of Italy has possession of the City. The Pope is reduced to the position of a mere bishop again. He is obliged to tolerate dissenting chapels before his very eyes, and is powerless to stop the free circulation of the Bible, which has never before been allowed in Rome during the forty and two months. This is a great sign that we are near the end of the present order.

In verse 11, John beholds another beast come up -- not out of the sea, but out of the earth. Students of the Apocalypse have found some difficulty with this beast; but Dr. Thomas has cleared it away. That it is another form of the Papal beast is proved by the statement in verse 12, that "he causeth them that dwell therein to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed". You may ask, why should there be another form of the Papal beast? Because, in the progress of events, the Papal ascendancy took an entirely new phase. The Constantinopolitan dragon of the east, who in the first place gave him his authority, finally became of no account; and from the interior regions of Europe -- (and therefore from "the earth", Apocalyptically speaking, as contrasted with the Mediterranean seaboard) there now sprang up a new conquering power, which obtained the controlling ascendancy in Europe, and incorporated the Papacy in itself in a new order of things. This was the Germanic Empire, springing out of the order of things established by the victories of Charlemagne, king of the French, the emperor of the Romans. Let anyone read the history of this Germanic Empire, which slowly and peacefully shifted from France to Germany, and finally to Austria, as the leading German power. They will find that it had two horns, or was constituted of two contemporary dynasties -- viz., the Emperor and the Pope. These were the two leading features of the empire, to which the rest of Europe were subject. The Pope held his position subject to the confirmation of the emperor, and the emperor did not hold a valid position till he received his crown at the hands of the Pope. It was a dual empire -- a two-horned beast. They were lamb-like horns (verse 11); that is, by profession, they belonged to Christ; between them they were Christendom; but the beast spake like a dragon for all that. In nature and principles it was thoroughly dragonic, though ostensibly holding a lamb-like character. Let anyone study the deeds of the Pope and emperor, and they will see the truthfulness of this symbolism. No more merciless tyranny ever afflicted earth than that which, under the name of the Holy Roman Empire, caused the tears and blood of thousands to flow in dire persecution and oppression, under a pretence of authority from Christ.

The two-horned beast "caused the earth and them who dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." The first beast being Rome in the first stage of her Papal constitution, was now incorporate in the two-horned beast: it was merged or fused with it. This is proved by the fact that the latter "exercised all the power of the first beast"; and proved also by the history and facts of the case. The first beast was revived in the constitution of the second, in so far as imperial rank was restored to Rome, and the Roman Empire re-instated in the west, in the new empire created by the proclamation of Charlemagne as Roman Emperor by the Pope. This was the healing of the wounded sixth head, and by the public proclamation of the new empire, the earth and the dwellers therein were commanded to worship "the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." The great wonders which the new beast was able to perform consisted of the prodigies of war, for which Charlemagne is famous in history. He was able to enforce his will upon all Europe by the powers for destruction which he possessed, symbolized by "making fire come down from heaven on the earth, in the sight of men". By these political miracles he deceived "them that dwell on the earth" into the conviction that

divine authority was on his side, and proposed and carried his proposal into effect, that an image should be made of the killed beast that had recovered. This, of course, is not a literal image. It is part of the symbolism. It means a political likeness, or counterpart of the imperial system in Rome that had been killed by the Gothic sword: the restoration, in fact, of the old imperality of Rome in a new form. This was accomplished on the investiture of the Pope with all the prerogatives of an emperor. In this position he was the exact likeness of the old Roman emperors of the sixth head -- chief magistrate in the domain of civil law, and, at the same time, chief pontiff of the national religion. He was, to all intents and purposes, an image of the defunct imperialism of the west, but a speaking image; for the new beast which came on the scene with the victories and empire of Charlemagne, had "power to give life unto the image of the beast" (verse 15). Victorious Charlemagne (accepted and crowned by the Pope) had the power to give political vitality to the Papal image of the beast. This power he exercised, and ordered the worship of the Pope-King on pain of death (verse 15), causing all to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their forehead, that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name (verse 17). This was the symbolic way of setting forth that, under the new system, the authority of the Papal image would be made essential to the holding of any office, or the exercise of any traffic, in the emoluments or advantages of Church or State; and as this authority was conferred by signing the cross on the forehead or right hand of the recipient of official favour, the cross became the subject of this symbolism as "the mark of the beast." The name of the beast, or the number of his name, were equivalent symbols of the same thing. Those who know the name of the beast, or the number of his name, are in the secret as to what is meant by the symbol. "It is the number of a man", so says the last verse. That is, when you have found the system represented by the name of the beast, you will find the system is centred in a man, though the man and the system are two things. The perception of this enigma is made a feat of wisdom in verse 18.

"Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred, threescore and six."

There has been a great deal of guessing and speculating on this subject. It is a standing joke with the scorning and scoffing class, but it is a matter of wisdom for all that. The difficulty which most people have had in finding it out is due to the fact that their theology prevents them from identifying the beast. They regard the Roman Communion as a part of the true Church of Christ, and are therefore driven to look into indefinite futurity for this phenomenon of human history which is already hoary with age. Those who know the truth are burdened with no such difficulty. They see in the leading figure of Christendom -- a sovereign who pretends to hold office in all the centuries as Christ's representative and to be endowed with supernatural authority and prerogatives -- an exact fulfilment of all that was shown to John, and also to Paul, as to the anti-Christ, the Man of Sin, that was coming. The only question is how the Apocalyptic identification of 666 can be discovered in him. Does any official title appertaining to him, when the letters of that title are summed up in their numerical value, yield the number in question as "the number of his name"? It matters not if twenty other names can be made to yield the same number: it must be a name in connection with a one-man system which has wielded a compulsory authority in all the earth in centuries past. The Papal system is such a system, and there is no other system or man of whom this can be affirmed. It is, therefore, a simple question of whether a system, answering in all material points to the prophecy, presents also this feature of identification, that its name, numerically estimated, is equal to 666.

The answer is before us in the Greek name LateinoV (Lateinos), which, in plain English, may be said to mean Latindom or Latin power, kingdom, or Church headed up in the Pope. The letters of this name, added together according to their arithmetical value, give the number thus:

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It would be a grave defect in this evening's lecture, if I were to neglect to point out the unmistakable stamp of divine reprobation placed upon the Papal system -- root and branch -- by the language of verse 8: "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain," etc.

As if to give it greater emphasis, verse 7 adds these words: "If any man have an ear, let him hear." The multitude admire various features of the Roman system which commend themselves to human appreciation -- its antiquity, its numbers, its learning, its wealth, its political status, its history, etc. They think it the most odious form of uncharity to doubt the salvability of those who belong to its communion. Be it ours to accept the odium consequent on receiving the word of God. This word says -- and it strikingly calls our attention to the fact -- that those only worship the beast whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life. Consequently, it is impossible for anyone realizing this to have the least sympathy with the system or its ramifications. The finger of God's condemnation is indelibly placed on it by this chapter, if there were no other; and if it must be considered uncharitable to be on God's side, wise men will suffer the rebuke, awaiting in patience and submission the day spoken of in subsequent chapters, when God will destroy Christendom, in preparation for the establishment of His own glorious kingdom in all the earth.

LECTURE 9: REVELATION CHAPTER 14

Daybreak after night -- the Lamb on Mount Zion -- the 144,000 who are with Him -- who they are -- their virginity -- the meaning -- their song that no man could know -- the women, with whom the 144,000 are not defiled -- following the Lamb -- the everlasting gospel preached in the hour of judgment -- the summons to the world -- the result -- catastrophe to Rome -- warning proclamation to the nations -- the threatened torment to the worshippers of the image -- the smoke of their torment -- not the orthodox hell -- a terrible epoch in the history of Europe -- the blessedness at that time of the dead dying in the Lord -- the white cloud, and the sickle-armed Son of Man sitting thereon -- a hieroglyph of coming retribution -- the angel coming out of the temple, and the angel coming out of the altar -- stages in the work of judgment -- the 1,600 furlongs of blood to the horse bridles -- a horrid picture -- the glorious sequel.

THERE is a very great contrast between the scenes exhibited in this. 14th chapter of Revelation, and those we had to look at in the 13th. It is the contrast expressed in the statement: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning". The chapters in question exhibit this fact in symbol, so far as concerns the class of whom Jesus said, "Blessed are ye that weep now". We have the long, dark, distressful history of Europe under the militant Papacy in chapter 13, and the inauguration of the joyous morning in chapter 14. For this reason chapter 14 is more interesting. It brings light, and life, and cheer, after the gloom resulting from the ascendancy of the Man of Sin. The history of the Man-of-sin power is in reality an unbroken history, from the apostolic age to the Lord's coming in power and great glory. The chapters in question show it. Paul shows it in saying of his own day, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work; only that which hindereth must be taken out of the way. Then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming". From the "already-working" point in Paul's day, to "the brightness of the Lord's coming", is an unbroken line. It shows us the Papal system lasting till the Lord's coming. Revelation 13 shows us the shape and attitude of the power during the longest part of the unbroken line. Chapter 14 shows us the glorious event at the end of the line.

"I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." We know who the Lamb is: "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" -- Jesus, the Son of God. Why did John see him stand at his coming "on mount Zion"? The gospel of the kingdom gives us the answer, which cannot be obtained from the teaching of the day: Zion was the seat of David's government in the land of promise. To Jesus belongs the throne of David (Luke 1:32). On that throne he will sit in the age to come (Isaiah 9:6). Occupying this, he must needs reign on Mount Zion (Micah 4:7; Isa. 24:23), in harmony with what is written in the 132nd Psalm, verses 13-14: "The Lord hath chosen Zion: He hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell." It may be said, this is treating Zion literally when, by the character of the Apocalypse, it ought to be construed symbolically. The answer has already been before us in connection with the symbol of the Euphrates. Literal objects are introduced as the basis of the symbolical representation of events having to do with those literal objects. As the Euphrates, a literal part of the Turkish Empire, is used to represent symbolically that empire, so Zion, a literal element in the kingdom of David, is introduced symbolically to represent that kingdom.

With the Lamb is a great company. They are stated to be "an hundred and forty and four thousand." This, of course, is their symbolic, not their literal number, for they are literally defined as a "great multitude, which no man could number" (Rev. 7:9). Twelve is the numerical root of the divine economy upon earth -- 12 sons of Jacob -- 12 tribes of Israel -- 12 apostles of the Lamb. Twelve multiplied by 12, constituting what is mathematically termed a "square" of the number, yields 144, and thousands are added to show that multitudes are embraced. An Israelitish multitude is the idea conveyed by the number 144,000.

Some have distressed themselves with the idea that 144,000 is the exact number of the company of the

chosen. They think of that as a small number, and the opportunity of salvation slight in consequence. They think if that number is made up, there is no use trying. There is no need for this distress. Even if 144,000 were the exact number (and no man knows the exact number: doubtless, it is fixed), so long as the door is unshut, no one walking in will be turned back: the open door, and his walking in, would be proof of inclusion among the number; for Jesus has said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me: and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

The 144,000 had "the Father's name written on their foreheads" -- "his Father's" name -- the Lamb's Father's name -- the name of God. This shows that the 144,000 consist of enlightened persons. The forehead is the symbol of the understanding, and the name of the Father, the knowledge of God. The ignorant of the things of God have no place among the 144,000, whose chief characteristic is the knowledge of God. This is in harmony with what Jesus said: "This is eternal life, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). As it is written, "The foolish shall not stand in thy sight" (Psa 5:5); "They are alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them (Eph. 4:18). Some despair at these facts, as though they involved exclusion from the kingdom of God. The right use to make of them is to make them a reason for the diligent obedience of the precept which says: "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord; and find the knowledge of God." "Be diligent to make your calling and election sure."

The common habit is to treat these things with indifference. Let the anxious avoid the common habit, and obey the commandments, and they will experience the truth of those words of wisdom: "All the words of my mouth are ... plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge. Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it."

How did John see the 144,000 occupied? "They sung as it were a new song." This is the scriptural way of expressing a new deliverance. When David had just been delivered from distress, he said that God "had put a new song in his mouth". The new song of the 144,000 points to the fact that they have just attained that mighty deliverance which awaits all the sons of God at the Lord's coming -- deliverance from the feebleness of mortal nature, and from all the cares and evils that afflict present life, and from the constitution of the evil world. It is a song of great and joyous exultation. Their voice, John says, was "as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder ... as the voice of harpers harping with their harps This is a great change from the aspect in which he saw the same company in chapters 12 and 13. There they were a feeble community, a remnant of the woman's seed -- cast out and prevailed against by the nightmare monsters of the vision. Here they are enthroned on Mount Zion, in power and exultant joy. Who would not endure "the light affliction" of the present down-trodden state to obtain a place in that shining and exultant throng? -- a vast and impressive multitude, even if only 144,000 mortals; but what shall we say of the countless multitude of powerful and glorious immortals?

John heard the voice "from heaven", although the performers were on Mount Zion. This is due to the sense in which heaven is apocalyptically employed. When the Lamb and the 144,000 are enthroned in Mount Zion, preparatory to the earth's subjugation, they are in heaven in the sense in which the great red dragon of chapter 13 was in heaven. They are in the arena of political power, from which they will expel all rivals in "the war of the great day of God Almighty." Their vocation is to reign together over all the earth, as "kings and priests unto God" (Rev. 5:10). Before they can do this, they must execute the judgment decreed against the present powers or governments of the earth. It is recorded of them that this they will do (Dan. 7:22; Psa. 149:5-9; Rev. 2:26-7). But before they proceed upon this work, they have a time of rejoicing together at their first meeting, after the judgment of the household has eliminated all the worthless elements from the assembly. It is in the act of celebrating this preliminary

festival of love and joy, that John sees them engaged in the opening verses of the chapter we are considering. "No man can learn that song, but the 144,000." That is, no one can take part in the song who does not constitute part of the assembly; for the song is declaratory of facts which can only be affirmed of themselves, viz., that they are redeemed (immortalized), and appointed kings and priests unto God.

"These are they that were not defiled with women, for they are virgins." This is not to be taken literally, of course: for, literally, a great proportion of them will be women, such as Mary, of whom Jesus said she had chosen the good part, that should not be taken away (Luke 10:42); and the women who, along with the men, were baptized on believing the gospel preached by Philip (Acts 8:12); and the wives, who are "heirs together" with their husbands of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). If it were taken literally, it would exclude the bulk of the apostles, who were married men. If not literally, it must be taken figuratively. The question is, what sense attaches to it understood in the figurative sense? We find the answer in the name given to THE WOMAN, exhibited to John as the symbol of Rome -- the mother of harlots. These harlots are the women with whom the 144,000 are not defiled. What are they? If Rome be the mother (and she is called so in universal ecclesiastical usage -- "the mother Church"), the daughters must be recognized in her offshoots. These are numerous throughout the world. All national Churches, and all sects and denominations that own a Roman parentage and acknowledge Roman Catholics as "fellow-Christians", are included with Rome in the Apocalyptic phrase: "the Mother of Harlots, and the abominations of the earth." To have fellowship with them is to be defiled with the "women" of the Apocalypse. The constituents of the 144,000 are all of them clean from this defilement. They have all in their day and generation been outside the national and popular communions. These communions are incorporations of superstition. They use the names connected with divine knowledge, but of the knowledge itself they are in large measure -- (so large as to be almost totally) -- ignorant. Their theology is the crystallized ecclesiastical traditions of the Papal ages, instead of the embodiment of scriptural knowledge. The consequence is, that "the Churches" are "refuges of lies" instead of strongholds of truth. They are institutions, with which no one can be in harmony Without being guilty of unbelief and disobedience; for they rest on dogmas inconsistent with the faith once for all delivered to the saints -- the gospel of the kingdom and the name of Jesus; and inculcate and observe precepts which cause the doers of them to "do those things which they ought not to do, and to leave undone those things which they ought to do". Our position as Christadelphians is a disagreeable one, in standing aloof from the professions of Christianity; but we must remember that our hope of inclusion in the joyous ranks of the 144,000 rests, among other things, on that very isolation which is so inconvenient at the present time: for "these are they which have not been defiled with women: for they are virgins."

"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." They do so in the most comprehensive sense -- now and hereafter. Their mind in the case is expressed in the words, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest". Peter meant this in a personal sense: but it has a spiritual sense which everyone readily understands. To follow Christ is to do as he commands. This is the policy that causes exclusion from the Churches; for the Churches do not obey his commandments or believe in his glorious gospel. The following of the Lamb must be a present following in order to be a future following. Those who do not follow now will not follow then. Those who do not suffer with him will not reign with him. Those who do not "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" are not of the 144,000. Those who follow him in his humiliation will follow him in all his glory when the day for his enthronement on Mount Zion arrives. There will be a wonderful reversal of the rule of honour then. It is certain disgrace to be identified with the testimony of God in the present age; how greedily will men covet Christ's recognition in the day of his coming -- in vain! "Him that honoureth me, I will honour"; this is the rule, and this is the day for the first part of it. We honour God by believing and obeying Him in the day when all rests as yet on His promise. "He that denieth me before men, him will I deny": this is what Jesus says concerning the coming day. Let us not be sorry, then, at having the opportunity of suffering shame for his name.

They are “the first fruits unto God and unto the Lamb.” This shows they are not the finish, but only the beginning of the glorious triumph of God’s work on earth. After “the firstfruits” comes, by and by, the harvest. There will be a great harvest at the end of the millennial age as the result of the work of Christ and the saints in ruling the world a thousand years. Multitudes will ripen for immortality under their reign, to be glorified at the end, when “the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed.” Then will be realized the consummation proclaimed at the close of the Apocalypse: “There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be anymore pain: for the former things are passed away”.

“In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.” We are to understand this in the light of David’s statement: “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. The statement that they are without fault does not mean that they never had any fault: for they are made to declare to the Lamb that they have been “washed from their sins in his blood.” It means that they are justified men -- men forgiven -- to whom their faith and obedience of Christ have been counted for righteousness. But, of course, this involves the idea of personal righteousness. It would be a mistake to conclude that because they are men that have been forgiven, therefore they are destitute of personal righteousness as their leading moral characteristic. This is the mistake practically made by most systems of popular religion -- perhaps by Revivalism most glaringly of all. No one can be an obedient servant of Christ without possessing in the very act the quality of righteousness; for righteousness is obedience. “The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9). “The righteous shall scarcely be saved” (1 Pet. 4:18). These are apostolic declarations, uttered for the warning of believers. The fact that the righteous are men whose “transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered”, does not interfere with the fact that they are men who acquire that forgiveness in the attitude of faith and obedience towards Christ. There is no reason for the theological tradition that the saints are the blackest sinners -- Without one plea, except that “Jesus died for me”. Jesus says, “I will give to every one of you according to your works ... He that keepeth my works unto the end, will I give power over the nations ... To him will I grant to sit with me in my throne”. Such are at last forgiven men -- men having to confess failings, which are passed by in the mercy of God, through Christ; but their case is very different from that of men who live in indifference, unfaith, and disobedience.

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” This follows the enthronement of the 144,000 on Mount Zion. It is, therefore, after Christ has come and raised, and judged, and immortalized his brethren; and after he has, with them, made his appearance in the affairs of the world as a new political power. It is, in fact, after the overthrow of Gog; for Jesus and his brethren are not enthroned on Mount Zion till Gog has been driven out of the land. This overthrow having been effected, we have here the government of Christ established in the Holy Land, entering into diplomatic relations, so to speak, with the rest of the world which is still unsubdued. The angel flying in the midst of heaven is the symbol of the divine ambassadorship, through which they will be addressed. The message he delivers is styled the everlasting (the aionian) gospel, or gospel of the age, because it is the proclamation of the glad tidings peculiar to the age. The gospel of our day is the glad tidings of what God proposes to do: the gospel of the age is the glad tidings of the hour having come for the accomplishment of that purpose. It is a proclamation addressed to the political world in general. The mode of address is something new in the history of politics -- something at strange variance with the attenuated and insincere refinements of modern diplomatic speech. It is a blunt summons to do something of which governments know nothing, except as “cant”: “Fear God, and give glory to him.” This strikes the key-note of the coming dispensation. It is the great difference between the present and the future age. Human convenience is the rule of

the present age: "Glory to God in the highest" is the motto of the future. The human race will be much more interesting, and much more loving one to another, when the supremacy and proprietary rights and ineffable excellence of God are practically and heartily recognized among them. The summons to yield this recognition is the first demand of the coming age upon the present age. The form in which it is required in the first instance is obeisance to the Lamb: "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little". This is the practical form of the message to "the kings of the earth", when Jehovah [Yahewh] has set His king on the holy hill of Zion (see Psa. 2).

Asking them to do homage to Jesus enthroned on Mount Zion, will be to ask them to "Fear God, and give glory to Him"; for the bowing of the knee to the name of Jesus is "to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:11).

"The hour of his judgment is come." This shows the time to which the scene refers. There is an hour appointed for judgment. Until its arrival, it seems as if God were taking no notice. He keeps silence and men suppose Him ungrateful, though a moment's consideration of the history of the past would dispel the delusion. The fact is He proceeds methodically. "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). When the day arrives, the world will be apprised of the fact and summoned to give attendance, as the symbol before us informs us. As we learn from a subsequent portion of the Apocalypse, the response at first is a rebellious one. They gather their forces to make war upon Jehovah's [Yahweh's] King: not understanding who he is. Their presumption appears to receive a severe blow at the outset; for after the angel had delivered the message of summons, John says "There followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." This appears to intimate a catastrophe at this stage to Rome itself as the historical and geographical centre of the Papal corruption. In another chapter further on, her engulfment after the manner of Sodom and Gomorrah is plainly foreshown: and here we appear to have the time of its occurrence indicated -- viz., just after the rejection of the first summons from Christ enthroned on Zion.

The destruction of Rome does not open the eyes of the nations subject to her direction; for there follows a warning which would be unnecessary in that case. "The third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

This shows the survival of the system symbolized by "the beast and his image", after Rome itself has gone crashing into the abyss. The constitution of European society in Church and State continues after the disappearance of Rome. That disappearance is the knell of the whole system and the opening stroke of the impending vengeance as it were, but it fails to be read aright by the deluded peoples. It will doubtless be explained away as a natural calamity to which no significance is to be attached; and with a sense of ease and confidence, they proceed to organize themselves in middle Europe for a strenuous resistance to the power that has already summoned them and backed its summons with power, but whose nature they misapprehend as totally as Pharaoh misapprehended the power he was opposing in Egypt. It is while this resistance is organizing that a second message is addressed to the European populations, warning them against identification with the opposing camp, assuring them of the judicial penalties impending upon the Papal system in all its ramifications, and upon all who sympathized with it. They are told of the full cup of unmixed wrath about to be poured out, and of the torment resulting to

those who may have to drink it. This indicates that those who at the last moment dis sever themselves from the enemies of the Lord will find sparing mercy at His hand to the lengthening of their lives and their admission to the kingdom of God as mortal subjects. There may be a remnant who will favourably respond: the publication of the warning implies as much: but as regards the bulk, the message falls on heedless ears, and the worshippers of the beast rush on to the torment awaiting them in the presence of the Lamb against whom they advance, and whose power comes terribly forth to their destruction, causing the smoke of their torment to ascend up to the ages of the ages.

We know the use that is made by the believers in popular theology of this verse, to uphold the orthodox idea of hell fire. They quote this high figure of the Apocalypse as the description of a literal fact. It is the characteristic in general of the orthodox treatment of the Scriptures, to "spiritualize" literal truth, and to literalize that which is figurative and symbolic. The inapplicability of the symbol in question to the popular hell must be evident, from the place it occupies in the representation of events transpiring subsequent to the Lamb's enthronement in Mount Zion with the 144,000. Their hell is always at work: this is a torment to be inflicted at the coming of Christ. The torments of their hell are presided over by the devil: this is inflicted "in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb". Their torments are for the vile of mankind in general: this is for a special class, defined as "the worshippers of the beast and his image."

It is not necessary to argue this question with you; but it is as well, perhaps, in passing, to refer to this bearing of a strongly coloured symbolism which, on the face of it, gives countenance to popular ideas of hell torment. It is, in fact, the description of the vengeance which awaits the great European Apostasy at the coming of Jesus, when "revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction" (2 Thess. 1:7). It is what Paul describes as a "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:27); and Malachi, as "a day that will burn up the wicked, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Mal. 4:1). To say of this tormenting outburst of judgment in a symbolic vision, that the smoke of it will ascend up for ever and ever, is to say that it will be perpetual in its triumph over those overwhelmed by it -- that there will be no recovery from the catastrophe. They have no rest day nor night when the hour for the infliction of the judgment has arrived; and its effect, when consummated, is for ever -- after the example of Sodom and Gomorrah, "who are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude, verse 7), though "overthrown as in a moment, and no hands stayed on her" (Lam. 4:6).

It will be a terrible epoch in the history of Europe, when the devouring judgments of God are sent forth like the lightning in all the earth, from the presence of the Lamb and the 144,000. The people will then see and feel the heinousness of the offence of which they are guilty, in submitting to the lying prescriptions of the blasphemous imposture of Rome. The faithfulness of those who have stood aloof, in all ages up to the last moment, will then be fully vindicated, and their wisdom manifest. The prospect of it inspires the saints with patience, as saith verse 12: "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." When the prospect is realized, the meaning of a certain writing which John was commanded to write, will be abundantly apparent. John says (verse 13), "I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them": that is, the blessedness of the dead dying in the Lord will be manifest from this point of time, when the dead, having arisen, behold the judgment of God executed on the head of the wicked, and their own labours past and then present, accomplished in the benign administration of the world in the reign upon which they will enter with Christ. The usual way to understand the passage is illustrated in its frequent inscription on tombstones. It is taken to declare a blessedness in John's day for the dead in general dying in the Lord. That this is a mistake must be evident from the specification of a time for

the commencement of the blessedness. Understood in the ordinary way, it would mean that the dead dying in the Lord were not blessed before Jesus' day; and what, then, about the ordinary conviction that for all ages before then, the righteous dead had entered upon blessedness and rested from their labours? This cannot be the meaning. The meaning cannot be perceived without a knowledge of the truth which teaches that the dead are dead, and that not until the coming of the Lord do they enter upon their blessedness as spectators, and executioners of the divine judgments that will precede the glorious establishment of the kingdom of God in all the earth. Then they enter upon "the rest that remaineth for the people of God" (Heb. 4:9); and then their works accompany them in the results that accrue to them from those works, concerning which Jesus says He will "give to every man according to his works". It may be, however, on this point that the new translation is right which makes the Spirit the follower with the saints in the works they accomplish in the day of power.

The scenes in chapter 14 up to this point have all to do with the opening events of the judgment to be executed at the appearing of Christ. They show us the sequence of events: 1, the enthronement of the Lamb and the 144,000 on Mount Zion; 2, the summons addressed to the nations to fear God in view of the arrival of the hour of judgment; 3, its enforcement by the overthrow of Babylon; and 4, the issue of a warning to the world at large as to their attitude towards the beast and image system of things in Europe. Verse 14 introduces us to the execution of the judgment itself: "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud sat one like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which hath power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horses' bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

The whole of this symbolism is so plain as to speak for itself. First, the white cloud: we all know the sense in which a cloud is figuratively used: Paul supplies it in the phrase "so great a cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 12:1). The cloud stands for a multitude; "white", the colour for righteousness: a righteous multitude. The Son of Man, crowned, sitting thereon -- the Lord Jesus enthroned in the midst of his brethren. A sharp sickle in his hand: a reaping act about to be put forth. The vine-clusters, upon which the reaping operation is performed, the leading sinners of the present evil world. This is shown by the fact that "the vine of the earth" being reaped, they were "cast into the winepress of the wrath of God." It is a beautiful hieroglyph of the work of retribution to be performed upon the earth by Christ at his coming. There is great profit in the contemplation of it. There is a time for the performance of the work: "The time is come for thee to reap." Therefore let us not be weary at the apparent indifference of God to the present situation. It is a time when godlessness has overgrown the earth, and come to fine development; for "the harvest of the earth is ripe." Therefore let us not be unduly distressed at the utter barrenness of all spiritual things, which characterizes the present constitution of society everywhere. The actual situation, as we find it in our bitterness, is in harmony with the prophetic forecast of the Apocalypse: and our lonely strangership, in the present order of things, is a good augury of our position before God, though hard to bear. The day of rectification is at the door: "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth" (Psa. 58:10).

The hieroglyph evidently reveals stages in the work of judgment. First, the Son of Man is implored

by an angel to use his sickle. This may intimate that the actual execution of judgment in the first instance, though a matter of purpose, will be in answer to the petition of the glorified equal-to-the-angel multitude. The Son of Man complies, and the earth is reaped. The first stroke of the judgment is dealt, affecting, probably, the neighbourhood of the land of promise where he takes up his stand. Then another angel, sickle-armed, issues from the temple, and obeys the command to reap, received from another angel, coming out of the altar. This would point to a further extension of judgment, probably into remoter countries, carried out by the saints issuing for that purpose from their headquarters in the Holy Land, and carrying fire and sword into the dominion of the fourth beast, where, in former ages, they were placed under the altar in the bloody persecutions to which they were subjected. The slaughtered saints are personated by the angel coming out of the altar, now having power over fire (judgment), and crying for vengeance, like the blood of righteous Abel. In response, the winepress is trodden "without the city" -- away from the Holy City, which becomes a quiet habitation; and the process is so terribly effective that the blood flows in torrents, so deep as to reach to the horses' bridles, for a long space. This is the symbolic indication of the sanguinary nature of the outpourings of vengeance that hangs over the world, when "the slain of the Lord shall be in that day from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth; they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the face of the ground" (Jer. 25:33). "The indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter" (Isa. 34:2).

"For sixteen hundred furlongs": the root of this number is 40, thus $40 \times 40 = 1,600$. For this reason, Dr. Thomas has suggested that it represents forty years of judgment on the nations, after the analogy of 40 years of judgment on Israel in punishment of their rebellion in the wilderness. It may be so. It seems strange to represent time by distance; but the strangeness diminishes when we remember that in Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream, seven cattle and seven ears of corn stood for seven years (Gen. 41:26-27). The spirit of God is fertile in its similitudes and analogies. Some have suggested that the 1,600 furlongs are the measure of the country (in Italy), where the hand of God will be most severely felt. There is no certain guide in the Apocalypse as to the exact meaning. But this much is clear -- that it is intended to express a time of unprecedented bloodshed and destruction. Its value in this sense is without obscurity. It is a confirmation -- (in a very striking form) -- of all we read in the Scriptures concerning the crisis of the work of God upon earth -- "a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness" -- "a time of trouble, such as never was" -- a day when "the haughtiness of men shall be made low and the Lord alone exalted." Christ's comparisons of the day of his coming to the flood, and to the destruction of Sodom, carry the same sense. The prospect is a terrible one. It will make no impression till realized. Men will laugh at it as an idle fancy, till the appalling thunders of divine wrath begin to spread terror through the world. Blessed are they who put their trust in Him. The blessedness will be manifest then.

The whole chapter, though a chapter of brightness as regards what it ultimately means, is a chapter at once dark and lurid with judgment. It tells of the dreadful scenes to be enacted upon the earth before the promised blessing can come. Shall we turn away from it, because less pleasing than some aspects of the divine purpose? This were worse than idle. It is an essential feature of the divine plan, and one to inspire gladness in view of the need for it. The world can never be brought to God without a display of judicial power: the inhabitants of the world will never learn righteousness till the judgments of God are in the earth: the kingdom of God can never be established till the kingdoms of men are destroyed. The new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, can never be developed till the old is broken up and dismissed; with great tumult. There must be a clearing of the old foundations, a pulling down of the old institutions, a wiping out of the old principles, a destruction of the thousand long-standing sentiments and views of society that are antagonistic to wisdom and righteousness, before there can be established an order of things in which glory to God will be the highest principle, and goodwill among men the prevailing habit. For this necessity God has provided, and Rev. 14 symbolically exhibits the provision He has made.

LECTURE 10: REVELATION CHAPTERS 14 AND 15

Back again for a hundred years -- telescopic construction of the Apocalypse -- the last slide the smallest and the intensest -- the pouring out of the vials -- the saints in glory apparently before the vials begin -- a difficulty explained -- the song of Moses and of the Lamb -- the opening picture taken to pieces -- the white linen and golden girdle of the vial-angels -- why the vials were given to them by one of the beasts -- the FIRST VIAL -- the Papal populations afflicted -- terrible events in France -- the judgment on the Papacy gradual, as on Israel; yet terminating in catastrophe, as with Jerusalem -- the end arrived -- all Europe affected -- the SECOND VIAL -- unprecedented maritime calamities -- British exploits at sea -- the THIRD VIAL -- the Napoleonic wars in Italy -- the FOURTH VIAL -- scorching action of the Austrian sun: desolating wars -- the FIFTH VIAL -- darkening of the Papal kingdom: the Napoleonic suppression thereof for a season -- the Pope a prisoner and Rome incorporate with France -- the SIXTH VIAL -- the drying of the Euphrates -- exhaustion of the Turkish Empire -- the three frogs -- French diplomacy effective in causing the three wars (dragon, beast, and false prophet), and in rousing the world to military preparation for Armageddon -- the SEVENTH VIAL -- the overthrow of human power -- judgment on the world and the setting up of the kingdom of God.

TO-NIGHT we look at the 15th and 16th chapters of the Apocalypse. In the 14th chapter, which we had under review last Thursday evening, we were face to face with the events connected with the solemn proclamation, "The hour of judgment is come" -- events which characterize the time occupied in the transition from the kingdom of men to the kingdom of God, a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation upon the earth. To-night, while still engaged in the contemplation of the end, we shall find ourselves, in the first part of the subject, taken back a hundred years. The cause of these perplexing retrogressions we have spoken of before. We are so often brought to the end of the matter and taken back again, because of the structure of the Apocalypse, which has been well likened to a telescope shut up. When a telescope is shut up, the outer case contains all the inner ones. The end of the outer ones is the end of all the inner ones; yet in the drawing out of the inner one, the instrument is several times lengthened beyond the space which at first contained the whole. The whole of the contents of the Apocalypse are all contained within the seven-sealed scroll. At the seventh seal you are at the end of the programme in a general sense; yet, as this seventh seal contains seven trumpets, you have to traverse the trumpets to get to the end of the seventh seal; and yet in the seventh trumpet, you are not at the final end, for the seventh trumpet contains seven vials (the next slide of the telescope, so to speak); and these, again, seven thunders. The exhibition, in succession, of these various interior sections of the whole structure involves the arrival several times, so far as the order of narrative goes, at the end of the whole; and therefore necessitates the going back again, which we shall have to perform to-night.

The events we were considering in the last lecture form the details of the seventh trumpet. The seventh angel, you recollect, sounds in chap, 11:15, the general result of which is declared to be that "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." The long and dreary experience by which this is prefaced on the part of the saints is exhibited in chapters 12 and 13: and the events directly leading to the accomplishment of the change are displayed in chapter 14. But a new symbolism remained to be employed, to represent the events and scenes condensed into the last century of the Gentile dispensation. The last slide of the telescope is the smallest. The last sub-section of the Apocalyptic scheme is the briefest and minutest, both as regards the scale of events and the time occupied. And the symbol employed is in harmony with the nature of the time represented -- the pouring out of the vials. If you reflect upon it, you will see that there is a gradual increase in the intensity of the symbol as events thicken, and God's purpose matures in the progress of time. There is first the opening of the seals, imparting power to the opener to control European events, and exhibiting the nature of their occurrence. Then there is the blowing of trumpets, implying a more direct causation, after the analogy of a military summons, bringing hosts into action in aggressive operation against the

powers regulated under the seals. Then there is the pouring-out of vials, suggesting the intenser and speedier destruction effected by the employment of solvent chemical agents. And, finally, there is the roar of the seven thunders, consummating the overthrow of the kingdoms of men, and opening the way for the kingdom of God.

It is the pouring-out of the vials we have to look at to-night. We may find them, in some respects, more interesting to us than some parts of the Apocalypse, because they belong to the age in which we live; though in truth, the older we grow in our acquaintance and love of divine testimonies, the more do we come to feel an equal interest in all parts of the divine-work -- whether ancient or modern. We will, first, dwell for a moment on the preliminary scene by which the vials are prefaced.

“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues: for in them is filled up the wrath of God. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass; having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, thou King of saints (Greek, ethnon, nations). Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name: for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee, for Thy judgments are made manifest?”

Here there might seem to be a difficulty. We have already had occasion to see that the sea of glass, having been clarified by fire, is a symbol of the purified populations of the earth, as they will be when the change from the present to the future age has taken place: and the victors over the beast, standing thereon, the symbols of the saints who reign with Christ over them. With this in view, it might be asked, how is it that the world in that glorious state is introduced in connection with the first view of the seven vials, whose judgment-work comes before the establishment of the kingdom? It seems to me that the explanation is that in this scene, we have the work of the seven vial-angels, and the state of things that comes after as the result, all included in one complete general picture, without reference to details. The details come after. The seven vials, in their details (as afterwards given), are all crowded, as it were, into the general statement that John saw seven angels with plagues, in which were filled up the wrath of God; and the picture of the sea of glass is a symbol of the state of things that comes after their work. It must be so, because while John in verse 1 sees the seven angels, “having the seven last plagues”, he afterwards sees them (verse 7) receiving the vials containing the plagues: and whereas, at the same time, he sees Christ’s victors in glory, “standing on the sea of glass, with harps of gold”, and therefore “in the temple”, in the sense of Christ’s promise that he would make the victors pillars in the temple (Rev. 3:12), he informs us in verse 8 that “no man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.” From this it follows that we are not to read chapter 15 as if describing a scene that is to become a fact before the pouring out of the vials described in chapter 16, but rather as a general presentation of the vials and their glorious sequel in the establishment of the kingdom of God.

The victors “sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb”. Why are Moses and Christ thus united in the final triumph of the saints? There are various reasons. They cannot be separated. Christ and Moses stand and fall together. It is not only that Moses wrote of Christ (John.5:46), but Moses was the shadow of Christ: and the first covenant, the shadow of good things to come. You cannot separate substance and shadow when the light shines. The light in this case is the glory to be revealed: a future brightness. Christ stands in it so to speak, and the watcher for this coming day of light looking forward to it from ancient times would have the shadow of Christ thrown forward towards himself, and this shadow is the Mosaic economy and Moses himself. Christ is the end of the law (Rom. 10:4). “The substance (of the Mosaic ordinances) is of Christ” (Col. 2:17). In Christ, Moses is consummated: and the song of his triumph is also the song of Moses, the servant of God. Then, the song of Moses,

which Moses and all Israel sang on the morrow of the overthrow of the Egyptians in the Red Sea (see Exod. 15), was the song of Jehovah's triumph over His enemies through Israel, His people. The song of the Lamb will be a song of Jehovah's triumph over His enemies through Israel. The song of Moses was the celebration of the accomplishment of events preparing the way for the occupation of the promised inheritance: saying, "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth thy people whom thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength to thy holy habitation Fear and dread shall fall upon them (thine enemies). By the greatness of thine arm they shall be still as a stone, till thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over that thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." This song of Moses the servant of the Lord is exactly descriptive of the events to be celebrated in the song of the Lamb, events having to do with the manifestation of the judgments of God, "according to the days of Israel's coming out of the land of Egypt", and resulting in fear towards God and the glorification of His name and the yielding of worship on the part of the nations. Both Moses and the Lamb have to do with the occupation of the land of promise; and although in the case of the Lamb, the whole world will be subdued and subjected to the divine authority, the headquarters of the government established over them will be in the Holy Land, towards which Moses led Israel and in which Joshua (Jesus -- the names are the same) will establish them. The song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb is a political song having reference to the purpose of God with the house of Israel amid the nations of the earth -- a song perfectly unintelligible from an orthodox point of view. I once heard a minister say in a public meeting that Abel, on being murdered by Cain, went to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb before the throne. It evidently did not occur to him that Moses was not born till ages after. This is an illustration of how unintelligently mere phrases of Scripture are used by the teachers of the people.

Let us now retrace our steps a little. Having witnessed a general scene, representing the complete work of the seven vials and the sequel to come after, John sees the picture taken to pieces, so to speak, and exhibited in its details. "And after that I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony was opened: and the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles." "After that I looked" -- not that what he saw was in the order of events to come after the scene he had just witnessed: but that after having seen that scene, he now sees another scene representing details involved in the first. This must be recognized or confusion will result. It must be so; for in the first scene he sees the servants of Christ in glory, whereas under the sixth vial (chapter 16:15), they are still watching. "Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest, etc.," shows that under the sixth vial the glory is yet ahead.

The angels, though messengers of the plague, were invested in "pure and white linen" -- the constant symbol of righteousness: intimating that the curses and judgments poured out upon the nations of Europe are all in truth and righteousness, and with a good intent and not done in malignity. The "golden girdle" connects their mission with the exercise of faith; for gold is the symbol of faith tried in the fire. The import may be discerned in the words of Christ, "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?" (Luke 18:7). The servants of God patiently exercise faith in the purpose of God to vindicate them against the oppression and unrighteousness of men, and the symbolic angels before us intimate that this element is present in the divine counsels which direct the infliction of judgment on mankind.

"One of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever." Why were the vials handed to the angels by one of the four beasts? We get the answer in the recollection of what is signified by the four beasts full of eyes. They represent the commonwealth of Israel. God told Cain that Abel's blood cried from the ground for vengeance. This was a figurative description of moral relations. In the case before us, the representative of the

commonwealth of Israel is made to hand to the divine executioners the vials of wrath to be poured out upon their enemies. What can this signify but that it is for the sake of the Israel of God that all these things are done? Paul told those of them living in his day "all things are for your sakes", and also that Christ had become "the head over all things to the Church which is his body" (Eph. 1:22-23). There may not appear to be any connection between the public events in Europe and the interests of the obscure class in the earth who believe in Jehovah's testimonies and do His commandments, but the connection is revealed by this peep behind the scenes, so to speak, which we get in looking at that exhibition of the secret forces at work which God vouchsafed to His servants for their information and comfort by the hand of John in the solitude of Patmos.

Having received the vials, the angels proceed to empty them one by one upon the various objects obnoxious to their contents. Let us look at the results briefly.

THE FIRST VIAL

"The first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image." Here we have the Papal populations brought to view as the sufferers of judgment. Some might think that this cannot yet be historic. Such assume that all judgment upon the Papal imposture and its friends is reserved till the Lord comes. They are right in thinking that it is when the Lord comes that its destruction is effected: but it would be a mistake to imagine that nothing is done in the way of vengeance till then. All God's works are gradual, culminating in striking terminations. Take His judgment on Judah's commonwealth: this ended with the tragic and utter destruction of Jerusalem and Israel's nationality: but there was a long preliminary period of misfortune and pulling down. Moses told them that in the event of their disobedience, God would work against them in their ordinary affairs in their land. He did so during centuries, and then, as foretold by Ezekiel (Ezek. 22:19-22), gathered them into Jerusalem as a smelter gathers material into the smelting pot, and blew upon them in hot anger till they were consumed. This is the analogy of His judgment on the Gentiles whose times of power and privilege have been current so long. Judgment is determined against the Papal blasphemy: it ends in the tragic and utter extermination of the institution from the face of the earth by fire and sword at the Lord's coming. But before then, there is a gradual harassing and punishing of all connected with the institution, extending over a considerable time, represented in another symbol under the figure of a woman being eaten and burnt by royal paramours. The vial under consideration has to do with the outpouring of the preliminary affliction. The date of its commencement coincides beautifully with the chronology of the case. It will be recollected that the name of blasphemy, after long germination was finally developed and established by the decree of the emperor Justinian, recognizing and confirming the claim of the bishop of Rome to be the head of all churches and spiritual lord of, mankind. The date of this decree was A.D. 533, added to which, 1,260 years -- (the appointed period of its "power to make war") brings us to A.D. 1793, when all Europe was convulsed by the anti-Papal French Revolution, which developed that spirit of hostility -- private and public, religious and political -- to the Papal pretensions which has since steadily strengthened with the lapse of every year, till now the Church stands despoiled of her possessions throughout Europe, and its chief deprived of all power, and restricted to the Vatican as a private palace, which he calls his prison. We have already had occasion to see why France should stand in the foreground in all that affects the Papacy. She has been in all her history the principal section of the Papal spiritual dominions. Her position in this respect is indicated by the official title which the head of the French State has held from the Pope -- the Eldest Son of the Church. Other States hold other names from the same source. Thus, the Austrian emperor is "His Holy Apostolic Majesty"; the king of Spain, "His Most Christian Majesty"; the monarch of England, "Defender of the Faith"; etc. These are imposing titles, but "The Eldest Son of the Church" points to the most important position in the Papal family; the eldest son is always an important member of any family. To afflict the firstborn is to bring trouble in its most direct form, as in the

last and worst of the plagues of Egypt. When therefore the time arrived to subject the worshippers of the beast to special judgment, we should on this principle expect to find France most intimately affected, and it was so. She was not the Republican France of our day, but the priest-ridden, Pope-worshipping heretic-slaying country which befitted her position in the Papal family. At the close of the eighteenth century, events well answering to the infliction of "a noisome and grievous sore" -- or ulcerous sores -- on the worshippers of the beast, occurred in France. They filled Europe with dismay. They were truly dreadful, and without parallel in the history of the world. They were the events that developed the First Napoleon, the especial tormentor of the men who worshipped the beast and his image. The people came into power for the first time in French history; they dethroned and imprisoned and finally murdered the king; they beheaded thousands of his sympathizers; they chased the aristocracy out of the country; they disestablished and disendowed the clerical orders; abolished all titles, pulled down monasteries, sold and divided the lands of the clergy and nobles, melted down church bells to make cannon balls, revolutionized the laws and institutions of the country, and generally made war against "the church" and its friends. They even went so far as to suspend religion of every name, proclaiming God a myth, and futurity a dream. France became a slaughterhouse and her public life a "reign of terror." It was the most awful turmoil the world ever witnessed. More than a million beast-worshippers perished on the scaffold or on the field of civil carnage; and the survivors were brought under a tyranny as harsh and odious as ever flourished under despotism. Life was deprived of its comfort, and society of its attractions; existence was barely durable. France for a long time was a pandemonium. The Papal interests were those that suffered everywhere. The convulsions in France vibrated throughout Europe, and everywhere carried injury and torment to the worshippers of the beast and his image. The attempts of the European powers by military power to tranquillize France and restore the overthrown order of things, only aggravated the situation ten-fold. The armies of France, after long delays, were victorious at all points, and swept like a tornado over all the countries of Europe, extending everywhere the ravages of "the noisome and grievous sore" which fell with such severity on the worshippers of the beast and his image. Europe had no settled peace for twenty-five years after the outburst of the storm inaugurated by the first vial. The progress of the storm is marked and regulated by the succeeding vials.

THE SECOND VIAL

"The second angel poured out his vial upon the sea, and it became as the blood of a dead man, and every living soul died in the sea." The events of the first vial affected the land: the Roman habitable in its entire extent was afflicted, but the sea was to be brought under the operation -- yet not the sea as a physical element but as the basis of the maritime interests of nations, in which there is a mingling of both the literal and figurative, without causing confusion, however. To stop trade by sea would be to inflict much suffering on those living on land. As the result of the vial, the sea was to become as "the blood of a dead man." The blood of a dead man is stagnant -- non-circulatory. The sea would be stopped as a medium of national-life circulation. What could have this effect? It could be effected miraculously in various ways, but the events foreshadowed in Apocalyptic symbolism were not to be miraculous events. We must find the counterpart in natural events. Whatever difficulty, as a matter of speculation, we might have in finding an application for the second vial, it is ended when we ask if the sea was the scene of national events after the pouring out of the first vial. You have all heard of British naval achievements. You have heard of Hood, Nelson, and other naval celebrities, who swept the fleets of all nations from the sea and laid the foundation of the national song that "Britannia rules the waves." These traditions take us back to the time in question. Before the end of the last century, Britannia did not rule the waves. She was strong on the ocean, but not "Queen of the sea." She shared the strength of the sea with several European powers -- France, Holland, Portugal and Spain: but the events springing out of the French Revolution brought England to the first position. These events comprised many bloody naval engagements (the battles of Trafalgar, the Nile, Aboukir, etc., etc.), in which England cleared the ocean of all rival fleets. During these operations, 200 ships of the line, appertaining to the

beast-worshippers, between 300 and 400 frigates, and an incalculable number of smaller vessels, were destroyed, and countless multitudes of lives lost. The vial covered a period of several years, in the course of which Britain, everywhere triumphant, became ruler of the waves. The vial was poured out by the instrumentality of England, with the effect, in relation to the beast-worshipping jurisdiction of the Continent, that every living soul died in the sea; that is, every living soul on the sea belonging to the Continent (which was the subject of operation), died in the symbolic sense of ceasing to have a permitted life on it.

THE THIRD VIAL

“And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus; for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.” We are guided to the locality of this vial by asking, what part of the European earth has been most distinguished for the “shedding of the blood of saints and prophets”? Whether we give the question an ancient or a modern application, the result is the same. Where was Peter crucified? Where was Paul beheaded? Where flourished the power that imbrued its hands in the blood of the witnesses everywhere? Where were whole heretical districts desolated by the Papal soldiery in the terrible scenes that drew from Milton his memorable lines on the slaughtered Albigenses (“Waldenses” In all editions from 1946 on -- Editor of Antipas)? All these questions lead us to the Italian Peninsula. Why should any part of this peninsula be described as “the rivers and fountains of waters”? It will be found that this is a very appropriate description, as distinguishing the region in question from the sea and the land. In the northern part of Italy, embracing the Alpine regions, the country is cut up and intersected with springs, rivers, fountains, and lakes, as no other part of Europe is. It is a perfect network, as anyone may see who looks at a map of Northern Italy, Piedmont, and Switzerland. That this is the district upon which the vial was to operate is shown by the history of the case; for the next phase of the European turmoil, springing out of the French Revolution, shows us Napoleon I, in this very region, conducting several campaigns against both the Austrian and Italian upholders of the Papacy.

These campaigns were obstinate, prolonged, and bloody, and subjected the country of “the rivers and fountains of waters”, to more than the usual calamities attendant on war. Read the history of these events, and you have the picture of whole districts desolated; pestilence following in the wake of famine, and decimating thousands of the non-combatant population. The rigours of the times fell with especial severity on the aristocratic upholders of the beast and his image. They were made to disgorge their wealth, give up their pictures and ornaments, and submit to the spoliation on pain of death. The common people were befriended, so far as the intention of the conqueror could be effected: it was the persecuting class, especially, that had the blood of the third vial given them to drink. If you are tempted to think it strange that retribution should fall at the end of the eighteenth century, for deeds performed in all the previous centuries by persons long dead, you must remember that those upon whom the retribution fell were the hearty supporters and endorsers of what had been done by their fathers. It was a case similar to the generation of Israel contemporary with the Lord Jesus. Jesus told them that upon that generation would come all the righteous blood shed upon earth (Matt. 23:35), because they allowed the deeds of their fathers (Luke 11:48).

THE FOURTH VIAL

“And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, who hath power

over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory.” Here our attention is directed to the sun. The sun of the European system we get to know the meaning of by the sixth seal, in which, you will recollect, the sun was turned into darkness. In that case we found the darkening of the sun to be the eclipse of the Pagan imperialism of the Roman Empire. The emperor, as the embodiment of the power of the empire, was dethroned, and his office extinguished. In the fourth vial it is not the darkening, but a heating of the sun, that is before us. We must find the meaning in connection with some imperial luminary of the Roman system, just after the judgments of the third vial had exhausted themselves on “the rivers and fountains of waters”. That luminary we must find to be so acted upon as to give forth great and destructive heat. The history of the period exactly answers to the requirements of the prophecy.

It brings the Austrian Empire before us. You must remember that the position of Austria in those days was very different from what it is now. Before the wonderful Papal-destroying exploits of Napoleon I the Austrian emperor was emperor of Germany, the military head of the “Holy Roman Empire”, the second horn of the two-horned (Pope and Emperor) beast of the earth. He was the most considerable member, the overshadowing power of the European system. He was the sun of the system, whose light gave strength and cheer to those enjoying his patronage, and the withholding of whose rays caused darkness. The pouring of the fourth vial upon this sun was effected by the victories and astounding pretensions of Napoleon, who, after the temporary settlement of the Italian campaigns, adopted an attitude towards the sovereigns of Europe that led Austria to put forth her whole strength in the vain attempt to crush the formidable enemy, which had sprung up in the presence of affrighted Europe, to the old order of things. The result was a war of great severity, spread over the principal regions of middle Europe, and subjecting populations to a great -- a scorching -- heat of affliction. The occupations of peace were suspended; vast tracts were desolated; and countless thousands fell victims to the calamities of the times, which, however, as the sequel shows, did not have the effect of inducing enlightened repentance, but rather goaded men to give vent to their feelings in blasphemy. Austria was overthrown; peace ensued for a season; and the way cleared for --

THE FIFTH VIAL

“And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.” The first question here is, where are we to find the seat of the beast? What beast is it? We read of the beast of the sea, the beast of the earth, and the image-beast: but it is not said on the seat of which the fifth vial was poured. No practical difficulty arises from this, because these various symbols are but historic aspects of the same power. The beast of the sea with seven heads and ten horns shows us the Pope-headed system of nations established on the downfall of imperial Rome; the beast of the earth -- the political Papacy merged by agreement and concordat with the second imperial dynasty (horn) that sprung up in northern Europe, viz.: the German emperors; and the image of the beast, the system resulting from the restoration of Rome, under the Popes, to the imperial position occupied by Rome under the emperors. Now “the seat of the beast” in any of these phases would be Rome, apart from which the imperial tradition was not recognized. The Papal element of the beast was always the most considerable, as occupying the traditional seat of the empire besides putting forth special pretensions to authority. The imperial element enthroned at Vienna, was always to be considered as co-ordinate with the Pope, and therefore as seated with him on the seven hills.

The correctness of the view thus presented -- (that “the seat of the beast” is to be found in the actual Roman territories themselves) -- is proved by the fact that the chapter of European history next after the events of the fourth vial shows us the course of judgment directed against the Pope and his dominions. After the overthrow of Austria, Napoleon directed his attention to the position of the Pope with a view

of inducing him to accept his friendship and alliance in the re-settlement of Europe. Napoleon did not succeed in bringing the Pope to his views, and the result was the outbreak of war, in which by a curious combination of circumstances, the Pope was befriended by the anti-Papal powers, England, Prussia and others. The Pope's friends were, however, of no use to him, for God was against him. The fifth vial was poured out upon his kingdom, and what could man avail to help? Napoleon raised an army which he hurried into Italy with his usual celerity and dash, and overthrew all the forces brought into the field against him. Darkness immediately set in upon the seat of the beast. The Pope was taken prisoner, and brought to France. He was made to pay the expenses of the war. The Papal kingdom was extinguished: Rome degraded to the position of a second class city in the French empire, and offered the privilege of representing herself in the French legislative assembly in Paris by seven delegates. The cardinals and friends of the Pope had a dreadful time of it. They were stripped of their wealth; the ecclesiastical property was taken from them: the churches given up to public use and even pillage. Symbolically, they gnawed their tongues for pain. . . . After many a prolonged and determined effort to throw off the incubus of Napoleon, they accepted the situation and acquiesced in the extinction of the kingdom in which they had hitherto been the lights, but which was now full of darkness. Afterwards, the darkness passed away, and there was a revival of the Papal kingdom, but the Papacy never recovered from the shattering effects of the judgments of the vials. It was a mere shadow of its former self; and finally the shadow disappeared with the full end of the 1,260 years in 1867-70, since which epoch, the Pope has been merely a bishop -- a false prophet -- and not a king.

THE SIXTH VIAL

This was poured upon "the great river Euphrates", which directs our attention to the country possessing that river as its distinguishing river -- viz., the Turkish empire. While the events of the previous vials were in progress, Turkey was a great and formidable power -- so powerful that a writer on prophecy at the beginning of the present (nineteenth) century, perceiving that the downfall of the Turkish empire was meant, expressed his inability to conceive by what means it could be brought to the position of powerlessness and exhaustion to which the symbolism of the sixth vial pointed. But the time had now arrived for the commencement of those events which would prepare the way for the appearance and power of the kings of the east, who should succeed tottering Papalism in universal empire. These have not yet made their appearance, but their way is prepared. You are well acquainted with the description of the vial. Still it may be well to read it in full: "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet: for they are the spirits of demons, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the war of the great day of God Almighty. (Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.) And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

The historic parallel to this, in the events with which the present generation are familiar, is remarkable, and so far as these events have gone, very complete. No sooner had the effects of the first five vials subsided in the pacification and re-settlement of Europe as the result of Waterloo, and in the death of Napoleon in St. Helena, than the destruction of the Turkish Empire began. To realize the full nature and signification of the fact, you must go back to the days of the sixth trumpet, which brought the four Ottoman waves of conquest over eastern and southern Europe.

Realize the power and terror of the Turkish name, and the enormous extent of the Turkish dominion, which threatened to spread and spread with Turkish victories till the light of European civilization should go out. Think of the power of the Sultans, who were the most exalted monarchs of their time: and think

of their long and powerful reigns. A sense of those days will enable you to estimate rightly the great change that commenced A.D. 1820, in harmony with the symbolism of the sixth vial. The symbol was a drying river. Therefore we must look for events of a gradual character, more internal than external, having the effect of exhausting the power of the empire, and opening the way for another power in her evaporated territories. Such has been the history of Turkey since 1820, till the present moment, when she is on the verge of dissolution. In 1826 the Sultan accomplished the insane performance of destroying the select provincial soldiery, known as Janizaries. These were bodies of troops got up, and maintained, and officered by the provincial aristocracy -- the flower of the army and the prop of the empire. The reason of their destruction was the complaining and almost dictatorial attitude they had assumed in various military and political questions. Having in vain endeavoured to conciliate them, the Sultan, with a purpose unknown to all; ordered them to the capital, and having marshalled them in a great square, he surrounded them with troops, to whom he gave orders for an indiscriminate massacre of the Janizaries. The orders were carried out, and thus, in one day, the core of the empire's strength was taken out; for these Janizaries were in the hands of the independent chiefs, who vied with each other in the efficiency of their corps and the general vigour of their administration. After their destruction, the management of military and other matters in the provinces was left to government officials sent from the capital, who held their posts precariously at the pleasure of the central authorities, and consequently were more intent on using their position for their private enrichment as rapidly as possible, than for the efficient conduct of the public service. The result was shortly seen in the neglect of the public works, the disrepair of roads, the languishing of agriculture, for want of means of communication, and for want of protection from the rapacity of the collectors sent from the capital. Along with these causes of decay, there was a succession of the appalling disasters of fire, famine, and pestilence, depopulating whole districts; while in her political relations everything went against her, and tended to the curtailment of her empire and the weakening of her power. Greece (till then a part of the empire for 400 years) revolted, and was made independent by the action of the European powers. Egypt revolted, and was erected into a semi-independent country, owning vassalage to Constantinople, but still self-governing under a vice-royalty. Moldavia and Wallachia revolted, and were detached as autonomous provinces, as the result of the Crimean War, and afterwards united in one government under the name of Roumania which has since become independent. Then Servia revolted, with a similar result. More recently, Bulgaria revolted, and the severe measures of repression resorted to by the Turkish Government roused European indignation, and led to the Russo-Turkish war, which further reduced the shrinking, and drying, and dying empire. Bulgaria became a self-governing country under a prince; Bosnia and Herzegovina were sliced off, and annexed by Austria; Roumelia also became practically independent, and all that was left of European Turkey was Albania, Thrace, and Macedonia, which are all in the full throes of new insurrection, which bids fair to finish the Turkish dominion in Europe altogether. Concurrently with these political and geographical evaporations, various other causes of decay have been in active operation (such as living on borrowed money, etc.), which have reduced the Turkish Government to a state of extreme poverty and impotence. The facts are so glaring, and so widely known, that it is unnecessary to do more than thus briefly allude to them as illustrating the full progress of the sixth vial, in the evaporation of the political Euphrates, in preparation of the way of the kings of the East.

A word may be appropriate as to this "way" and its preparation. The gospel of the kingdom has made you aware of the purpose of God to establish a kingdom of His own, at the return of Christ, when the times of the Gentiles have run their full course. The covenants of promise have enlightened you as to the locality of the country in which this kingdom will be manifested. You are aware that it is the land promised to Abraham -- the land occupied by Abraham's descendants for centuries -- the land now in desolation. Under whose jurisdiction is this land at the present moment? You know that the Holy Land is part of the Turkish Empire. So long as that empire exists, the way of the coming kings is barred; for the land of any king is his "way." Is there not, therefore, a manifest reason why Turkey should be dried out of the way, in preparation for the manifestation of the kingdom of God, which is to enter into conflict

with all the nations of the earth? The truth thus furnishes an explanation of the drying of the political Euphrates at this time, which you ask in vain of any other system.

But you will observe there is something else in the description of the sixth vial. While the Euphrates was to be drying in the east, other political influences were to be at work in the west (the dragon, the beast and false prophet) with the effect of developing a war-like situation of things preparatory to a gathering of the nations to the struggle that ensues on the advent of the kings of the east in their prepared way. Those influences are symbolized by three unclean spirits, like frogs, which John saw emanate from the three European centres. In this symbol, as you know, the political heraldry of France is to be recognized. She represented herself by the frog, and the three frogs in the early stage of her political existence, as shown by ancient coins and banners extant to the present day. Here she is exhibited as exercising at the time of the drying of the Euphrates an influence so potent as to emanate frog-like, or in French shape, from the mouth of the dragon (CONSTANTINOPLE), beast (VIENNA), and false prophet (ROME).

Contemporary history furnished us with the fulfilment of this prophecy. Under Napoleon III France became a disturbing element among the European powers, with the effect of rousing them from the military dormancy into which they had sunk with the close of the stormy career of the first Napoleon. A nearly forty years peace had made militarism almost obsolete. At the present moment, on the Continent, all nations are armed to the teeth, every man a trained soldier, liable to be called to the standard at a week's notice. If you trace the process of transition from one state to another -- from the state of military indifference into which the world had sunk, to the present state of stupendous armaments -- you will find it due to France. The mysterious policy of Napoleon III -- preceded as it was by the coup d'etat -- set a process of reciprocal arming into motion which no one could stop.

This process was greatly accelerated by the wars into which Louis Napoleon from time to time dragged the nations of Europe. These wars were in the very order of the frog-like emanations of the symbol. First there was the Crimean war, which commenced with a declaration of war from CONSTANTINOPLE (the mouth of the dragon), inspired distinctly and directly by Louis Napoleon, as afterwards transpired in diplomatic documents. This declaration of war, therefore, issuing from Constantinople, was palpably a frog-like or French-like spirit coming out of the mouth of the political dragon. Next, from VIENNA, came the declaration of war by the emperor of Austria, in 1859, against Sardinia (backed by France) -- a declaration which a study of the events of the time, will show you as distinctly traceable to the operation of French policy on the Austrian government as in the case of the Constantinopolitan declaration. Finally, in ROME, there was the Papal war, in which the Pope, energized by the French, who sent troops to his aid, made war upon the revolutionists. This also was a frog-like emanent from the mouth of the false prophet. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of the sixth vial.

You may be aware that this is not an interpretation invented after the things happened, but one that was published in 1850 by Dr. Thomas, before the events transpired. The occurrence of these wars afterwards, in the very order of the symbols, is all the more to be noted as a confirmation of the Divine character of the whole prophecy, and pre-disposes the mind to consider the import of the wonderful parenthesis: "Behold, I come as a thief; blessed is he that watcheth." What is this but the coming of the Lord? The time of its occurrence is indicated in this general way. It is when the Euphrates is dried, and the nations are armed and ready for the Armageddon conflict, that Jesus steals into the world to resume his work, and to carry it on to the glorious issues displayed in subsequent parts of the Apocalypse. The sixth vial is nearly fulfilled, and Jesus comes under the sixth vial, but exactly at what stage of it is not revealed. We are therefore in the position described by Christ, that "we know neither the day nor the hour." His first work is a work of judgment on his own house, as indicated by the words, "Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments." His next work is work of public participation in the wars

that will ensue. The armies of the nations are (providentially) gathered to Armageddon, that is, to the mountains of Israel (Ezek. 38:6-16), where they are overthrown with great slaughter, and the kingdom of God established in nucleus form in the land of Judah. Then comes the era of public tumult, depicted in

THE SEVENTH VIAL

“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, ‘It is done.’ And there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great.” This indicates the period of appalling revolution that sets in with the apparition of a new, and unknown, and mysterious power in the world of politics and the affairs of nations. It is the time we have already looked at in connection with the movements of the 144,000, after their enthronement on Mount Zion -- the time of trouble spoken of by all the prophets -- a time of war, and disaster, and judgment, directly inflicted with the result of breaking the pride and power of man, and clearing the way for the universal establishment of the kingdom of God. This is not an immediate result. It takes time. The little stone gradually becomes a mountain, which fills the earth. During the process there are details in the development of public events, which are foreshadowed in the further description of what occurred on the outpouring of the seventh vial: “And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.”

The overthrow of the imperial Gog, under whose leadership the nations league themselves against Christ, in the first instance, sets the nations at liberty for new combinations. A three-fold division of the Roman habitable is one of the features of it. We need not speculate as to what this division will be. It is more practical to know that the national politics, one and all, fall before the prowess of the Son of David, and that Great Babylon, in particular, receives at his hand the accumulated wrath of centuries, in the way we have already had to contemplate in connection with the symbolism of chapter 14. The political islands and mountains disappear. Rulers everywhere, great and small, abandon their power in terror at the presence of the world’s conqueror. Destroying judgments -- (represented by the heavy hail) -- ministered by the saints (represented by the talent-weights), destroy those who destroy the earth; and, while filling the earth for a while with great wrath and woe, these judgments, like the cleansing storm, will clear the air, and purify the earth, and prepare the way for the sunshine of the glorious day that will dawn in fulfilment of the purpose declared in ages past.

LECTURE 11: REVELATIONS CHAPTERS 17 AND 18

Much of Rome in the Apocalypse -- No marvel in view of history -- The objection of some people that Babylon is not Rome -- The proof that Babylon of the Apocalypse is Rome -- the scarlet-coloured beast and its lady rider -- the symbol of Roman Europe in its latter day constitution -- an enigma; "that was and is not and yet is": the other enigma: "he is the eighth and is of the seven" -- the standing in God's eyes of all who admire the Roman system -- the ten horns of the time of the end -- their war against the Lamb -- the nature and objects of the struggle from a divine point of view -- the companions of Christ in the conflict -- the called and chosen and faithful -- the hating of the harlot by the horns preliminary to the end -- the anti-Papal policy of the powers -- The perdition awaiting Rome at the Lord's coming -- the summons to the Lord's people to come out of her -- Rome's complacency to the last -- her destined submergence in volcanic fires -- the first and stunning blow in the conflict between Christ and the nations after the destruction of Gog on the mountains of Israel -- the evidence that Rome topographical and not Rome as a system is meant in Rev. 18 -- the terrible category of her crimes -- the song of triumph at her overthrow.

IN the 17th and 18th chapters of the Apocalypse, we shall find ourselves very closely face to face with the subject of Rome. You may think we have had very much of this subject already. No doubt we have. It is a matter of surprise with some people that there is so much about Rome in the interpretation of the Apocalypse. It is certainly the fact that we are never well away from her in the course of the interpretation. It is really no matter of marvel when the relation of Rome to the history of the divine purpose is realized. We may fail to realize this if we live too closely in the narrow circle of our own affairs. Most people never get out of this circle. To them, their own affairs, their own street, their own acquaintance, their own town -- is the measure of their estimate of what is valuable and important. Their own country is the widest stretch of their horizon. The present hour is the only reality with them, and only that within the circle of their senses. Europe, even of the present hour, is to them a misty abstraction -- a something in which they feel no interest: as for Europe of the past, it has no existence for them. To such, the Apocalypse is in the same position and worse -- not only a dark riddle, but a riddle of which they never heard.

However, we are not here to discuss their doleful case. Your knowledge of the truth is a guarantee that in some measure, you have ascended from their low lying plane of life, and mounted to some height in the nobler life which consists, among other things, of a knowledge of the past in its relation to the present and future well-being of man in the highest sense. In this position, you are able to realize why it is that Rome occupies so large a place in John's prophetic vision of what was to occupy European history between the first and second advents of Christ. She fills so large a place in the vision because she was to fill so large a place in the history. We cannot look back in the most cursory manner without seeing how large her place in the past has been. She was the destroyer of Christ, the slayer of the apostles, the enemy of the faith, and then the professor and champion and corrupter of the faith. She has been the leading influence in the European economy, and continues to affect the principles, and control the actions of millions in every country. She is so large and powerful an institution to the present that, notwithstanding the fall of the temporal power, and the circumscription of the power and wealth of the Church in all countries, statesmen cannot leave the Vatican out of account in their combinations and calculations. No wonder then that Rome should be in sight, so to speak, in nearly all the scenes exhibited to John in forecast of European events.

Some people have a difficulty in realizing that we are with Rome in chapters 17 and 18, because we read a deal about Babylon and nothing about Rome. Rome, say they, is not Babylon, and Babylon is not Rome. Well, if we are dealing with a literal book, their remarks might have some force; but, as has already abundantly transpired, we are dealing with a book of figures and symbols -- symbols confessedly such, yet symbols not wrapped up in utter obscurity -- symbols whose significance is allowed to appear here and there in a manner that supplies clues and keys, putting it into our power to trace and unlock

the hidden meanings. Babylon is no exception to this. We read much about Babylon in chapters 17 and 18; and if we had nothing more than the name we should be at a loss. But we have more than the name. We have it in associations that guide us to its application. When we ask, to what and to whom the term is applied, we find ourselves in the presence of the interpretation at once. For example, there are rejoicings at the downfall of Babylon. Among others, we find the apostles commanded to rejoice (verse 20); "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles". Why were they called upon to rejoice? "For God hath avenged you on her." From this, it follows that the Babylon of the chapter was the murderer of the apostles. We have only to ask, "Who killed the apostles?" to find out what is meant by Babylon in the Apocalypse. It was not Babylon on the Euphrates -- nor the Babylon of Neduchadnezzar and Evil-Merodach -- that put the apostles to death. It was Rome on the Tiber -- Babylon of the seven hills. This identifies Babylon with Rome at once.

The result is reached in another way. There is a certain symbol, labelled "Babylon". The label is this: It is in the 5th verse of chapter 17, "Mystery; Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." To what is this label affixed? Not to a city, but to the woman. It is a writing on the woman's forehead: "I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast ... And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, BABYLON ..." This shows the name is not used plainly. It is used in "mystery", with a hidden and not a plain meaning; and it is in the first instance applied to a woman, and not a city. But this woman stood for a city. So John was told (verse 18): "The woman which thou sawest is that great city that reigneth over the kings of the earth What great city reigned over the kings of the earth in the days of John? When this is answered, Babylon is identified, and the woman's name becomes the name of the city. There is only one answer. One city was "great", reigning over the kings of the earth, and that city was ROME.

When to these two simple and unquestionable modes of identification you add the fact that Rome, in her political and ecclesiastical relations, has been the one eclipsing figure on the historic stage in all the eighteen centuries that have elapsed since Christ's departure, the conclusion is established beyond the reach of objection or doubt. Babylon, apocalyptically, is Rome, just as France is "the street of" Sodom (chap. 11:8). It is impossible to go forward in the understanding of the Apocalypse without having that conclusion forced on conviction. The woman named Babylon was seen "sitting upon many waters" (17:1) -- What is signified by the "many waters"? Verse 15 answers: "The waters thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Literal Babylon has sustained no such relation to the population of the world since Christ went away. Literal Babylon has ceased to exist at all, in accordance with the prophecy of her downfall, which said: "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be dwelt in from generation to generation" (Isa. 13:19-20). "It shall no more be inhabited ... from generation to generation". (Jer. 50:39). But Rome has answered to the prophecy exactly. She has brooded upon all nations: she has sat on the many waters.

But her seat had a particular shape (and here, again, Rome is forced upon our attention). She sat on "a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns" (verse 3). What may be the meaning of this hideous piece of heraldry? The angel gave a word of explanation to John (verse 9), prefacing the words, "Here is wisdom," which is an intimation that it required discernment to penetrate the meaning. "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And (in addition to that, there is this further meaning :) there are seven kings (or sovereignties -- forms of government) -- five are fallen; ONE IS, and the other is not yet come." Rome, as built on seven hills is notorious; but here is a further explanation, which connects the seven-headed symbol with a form of government actually existing in John's day, and whose five predecessors had passed away. "Five are fallen; ONE IS." Such was the fact concerning Rome. The city of the seven hills had passed through five forms of government, viz., 1, the Regal; 2, the Consular; 3, the Dictatorial; 4, the Decemviral; 5, the

Tribunial. The sixth was the IMPERIAL, which was in the fulness of its power when the Apocalypse was angelically communicated to John. This was the political structure upholding the Babylon of the Apocalypse in her place in history. We look at history, and literal Babylon is nowhere to be seen; while Rome is, in all the exact relations prefigured by the symbolism.

Furthermore, the Babylon of the Apocalypse is contemporary with the Lord's re-appearance in the earth. She meets her doom at his hands, as was evident from the things we had to look at in the 16th chapter last Thursday evening. After the Lord had come as a thief (16:15) "great Babylon comes into remembrance before God to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." It is further proved by the song of the redeemed when the triumphs effected by Christ are celebrated: "Hallelujah! salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments: for He hath judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand" (Rev. 19:1-2). This proves that the Apocalyptic Babylon has a long career before the Lord's coming, and receives the retribution of that career when he comes. The inapplicability of this to literal Babylon is evident at a glance: its suitability to the case of Rome is complete.

Finally, the image-vision of Nebuchadnezzar, divinely interpreted by Daniel (Dan. 2), taken in connection with the vision of the four beasts shown to Daniel himself (Dan. 7), shows that Babylon, the destroyer of the saints, corrupter of the earth, the queen of many waters, must be Roman; for, by these visions, it is shown that it is the Roman iron and clay that receives the shattering blow of the stone; and that it is the Roman, or fourth beast, with Papal little horn and companion kings, that is given to the burning flame by the Lord at his coming. The Apocalyptic Babylon must be in the feet of iron and clay, and in the Roman monster of the night visions. We look at Europe as it is now, in the light of these symbols; and it requires no dogmatism to say that Babylon is there. The Roman habitable is sub-divided, as Daniel's visions require: it is cut up into a number of separate, yet connected sovereignties; and prominent among the elements constituting this fourth beast dominion is to be seen an ecclesiastical Babylon -- an ecclesiastical woman -- MOTHER CHURCH -- focused in the city of the seven hills, borne on the back of the political system subsisting in all the kingdoms of Europe. The evidence is complete, and the conclusion is very important; for Rome being Babylon, we are enabled, in the things said of Babylon, to see Rome as God sees her, and to gauge our relations to the present time accordingly.

In what aspect, then, is Rome presented to us in the chapters under our consideration this evening? The answer is very interesting. She is introduced to us in the aspect in which she appears at the time of the end. The symbolism of chapters 17 and 18 relates largely to the day in which we live. This will be evident from a consideration of who it was that exhibited the matter in these chapters to John, and what he said. It is "one of the seven angels which had the seven vials" that said to John, "Come hither: I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore." The seven vials belong to the end, and for one of the seven out-pourers of these vials to show John what is recorded in chapters 17 and 18, is as much as to intimate that what he exhibited appertained to the vial era, or time of the end. This is more evident from the nature of his communication. For John to be shown the "judgment of the great whore," was to be taken to the time of the end, when that judgment is to be inflicted. It is under the seventh vial, as we have seen, that "Great Babylon comes into remembrance before God, to receive the cup of the fierceness of His wrath." Therefore, for a vial-angel to say, "Come hither, and I will show thee the judgment of the great whore," is as much as saying he would show John in fulness and in detail what is only hinted at under the seventh vial. This judgment is after the coming of Christ, as shown by its position in the vials. The coming of Christ is under the sixth vial (see 16:15), and it is between the first and second parts of the vial. Under the first part there is a "preparation" for the gathering of the nations to Armageddon: then there is the thief-like coming; then there is the gathering to Armageddon, the locality of which is made certain by Ezek. 38 and Joel 3. Christ's coming is between the preparation for

the gathering, and the gathering itself; and after the gathering and overthrow of the armies, occurs the final judgment on Babylon. The preparation is the drying of the Euphrates and the activity of the frogs. These have been the conspicuous features of the situation for many years. This is why we entertain the expectation of the coming of Christ at any time.

“He carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.” John observed that the woman was richly arrayed and intoxicated. His attention was earnestly aroused. The picture before him was the symbol of the system of things in the Roman habitable, upon which the destroying judgment of God was to be poured out under the seventh vial. It is the same system that has existed in all the ages that have elapsed since Christ’s departure, but with modifications from time to time. The seven heads and ten horns identify it inseparably with historic Rome; but the particular scene, witnessed by John, exhibited the constitution of Europe at the coming crisis of judgment. We look at the European system of to-day; and we ask, Is there any correspondence to this symbol? Is there a confederation of powers on the Roman basis, independently sovereign, and yet combining to sustain among them an ecclesiastical system enthroned on the seven hills, historically reeking with the blood of heretics? Everyone knows that this is just the situation of affairs. The scarlet-bodied beast is the body politic of Europe; its colour is the symbol of sin -- (“though your sins be as scarlet” -- Isa. 1:18) -- showing that, in divine estimation, European society, which, considers itself Christian and holy, is steeped in wickedness. The “names of blasphemy”, with which the body is said to be full, are the great and swelling titles, ecclesiastical, military, and civil (from the “Holy Father” down to the meanest “Rev.”) with which the system abounds, which gratify the carnal ambitions of the wearers and rob God of His due, for God only is great, and His name only to be had in reverence, as will be the case in the age about to succeed the present, when “the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man is brought low, and the Lord alone is exalted in that day.”

John wondered at the spectacle, and the angel said he would tell him the mystery -- that is, the concealed meaning -- of the woman and of the beast that carried her (verse 7). The angel then proceeds to explain various particulars, at which we have already looked. They lay hold of historic features; that is, of things that have transpired in ages past. This may seem to conflict with the idea that the picture seen represents the constitution of Europe at the crisis of the advent; but this feeling will disappear, if we realize that you cannot look upon the system at the present moment without looking upon much that is historic. You look at the Pope, for example; he is not the creation of to-day. His position and pretensions require centuries for the explanation of their existence. So with the confederated sovereignties, and the names and titles of the European system: you are looking on history when you look on these; and if you suppose a friend showing and explaining to you the system as it is to-day, you will easily realize how much of this explanation would relate to long-past accomplished things. So it is with the angel’s explanation to John. It goes back in the history of the beast and the woman, while dealing with the system as it appears in the time of the end, at the crisis of its destruction.

The angel made to John this curious statement: “The beast that thou sawest was and is not ... and yet is.” There is something like an explanation of this puzzle in the words that immediately follow. First as to the “was” (verse 10) -- five are fallen; second, as to “IS” -- one is; third, as to “IS NOT” -- the other is not yet come. This is said in explanation of the seven heads of the beast. The seven heads cover the whole period of time in which the beast having the heads appears in various forms. When we recognize that the things here spoken of are all aspects of the one Roman system which has had an unbroken history of over 2,000 years, and that these aspects at the moment of their existence were to be seen only one at a time, and yet were the same thing in different forms, we may understand the obscure and apparently contradictory statement made by the angel. The beast (the body politic of Europe in its Roman constitution), was before John’s day: it had already filled a large place in accomplished history:

yet in the particular latter-day phase exhibited in the symbol shown (viz., organized as a church militant upheld by a concurrence of separate sovereignties into which Rome was to be split up), it was not: it had not come: this phase was a something not to appear on the historic stage for centuries; yet, in the existing Roman power that in John's day bore rule over all the earth (upon which, afterwards, a false profession of Christianity was to be engrafted, with the result of developing the final phase), the beast could be said to be.

There is a further apparent obscurity, which disappears with all the facts in view, viz., the statement: "The beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition". The Roman beast, at the crisis of its destruction, is the Papal phase of the beast; and therefore the eighth in the history of the changes in the forms of government that the Roman system has passed through. It may be well here to repeat the enumeration, gone through a little way back, for another purpose: -- 1, Regal; 2, Consular; 3, Dictatorial; 4, Decemviral; 5, Tribunitial; 6, Imperial; 7, Gothic, kingly; 8, Papal. Now, suppose these phases of Roman power were represented by separate beasts, as is done in several similar cases, the Papal phase would be the one that goes into perdition, seeing that it is under the Papal phase that the fourth (Roman) beast of Daniel's vision is to be destroyed. But "he is of the seven": what are we to make of this? The healing of the wounded sixth head gives us the answer to this. I will not repeat what was said on this; but you will recollect we saw that the establishment of the political Papacy in Rome was the restoration of the imperialism that had been killed there by the sword of the Goths, and therefore the healing of the sixth head. The Papacy is, in reality, the ancient Pagan constitution of Rome revived and reproduced with Christian names and superstitions. Therefore, although the eighth, he is "of the seven and goeth into perdition."

Before passing from this point, it is well to notice the solemn implication of verse 8, as to the position of those before God who sympathize with the Roman system. "They that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is." What is this but a declaration that the sympathizers with the Roman system, in all its ramifications, are outside the pale of divine regard. The cry of uncharitableness will not scare away an earnest mind from the recognition of divine truth so plainly enunciated. It is either true or not true, that all who admire Papalism and its offshoots are unwritten in the book of life. If true, should we not be very careful to recognize and proclaim the fact? If not true, what are we to do with the Apocalypse and the Scriptures, of which they are an attested part? To attempt to displace them from their position of self-evident authority and truth, is to attempt an impossibility. There is no alternative but to recognize their teaching, however out of accord it may put us with our day and generation.

"The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." "As yet", that is in John's day, the sub-division of Rome into separate royalties had not taken place. In due course, it came to pass: when imperial Rome fell, Rome divided into kingdoms rose; and in this condition she has continued for many centuries. The ten horns on the head of Daniel's fourth beast (Dan. 7:7), with the eleventh with eyes (Papacy), that afterwards rose in their midst, were the prophetic forecast of this state of things which has prevailed over twelve centuries. The ten-horned, scarlet-coloured beast of Rev. 17, which we are considering, while embracing the history of that time, represents more particularly the constitution of Roman Europe at the crisis of its destruction, as we have seen. Consequently, the ten kings of verse 12 are the powers that will confederate with Rome in the hour of her retribution. The cause of the unity of mind with which they "give their power and strength unto the beast for one hour" is evidently the Lord's presence in the earth -- (though they know not he is the Lord, but imagine him an anti-Christ). "These", it is added, "shall make war with the Lamb; and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings." The Lamb overcomes them, but not in a moment. To "make war" with the Lamb is not the work of a day. It implies all that is involved in

preparation, organization, discussing plans of campaign, etc., and extends over a considerable period. "One hour" is not literal, of course; it must either be taken generally (e.g., "This is your hour and the power of darkness"), or it must be understood with precision as the fraction of a duplicated day of years -- that is, a year of years. An hour of a day year of years, would be the twelfth part of 360 years -- 30 years. In either case, the statement brings with it the idea of a prolonged struggle. Some have a difficulty in conceiving of a prolonged struggle where Omnipotence is on one side. This difficulty arises from looking at it as a mere question of power. This is not the question. As a question of power there would be no need for war at all, for the Lamb has power to take the life of all his enemies quietly, instantly, and in detail, just as he has power to give life to his friends by resurrection. But there is a purpose to be served, which requires that his enemies put forth their strength in war. The case is illustrated in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. This was effected after a prolonged conflict with Pharaoh. There was no need for this conflict as a question of power. It was in the power of God to have disposed of all the Egyptians at once, as effectually as He disposed of the firstborn on the night before the exodus: but there was a purpose to be served: "Unto thee (Israel) it (the manifestation of God's power) was shown that thou mightest know that the Lord He is God: there is none else beside him" (Deut. 4:35). So in "the war of the great day of God Almighty": the word has to be compelled to recognize the existence of God and to be brought into subjection to His law as the basis of the kingdom which He is to set up over all nations as the result of the war. Thus an intellectual and moral result has to be achieved by the war which the ten horns are permitted to wage upon the Lamb. This requires that they be blinded in the first instance to the true nature of their foe, and that they persevere up to a certain point against the repeated disasters which they will experience in the vain attempt to overthrow the power of the true "Lord of lords and King of kings." At the last, "the Lamb shall overcome them," and then will be fulfilled the words of Isaiah: "The kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider." They had chaplains and religious instructors, but never from them have they heard that Christ is coming again to take possession of all their thrones and set up one divine government which will fill the whole earth and give law, and health, and blessedness to all mankind, in which every form of human government has so miserably failed.

"They that are with him are called and chosen and faithful." Who these are, a knowledge of the truth has caused you to understand. It is the class whom John heard sing earlier in the vision: "Thou hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation: thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:10). These are "the called," as Paul told the believers that lived in Rome in his day: "among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ" (Rom. 1:6). What they are called to he also defines: "God hath called you unto his Kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12). But all who are called are not chosen. Jesus says, "Many are called but few are chosen" (Matt. 20:16). Those who being called, are chosen, are so chosen because they are faithful (Rev. 2:10). Their faithfulness is exhibited as the reason of their choice, when he comes: for he "judges the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:1). They all stand before his judgment seat when he comes, to receive according to what they have done (2 Cor. 5:10). This takes place under the sixth vial as we have seen: for there the Lord himself says, "Behold, I come as a thief: blessed is he that watcheth, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Rev. 16:15). Consequently, the judgment of the called is all over before the war of the ten kings with the Lamb begins: for that war is under the seventh vial, and those are with the lamb who being "the called" have been "chosen", having been found "faithful." The brethren of Christ as his co-adjutors and assistants in a work of war and devastation, will appear a strange idea to those who only know the Bible (?) through the medium of pulpit theology: but is a divine idea for all that, and a beautiful idea, when we realize what the world requires and what will come of the terrible work they will do. The result of the work is referred to thus in Psalm 46: "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted Come, behold the work of the Lord, what desolation He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth: He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder. Be still,

and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen: I will be exalted in the earth.”

After telling John (verse 15) that the waters of the symbol signified population, the angel gives him to understand that at a certain stage of their career the ten horns “shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.” This we have seen fulfilled within the last forty or fifty years. The governments of Europe have concurred in an anti-Papal policy, while obliged to compromise with the Church in their arrangements. The secularization of ecclesiastical property in all the states of Europe (including even Spain, the most pro-Papal of all countries), is a process which illustrates the fulfilment of the prophecy. This is, symbolically, eating the harlot’s flesh in a very unmistakable way. Before the days of the French Revolution, the Church possessed nearly a third of the lands of Europe: now she has but a very little. The Church has been hated of the governments; her flesh has been nearly eaten off her bones, and they have burnt her with the fire of war. But a reaction in her favour may be looked for as the end approaches. When Christ appears on the scene, the powers rally round her; for the false prophet is found in their camp, as their inspirer and ecclesiastical leader. But her “last end will be worse than the first;” for Christ himself confronts her as the avenger of the slaughtered saints, and there will be no recovery from the perdition which he will bring upon her.

This is the subject of chapter 18. Chapter 17 brings us so far in the work of overthrowing the ecclesiastical corrupter of the earth. The horns do the first part. There is an orderly gradation in the downfall, as there was in the uprising; first the gradual and providential, then the summary and the divine. The horns do their disestablishing work, and then there is a manifestation from heaven to consummate the work in overwhelming perdition. John sees (verse 1) “another angel coming down from heaven, having great power, and the earth was lightened with his glory.” That this angel symbolizes an earth-enlightening power, having a mission against Babylon, is evident from the proclamation he makes (verse 2), “He cried mightily with a strong voice, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of demons, and hold of every foul spirit, and cage of every unclean and hateful bird!” The literal power having this mission is defined by Paul in his words to the Thessalonians, on the same subject, under another style of discourse, viz., the Man of Sin, “whom THE LORD”, he says, “shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming.” The Lord at his coming is the destroyer of Babylon, in conjunction with his brethren, who, with him, “execute the judgment written.” Therefore we cannot be mistaken in regarding this earth-enlightening angel as the symbol of Christ and the saints -- the one glorious mystical angel-man in head and body -- gloriously manifested to proclaim, and therefore to effect, the downfall of the great corrupting institution of the earth, and to fill the earth with the light of the glory of the Lord. The angel cries, “Babylon is fallen!” -- not as a thing done, but as a thing about to be done, for the very next voice recognizes her existence still, “Come out of her, my people”. The reason for her fall (verse 3) is true to history. “All nations have drunk of the wine of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her.” All nations have received, and imbibed, and been subject to the influence of Rome’s religious teaching; and that religious teaching is meant by wine, as a symbol, is evident from its employment (as the good wine) to represent the feast of truth and righteousness, which Jehovah is to spread for all people in Zion at the establishment of His kingdom (Isa. 25:6). Then all the kings of the European system have had constant dealings with Rome as a church. “The merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.” Who are these? Who are the merchants of the earth in Apocalyptic usage? We are not left to guess. The last verse but one of the chapter tells us: “Thy merchants were the great men of the earth” -- therefore not ordinary traders; but dealers in Romish merchandise, traffickers in indulgences, and preferments, and ecclesiastical privileges, immunities and emoluments of all sorts. The Church has been the gate to civil distinction for centuries. The dealers in her wares have been the great men of the earth; their dealership has been a passport to eminence, and a means of wealth everywhere: vide to cardinals, and ecclesiastical magnates of all sorts, to whom secular princes have been aids, accessories, and servants. Even secular princes acquired distinction as friends of the Church. These have been traders

-- not common traders, but traders in Romish goods to their great advantage and enrichment, as the history of a thousand years illustrates. To be out of the trade was a dreadful situation at one time. This country was once under the ban of excommunication, and the result was a suspension of business of all sorts -- common businesses, as well as other sorts -- till an understanding was arrived at with Rome. No burials could take place; no marriages, no baptisms (so-called), no preaching, no traffic in the market. We have to go back to the palmy days of Papal history to see these things in their full light. Rome licensed everything: she sold the right to preach, the power to forgive sins (!), the right to be buried, and the right to escape an imaginary purgatory after death. Immense revenues were derived from this ecclesiastical traffic. No man could buy or sell without the paid-for mark of the beast -- the sign of the cross officially imparted.

“I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues” (verse 4). This shows that after Christ has come, there will be no invitation to all who choose to separate themselves from the Papal association. The invitation was placed on record long ago, doubtless that it might serve as a guide to all who fear God during the ages of Papal darkness; but it seems specially to point to an invitation to be issued just before judgment is inflicted. It is parallel with what happened in the case of literal Babylon, when the time for her destruction arrived. Israel in her midst was thus addressed “Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord’s vengeance; He will render unto her a recompense” (Jer. 51:6). There is an analogy between the two cases, which the truth enables us to perceive. In the case of ancient Babylon, the time for her destruction had arrived: Israel had been long in captivity, and the crisis of Israel’s restoration, under Cyrus, was at hand. The era of Babylon’s downfall was the epoch of Israel’s uprising. And so it is now. When the Lord Jesus appears to destroy the Apocalyptic Babylon, it is that he may also “build again the tabernacle of David that is fallen;” and here is on record a summons to his people to “come out” of the former, for fear of being involved in the retribution that is to descend upon her. Lot, departing from the midst of Sodom, is an illustration. He pressed his sons-in-law to accompany him, but they would not, and were involved in the destruction of the place: Lot’s wife, looking back, after having been warned, was smitten; and, says Jesus, “Remember Lot’s wife.”

The address to “my people,” in the midst of Babylon, would indicate a special class. There are only two classes to whom the designation can apply -- 1. Israel after the flesh; and 2. Israel after the spirit, or those who have become Israel by adoption through the belief and obedience of the gospel. Now as the latter at this crisis have been taken away and are in fact waiting with Christ to pour out the impending judgment, it can only apply to the former who are scattered in thousands in all the territories of the ecclesiastical Babylon. Israel’s gathering from their midst is one of the most interesting operations in the setting-up of the kingdom of God. This summons would indicate that to some extent at its first stage, that restoration will be a question of voluntary compliance on the part of the Jews with the invitation addressed to them. It would also indicate another thing: the probability of many preferring to remain in the “Let-us-alone-that-we-may-serve-the-Egyptians” spirit of their ancestors in the days of Moses. The bulk will doubtless respond and “come out,” in the readiness to repair to the countries that are to witness the revival of their nationality in the midst of the earth. The prophet testified “they shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for Jehovah will go before them, and the God of Israel will be their rereward” (Isa. 52:12). They will be Jehovah’s army in the Roman dominion, with which He will break in pieces the nations. They will move deliberately and according to instructions. They will accomplish the retribution of God upon the European Babylon before their final departure for the land of their fathers, as in the case of Pharaoh and the Egyptians before Israel’s exodus. They will therefore be in a suitable position to carry out the injunction of verses 6 and 7 of the chapter (18) we are considering: “Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself and lived deliciously, so much torment

and sorrow give her.” This means a time of great affliction for Rome and all her supporters, ministered at the hands of Israel, used as Jehovah’s goodly horse in the battle, and battle axe in war (Zech. 10:3; Jer. 51:20).

To the last, Rome retains the complacent hallucination in which the undisturbed imposture of centuries has confirmed her. “She saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her” (verses 7 and 8). This shows that Rome retains confidence in her destiny up to the moment the thunders of divine vengeance crash forth upon her affrighted ear. It is to something like this that Paul refers when he says of the day of the Lord’s coming, “When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh.” It also shows that in the final perdition of Rome, there is to be something local to the city itself, very sudden, and out of the usual run of calamity. The intimation that her plagues are to come “in one day:” the declaration that “she shall be utterly burned with fire,” and the cause alluded to as accounting for her disastrous end -- “strong is the Lord who judgeth her,” all point in this direction. The sequel supplies particulars that could not be understood apart from the view of which Dr. Thomas was strongly convinced and which this whole chapter furnished so much reason for entertaining: viz., that the city of Rome itself, and all its environs, will be engulfed in the fiery abyss that underlies the site on which it is built and of which Vesuvius (quiescent for many centuries, but now active) may be considered the chimney. The kings of the earth, her paramours, are represented (verse 9) as seeing the smoke of her burning afar off and lamenting for her catastrophe and the suddenness of it. This shows the kings survive the destruction of the Babylon of this chapter, and that they survive as sympathizers with a calamity which they have not caused. The destruction is therefore something more than a political or ecclesiastical destruction. Literally, of course, they could not see a conflagration in Italy: but in a condensed presentation of the scene, it is not inappropriate to represent them as spectators. They would see in the sense of hearing of it, and being witnesses of it by report. All the world saw the capture of Napoleon III at Sedan, though not with their actual eyes. There may appear to be a little mixing up of literal Rome with the ecclesiastical Rome that “sits on many waters;” but the confusion will only be experienced where there is a supposed obligation to be uniform and precise in the interpretation. There, is a literal Rome and a spiritual Rome, and while these are separate, yet they are to be identified one with the other, and in a sense, you cannot have one without the other. The spiritual Rome is the architectural Rome in her ecclesiastical relations with the peoples of the earth. There could be no “Church of Rome” without a Rome to give that standard of affinity. The literal Rome is the kernel of the affair. It is so even in the symbolism, for the “seven heads” of the monster symbolizing the Roman body politic, lay hold of the fact that Rome is built on seven hills. Now, it would seem appropriate to commence the breaking-up of the Roman system by the destruction of Rome herself: nothing would arouse the world’s attention so much to the Roman question in its divine relations as the disappearance in the volcanic subterranean, amid earthquake, and tempest, and fire, of the city of the Pope, with its presumptuous temple of “St. Peter’s,” its Vatican Palace, its hundreds of costly churches, and shrines, and all the multiplied paraphernalia of priestly superstition and iniquity. Nothing short of such a catastrophe would answer to the features of this chapter. The apostles are adjured to rejoice over her (verse 20) because of God’s avenging of them on her. This could not apply to the Roman Catholic Church, which did not exist when the apostles, were slain. But it would apply exactly to architectural Rome, which was the city of the Caesars who murdered them -- a city doubtless which is the root of the Roman Church, but which church could, however, survive without it. A mighty angel takes up a great stone (verse 21) and casting it into the sea, says, “Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found. no more at all”. This figure would not be met by any merely ecclesiastical overthrow. The enumeration of the wealth appertaining to the city (verses 12-13) could not be understood as applicable to an institution merely: because “the merchants of these things” appear (verse 15) as “standing afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold,

and precious stones, and pearls!" There is no such collection of precious articles and art treasures in the whole world as there is in Rome. The interior walls of St. Peter's are enriched with precious stones, the offerings of devotees. The city is full of shrines at which similar offerings have been made. It has been a superstition with the rich everywhere that costly gifts to the church would purchase the favour of heaven, and in those sent actually to Rome itself there was special virtue. The result is that there is a concentration at Rome in the churches of a vast material wealth of the character described in the category occurring in verse 12 of this chapter. Rome has always been the great market for such things: the jeweller, the sculptor, the painter, the worker in precious stones, and in stained glass and costly embroidery, have found their best employment in Rome -- speaking broadly of her history, covering the centuries. The best musicians are also found there. "The Pope's choir" at the present moment is the finest in Europe. "The voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters" is to be heard no more at all in her when this catastrophe has overtaken her (verse 22). This agrees only with the idea that topographical Rome is meant. The Papal institution survives the destruction foreshown in this chapter, for the Pope is found at the head of the armies that oppose Christ in the subsequent war (19:19-20). Therefore it cannot be the overthrow of the institution that merchants lament, but the overthrow of the city which is the heart and headquarters of the institution.

It is Rome, which, by the hand of Pilate, killed the Lord Jesus; which, by Nero, beheaded "our beloved brother Paul," and threw his body to the beasts; which, by a similar edict, dishonoured and crucified erring but forgiven, impulsive but lovable, Peter; which slaughtered the friends of Christ by the thousand in the days of Paganism; which, by Titus, levelled Jerusalem with the ground, drowned the flames of the temple in the blood of Israel, and scattered a miserable remnant to the winds; Rome, the implacable enemy and destroyer of the Jews, in all the centuries, Pagan and Papal; Rome, the Papal foe of the Scriptures, and the murderer of the saints; Rome, the inventor of torments and foul iniquities of the monastery and dungeon; Rome, who flaunts among her architectural ornaments the sculptured forms of the dishonoured furniture of Jehovah's sanctuary; Rome of the Caesars, and Rome of the Popes and Cardinals; Rome of the long dark and dreadful history of the world; Rome, the mistress of kings and the debaucher of the nations; Rome, the corrupter of the world to an extent the corrupted populations do not realize in their corruption; seven-hilled Rome on the Tiber, which blasphemes heaven by arrogating to herself the title of the Eternal City, and exhibiting her chief magistrate to all the world as the Holy Father; Great Babylon, the Mother of Harlots and the abominations of the earth; -- this is the Rome that is destined most terribly to fall before the first blast of Jehovah's fury, long pent up "deferred for his name's sake," but shortly to descend in roaring tempest that will sweep away all refuge of lies, and level the pride of man with the dust, that the Lord alone may be exalted, and the nations blessed in Abraham and his seed.

No wonder that such a glorious consummation should be greeted, as John heard it greeted, by an outburst of praise, like the roar of thunder, and the sound of many waters, from the mouths of a countless multitude who said, "Alleluia! salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hands." But the more particular consideration of this triumph we must reserve for the next lecture.

LECTURE 12: REVELATIONS CHAPTERS 19 AND 20 (TO VS. 6)

The Hallelujah chorus -- its real occasion and meaning -- the marriage of the Lamb -- the destruction of Rome -- the reasons for joy involved in these events -- the avengement of the slaughtered saints, of which they are the resurrected and rejoicing spectators -- the national celebration in the Holy Land under the leadership of Christ -- the next stage -- preparing to subjugate the whole world -- summons to surrender -- its rejection -- the “war of the great day of God Almighty” -- the programme of events in eleven items -- coming sacrifice -- destruction of the great men of the earth -- Nihilism eclipsed -- overthrow of the confederated powers of Europe -- capture of the leaders -- the beast and false prophet -- the lake of fire -- the host of rejected (resurrected) fugitives in their territories -- the binding of the dragon -- shutting him up in the abyss -- the reign of the saints for a thousand years -- who they are that reign -- not “martyrs” only -- the millennium not 360,000 years -- the first resurrection -- the rest of the dead -- living and reigning with Christ -- orthodox imagination -- the gloriousness of the kingdom.

THE civilized world has been made familiar with the Hallelujah chorus by the splendid composition of Handel; but its real nature, occasion, and meaning are by no means so generally understood as the music is appreciated. Handel himself had evidently a poor light on the subject; for, in selecting from the Apocalypse the word, to be set to strains which are as nearly “immortal” as anything musical can be, he omitted the very pith and marrow of the song that pealed forth in John’s hearing in a tumult of joy and praise, which he could only compare to the noise of many waters, and the voice of mighty thunders. The pith and marrow are contained in two items, which Handel did not deem appropriate in his composition, though they formed part of the song John heard: 1. “The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready;” and, 2. The Lord our God “hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hands.” Both are central and essential aspects of the crisis causing the joy, and both are equally foreign to the theology in which Handel, with the majority of people, was born and bred. The first you understand very well: we need not dwell much upon it.

We have come to know that the marriage of the Lamb is the union that takes place between Christ and his brethren, in the day of his manifestation upon earth in power and great glory. This knowledge is derivable from this very Scripture. We are told (verse 8), “The bride was arrayed, in fine linen, clean and white;” and that this fine linen, as part of the Apocalyptic imagery, represented “the righteousness (or more strictly translated, righteousnesses -- the righteous actions) of the saints.” Consequently, the bride stands for the saints; and, when we know who the saints are, we know who the bride is. Who the saints are we may learn from the recorded work of the apostles in the first century. All who believed and submitted to the requirements of the gospel were saints, as in the case of the Romans (Rom. 1:7-16); the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:2); the Ephesians (Eph. 1:1); the Philippians (Phil. 1:1); the Colossians (Col. 1:1), etc. All in every age who have, like these, believed the gospel are in a similar position with them, and therefore constituents of the bride, to whom the Lamb is to be united in glorious marriage at his coming. That bride stands for all the saints, in their numerical completeness, in the day spoken of by Paul, when the Lord comes “to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe” (2 Thess. 1:10). The union is more than a legal union. It is a union of nature. Christ is now immortal, while his brethren are either in their graves or living in a weak and mortal state. At his coming the dead of them will come forth, and the living, with them, will, in the act of marriage, be assimilated in nature with him; for it is written, “He shall change their vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Phil. 3:21). They will, therefore, be “no more twain, but one flesh.” Marriage will have its highest antitype, when Christ presents the complete ecclesia “to himself a glorious ecclesia, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing” (Eph. 5:27). The time for this presentation arrives at the epoch of Rome’s overthrow. Pulpit theology has no counterpart for this; for it sends the friends of Christ to him, one by one, in detail as they die. There is no place for a simultaneous muster in such a system. Handel could not associate the marriage of the Lamb with his “Hallelujah”, and so he left it out, and,

in doing so, left out its most glorious feature; for the marriage of the Lamb is more glorious than the judgment of the Romish whore, though that is glorious. The two events are naturally related. A bride and a prostitute are congruous ideas. A gaudy prostitute is the divine symbol for the Church of Rome. That Church counterfeits what is coming. In the Roman Church we have a body subject to a head: that body the benighted Catholic populations, perishing for lack of knowledge; that head, the Pope at Rome, a feeble, erring mortal, claiming the attributes and accepting the honours of God upon earth. What a body when contrasted with the body of the immortalized saints! -- a glorious corporation of men and women, perfected in character and nature, "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;" and what a head when compared with the omnipotent, immortal, and infallible Lord Jesus, the Son of God, and heir of all things! The contrast helps us to see the glory of the feature omitted by Handel; for the false Church is to be supplanted by the true. The pretended head is to be destroyed by the true head of the Church, and government given over to Christ and his glorified brethren, to the unutterable joy and well-being of earth's teeming populations, who will, under them, experience the truth of Jehovah's promise to Abraham, that all nations shall be blessed in him and in his seed.

The theme of the "Hallelujah!" that first broke upon John's ear is one that is very unpopular with society, and yet is one that in the system of true wisdom is glorious and joyful. It was expressed in these words, "True and righteous are his judgments, for he hath judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornications, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand." It is impossible for those who are intelligent in the truth to leave this out of their vision of the Hallelujah chorus. Such know too well what great reason there is for the rejoicing in which the apostles themselves are divinely summoned to take part (chap. 18:20). Apart from the fact that the manifestation of the destroying judgments of God will teach the world righteousness, there are retrospective reasons that will give them much joyful zest in the appreciation of those who are in sympathy with the divine work upon the earth. They are hinted at in the closing verses of chap. 18: "By thy sorceries were all nations deceived; and in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth". Here is a reference to the demoralizing effect in the now current age produced by the system headed up at Rome. There is a deceiving of all nations by ecclesiastical sorcery. We see it before our eyes. It is much more of a reality than the common run of people (looking at things merely in the light of what they have been accustomed to) are able to realize. It is not merely that the community everywhere has for ages been sorcerized by ecclesiastical pretensions, assertions and ceremonies into the belief of worse than worthless fables -- (whose hold upon the popular mind is so deep-rooted that even Protestants, who repudiate the authority of Rome, are largely victimized by them), but the effect of these fables has been to dull the intellect, and degrade the mind, and brutalize the tastes of the peoples everywhere, to an extent that is only realized when the ennobling glory and emancipating power of the truth is seen. The mind is on the move from day to day, and inevitably assimilates the influences acting upon it. Papal doctrines and traditions are utterly corrupting and degrading. They blind the understanding, rob the better nature of all stimulus, and directly encourage the free play of the worst impulses of human nature. This is done by the slow out-working of their logical effects in the minds of their victims, and not by their ostensible professions. I believe it is impossible to estimate fully the part contributed by historic ecclesiasticism to the intellectual stolidity and moral debasement of the European populations. The truth gradually awakes us to a perception of its stupefying effects, even in Britain, which, in a certain way, has been free from the Roman yoke for centuries. We do not realize it all at once. "Drunk with the wine of the harlot's fornication" is the Spirit of God's own symbol of the world's condition; and while, at first, the symbol shocks by its plainness and its vigour, at last it seems exactly adapted to express the actual state of things. The world appears in a very different state to a mind scripturally enlightened, from what it does to a merely natural observer. Who can alter it? Argument is powerless. The system rests upon the impregnable foundations of vested interest, respectability, human honour, and historic celebrity. All the world wonders after the beast. A strong and infallible hand is wanted to break up a strong and hoary system of intellectual and spiritual slavery, which has besotted the nations and keeps

them besotted. Such a hand is brought to bear when Christ comes. The true and righteous judgments of God are poured upon the great whore to her extermination from the earth. Is it a great marvel that such an event should evoke the loud and long hallelujahs that John heard beforehand in the vision in the isle of Patmos?

But there is another aspect to the case, yielding joy in the “judgment of the great whore.” It is that expressed in the words, “He hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hands.” This sentiment is entirely obnoxious to modern “Christianity.” Boasting of the New Testament as the source of its inspiration, it yet has no place for this New Testament foreshadowing of retributive visitation of the blood of saints and prophets on their ecclesiastical murderers. This is the result of a misapprehension of the New Testament precepts on the subject of vengeance. We are not to avenge ourselves. We are to submit to evil at present: but this does not exclude “the righteous judgment of God.” In the same precept it is written, “Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” And at the time we are considering, the era for this vengeance has arrived. It is a vengeance to be inflicted by the very hands of the saints themselves, with Christ at their head (Psa. 149:9; Dan. 7:22; Rev. 2:26; Rev. 19:11-15).

The apostles are called upon to rejoice over Rome’s perdition (18:20). This implies they will be on the scene at the time: so they will. The resurrection has taken place before Rome goes crashing into the abyss. The song that John hears in the beginning of this chapter -- “a great voice of much people in heaven” -- is the song of the resurrection multitude, who have become aware of the retributive catastrophe that has overwhelmed their historic enemy. It is heard “in heaven,” because they are there, that is, in the heaven of the Apocalypse -- the heaven in which previously John saw the dragon and the sun-clothed woman -- the heaven of power upon earth. In this heaven they have become enthroned, as the result of the appearance of Christ in power and glory, their resurrection and immortalization with him, and their joint overthrow of Gog and his assembled hosts on the mountains of Israel, from which, at this point, they will have expelled these hosts, and established themselves in their stead as the beginning of the kingdom of God upon earth. Firmly established here (in the Holy Land), they will have sent their summons to the nations to submit, as we saw in the consideration of chapter 14. That summons will have been rejected, and its rejection will have been answered by the blow which destroys Rome in their midst -- an event, the of which causes the joyful outburst in the camp of the saints which John heard in “the heaven” of their occupation. A glorious and imposing State ceremonial -- far exceeding anything possible to mortal men -- is implied in the intimation that “A voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.” We have heard of thanksgiving services by royal authority -- national fasts and national thanksgivings on special occasions; but where has the world ever witnessed a celebration like that which responds to this divine summons, issued to the house of Israel on the morrow of Rome’s perdition? The thousands of Israel led and guided by an immortal multitude, surrounding the Son of Man, give no formal and laggard expression to their praise. The manifestation of the national joy -- after so long and bitter a night, and in the presence of so perfect a deliverance as the Lord brings -- is hearty and rapturous beyond all previous ebullitions of human feeling -- excelling even the song of Israel on the eastern shore of the Red Sea after Pharaoh’s destruction. If ever men weep tears of gladness, it must be on the occasion here depicted, when, after the depression and desolation of ages, the mustered family of Jehovah can say in the language of manifest fact, “The Lord God omnipotent reigneth”; and when they seek to give vent to their unspeakable joy in saying, “Let us be glad and rejoice; for the marriage of the Lamb is come; and his wife hath made herself ready.” This marriage of the Lamb is not only union with his brethren but union with the land (Isa. 62:4), and union with the long outcast nation of Israel (Zeph. 3:17). It is the era of regeneration all round, the joyous heading-up and ripening of all the glorious purposes and promises of God for which the night of suffering is but a preparation.

Handel inserts, in his version of the song, the words proclaimed on the sounding of the seventh trumpet

(Rev. 11:15); "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." This is rather out of place. It is true the epoch for this mighty revolution has arrived when "the marriage of the Lamb is come;" but at the particular moment represented in the celebration before us, the change has not taken place. "The kingdoms of this world" are still "the kingdoms of this world." The only part of the world that has become subject to Christ is the Holy Land, cleared of the Gogian hosts by the preliminary stroke of Ezekiel 38 and 39; Joel 3; and Zech. 14. The rest of the world, though startled by that disaster, and by the subsequent cataclysm on the Italian peninsula, have no knowledge of the divine nature of the revolution begun, and are engaged in sullenly organizing their forces for the succeeding phases of "the war of the great day of God Almighty." These ensue shortly. After a period of great joy and rejoicing in the Holy Land, the palm is laid aside in the camp of the saints for the sword. The heavenly hosts equip themselves for the struggle on which they are about to enter for the mastery of the world. This is signified by the next scene (verses 11-16): "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called THE WORD OF GOD. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Here is an entire change of scene: instead of a Lamb, and a bride, and a marriage, we have horses, instruments of war, fire-glancing riders, and blood-stained garments, with glimpses of smitten nations, iron rule, and hot retribution. Though the picture is changed, its elements are self-evidently the same in the principal features. The "faithful and true" leader of the heavenly host is, without controversy, the Lamb; the armies following are the bride, and their companionship in war is that which is inaugurated by the marriage. The first picture is that of the saints in the banqueting house of love, so to speak; the second is the Apocalyptic hieroglyph of their subsequent relation to the nations of the earth as military conquerors. This is a perfectly natural order of ideas. God is in all things the God of order. The universe, as we see it, is a perfect illustration: the history of His past doings is a confirmation, if needed. The work to be done at the coming of Christ is the work of God, for Christ is God manifest. "God was in Christ," in the days of his flesh, "reconciling the world unto himself;" much more is God in Christ in the days of his power, when, as "the name of Jehovah, he comes from far, burning with his anger" (Isa. 30:27). The work to be done at the appearing of Christ being a work of God, we should expect it to be done in an orderly and consecutive manner. What more orderly and appropriate than the following programme, which appears from the symbols and testimonies bearing upon the case: --

1. -- The arrival of Christ in the earth as a thief during the progress of the sixth vial, viz., in this current epoch, when the political Euphrates is at the dried-up point, and the nations of the earth in an armed state, as the result of the policy of the political frogs (Rev. 16:15).
2. -- The gathering together of the household of faith -- living and dead, faithful and unfaithful, into his presence, to be judged by him -- as the "account" may warrant -- to be accepted or rejected -- immortalized or sentenced to inherit corruption according as it shall be shown the things done during probationary life have been good or bad (2 Thess. 2:1; 2 Tim. 4:1; Luke 19:15; Acts 10:42; 2 Cor. 5:10; Luke 12:8-9; Gal. 6:8).
3. -- The sending away of the rejected to await the judgment that will "devour the adversary" (Heb. 10:27), that is the manifestation of Divine power that will overthrow the nations who will oppose Christ, organized as "the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41), and Apocalyptically described as "the

great dragon, that. old serpent, the Devil and Satan” (Rev. 20:1).

4. -- A season of rejoicing together (in the seclusion of the judgment scene -- probably Sinai -- in the presence of the attendant hosts of angels), on the part of Jesus and his accepted brethren -- the long separate but now united bride and Bridegroom, yielding mutual joy and gladness -- the Bridegroom beholding in the bride the fruit of “the travail of his soul” during the terrible days of his sufferings; and the bride, realizing in the spectacle of her visible Lord and Saviour that “joy unspeakable and full of glory,” which, in measure, she experienced in the days of faith, when she had to say, “whom having not seen, we love” (John 16:22; Matt. 25:21; Isa. 53:11; 1 Peter 1:8).

5. -- Their ascent together from the desert to the mountains of Israel to waylay and overwhelm the northern Gog, who will have victoriously overspread the re-settled Holy Land, and have brought the partially-restored Jews into great affliction, he resting in confident possession of Jerusalem (Zech. 14:5; Joel 3:11; Ezek. 38:1-12, 21; Daniel 11:45).

6. -- The destruction of the northern hosts, and the expulsion of a miserable remnant out of the land (Ezek. 39:1-5; Isa. 17:14).

7. -- The setting-up again of David’s fallen tabernacle (Amos 9:11).

8. -- A call to the nations to surrender to Jehovah’s king, enthroned on Zion (Psa. 2:6, 10-11; Isa. 52:13-15; Rev. 14:7).

9. -- The destruction of Rome (Rev. 14:8; 18:21).

10. -- Great rejoicings in Jerusalem (Rev. 18:1-6).

11. -- Preparation in the Holy Land for carrying war into the enemy’s country, and inflicting the vengeance of God throughout the world (Isa. 41:15; Micah 4:13; Jer. 51:20; Rev. 19:11-16).

This is the point to which the white horse scene in Revelation 19 conducts us -- the point at which the kingdom of God has begun upon the earth, but has not yet subdued the earth to its power. At this point, it exists only in the territory of the Holy Land which has been previously cleared of the enemy by the overthrow of Gog. Established here, after a preliminary pause of consolidation, it takes attitude for its great aggression upon the whole world, which it is destined to subjugate to the sceptre of the house of David. This is the relation of things symbolized in the scene before us. In such a situation, the summons of the fowls to a feast of carrion is appropriate: “I saw an angel standing in the sun: and he cried with a loud voice, saying, Come and gather yourselves together to the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.” Here we have exhibited a coming sacrifice of the great men of the earth. What greater men are there than “kings and captains and mighty men?” They comprise the respectability of the Continent where militarism is in the ascendant. The abolition of this class of respectability is a necessity before a true civilization can be established. The Socialists see this: the Nihilists of Russia have startled Europe with a programme aiming at it, and with one or two attempts to carry it out, but what can they do? If every attempted assassination were a success, it would be but a leaf or two more from the mighty oak, and even if they could pull the oak down, what could they put in its place? We should only have the same monstrous evil in another shape. Better the ascendancy of an elegant and refined aristocracy than the leadership of an ignorant and vulgar democracy. God has His own remedy in store. He intends the destruction of the great of the earth in preparation for the new order of society to be established under Christ’s glorious

headship -- not a democracy, but a theocracy -- a true theocracy -- not in name merely -- the real and active government of God through Christ and an immortal administration, numerous enough to meet the requirements of universal empire. This purpose involves the perdition of the present order of things, for it is based upon principles with which the present order is at utter variance. It is expressed in the angelic formula, "Glory to God in the highest: on earth peace, and goodwill toward men." This was the motto of Christ's mission, heralded on the plains of Bethlehem, and it will not be falsified when that mission is accomplished. That mission will not be accomplished till he has performed the work symbolized in the chapter we are considering. The work he has done so far is great, but it is only foundation work. He has laid the basis of the world's reconciliation to God; but there are many obstacles, and these have to be cleared out of the way. This will be done when the kings and captains and mighty men are served up at "the supper of the great God." The way it is done is beautiful. They are not hunted and shot, like game. They are allowed to give full vent to their native diabolism, in a fully organized military enterprise to put down the power of Christ just established in Palestine.

"I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army." This is the preparation for the supper announced in verse 17. The confederated hosts of Europe, marching under the constituted authorities, draw near in threatening masses, to crush the insolent and mysterious dictatorship that has newly sprung up in Syria. They probably expect an easy victory, supposing they have only some fanatic of a second Mahomet to deal with. They put forth great strength to make sure work. They come on like Goliath, disdainful of their petty foe, yet angry at having to condescend to smite him. But how speeds the war when the hosts meet? Many a carnage-strewn field from which the kings flee will slowly tell the tale. The war lasts a long time as we saw in connection with chapter 17, and for purposes which we then considered. The end is certain. "The beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat on the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. Such is the symbolic description of the general upshot of the war of the great day of God Almighty. Its general effect is clear enough, whatever may be involved in the details. The system of civil and ecclesiastical European society, as headed-up in the emperor and Pope (for the time then being), will be "taken," and extinguished in the fiery destruction that will have beforehand obliterated sacerdotal Rome in volcanic perdition. That they are "cast alive," as distinguished from the "remnant" who are "slain with the sword" of the white-horse rider in chief, intimates the difference made between the leaders and the rank and file. The latter are destroyed with an indiscriminate slaughter; but the official heads are preserved for ceremonial judgment at the hands of the victor, after the type of the kings of the Amorites, who were brought before Joshua when their forces had been overthrown and scattered (Joshua 10:22-25). By this discrimination, the beast-and-false-prophet system, of which they will be the last representatives, will be more strongly and effectually suppressed than if they were slain in battle. The lake of fire, into which they are cast, is the symbol of the second death, as we are informed in chapter 21:8. It therefore stands for the fiery judgments of God, inflicted destructively on the adversary at Christ's coming; for it is this judgment that is to devour false brethren in a second death, after they have risen from the dead (Heb. 10:27; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Matt. 25:41). While the fiery lake is a symbol, it does not exclude the employment of literal fire as the destruction which it symbolizes, which leaves the wicked neither root nor branch (Mal. 4:1). Fire has been so employed in several former cases: vile Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24); Korah's sympathizers (Num. 16:35); Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:2); the military companies sent to arrest Elijah (2 Kings 1:10-12), etc. In whatever manner destruction befalls the adversary (and the manner will doubtless vary in different cases), it will be terrible and effectual. Participation in it -- ("alive" -- that is, raised from the dead to judgment) -- is the fate awaiting those who, being responsible, are not counted worthy by the Lord of acceptance in that day: for "the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore-mongers,

and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death” (21:8). This is not the popular hell, but it is terrible enough. It is a lake of death, and not a living torment. It symbolizes the inflicted judgment of God, which destroys those who are the subjects of it (Psa. 37:20; 145:20; Matt. 3: 12), but which, for a time, leaves the traces of their shame for the instruction of the populations who will survive the judgment crisis, and find their wisdom and delight in the worship of Jehovah (Isa. 66:23-24). Proximately, the judgment will be put forth (by fire and sword) for the overthrow of the kings who oppose the setting-up of the kingdom of God; but, secondarily, it will be the great day of retribution for the wickedness of the generations that have passed. It is part of the political situation that “the time of the dead that they should be judged” arrives with the coming of Christ and the anger of the nations. Though responsibility is limited to but a small proportion of the dead (the rest remaining undisturbed: Isa. 26:13-14; Psa. 49:6-20; Prov. 21:16; Jer. 51:57), yet those who come forth to the shame and contempt of that retributive era will be a vast multitude, far vaster than the number of those accepted and glorified; for, though many be called, few are chosen (Matt. 22:14). Thus, a new and terrible aggravation of the troubles of the times will be the launching upon society of a crowd of fugitives, accursed of God, lacking friend and bread, and the opportunity of quiet settlement anywhere; knowing the nature of the time that will have come upon the world, and having only the language of despair on their lips; for they will have seen the Judge, and retired from his presence, “with weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth” -- death lying before them, but not till the time appointed, at or before the close of the struggle between the nations and Christ. Well may such a time be described as “a time of trouble, such as never was,” when “many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake” (Dan. 12:1-2). Blessed are those who find mercy of the Lord in that day, and are invited to his side, among the called, and the chosen, and the faithful, who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

The political sequel is the suppression of human government and the establishment of the kingdom of God in all the earth. This is shown in the symbolism of Rev. 20:1-6, which comes within the purview of this evening’s lecture.

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given unto them: and, I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power: but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

The significance of this symbolism becomes evident enough after what has gone before. It shows the elements of previous scenes in new combinations. Just as the marriage scene gave way to a picture of war, in which the marriage parties appear in a new guise; so here we have the combatants in the war under a new figure, illustrative of the altered relations resulting from the war. The heaven-descended angel is Jesus and the saints; the key and chain, power to open and shut at will, and to bind or reduce to a condition of powerlessness; the dragon, the Devil and Satan, or human nature in organized opposition to God, and here represented by the symbol of the eastern section of the Roman Empire (the dragon), because that is the part of the earth (Turkey occupied by Russia) in which the closing opposition is offered. Also called the Old Serpent, because the Edenic serpent was the beginning of human rebellion, and became the symbol of the system resulting from it. For such an angel to lay hold on the dragon and

bind him, is for Jesus and the saints to seize on human government, and impose on all its officials such a restraint as will effectually prevent them from re-asserting their authority, or making any attempt to re-establish their power. To cast him into the abyss -- (translated bottomless pit) is to eject human nature -- (sin's flesh, alias the devil) -- from all share in the government, and to cast all its officials into privacy among the common people. To shut him up, and set a seal upon him, is to establish such a system of repression and watchfulness as will leave no loophole for the escape of human Satanism from the abyss of powerlessness into which it will be thrown.

The adoption of such a system would be simple and easy to such a class of rulers as Jesus and the saints, who control the power of the Spirit of God. There are several historic illustrations of the practical use of this power in dealing with men. The Syrians could not succeed in their plans against Israel, because, as one of the servants of the king told him, "Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telling the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber" (2 Kings 6:12). Gehazi sought in vain to conceal his private movements from the prophet, who said, "Went not mine heart with thee when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?" Peter, by the power of the Spirit, knew the private understanding between Ananias and Sapphira to misrepresent facts, before they came to tell their tale (Acts 5:1-7). Jesus knew the whereabouts and the attitude of Nathanael at a distance, before he was called to come and see Jesus (John 1:48). These are some of the illustrations of the power by which the government of Christ and the saints in the age to come will be able to detect the smallest germ of sedition without the employment of spies; while the falling down dead of Ananias and Sapphira illustrates the power by which they will be able to enforce their authority, thus admitting of that entire abandonment of the art of war, which is the prophetically-declared characteristic of the reign of Christ (Micah 4:1-4; Hosea 2:18; Zech. 9:10).

The work of binding and shutting up the dragon accomplished, the next scene in natural order is that presented in verse 4 -- a picture of thrones -- the thrones of the house of David and their occupants. "I saw thrones, and they sat on them..." Who are "they?" They are defined in the amplification following: "The souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God." On the strength of this, some say that the millennial thrones will only be occupied by "martyrs" -- those who have actually suffered death for Christ. That this is a mistake you are all aware from two things: 1, Christ judges and rewards the living, as well as the dead, "at his appearing and his kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:1). The living, found in the act of faithful service, are made rulers, as well as those who have gone to their graves by violence, or otherwise (Matt. 24:46). This is only reasonable; for the kingdom is awarded, not for being killed, but for faithful service in life, which is often more difficult than to die. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2 Tim. 2:12), whatever form the suffering take. Secondly, the 4th verse of Rev. 20 does not limit the occupants of the throne to one class. There are not only those who were "beheaded for the witness of Jesus," but those "who had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands:" that is, who had stood aloof from all complicity with Roman Babylon. There is a special appropriateness in classifying the occupants of the millennial thrones in this way, in view of the preceding portion of the vision, which exhibits the beast and his image in the ascendant in all the earth, and prevailing against the saints, "even unto death." The time has now come in this chapter for a reversal of parts. The saints rise from the dead; the beast and his image are destroyed, and the saints reign. They reign a thousand years, -- hence the period of their reign is called the millennium, from the Latin word signifying a thousand. Some have suggested a day-for-a-year interpretation of this period, making it 360,000 years; but there is no ground for the suggestion, beyond the fact that the day-for-a-year principle is observed in the definition of some of the Apocalyptic periods. This is by no means a conclusive evidence of every period being on the day-for-a-year principle. It all depends upon the association of the period. The life of the beast, signifying an empire, requires a condensation of the time, for the sake of decorum: so with the depredation of locusts, or the exposure of corpses, symbolizing political events: symbolic time was a necessity to suit

the fitness of things; but here, in Rev. 20, it is a question of “reigning,” which is a literal function, as those who reign are literal persons, requiring a literal statement of time. The surroundings of the case necessitate a literal understanding of the thousand years. It is in harmony with the Sabbath type, six days followed by a seventh of rest: six thousand years of turmoil, followed by a thousand years of rest and peace. 360,000 would be incompatible with the mission of the kingdom of God, which is to bring the mortal population of the globe into reconciliation with God, and a state of readiness for the immortal state beyond. 360,000 years of mortal propagation would cram the earth many times over, even at the present rate of increase; but what shall we say to the rate of the increase when human life is greatly lengthened, as we learn it will be from Isaiah 65:20-22, and when the enriching blessing of God will be on the earth with its increase, and the family of man everywhere? (Psa. 67:6-7; Hosea 2:18-22; Jer. 31:12-14; Ezek. 34:26). God’s plans are wise; and therefore a thousand, and not 360,000 years, are required for the reign of Christ and the saints. A poor salvation, some say, if it is only to last a thousand years. The criticism is founded on a mistake. It is not salvation, but only its opening phase, that is to last a thousand years. When mortal man has been divinely governed a thousand years, the time will have come for the final form of things on earth. Man’s mortality will cease in the immortalization of the mighty harvest of obedient men and women, generated by the millennial reign, and in the destruction of such of the races as do not, after that wonderful era of privilege, answer to that description. But this is anticipating the subject of the last lecture.

“The rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished.” This shows that after Christ comes and raises his brethren and associates them with himself in the government, there will be no further resurrection till the period of their government is at an end. “The rest of the dead”* does not necessarily mean those left unraised in their graves at Christ’s coming, though it may include some such; because the bulk of them will never see the [*The dead who figure in this vision of the millennial “thrones” are the righteous. No others “shall reign”; and no others are within the purview of the vision. “The rest of the dead” are the “post-millennial harvest”, of which Christ and his brethren are” the firstfruits” (1 Cor. 15:23-28; Rev. 14:1-5). -- Publisher.] light of resurrection at all, not being in circumstances making them responsible (Isa. 26:13; Psa. 49:14-20). “The rest of the dead” must be understood of the entire reign of death on the earth. The time for death to cease has not arrived with the setting-up of the kingdom. Death continues in the kingdom of the thousand years (Isa. 65:20; Ezek. 44:25). When the saints are immortalized, there is a remainder of Adam’s mortal race, who like them will at a subsequent time become immortal; and the force of the statement seems to be in the intimation that there will be no more admission to immortality till “the thousand years are finished.” The Revised Version of the New Testament omits in this verse the word “again,” and the omission strengthens the meaning of the verse in the direction now suggested.

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” This verse is usually understood in a way that nullifies important truth in other directions. It is taken to mean that all who come out of the grave at the coming of Christ are “blessed and holy,” in disregard of the plainest declarations elsewhere that the unworthy servants of Christ as well as the worthy come forth to judgment at his coming (Dan. 12:2; John 5:29; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:1). What the verse says is that “Blessed and holy is he that hath part (meros, portion, inheritance, or lot) in the first resurrection.”* Many come forth at that time who, like Simon Magus, have “neither part nor lot in the matter” (Acts. 8:21); to whom Jesus says “I never knew you” (Matt. 7:23), and in whom at that time will be realized his terrible words, “Ye shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out” (Luke 13:28). To say that these do not rise at this time is to deny the judgment of the living and the dead at the appearance of Christ, and therefore to reject a first principle of the gospel of Christ (Acts 10:42; Rom. 2:16; Heb. 6:1- 2).

[* “The first resurrection” in this vision refers only to the righteous. Compare Luke 20:35-36. The judgment seat is a thing of the past before Satan is bound and the millennial thrones set up. -- Publisher.]

The contrast, in the verse, is between those who at the time have part and those who at that time have no part; those on whom the second death hath no power and those on whom it has the power. The contrast is not between those who rise when Christ comes, and those who rise at some other time. Such a contrast could not hold good; for millions who rise at the close of the thousand years will be as “blessed and holy” as those who rise at the beginning of that period, though doubtless a higher rank will eternally appertain to those who enter eternal life “through much tribulation” than to those who, in such an age of light and blessing as the thousand years, hear a voice behind them, so to speak, at every step in their journey, saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it” (Isa. 30:21), and when “all shall know the Lord, from the least even to the greatest” (Jer. 31:34).

This “living and reigning with Christ” is a privilege which cannot be enjoyed at a subsequent stage of God’s work on earth. It is a work of subduing the evil and dispensing blessing among mankind in a thousand practical ways, while as yet the effects of sin remain. They are no meaningless words that are addressed in the parable to the man faithful in the use of the talents entrusted to his use in his Lord’s absence, “Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful in a very little: I will make thee ruler over many things: have thou authority over ten cities.” To qualify his brethren for the enlarged stewardship of the age to come, the first thing Christ does at his return after judgment, is to transform their natures into similarity with his own. This is testified with a plainness that leaves no mist on the point (Phil. 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2; 1 Cor. 15:50-53). Endowed with an incorruptible, unflagging, immortal nature and gifts of penetration unknown to mortal faculty (1 Cor. 13:12), we behold the saint enter upon the work of ruling his appointed district in the name and by the power of Christ when the word everywhere has been brought into subjection. An immortal amidst mortals; an infallible man among erring men; an omniscient judge among those who see only the outside of things -- the beautiful, the dignified, the noble, the strong among the frail and lacking sons of Adam: the omnipotent and the wealthy among the weak and the poor. We can form but a faint conception of the glory of the destiny of “living and reigning with Christ a thousand years.” Such a man will be a father among his people -- a god among men -- revered, honoured, loved and worshipped by his grateful and rejoicing subjects, who thrive and flourish in his clemency and in his wisdom in all their affairs. He will be a constituent of Jehovah’s One Name in all the earth (Zech. 14:9), of which the kernel will be Jesus enthroned in Jerusalem (Isa. 24:23; Mic. 4:7). This the gospel of the kingdom has taught us. It is a common idea that the doctrine of the millennial reign of Christ depends upon the few verses in the Apocalypse we have been considering. When people become acquainted with the Scriptures, they see how totally groundless this idea is. You have experienced the truth of this remark. You have seen that the doctrine of the kingdom of God (or the reign of Christ on earth in the age to come) is the theme of divine promise from the beginning; the subject of the promises made to the Fathers (Gen. 22:17-18; Gal. 3:16); the covenant made with David (2 Sam. 7:12-17; 23:3-5; Acts 2:30); the communication of God to men by all the prophets (Isa. 9:7; Jer. 33:15; 23:3-5; Ezek. 37:21-22; Dan. 7:14, etc., etc.), and the preaching of Jesus and the apostles (Luke 8:1; Acts 28:23). You have seen that the salvation offered to us in the gospel is neither more nor less than the realization of all those glorious promises. The Apocalypse is a dramatic exhibition of the course of affairs among men with relation to the working out of this hope. It exhibits in a distinct manner the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth as the appointed consummation to which all things are working: but it is by no means the source of the idea. The idea is rooted in all the Scriptures. It is pre-supposed in the Apocalypse throughout, which is merely a communication to the servants of God for their enlightenment in contemporary matters of detail. Their hope of living and reigning with Christ would rest on substantial grounds if the Apocalypse were taken away. It rests on “the sure word of prophecy” delivered to Israel ages before John was banished to Patmos. It rests on the gospel itself, which is the gospel of the kingdom (Matt. 24:14).

It is a hope very distinct and tangible. Reigning with Christ, as exhibited in this gospel, is a reality. Popular hymns talk of reigning with Christ, but what do they mean? They know not. A mere subsistence of delight -- a passive ecstasy, in which they drowsily float in the ethereal clouds of "the happy land" -- a bathing in the blue and brightness of heaven -- an imaginary bliss. This is not the Bible "reigning with Christ," though the Bible reigning with Christ will have all the happiness about it that was ever imagined in connection with the orthodox heaven. The Bible reigning with Christ is a regulating of human affairs as they ought to be regulated: a guiding of mankind with power into ways of enlightenment and righteousness, joy and peace, in the then present time, with an unbounded prospect of eternal day beyond. Such a reigning with Christ is exactly adapted to meet the wants of the afflicted human race who will be blessed by it, and to give scope to the noble aspirations of those who will be called upon to take part in it.

LECTURE 13: REVELATIONS CHAPTER 20 (VS. 7 TO END OF BOOK)

Prophetic character of the Apocalypse -- its fulfilment in European history -- the closing scenes -- the kingdom of the thousand years -- the revolt of the nations at the close -- the cause that leads to it symbolically expressed as the loosing of Satan -- deceiving the nations -- the catastrophe that ends the revolt -- the devil and the lake of fire -- the resurrection at the end of the Millennium -- death during the thousand years -- the post-millennial judgment -- abolition of death -- an immortal population for the earth -- new heavens and new earth -- the giving-up of the kingdom of God -- History of God's work on earth -- the consummation -- the world peopled by one race, all immortal -- "all things new" -- New Jerusalem -- gorgeous picture -- a contrast to the hideous symbols of the present dispensation -- not a literal city -- a symbol of the saints in their corporate constitution -- the twelve gates and twelve angels -- the wall of the city with twelve foundations -- the cube form and furlong measurement of the city -- the measurement of the wall, and of the man, and of the angel -- the garnishing of the twelve foundations with all manner of precious stones -- no temple in the city, and no need of the sun -- why called New Jerusalem -- The city at the beginning and end of the thousand years -- Queen of the endless ages -- the river of life and trees on the banks -- the healing of the nations -- no more curse.

TO-NIGHT we reach the last of the lectures which has kept us together in such goodly muster for the past twelve nights. We have been engaged in the contemplation of a variety of extraordinary scenes, witnessed in vision by the apostle John in the isle of Patmos, 1,800 years ago -- scenes that were not shown to him for his personal benefit only, but for a certain class, contemporary with himself, and who should come after him, described as "the servants of God." The benefit proposed was one of knowledge. The vision was communicated "to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass." This is the opening intimation of the whole book (verse 1). From this it follows that the book is prophetic in character, and that it is a duty and a privilege on the part of those who may conceive they are the servants of God, to make themselves acquainted with its contents. It is a difficulty in the way, that the information communicated in it is presented in symbolic form; but it is a difficulty surmountable when the key is obtained, in the understanding of the literal system of knowledge conveyed in the plainer writings of the prophets and apostles. This system of knowledge is entirely concealed from view by the established theology of the day, with the result that the Apocalypse is utterly unintelligible to the vast mass of professing Christians. To those we all belonged once, and can speak from experience on the point. Recently -- in some cases not very recently -- we have had a happier experience. Our eyes have been opened to see the unscriptural character of current theology, and to apprehend the beautiful system of Bible truth expressed in the apostolic phrase, "the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ." As a collateral result, the agency that has put us in possession of this precious knowledge has also opened to us the significance of the last book of the Bible, which, in former days without meaning or use, has now become a consoling beacon light in the moral and political confusion at present prevailing on the earth.

Unlocking the hieroglyphs, in no empirical manner, but by the rational employment of the keys contained in the book itself, in conjunction with the keys procurable in the other departments of Scripture, we have been enabled to recognize in the successive scenes of the Apocalypse the prophetic foreshadowings of the leading features of European experience during the last eighteen centuries. We have been able to determine the position of our own particular day in the complicated but not entangled programme, nearly concluded. We have looked at the nearly-reached "end of the matter," which furnishes the reason of the whole -- the transformation of the system of the world from a variety and a contrariety of bad mortal governments, to a single universal theocracy in the hands of an order of immortal rulers -- Jesus and his brethren. To this point the vision conducted us last Thursday evening in chapter 20. To-night we look at the closing scenes, which are gorgeous scenes. But before the perfect gorgeousness there is a momentary cloud.

Chapter 20, verse 7: "When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." It seems strange at first sight that a divine reign of a thousand years duration should end in this manner. Fancy would suggest that the power and purity and beneficence of the government of Christ and his brethren would have so affected mankind everywhere for good that it would be morally impossible for a rebellion to be conceived, still more, that it should enlist the sympathy and support of nations and multitudes. That such a result should be foretold is one of a thousand evidences of the divine character of the Scriptures. Imagination would have drawn a very different picture. We should have had human nature, basking in the sunshine of divine government, represented as rising in the majesty of an unsullied and ever-soaring progress, towards the perfection of which the germ is supposed by every human philosophy to exist in every human breast, and which only requires the necessary conditions to ripen into a gorgeous flower. Instead of that, we have the whole world in arms against a government that will have blessed them with a thousand years of justice, righteousness, beneficence, plenty, and peace. How is it to be explained? The explanation is furnished in the opening sentences of the verses we have just read. "Satan shall be loosed out of his prison." You recollect who Satan is -- not the fiction of a Romanized and Paganized theology -- not the immortal devil of pulpit discourse, who has no existence, except in the light literature and lighter talk of the people. Satan (a Hebrew word, signifying adversary) is the name applied to the dragon, and the dragon we have indisputably identified as the heraldic symbol of human hostility to God, officially incorporate in the kings and governments in which it is headed up. The seizing and binding of this dragon is the subjugation and suppression of the governments that oppose Christ at his coming, and the establishment of an iron rule throughout the earth, which effectually prevents their resuscitation. What can the unloosing be but the removal of those repressions and restraints which keep rebellion down for a thousand years? It is a matter of no importance to know the particular way which these restraints will be removed. A suspension of acts of rigour on the part of the saints in their several stations throughout the world, such as letting disobedience go unpunished and unnoticed, and allowing assemblies for political discussion, would be enough to give the native wilfulness of human nature scope for revival, especially if, as is possible, the saints were everywhere withdrawn to the imperial centre at Jerusalem. The men of that generation will know nothing experimentally of the evils of human government. They will have known nothing but the order and prosperity and peace of the rule of the saints, accustomed to which, they will probably lose all perception of the connection between that rule and the blessedness of the age. They will suppose the blessedness a matter of course -- a something that would be enjoyed under any government strong enough to take the reins of power. They may get tired of these being in the hands of one class all the time. They will know that a thousand years previously, self-government was a power exercised by mankind in various forms all the world over. They may begin to question the right of any power to set this "natural birthright" aside. Human longevity will be common in those days, and therefore the immortality of the rulers will be a matter of faith with the subject populations. Doubt may at last come to be cast upon it. There will be much specious sophistry employed, we may be sure, before the nations surrender themselves to the leadership of Satan let loose. Stirring orations, self-important conferences of delegates, the circulation of eloquent documents, will doubtless enter largely into the machinery of seduction. At last the poison takes effect. The people lend themselves to the Demagogues: they listen to the flattering doctrines to which they have been unaccustomed for centuries. They subscribe to the movement. They enroll themselves in the battalions: secret drillings go on everywhere. As government takes no notice, the drillings lose their secrecy. The people take courage. The movement becomes an open one. From certain centres it spreads, until it commands the adhesion of entire communities; and, lastly, of nations. It finally attains the proportions and power of an international armament. The armies take the field. An expedition against headquarters -- "the camp of the saints, the beloved city" -- is projected. Christ, who could nip the whole conspiracy in the bud with a single act of power, allows

the rebels a clear field and no favour. They come up in their unchallenged hosts "on the breadth of the earth." They arrive on the confines of the Holy Land, with which their annual journeys have made them familiar. They carry all before them. Flushed with complete success, they come within sight of the Holy City itself. This is the "hitherto-and-no-farther" of their Korah-Dathan-and-Abiram enterprise. While they are contemplating measures of siege, the devouring fire and crashing artillery of heaven burst suddenly upon their affrighted eyes and ears. The scenes of the pre-millennial Armageddon are re-enacted on an enlarged scale. The earth opens her terrific jaws to receive the stunned and blaspheming multitudes, who are engulfed in a catastrophe that wipes the last trace of rebellion from the history of the earth. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet (here there is an ellipsis in the original. It is supplied in the common version by the word "are;" but as the allusion is historic, -- pointing to what happened at the beginning of the thousand years, it seems more rational to make the ellipsis historic, and to read, instead of "where the beast and false prophet are", " where the beast and false prophet were cast," intimating that the fate that consumed the leaders of the Armageddon pre-millennial war now befalls those of the post-millennial insurrection) -- and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." This is the symbolic intimation of the fact that the divine affliction that overtakes the official heads and leaders of the post-millennial revolt against the camp of the saints will prevail over them without remedy. Sodom and Gomorrha are pointed to as examples of what we are to understand by a scriptural "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude, verse 7). The fire of God's judgment consumed them without remedy, (Lam. 4:6). The leaders of post-millennial diabolism will be secured, and made the subjects of a formal and awful consignment to their well-merited fate. It will be found a pleasant exercise to consider how appropriate a finish to the history of sin upon earth is this great appointed post-millennial revolt of nations. Sin is allowed the opportunity of coming to a great head, so to speak. It gathers up its power, comes into the presence of its destroyer, provokes mortal combat, and is finished at one terrible blow. There is a dramatic completeness about such an arrangement, which is in harmony with the beautiful wisdom that is manifest in all the works of God.

It involves certain details which will readily occur to us. While all the world is nationally implicated in this rebellion, there will, of course, be thousands, nay, millions, who take no part in it. We are not told in so many words, but it follows from certain things testified. For example, the saints accepted and glorified at the coming of Christ are styled "the firstfruits" (Rev. 14:4). This designation is borrowed from the Mosaic shadow of these "good things to come." Israel were required to offer the first ripe fruits of the field in thanksgiving and joy before God: this was afterwards followed by the full harvest, when there was again a feast of gladness coinciding with the feast of tabernacles. These Mosaic arrangements were of divine appointment and foreshadowed the ultimate purpose of Jehovah in Christ. Now as the glorification of "the ecclesia of the firstborn" at the return of Christ, is the antitype of the "first fruits," there must be a counterpart to the feast of ingathering. There must be a great harvest of human life to glory, honour, and immortality at the close of a thousand years. What else could come of an age when "the glory of the Lord" prevails on the earth like the spread of the mighty ocean in its bed? It is testified that the reign of Christ is to this end -- that he put all enemies under his feet (1 Cor. 15:25). And "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (verse 26). It consequently follows that at the close of his reign, there will be a vast multitude who have learnt to walk in Jehovah's ways (Isa. 2:3), from whom the veil and the darkness of these gloomy times will have been removed, with the effect of making them turn to Jehovah with a fervent and joyful faith and obedience (Isa. 25:7), in readiness for investiture with the glorious attribute of immortality. These will not be found in the rebellious ranks of the Satanic multitude. Their refusal to join them may bring upon them evil consequences permitted as a closing proof of their obedience. The unchecked success of the revolt up to a certain point, which may involve the preparation of years, will certainly be a sore trial to the mortal faithful. But the end will justify their refusal to be compromised. The sudden destruction of the presumptuous host will be followed by the recognition, praise and immortalization of the faithful multitude everywhere, who have stood aloof from

the popular conspiracy against the Lord's anointed.

But will there be no dead waiting to stand in the same category of approbation? Will death have made no havoc in the populations under the reign of Christ and the saints? This question is answered (supposing there were no other answer), by the statement that "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." If death is the last enemy to be destroyed, it follows that death is not destroyed until after the destruction of the Gog and Magog multitude of the post-millennial revolt. Consequently death is at work up to that point, though greatly weakened in its power like every other evil at that time when the blessing of Israel's God sheds a healing beneficence on land and ocean. There is direct evidence of the soundness of this conclusion in the directions given to the mortal Levitical priests of that age, to "come at no dead person to defile themselves" (Ezek. 44:25), and in the permission to them to "take for their wives a widow ... that had a priest before" (verse 22); likewise in the statement of Isaiah that "the child shall die an hundred years old" (Isa. 65:20), that is, a man dying at a hundred years old will in those days be considered a child. Human life will be much prolonged. Still, death reigns till abolished at the crisis brought on at the end of the thousand years by the revolt of the nations.

Now the aggregate of those who die during the reign of Christ must be very great, and as these will be times of great light, they will be times of great responsibility. Consequently when at the suppression of the post-millennial revolt, the time arrives for the great antitypical harvest into life eternal, something like a general resurrection must take place, differing very much in its extent from that which takes place at the pre-millennial coming of Christ, on account of the great difference in the dispensation preceding it. This seems to be the teaching of the scene next described by John: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to his works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

The import of the leading features of this scene must be evident enough. A great white throne -- the symbol of righteousness in judgment: the occupant of it, the Mighty One before whose face the whole fabric reared by the post-millennial politicians had crumbled into nothing; the dead, those who had died but were now raised; the opened books, symbols of the law by which they will be judged; the book of life, the divine record (preserved on something more enduring than parchment) of those who are chosen for life eternal because of obedience; the casting of death and hell into the lake of fire, the obliteration of death and the grave from the earth by the giving over to the destroying judgment of God of all who are divinely decreed worthy of death, leaving in the land of the living those only who by the same prerogative are adjudged worthy of the unspeakable gift of immortality.

When this mighty result has been reached, a new state of things upon the earth must result from the altered conditions. Till then sin and death will always more or less have prevailed, necessitating arrangements and institutions suitable thereto. But now, the population will be without exception immortal, and socially and racially fused into ONE, as the result of assimilation to a common perfection of nature and harmony with God. What must come out of such a change but the alteration of constitution symbolically described in the next succeeding words of John (chap. 21:1-4): "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be

with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away”.

This seems to be the consummation alluded to by Paul, when he speaks of Christ at the end “delivering-up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all authority and power ... when all things (including the last enemy, death -- see verse 26) shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:24 - 28). It is manifest that the full accomplishment, at the end of the thousand years, of the work of Christ who came to “take away the sin of the world”, and therefore death, the effect of it, will require a change in the constitution of things. There has been a gradual change since the beginning. The introduction of sin caused a breach between man and his Creator, whose benevolence and wisdom proposed a healing of the breach by gradual measures which should bring more glory and joy at the last than if no breach had taken place. These measures began with worship at a distance -- outside of Eden -- through the medium of sacrifice. The next stage brought a whole nation close to God as His chosen people, under an arrangement, however, which was but “a shadow” of the final form of the proposed goodness; for “the law (of Moses) was a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image thereof” (Heb. 10:1). The next stage introduces Jesus and offers him to the world as the medium of approach on the part of a few among mankind who should respond to the invitation to “come out from among them”, and in the midst of the surrounding alienation, to become “sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.” The next stage shows this class glorified with Christ, at the restoration of the kingdom again to Israel at the return of Christ, and the subjection of all nations to the sceptre of the house of David in his most righteous hands. In this stage of the plan, his accepted brethren rule all the world for a thousand years as “kings and priests” for the purpose of bringing the world to God. All nations are brought into a worshipping relation to God, but still it is worship at a distance, so to speak. They are a mixed multitude with godliness in the ascendant, but still with an element of the constitutional diabolism of human nature not altogether latent. They use sacrifice and they approach God through the millennial priesthood. A thousand years of this arrangement provides from amongst the nations a sufficient population of enlightened and obedient members of the human family to occupy the earth as its immortal, joyous, and God-glorifying inhabitants. These by resurrection and transformation are glorified, and the remnant destroyed. Sin and death have disappeared. What need then for priesthood? What need for the institution of a kingdom, designed, with iron rod, to keep the world in subjection, and the nations in the way of light and life? Manifestly, there must needs be a change. The nature of the change in its details we cannot know. We should need experience of the Spirit-nature to understand. Suffice it to note that the Father is no longer in the background: “the Son himself is subject.” God himself is “with men” and “their God”: and there is a cessation of every evil and every curse: “no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away”, In this state of things, Jesus and his brethren will always occupy the highest rank of the firstborn; but they and earth’s entire population are all one, and worship God without mediation. This is the promised “New heaven and new earth”, not literal heavens and literal earth: for these have been from of old and shall be for ever (Psa. 78:69; Jer. 31:35-36; Psa. 89:36-37); but new heavens and new earth in the figurative sense of a new system of things -- a sense constantly exemplified in the writings of the prophets (Isa. 13:10-19; Jer. 4:23-28; Isa. 65:17-19). The making of these “new heavens and new earth” begins at the commencement of the thousand years in “planting the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth” (Isa. 51:16). But they are not seen in their finished form till the consummation depicted in the chapter we are considering. When they are finished, there is “no more sea” -- no more sea in the apocalyptic sense. This sense is defined in chap. 17:15: “The waters which thou sawest where the whore sitteth, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.” When the end of the thousand years is reached, these will have ceased to be. The world will be one race and one family--and that, a new race, an immortal race--the last Adam in, multitude -- as the heir of the first Adam in multitude who will then have

passed away. This last Adam multitude being in Christ are all the seed of Abraham, as Paul says, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed." Being Abraham's seed, they are Israel. Consequently, in their sole occupation of the earth when "the former things shall have passed away," there will be a fulfilment of what God says by Jeremiah concerning the House of Israel: "Though I make a full end of all nations among whom I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee" (Jer. 30:11). Abraham will also see in its fullest sense the meaning of the promise made to him, "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore" (Gen. 22:17).

"And he that sat on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful." This is the glorious hope of the gospel. The old groaning earth is to be renewed and revived by the removal of every curse in the day of Christ's completed triumph. This pledge of God is the true and only enlightened form of the musty tradition of all ages, that there is a good time coming. There is no hope of a good time except in the way God has planned and promised. Science and literature are all very well in their place: they can do nothing to remove the inherent abortiveness of the present constitution of things. God will do this in the way He has revealed; and He here invites to a participation in the coming feast of life and gladness (verses 6-7): "I will give unto him that is athirst of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Another class is mentioned by way of warning (verse 8): "The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death"

And now we turn to a specially beautiful picture. You will recollect that having completed the exhibition of symbols illustrative of the dark and dreadful history of Europe under Paganism and the Papacy, one of the seven vial-angels invited John (chap. 17:1) to a special view of the queen-city of those times, in her ecclesiastical and political relations, saying to him, "Come hither, and I will shew thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters;" upon which John was carried away into a wilderness, where he beheld a sort of nightmare vision: a gaudy, befrinketed, intoxicated prostitute on the back of a seven-headed monster, dominating and misleading and dementing the nations of the earth.

There is a companion picture to this in the chapter before us, but different in every particular.

Having completed the exhibition of symbols illustrative of the glorious emancipation of the earth under the reign of Christ and the saints, one of the same group of angels -- viz., "one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues" -- invites John to a special view of the queen-city of that age of light and glory. He is taken, not to a wilderness, but "to a great and high mountain," and what a glorious spectacle bursts upon his view! "The holy Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal, and it had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels ... and the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones." There are certain particulars given which we shall look at presently: but let us first look at the general character and purport of the vision.

In the first place, it is impossible not to be struck with the extreme contrast between the symbols chosen to represent the present benighted constitution of things in the world, and those here exhibited to illustrate the glory of the coming age of God's completed purpose. Everything that is odious, repulsive, hideous, horrible, and frightful is suggested by the spectacle of a complex monster, mounting on its back and bearing through the dark waters an inebriated, senseless, domineering, wicked woman. This is the spirit of God's illustration of the character of the present age. It embodies the present evil world as

it appears from the divine standpoint -- the standpoint of true enlightenment. Its perfect appropriateness will be appreciated by all who have learnt to estimate things as they ought to be estimated. The civil government of the world, upheld by the sword, and administering law in the interests of a few, and applying it towards the many in a mechanical, indiscriminating, unfeeling manner, to their distress and impoverishment, -- are well summed up in one dreadful, devouring beast of prey; while the Church they maintain among them, which coquettes with the civil authorities for the sake of temporal advantage, and deceives the multitude with forms and phrases, cheating the understanding and robbing the heart with dogmatic fables and benighted traditions, stupefying and degrading the population with corrupt and corrupting doctrines, -- could not be better represented than by the heartless and degraded rider of the monster. Together they furnish the "coat of arms" of the present evil world: the heraldry of "the kingdoms of this world."

With what relief we turn to the symbol of the age when these shall have become "the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ" -- a city of glory, perfect in symmetry, dazzling in transparent brightness, and sparkling with the colours of every gem, -- with streets of gold, foundations of precious stone, and its municipal names derived from the apostles of the Lamb. It is a fitting symbol of the government which will fill the earth with the glory of the Lord, and bless mankind with justice, love, peace, wealth, and wellbeing in all that pertains to God and man -- a government that will concern itself with the honour of Jehovah, and the welfare of the poor, and that with omnipotent hand will vindicate the rights of God and quell all the sons of pride. Some have imagined the city literal. This would be out of harmony with the whole character of the vision, which begins by showing seven churches as seven golden candlesticks, and ends by exhibiting eternal life as a river. It would also be inconsistent with the express intimation John received as to the purport of the New Jerusalem he was about to see. The angel said to him, "I will show thee the bride THE LAMB'S WIFE". You all know who she is. She is the aggregate of the Lord's glorified brethren. Hence the city is a symbol of the saints. It may be noticed as a peculiarity -- not as a difficulty -- that in this case we have a symbol duplicated somewhat in the way we found time drawn in twice, so to speak, in representing the duration of the war with the Lamb. We have first the saints represented by a bride and then the bride symbolized by a city. If it be asked, how is this, we probably find the answer in the fact that while the bride represents the saints in what we may call their domestic relation to the Lord Jesus, the city represents them (this same bride-community), in their public political relations. At all events, there can be no question that in dealing with the new Jerusalem, we are dealing with a symbol of "the bride, the Lamb's wife," and therefore with a symbol of the saints in the corporate completeness of the day of their manifested glory. What a boundless field of grateful contemplation is here opened up to the minds of weary saints, who have here no continuing city and who groan within themselves at the many and sore evils of the present hour. They languish on the highway while they pursue their way Zion-wards. They are few, scattered, tired and faint. The road is rough, the air is cold, the night is dark. Their spirits oftentimes quail within them, and they are ready to give up. Is it not a great reviving of hope and courage to look forward and know that in a short time at the longest, they will find themselves at the end of the weary journey, within the walls of the glorious house of God, where there are myriads of rejoicing saints, clad in the garments of praise and mantled in the immortal strength of a glorified nature? Our hopes may droop, our hearts despond sometimes; "for a season if need be, we are in heaviness through manifold temptations." But it is only for a moment, though it seems long. New Jerusalem awaits: the family of God -- a large family -- an intelligent family -- a noble family -- a loving family -- a family with a thrilling history, bridging all the earth's dark ages -- is the coming institution of the age of gladness promised from the beginning. By the vision shown to John, though not by that alone, we look forward and see it enthroned in Zion, with all power in their hands, all wealth at their disposal, all strength and life and joy in their possession, for the glory of earth's Creator and the blessing of universal man.

The details of the city's architecture will be found to correspond with the leading features of the divine

polity as subsisting in what is apostolically designated "the commonwealth of Israel." There are twelve gates (verse 12) bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, and at each of the gates an angel. The gates represent entrance: the angels, the divine invitation to enter, and the names, the Israelitish character of the institution in which those who accept the invitation find themselves when they "enter in through the gates into the city" (22:14). We have found frequent illustration of this feature in the course of the apocalyptic visions, viz., that salvation is of the Jews, and that the basis of the divine operation in the earth is that laid in the first instance in the choice of the seed of Abraham as historically and racially represented in the twelve tribes of Israel. The four living creatures, the four and twenty elders, the 144,000, the twelve tribes of Israel, the temple, the holy city, the altar, etc., etc., are all symbols of Israelitish affinity. They teach a lesson much needed but much derided in our day, that "to Abraham and his seed are the promises made" (Gal. 3:16), and that Gentiles in the flesh have no hope and are without God in the world (Eph. 2:12).

"The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (verse 14). This is intelligible in view of the fact that the twelve apostles were the official agency for the development of the mystical body of Christ. The multitudinous body considered under the figure of a city, is built on the foundation of the apostles. Paul makes use of this very expression in his letter to the Ephesians (chap. 2:20), "Ye are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." This idea in a condensed and complete form is presented in the symbol of a twelve-founded city, bearing the names of the apostles. The name of Judas will not be found garnished there: by transgression, he fell from his place (Acts 1:25), and was substituted by Matthias, whose election is divinely endorsed in the narrative of the Acts, and was ratified by his inclusion in the apostolic band, on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14). His case illustrates that of many others whose names, originally inscribed in the book of life, will be found erased (Rev. 3:5).

"He that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city" -- not a rhabdos, like the reed given to John in chapter 11:1, to measure off the temple of God for affliction. The time of affliction is past in chapter 21. The Holy City is measured then for glory, honour, and immortality; and the measuring reed is golden. Faith, having been tried, has come out of the fire like pure gold; and receives its compensation in the divine use to which it is put. Faith under trial is pleasing to God, and He will show His pleasure in the measureless bounty of wellbeing He will bestow upon His saints in the day of their New-Jerusalem manifestation.

"The city lieth foursquare; and the length is as large as the breadth; and he measured the city with the reed -- twelve thousand furlongs. The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal" (verse 16). Here we have an immense cube as the form of the symbolical city. This is the perfection of geometrical symmetry, and indicates the finished completeness of the body of Christ when fully developed. God is the God of order. It is not more shown in His handiwork in the universe than it will be shown in the constitution of the body of Christ. There will be so many saints in it, and to each his perfect place. The measurement of the cube again brings out the Israelitish character of the hope. The arithmetical basis of all Israelitish arrangements is twelve, as we have before seen. This cube measures TWELVE thousand furlongs on any side. Its contents give us the enormous number of 1,728,000,000 (one billion, seven hundred and twenty-eight thousand millions) of cubic furlongs. The elements of this cubical city represent the saints. Each cubic furlong represents an individual saint; and the whole in one cube is the symbol of the ultimate fulness and perfection of Israel's "everlasting salvation" (Isa. 45:17).

The wall has the same characteristic. "He measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits -- the measure of a man: that is, of the angel" (verse 17). The wall is Jehovah's protection, as saith Jehovah, "I will be a wall of fire unto her round about" (Zech. 2:5). But what shape does this protection take? It takes the shape of Christ and the saints, the defenders of Israel in the age to come.

Consequently, they are the wall as well as the city. The measurement shows it: 144 cubits. This is said to be "the measure of a man." This seems confusion to call the measure of a wall the measure of a man. The explanation is to be found in the fact that the wall is only the architectural form of the symbolic man, consisting of Christ and the saints as head and body -- the one new man of Paul's discourse (Eph. 4:24). But it adds, "that is, of the angel."s This apparently increases the confusion. But this appearance vanishes when we realize that the measurement in question is the measurement of the New Man in the angel state. The New Man exists now; that is, the small part of him that is not in the grave; but he is in the flesh, and not in the state contemplated as the finality of his development. That state is the state of equality with the angels. It is in this state of angel-equality that the New Man is symbolized by the New Jerusalem.

But it might be said, the reference to the angel is to the messenger that was showing John these things. True, but it is evident that the angel himself is made to constitute a part of the significations related to the vision. Dr. Thomas has pointed out what would escape the attention of a superficial reader, that when the temple of chapter 11:1, symbolizing the saints in the days of their mortal probation, had to be measured off for affliction with the reed like to a rhabdos, John himself, as a saint in the day of the mortality, was asked to perform the measurement; whereas, in the chapter we are considering, when a structure is introduced to represent the saints in their glorified state, the angel, as an immortal, performs the measurement. The angel, therefore, stood to represent the glorified saints, and to represent all of them; and, therefore, the measure of the wall (144 cubits) was "the measure of the man, that is, of the angel."

"The building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass." Gold in a transparent state is unknown to the metallurgy of present experience. The use of a finer gold than is known to man, to represent the nature of the city, illustrates the absolute perfection appertaining to the body of Christ in its glorified state. It speaks to us of the saints delivered from the alloy of present weakness, and clothed with the power and perfection of the divine nature. They are conscious of many deficiencies -- many disqualifications in their present state. When they reach the translucent gold state, none of them will have any more to say with David, "My soul cleaveth to the dust," or to groan with Paul, "O wretched man that I am!" A supernal calm -- a pure and continual vigour -- the delicious glow of a never-dimming love to God and man -- will fit them to rejoice in the Lord always, and to pour their unstinted benefactions on a rejoicing earth.

"The foundations of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones." If the foundation stones are the apostles, the precious stones with which they are set and sparkle must stand for those who have been brought to Christ through their word and work. Peter speaks of such as lively stones (that is, living, sparkling, lustrous stones, as contrasted with dull, dead, common stones) -- "built up a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5). Paul also speaks of worthy saints as "gold, silver, and precious stones," incorporate in the building which has Christ for its chief foundation. What this means in the literal is very attractive to consider. Paul takes us a step towards the literal understanding in speaking of the Thessalonians as "his glory and his joy" in the day of the Lord. He does the same in remarking that if any man's work in Christ be destroyed -- that is, if those whom he has brought to the truth are rejected -- "he shall suffer loss" (1 Cor. 3:15). This hint suggests to the mind a beautiful organization of the body of Christ in the day of recompense. It will not simply be a multitude of saved men and women, but a multitude socially organized in a way that will reflect their history and secure for all the highest gratification that order is capable of yielding. We see it from the head to the foot. Christ is the author of all the salvation and the joy: in the kingdom he is the head, to whom every knee bows and every tongue confesses. The apostles were foremost in the mission and in the labours of the truth: they are the highest in the second grade of the kingdom, for they are the heads of the tribes of the house of Jacob in the day of restoration (Matt. 19:28). The earner of ten pounds has assigned to him ten cities: the earner of five, five cities

(Luke 19:17-19). All and sundry are declared amenable to the rule that “he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully”, and vice versa (2 Cor. 9:6), that “Christ will reward every man according to his works” (Matt. 16:27). Consequently “they that turn many to righteousness” shall specially shine in the kingdom (Dan. 12:3). What this involves as regards the actual arrangements of the kingdom is hinted at in the clustered gems that bedeck the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem. Those who bring men and women to the truth and help to keep them there, may find that these will be given to them in the kingdom in a special way, while they themselves will belong to those above them, to whose instrumentality they may owe their own standing in the One Body. All will reign: all will exercise authority, but in various positions and relations and in different degrees of glory and honour. The lowest will not envy the highest, but will find themselves exactly suited to the places assigned to them; and the highest will not exercise their power with arrogance, but will exhibit the pure and loving condescension of the highest of them all, who humbled himself even unto death. There will be no schism in the body of Christ. It will be an absolute unity, like the human body to which it is compared, yet exhibiting the diversity of organization and function which is the highest glory of that wonderful work of God.

The twelve foundations had not only each a different name, but each was of a different material. “The first foundation was jasper (BRIGHT GREEN); the second, sapphire (BLUE); the third, a chalcedony (DEEP RED); the fourth, an emerald (GREEN); the fifth, sardonyx (LIGHT PINK); the sixth, sardius (FLESH COLOUR); the seventh, chrysolite (YELLOWISH DULL GREEN); the eighth, beryl (SEA GREEN); the ninth, a topaz (YELLOW); the tenth, a chrysoprasus (GOLDEN GREEN); the eleventh, jacinth (ORANGE); the twelfth, an amethyst (VIOLET).” Whether there will prove to be any exactness of correspondence between the nature of these precious stones and the apostles they represent, we cannot know beforehand; but it must be manifest that one thing is distinctly signified by this classification, and that is that diversity of excellence will characterize the spirit state. The saints will not be all to one pattern. They will be all of a sort in one way. They will all be precious stones: but each with a preciousness of his own which gains by comparison with the preciousness of his neighbour. We see the principle faintly at work now. Brethren, resembling each other closely in their love of God and their affection for all spiritual things, and their fruitfulness in every good word and work, may yet differ entirely in their intellectual and moral characteristics. The difference, so far from being a defect, is an excellence, giving zest to their intercourse and their love one for another. We shall see this law in perfection in the supernal state to which the truth in its obedience will finally introduce men and women who please God through Christ. One other idea is suggested by the employment of precious stones to represent the saints. Precious stones owe their beauty to the light. In the absence of light they are dark; let the light come and they glow in all the dazzling and many-coloured refractions that give them their preciousness. The counterpart will be recognized in the relation of Christ as the sun to the precious stones, his brethren. Apart from him, they can do nothing and are nothing. “The head of every man (of them) is Christ, and the head of Christ is God.” This is true both now and hereafter. At the same time, there must be fitness in themselves to reflect the light. The brightest sunshine falling on brick produces no beauty; it only reveals the deformity of fire-baked stuff. There must be a nature in the stones suitable to the light. There must be good soil before the seed will germinate. There must be the honest and good heart before the fruit of the spirit will come forth. This is a matter of original bestowal to some extent, but the education of the truth, ministered by the word of God as contained in the holy oracles committed to Israel, has a wonderful power to change the old inferior man into a new man, created after the image of the firstborn -- the Lord Jesus.

“I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.” A temple is that which contains the worshippers who come into the building for the seclusion and abstraction necessary for the act of worship. The New Jerusalem is a mystical city of worshippers. It exists as such. It is not like present cities in which the staple pre-occupations of the people are secular, and “religion” a thing they attend to now and then, and who therefore require buildings in which to attend

to the matter occasionally. The city exists for the glory of God, and reflects it to the ends of the earth. Therefore a temple in its architecture would have been an anomaly. God Himself is the temple of the people who compose it. They are all in God and Christ in being in the Spirit, that is, in being changed from flesh nature to spirit nature in that birth of the Spirit which makes them spirit. This change makes them one with the universe-filling Spirit of which the Father is the focal centre. They are, therefore, in Him, and with Him, and before Him all the time. They need not to retire from the city for seclusion and concentration of attention. Their whole existence is an act of divine communion and praise.

But we should make a mistake in supposing that because this symbolic city has no temple, therefore the temple exhibited to Ezekiel as the central pivot of the glorious government machinery of the future age will not have a literal existence. There is a place for every truth. What is true of the symbolic New Jerusalem is no guide to the truths concerning the literal arrangements of the kingdom of God. This we must seek at other sources, which are very abundant and very clear.

“The City had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” The sun and moon, as symbolical objects shown in connection with their objects, would imply that the second class of objects were indebted for light, power, and glory to sources exterior to themselves. With this in view it would have been eminently inappropriate to have shown a sun and moon over the New Jerusalem. It would have been to intimate that Jesus and the saints were dependent upon the favour of some other power in the earth for the exercise of their authority over the nations of the earth. The power and light of the New Jerusalem are inherent. They belong to the body of Christ “of right Divine.” God is their power and glory, both by the favour and by the upholding presence of His powerful Spirit in glorious manifestation in Jesus His Name-bearer, and, through him, in all his brethren. Therefore it has no need of illumination from without.

“The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it; And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of all nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” This will be easily understood by those who have followed what has gone before, and who comprehend the gospel of the kingdom. The New Jerusalem is the governing institution of the future age. It is the official incorporation and manifestation of the power of God, following on the change which turns “the kingdoms of this world” into “the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.” Christ and the saints, enthroned in the land of promise in glory, honour, and immortality, are the New Jerusalem, in the light of which the nations will walk, in which there will be no night, but everlasting day, whose attention to mankind will not be intermittent through weakness, and at whose feet will be poured the wealth and honour of all nations. Into their glorious community none will be admitted who do not conform to the standard of well-being exhibited in the revealed will of God.

Its being called New Jerusalem is due to the fact that Jerusalem has already once been the seat of divine government, based upon the law of Moses. Jerusalem under this arrangement of things is the old Jerusalem. Jerusalem, under the new constitution of things, will as, far exceed the old as the Prophet like unto Moses exceeds Moses himself, who was but a servant, “for a testimony (or type) of those things that were to be spoken after” (Heb. 3:5). She is said to “come down from God out of heaven,” because in Christ coming from heaven, she comes from heaven. He comes as her glorious germ, in the same way as the kingdom of David was said to come with him when he rode into Jerusalem (Mark 11:10; Luke 19:38). On his arrival on the earth, he develops from the dust, by the resurrection-power God has given, the multitude of his saints of all ages, whom, after judgment, he organizes and manifests to the world as the New Jerusalem -- the new government of the kingdom of David, to whom all the world must be subject, and by whom all the world will be blessed.

There remains one point of apparent discrepancy to be considered. Rev. 21:2 represents the New Jerusalem coming down from God at the close of the thousand years, whereas the line of remark just indulged in points to her manifestation at the commencement of that period. The explanation is doubtless to be found in the fact illustrated in the case of the new heavens and new earth, which, while commencing with the thousand years, have their special and final manifestation in the state of things reached at the close of that period. The New Jerusalem is the metropolitan institution of the age to come; but its fullest glory will not be manifest till all enemies are put under her feet, death itself destroyed, and she established as the Queen of the endless ages, the permanent tabernacle of Jehovah's glory among the glorified and rejoicing nations of them that are saved" (verse 24). We cannot but believe that the inauguration of these, the endless ages of perfection on the earth, under the headship of Jesus and his New Jerusalem bride, will be accompanied by some signal revelation of her glory to the whole of earth's ransomed population, at the close of the thousand years. This would explain the fact of John seeing a post-millennial manifestation of the city which exercises authority over men for a thousand years before. The object of the thousand years ascendancy is to abolish all curse. But this object is not realized till the close of that period. It is therefore not inappropriate that her special manifestation should be represented at the time the great work is done.

We see a new wonder in connection with government in chap. 22:1. Here we read of "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Water is the constant symbol of life in the Bible's figurative discourse (John 4:14; Isa. 55:1; Rev. 21:6; 22:17). Here we have the fact that the fountain of life will be in the throne. We look to the throne of Victoria: is there any fountain of life there? Let a dead Prince Consort and a dying aristocracy answer. Never has the world before seen a king that had power to keep in life, and that life immortal life, all who are loyal to him. This power resides in Jesus, "the resurrection and the life." Hidden at present, as an object of faith, it will become manifest as a fact of experience in due time. The word will rejoice in a governor who can control the weather (vide the storm on the sea of Galilee), and affect all the physical conditions of existence at his will. This power flowing out from him is beautifully symbolized by a flowing river from the throne. On each side of the river are trees, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations (verse 2). Trees thus figuratively used represent persons. So we learn from Isaiah 61:3: "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning ... that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that he might be glorified." Who are the persons that grow like trees planted by the river of life? The saints. Their leaves are for the healing of the nations. That is, their work and mission, and the effect of all they do as kings with Christ will be to cure the world of all the woes that now afflict it. It is worthy of notice as a beautiful feature that this part of the symbolism of the age to come is derived from Ezekiel's prophecy. That is to say, the objects exhibited to Ezekiel with a literal significance are here employed as symbols of the glory that will be reached through the employment of those literal objects. The ultimate result is (verses 3-5): "There shall be no more curse (on earth). But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun: for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever."

The rest of the chapter we need not dwell on particularly. It can present no special difficulty and can have your attention at leisure. It does not enter into the structure of the vision, which concludes with the glorious picture contained in the words just read. Suffice it to note the angelic declaration (verse 6), "These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done". All here can bear witness to the truth of this declaration. The tortuous and complicated history of Europe for the past eighteen hundred years has run in the lines exhibited beforehand in the vision shown to the exile of Patmos. The situation of affairs in Europe at the present moment is exactly that which this vision requires; and the future it exhibits

is precisely what the benevolent heart desires as the solution of the otherwise impenetrable enigma of human life. It is a message of truth, and beauty, and consolation. It has come down to us from Jesus, who says (chapter 22:16): "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches". How sad so few are to be found who understand and believe it. Be it ours to do our duty, with whatever result. Be it ours to earn for ourselves, and as many others as we can influence to that end, the opening blessing of the book (chap. 1:3), "Blessed is he that readeth, and they who hear the words of the prophecy of this book". Be it ours to have in continual remembrance the fact stated in the last verse but one of the last chapter:

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly."

And be it ours to join always heartily in John's own response, which has been the response of all his brethren during the long night that has enshrouded the world in the absence of Christ --

AMEN! EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS



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