

THE REVELATION.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST (for this is God's title of the Book), is a book of prophecy, and a book of judgment. It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass, and He sent and signified it, by His angel, to His servant John, who bare record of the Word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ (*Gk.*) as many things as He saw. The Lord therefore is looked at here as a Prophet, unto whom God gives a revelation, after the manner of Ezekiel and Daniel; and we shall see, as we go on, how these prophets were great types of the Lord under this character—the former living at a time when the glory was just about to depart from the temple and city of Jerusalem; the latter living afterwards, during the time of the Babylonish captivity, and the second great Gentile empire, and getting a revelation about his people's future history. Both these prophets are addressed as Son of man—the only prophets that are—the very title Jesus takes in this chapter in the midst of the seven assemblies of Asia.

It is a book for the servants of God, which no doubt they are to hand on for the benefit of the Church and the world, but specially for them. There is a special encouragement given to him that reads and hears the prophecy of this book, and who keeps the things that are written therein, for the time is at hand. Sad it is that it has been a book so neglected by the professing church—cast aside as being too difficult of interpretation.

Chapters i.—iii. contain Jehovah's addresses to the

seven assemblies in Asia. Chapters iv.-xxi. 8 contain God's dealings with the world in judgment after the Church is taken to glory, up to the eternal state of things. In the addresses to the seven assemblies, and in the attitude the Lord takes towards them, we see a figure of the complete state the professing church was in in John's day. Seven signifies, in scripture, completeness. The Lord Jesus stands in their midst in the character of Son of man, for judgment.

In chap. i. 19 we have the Holy Ghost's own division of the book. John was to write the things he had seen (chap. i.), and the things which are, and the things that should be hereafter (chap. iv. 1), subsequently. This is God's own way to open the book, and to unfold its hidden mysteries. For if the things that John had seen, refer to what he had seen in chap. i. (viz. the Son of man in the midst of the professing church, judging it), and the things that shall be hereafter, refer to what takes place after chap. iv. 1, then the things that are, refer to the addresses to the seven assemblies, in chapters ii.; iii.

Now if the professing church had already become an object of judgment in John's day, and that judgment has not been finally executed yet,—for the church still exists in the world, as God's witness,—then we may fairly argue that chapters i. and iii. (whilst no doubt referring to the actual state of each church in John's day) give us a prophetic sketch of the professing church from the time of John's day to the time of the Second Coming of our Lord. In the address to the assembly at Ephesus we see the first decline of the church in first love, and in that to Laodicea we see the final spueing out of the church, as a loathsome thing, from Christ's mouth, at the time of His coming. Thus the vision of the Son of man in the midst of the

seven candlesticks is not only a view of the complete state of the professing church in John's day, (as also the actual state of the seven churches,) but it also gives a prophetic sketch of the history of the church from John's day to the Second Coming of the Lord. This latter view is confirmed by two thoughts: first, that the actual facts of history coincide most remarkably with the different phases of evil mentioned in the seven churches; second, that the address to the last four assemblies places the Second Coming of the Lord before them, which would not have sufficient meaning unless there was a circle actually answering to the states of those churches, and actually existing when the Lord comes.

Another thing that we find is that there is a company of saints in heaven, after these things in chapters iv., v., figured by twenty-four elders. These are seen seated on thrones, clothed in white raiment, and crowned, singing also the song of redemption. Who can these be but the saints of the present and past dispensations, who have been made partakers of the first resurrection, and have been translated to heaven at the Coming of the Lord? This may be figured by John's own translation in spirit to heaven. (See chap. iv. 1.)

If this is the case, and to my mind it is clear from the three facts previously stated, then, in chapters iv., v., we see the church in heaven, after the present church history on earth is closed as is pictured in chapters ii., iii. God's throne of government and judgment is set in heaven. The mystic creatures of Isaiah vi. and Ezekiel i. reappear to carry out His governmental dealings with the world. Christ in His Jewish character of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, appears as the only worthy One to open the seven-sealed book, which tells of the judgments about to be poured out on this world. He is the Lamb in the midst of

the throne, going to take the earth in the power of redemption, and by the means of these judgments, universal praise is awakened, and is the result from the three circles of the living creatures, and the elders; second, the angels; and, third, from every creature in heaven and earth and under the earth. God and the Lamb are to be supreme.

In chapter vi. the Lamb opens the seven-sealed book, and governmental judgments fall on the earth, of conquest, war, famine, and pestilence. On the fifth seal being opened martyred saints are seen under the altar crying for judgment on those that oppressed them. Their cry is not characteristic of saints under the present dispensation of grace, but will be so of those who live after the time of the church's translation to glory. (See Psalms.) On the sixth seal being opened there is the anticipation of judgment, and of the wrath of the Lamb, whose redemption work has been rejected.

In chapter vii. there is an interval during which time the saved remnant of the Jews and Gentiles are sealed. These are not the church. In that there is neither Jew nor Gentile. All are one in Christ Jesus. (See Gal. iii. 28; Col. iii. 1.) We see thus how God will re-people the earth, or rather preserve a people for the earth, through the judgments, over whom Christ will reign, whilst all the rest will be cut off.

In chapter viii. the seventh seal is broken, and seven angels prepare to sound the seven trumpets. Christ is there seen in His intercessory character, for the saints then on earth, presenting their prayers to God. These prayers are answered by judgments being poured out. The scene of these judgments is specially the Roman earth, represented by a third part of it. Angels are the ministers of it, which takes us again, in thought, out of the church dispensation, and into

that of God's government of the world. Chapter ix. continues the subject, the last three trumpets being connected with special woes. No repentance is produced by these judgments, but on the contrary men blaspheme God. In chapters x. and xi. 1-14, we have another parenthesis, in which another mighty angel comes down from heaven. He stands on the sea and earth, and swears there shall be time no longer; but that, in the time of the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the mystery of God should be closed. He gives John a little book to eat, as a fresh commission to prophesy before many peoples and nations. Jerusalem is now introduced with the temple as God's centre of dealing with the earth. It is trodden underfoot of the Gentiles, for forty-two months, *i.e.*, 1260 days, *i.e.*, three years and a half; during which time the two witnesses prophesy—most likely Moses and Elias—chap. xi. 15-18. The seventh trumpet then sounds, and the whole mystery of God is closed, taking us down to the eternal state, as shown in chapter xx. end, xxi. 1-8.

Chapter xi. 19, and chapter xii. open a new subject. God is seen in relationship with His earthly people, the Jews; the ark of God's testament is seen in God's temple in heaven. The new covenant must be carried out. The woman, *i.e.*, Israel, was the mother of Christ and of the church figured by the man-child; this latter is translated to heaven, which fills up the present dispensation. She is opposed by the dragon, *i.e.*, Satan, who seeks to devour the man-child as soon as he is born. After the translation there is war in heaven; Satan and his angels are cast out on the earth, and the woman flees into the wilderness, where she is nourished for three and a half years. Satan now sets up a rival trinity on earth to oppose the purposes of God, in reference to Israel. He energises the sec-

ular head of the revived Roman Empire, and the Antichrist figured by the second beast. They persecute the Jewish remnant, and martyr many. In chapter xiv. we see the spared remnant of Israel standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion; they will form the nation of Israel on the millennial earth. The everlasting gospel is preached to all nations, proclaiming the coming kingdom of Christ. Thus there will also be a remnant of saved Gentiles, who will be the sheep on the King's right hand as shown in the parable in Matthew xxv. end, and pass also into life eternal on the millennial earth. Another angel follows, proclaiming judgment on Babylon, the false apostatized professing church on earth which still exists after the real church is taken away. Another angel follows with threatenings of judgment, on all those who worship the beast, and his image; then the Son of Man appearing in a white cloud, closes the scene. He reaps the harvest, and the vintage of the earth, *i.e.*, the harvest of judgment on Gentile and Jewish apostates.

Chapter xv. introduces the seven angels, with the seven last vials of the wrath of God. It is the wrath of the Lamb in chapter vi. The martyred remnant are seen in heaven, as having gotten the victory over the beast and his image, and singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb. They partake of the first resurrection by a special translation. (Comp. chap. xx. 4.) In chapter xvi. the seven vials of the wrath of God are poured out. These judgments seem universal, though there are special ones poured out on the beast, and the river Euphrates, to gather all the kings of the earth to the final battle. Babylon is then judged as the last thing, before the final slaughter of the kings, and the Melchisedec Priest comes to reign. She is seen seated on the Roman beast with its seven heads and

ten horns. She is seen drunken with the blood of the saints. At length she is hated by the beast, who strips her naked with his ten horns, and burns her with fire. She is shown to be the great city Rome, which reigned over the kings of the earth in the days of the apostle John, but now transformed into this woman.

Chapter xviii. shows her judgment, and the wailing of the peoples of the earth in consequence.

Chapter xix. shows the rejoicing in heaven that takes place, and the false church having now been judged, Christ is introduced as married to the real church, who now takes her place as the Heavenly Bride of the Lamb.

The twenty-four elders now disappear. Christ then comes out of heaven, attended by His saints, whom we saw in chapters iv., v., as translated to heaven before, and executes judgment on the apostacy. The secular head of the Roman Empire, and the Antichrist now seen in the character of a false prophet, are cast alive into the lake of fire. Satan is bound, and cast into the bottomless pit for 1000 years. The first resurrection is completed. The judgment-seat is set. Christ and His saints judge the nations (comp. Matt. xxv. end), and reign over the earth for 1000 years. The rest of the dead are not raised till after the 1000 years are accomplished. At the end Satan is loosed; the nations are deceived; they are again gathered in battle against Jerusalem and the saints, but fire comes out of heaven and destroys them. The great white throne is set, the old heavens and earth having passed away. The resurrection of judgment takes place, the wicked are raised, and judged according to their works, and finally put into the lake of fire. Chapter xxi. 1-8, introduces us to the eternal state, where Christ delivers up His kingdom to God, and God is all in all. (Comp. 1 Cor. xv.)

Chapter xxi. ver. 6—end, takes us back again, and shows us the glorious view of the Bride of the Lamb in the figure of the heavenly city, New Jerusalem. She is seen in her relation to the earth during the millennial reign of Christ. The tree of life reappears in the midst of God's heavenly paradise, and the crystal river flowing from the throne of God. Chapter xxii. 6—end closes the book, with a four-fold warning of the Coming of the Lord, and a warning against adding to or detracting from the Words of the Book.

We have then in the Book of Revelation a book of prophecy telling of things that should come to pass, and a book of judgment, ending up with the victory of Christ over the serpent, His glorious reign over the earth, and His final delivering up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. It tells of things coming on the church and on the world, to the end of time, and the eternal state. Chapters i.—iii. show Christ judging the churches. It unfolds present church history. Chapters iv.—xxi. 1-8 show Christ judging the world—first, with governmental judgments from heaven after the church's translation to glory; second, by His actual Second Coming in glory and majesty and reigning over the earth with His risen saints for 1000 years; thirdly, by raising the dead, judging them at the great white throne, and introducing the eternal state. This establishes His complete supremacy. His Bride is finally seen in union with Him, as His copartner in power and affection; evil all put down and banished, and God all in all. What a complete undoing, with untold increased glory to God, of all that Satan had done! He thought to have destroyed man in the fall, but be-

hold the Second Man enthroned amidst the unnumbered myriads of redeemed creatures, in universal supremacy, at the end ! Behold God all in all in the midst of redeemed creation ! Behold the arch-fiend with his miserable dupes imprisoned in the lake of fire for ever and ever ; and say which has triumphed ! God has been glorified in His incarnate, dead and risen and glorified Son, as He never would have been if creation had never fallen. Redemption has put creation on a firmer basis than ever creation by itself could have done. Before redemption was accomplished, evil had all come out and done its worst, and was then judged and put away, and new creation built on the secure basis.

In the first creation it had yet to be tried, and as it was proved failed. Where would have been the glorious counsels of God in reference to Christ and His church, His heavenly Bride ? Where would have been the righteous witness as to His judgment of evil, His abhorrence of it, and final putting it away from His Holy sight ? You might say all these things have been the result of sin having been allowed to come in. Of course there are mysteries ; and things above our finite minds involved in it, that we cannot fathom. But anyhow we see God all in all at the end ; Satan and his dupes for ever imprisoned ; Christ and His Bride in the midst of redeemed creation, abiding in the new heavens and new earth, in undisputed supremacy. Let cavilings and reasonings cease in view of these glorious things, and let proud, reasoning man come and bow at the feet of the despised Nazarene, during this day of grace lest he be made to bear witness to His increased glory in the day of His victory, by being chained and hurled into the bottomless abode of hell as an incorrigible offender against His Majesty.

Just one more word before going more leisurely

through the book. I would not wish to deny that I believe there is a minor fulfilment of this prophecy, in what I may call the year-day system of prophecy. This system would extend the whole of the chapters of Revelation, up to chapter xx., over the present dispensation to the day of the Lord. In this view, we must restrict chapters ii. and iii. to the actual state of the professing church in John's day. Then chapters iv. to xix. must fill up the interval of time between John's day and the Coming of the Lord to judge the world, and set up His kingdom. After chapters iv., v., the Son of man is no more seen in the midst of the church on earth; God is on His creatorial throne in heaven; and the Lamb in the midst of the throne there. This would betoken that the mass of the church had already got to the point of spueing out of Christ's mouth. God could no longer own the public profession of the mass as His witness. He bore with it, but, henceforth, was on His throne in reference to the world, and the Lamb occupied with that which would prepare His final taking of it in the power of redemption. The saints are now only seen and owned as the church in their position in the heav- enlies as a corporate whole. With the church on earth, Christ would not be dealing with it directly but providentially. Consequently angels are largely introduced.

The first four seals would represent different dealings of God with the world, especially the circle where the professing church was—the Roman Empire. There is conquest, war, famine and pestilence, which things all took place in the first three centuries. At the same time the fifth seal shows there was persecution. Then were the martyrs slain at the time, in the ten persecutions. In the sixth seal, there was the dethroning of idolatry, and the powers of evil, as to their

power in the world, in the days of Constantine; a remarkable thing that had never happened to Satan yet, you might say! I speak as to His government of the world. The seal betokens the consternation on the heathen inhabitants of the world in consequence. Chapter vii. would give the sealing of true witnesses amongst Jews and Gentiles before the succeeding judgments, at that time, God's silver line of grace on the earth thus being preserved. The seven trumpets (chap. viii.), would show God's providential dealings, by the means of angels, on that part of the earth that had become christianized, *i.e.*, the Roman Empire, whilst Christ intercedes for the saints, figured by the angel standing by the golden altar. The answer to the prayers of the saints presented by the angel is that judgments are poured out on the Roman earth, ending up perhaps with the incursion of the barbarians on the Western Empire, which closes it. Chapter ix. may represent the Saracens' invasion of the East, followed in the next woe by the Turks. This woe lasted five months, or, taking the year-day scale, about 150 years, commencing with the hegira, A.D. 622 and ending about 772, when the Mahomedan conquests were checked. The Turks ended the Empire of the West in A.D. 1453. No doubt these were woes sent by God on the church for the allowance of idolatry.

In the little book opened perhaps there is an allusion to the fresh testimony given at the Reformation, chap. x., and chap. xi. may refer to the long period of Gentile apostacy that spread over the church for about 1260 years, ending with Antichrist and the Coming of the Lord, which was opened up in the light the open Bible gave. The two witnesses may represent the line of true witnesses during that period, and the continual path of death and resurrection as it were that awaited their testi-

mony. No doubt in the end they would refer to Moses and Elias.

The last trumpet closes this period with Christ's Coming and the time of judgment. The seven last vials may coincide with God's dealings since the French Revolution.

Having said so much, I go on with more detail as to the general interpretation of the book. After the introduction in the first three verses we have John's address to the seven assemblies in Asia, from Him who was, and is, and is to come; from the seven Spirits which were before the throne (comp. Isaiah xi. 1-3), and from Jesus Christ the Faithful Witness, the first begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. It is remarkable that none of these titles of God are His proper church characters. God is Jehovah in proper relationship with Israel. The Spirit is seen as in Isaiah xi., in its plenitude of power when Christ returns to reign. Christ is seen, first, in His character on the earth before the cross, as the Faithful Witness; second, as risen from the dead, but not ascended; third, as Prince of the kings of the earth coming to reign. What God is as Father, what Christ is as Head of His body the church, and Lord, and, I may add, as Priest; what the Holy Ghost is as Indweller and Comforter, are all left out. All this shows that the church is not the proper subject of prophecy; she is only introduced by the way to open the main subject of the book, which is prophetic in regard to the world.

Still this shows that Jehovah's governmental character is here applied to the church, and that there are unalterable principles in government that hold good at all time. (Comp. Ex. xxxiv.) We

know, as Christians, God to be in relationship to us as Father; Christ as Redeemer, Head and Lord; and the Holy Ghost as Comforter: nevertheless, the One who is Father, in relationship with us, is the Jehovah who governed Israel. It is the sense of who the Person is that addresses the church thus, that awakens in her the sense of her real relationship, and she expresses it in the end of verse 5, in the words, "Unto Him who loveth us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, unto Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen." It is like the bride of some great general like the Duke of Wellington, who hears her husband addressed by his various official titles, and exclaims in love and affection, "Oh, that is my husband," and rejoices!

The church continues, Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also that have pierced Him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him! Even so, Amen. Thus says the Christian heart that bows to the will of God. Most solemn word for the poor world that rejects Christ.

The next verse shows that Christ is Jehovah! The One to whom the Revelation was given says, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Jehovah, which was, and is, and is to come, the Almighty. All these are God's titles in relationship with man, Israel, or Abraham, faithful in covenant relationship and government, and almighty to carry out all the promises as given to Abraham. All this shows that the church is about to be replaced on the earth, by God's carrying out all that those titles *represent* to Israel and the nations. John continues handing on the message; he was the brother of the servants and of the saints in these assemblies, their com-

panion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. This kingdom had been rejected by the Jews; the King was in heaven and about to come back to reign when it would be set up in power. In the meantime it was set up in mystery in a world that had rejected the King, and Christians were in the kingdom, but in association with Him in His rejection, and also with His patience, and looking forward for His return. (See Matt. i.-xii., xiii., xvii.) At this time John was in Patmos, banished there by the cruel order of the Emperor Domitian, for the Word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Little did the wicked Emperor think that he was just furthering God's purposes, and giving Christ's servant such a wonderful opportunity of communion with his Lord, so that, like Daniel in Babylon, away from all brotherly and church communion, he received there the future history of his heavenly people, and of the world, which would be a blessing to the church all through the dark period of the present church's apostacy from God.

Ver. 10. Our Apostle was in the spirit of prophecy on the Lord's day, wholly occupied with what was coming on the world, when, all of a sudden, he heard behind him the voice of a trumpet, saying, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia, unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. Immediately he turned away from what he had been considering, and he saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. In spirit he had been outside and beyond the church and her history, for prophecy does not

relate to the church as such ; but now he is turned, and brought back as it were to the recollection that the church still existed on the earth. He turns to see who speaks to him and sees the Lord in the character of Son of man, as we have seen.

We get this title first mentioned in the prophecy of Ezekiel. He got his commission and revelation as prophet outside the land of Israel, for he was one of the captives by the river Chebar. (See chap. i.) He lived just at the time when the throne and presence of Jehovah was going to be removed from Jerusalem, on account of the idolatry and sin of the people, six abominations at least of which are mentioned, from chapters viii.—xi., where also the glory is seen gradually departing from the temple and from the city of Jerusalem. I think there are six abominations likewise mentioned in chapters ii. and iii. (Revelation), as a cause why the presence of Christ should finally depart from the professing church.

Since writing the above, it strikes me that the above statement is true. Certainly there was a parallel state of things at the period of the time when the glory was about to depart from the temple at Jerusalem, and the point of history that the church had come to in John's day. But as the Glory and Presence of the Lord lingered in Ezekiel's day before finally departing, so in a much more gracious sense has it lingered in the history of the church. And like as the Spirit of God had to enumerate at least four abominations in Ezekiel viii., which had gone on for a long period of time, off and on, in the history of the nation before the symbol of the Lord's presence made its first departure ; (See chap. viii. 3, 4, and chap. x. 4—18), so there are four evils mentioned in the addresses to the first four churches, before there is the removal of the presence of the Lord to the circle prophetically

shown in the assembly in Sardis. There is the jealous husband of the church speaking of departure from first love in the address to Ephesus, like as in the first abomination mentioned in Ezekiel viii., there was the image of jealousy in the inner gate, leading to the altar in the temple. Is there not some similarity between the hole in the wall (chap. viii. 7) where the ancients of Israel were seen encouraging the people of God to join their worship with every filthy and abominable thing, and the Balaams of the professing church teaching the people of God to mix up the worship of the church and world together? (Rev. ii. 14.) Is there not some similarity again between the women weeping for Tammuz or Adonis, and the worship of the men with their backs to the temple of the Lord (Ezek. viii. 13-18), and worshipping the sun in the East, to that woman Jezebel's teachings, in Rev. ii. 20, which typify the practices of the idolatrous priests of Rome, and perhaps also the lascivious practices of the Nicolaitanes?

When the glory departs and lingers over the East gate (Ezek. xi. 1), is there not some similarity between the princes of the people of Israel giving bad advice, denying the approach of judgment, and causing the people of God to settle down, and what has marked the Sardis period of the church (Rev. iii. 1-7), during which the church instead of trusting Christ has surrendered herself into the hands of the world rulers, and the church is subject to the state with a name to live and is dead? Fearing the sword of Babylon, they have gone down as it were to Egypt for help. Alas, for a fallen church!

And then may not the last evil mentioned in Ezek. xi. 15, be a type of that which causes at the end neutrality and indifference to Christ, as we see in Laodicea, viz., a portion of the people of God standing on right ground, saying to their brethren,

practically, "Get you far from the Lord, unto us is the land given in possession"? Alas, as the final result, Christ is found outside a Laodicean church, that says, I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, and finally departs with the true church to heaven at the Coming of the Lord, as the glory went off to the Mount of Olives, from which mountain the Lord ascended, and finally departed altogether.

In the Book of Daniel likewise the title of Son of man is twice mentioned: first, in reference to Christ Himself, in chapter viii. 13, where He is seen as Son of man coming to the Ancient of days, and where He gets His place given Him of universal dominion, at the time of His Second Coming, replacing the fourth great Gentile Empire of the earth, viz., the Roman, which reigned in John's day.

In chapter viii. 17, Daniel is addressed as Son of man, and in connection with this title he gets the future history of the nations in the East, specially in connection with his own beloved people, the Jews, unveiled to him. See also chapters x. and xi., where a vision of Christ much like what John saw, was shown to Daniel, also in connection with the unveiling of the future history of Israel.

In the Gospels, as has been remarked by others, the Lord takes this title in consequence of His rejection as Messiah by the Jewish nation. In Mark viii. 29, when Peter confessed Him as the Anointed, He charged them to tell no man of Him under that title, and immediately began to talk of His death, saying, the Son of man must suffer. Consequently it is a title betokening rejection by His professing people on earth, but in that rejection receiving revelations of judgment coming on them, and of their future history, which will end in the mass being set aside in judgment, the Son of man com-

ing again in judgment, and replacing them in His title of universal dominion over the earth and the heavens as we see in Psalm viii. Here, alas, it shows that the professing church as Israel had failed as God's witness on the earth; that the presence of Christ was about to depart as the glory departed from the Temple, but though departing the future history was opened up, which would finally end in judgment being actually executed, the Son of man replacing it with the kingdom set up in power over the earth.

We see then the Lord in the character of the Son of man, standing in the midst of the churches, represented symbolically by the seven candlesticks of gold. They were literally the seven assemblies of Asia, enumerated in the chapter, but no doubt symbolically representing the complete state of the professing church of God on earth in John's day. Seven is a number of completeness, whether of good or evil. The candlesticks are for bearing lights. Such was the true position of the church of God on earth, to be the light of the world, to bear testimony for God and for Christ. Gathered by God, through the instrumentality of the apostles, its walls had been built up by professing Christian builders, of professing Christians, and the Holy Ghost indwelt it. (Acts ii., and 1 Cor. iii.) But here it is not the Holy Ghost in the middle of the house, but the Son of man, clothed with the long priestly garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle, *i.e.*, divine strength for service. All the rest of His characters are for judgment. His head and His hairs white as snow, like the Ancient of days of Daniel vii., to whom judgment was committed, His eyes like a flame of fire, piercing for judgment, His feet like unto fine brass (strong for walking and for judgment), as if they burned in a furnace; and His

voice as the sound of many waters, *i.e.*, the voice of God Himself (comp. Ezek. xliii. 2); and He had in His right hand seven stars (the seven messengers representing the seven churches, who conveyed His messages to them); and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, *i.e.*, the word for discerning and judgment; and His countenance was as the sun, shining in his strength (Mal. iv. 1, 2).

In Matthew xviii. we find, the promise of Jesus in the midst, given to even two or three gathered to His Name, and so it was at the first; witness Luke xxiv., John xx., Acts ii., iv. But, alas, the church had departed from her Head and her Lord; she had left her first love; she allowed evil doctrine and Antinomianism in her midst; she allowed even a false prophetess to teach and seduce the servants of God to commit adultery, perhaps literal or spiritual, with the world; and to mix with idolatry. She had a name to live and was dead. She was lukewarm—neither cold nor hot. The attractions and claims of her Husband and Head and Lord, had lost their power over her.

Consequently the attitude of Christ towards her was changed: it is no longer the Saviour and Comforter for blessing, but the Son of man for judgment, loath to depart, indeed, for the priestly robe was on, and the girdle for the divine service of love, but on the verge of departure, like we read of in Ezekiel i.—xi. as to Israel, and again in the Gospels, and Acts i.—vii., as to the same nation, but now so for the church. The church had become an object for Christ's judgment!

John falls at His feet as dead! What, the chaste virgin whom Peter and Paul had espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ, so fallen, so departed, as to become an object for judgment? Was the glory about to depart from the assembly of God, as it did from Jerusalem's temple in Ezekiel's day, and

Christ's day—when He was actually there? Alas, yes, my reader! True it has lingered long, yea for more than 1800 years, but as truly as the pen of the apostle John wrote the Apocalypse, and God spoke it, so truly is judgment written on the professing church, as it was on man in Paradise, on Israel in Ezekiel's day, and on Jerusalem in Christ's day. The church has failed as God's responsible witness on the earth, and is to be set aside for the kingdom. And this is what John had to learn, and this is what you and I have to learn, my reader, if any have not learnt it!

The church as the body of Christ remains as the subject of God's counsels; Christ's building, over which the gates of hades shall not triumph that remains; but the visible house of God, set up by Peter and Paul amongst Jew and Gentile, has failed as God's light-bearer in the world, and is to be set aside. Trace its history through the Acts, the First Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 2 Timothy ii., iii., 1 Peter iv., 2 Peter ii., iii., 1 John ii., and Jude, and see whether the marks of departure do not get worse and worse; till, evil being allowed in Jude 4, and there being no power apparently to put it out, the next view we have is that in Rev. i. it has become the object of judgment for Christ. Now, what is the resource of the faithful under such circumstances? The resource is to return to Christ, in what He is as revealed—God and man in one Person. And as the corporate whole is for judgment, so it is for the individual to return, for whoever hath an ear, to hear what the Spirit saith to the assemblies, and it is for the individual to overcome in the midst of the ruin.

In order to this, Christ presents Himself to John as the first and the last, God, Jehovah Himself, and that revealed in grace. (Comp. Isaiah xli. 4; xliv. 6; xlviii. 12.) How else could Israel finally

be saved? Who sent Cyrus (Isaiah xli. 4) to restore Israel, except Jehovah, faithful to His promises (Isaiah xli.)? Who is the Redeemer of Israel, their King, but Jehovah, the first and the last (Isa. xliv. 6)? Who would refine them, and deliver them from the yoke of Babylon, but the same Jehovah (Isa. xlviii. 12)? Who, again, was that One described in Heb. i. 10-12, quoted from Psalm cii. 25, etc., the One who laid the foundation of the heavens and the earth, and who, when they perish, He remains? It is Jehovah, but now revealed for Christians as the Son of God (Heb i.), who became a man, purged our sins, and sat down at the right hand of God. The first and the last! What is this but the testimony of grace from which the church has departed, and to which the individual is called to return? Judgment is the result of departure from grace. He is the exhibition of it, the living One who was dead and is alive for evermore, who has the keys of death and of hades in His hands, God and man in one Person.

Here, dear reader, is the secret of overcoming in the midst of the church's ruin. The Son of God has been into the ruin of the then house of God—Israel—and has overcome. He lived at the end of a dispensation, just like we do now, and the secret of our overcoming is the realization of our link with the Great Overcomer, the Living One, who was dead and is alive for evermore. He stands as the Eternal Life beyond the imputation of sin, judgment and death, and the whole power of the enemy. He has met the whole thing for the believer,—has overcome, and His life of resurrection has been communicated to every believer, so that the believer is linked to the risen, victorious Overcomer, who was dead, who has opened the way clean through death and judgment, and the whole power of the enemy, so that if the believer is called to pass that

way, he passes dryshod over, like Israel over Jordan, and not a drop of the waters of judgment touch him. The keys of death and hades are in Christ's hands. Death is for him the open door into the glory; and when Christ comes again, the dead in Christ will rise first, even before the living are changed, and all the Christians shall then be caught away together, right out of the circle of judgment of the professing church, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be forever with the Lord.

Glory be to God, we are constituted overcomers through Him who has overcome—the living One who was dead and is alive for evermore, and who has the keys of death and hades (the unseen world) in His hands. And not one living stone of Christ's building shall be left out, the gates of hades shall not prevail against it (Matt. xvi. 16). The visible church has failed, but Christ's building in glory will be manifested when He comes again.

John was thus lifted up above the church's ruin, and was told to write the things which he had seen, the things that are, and the things that should be hereafter. Lifted up, he was now able to consider calmly what Christ had to say to the assemblies, and he was acquainted with the fact that the seven stars represented symbolically the messengers of the seven churches, and that the candlesticks represented the seven churches.

It has been noted in the opening of this little book, that the Book of Revelation is divided by the Lord Himself into three parts: First (chap. i.), the things that John had seen, showing a complete view of the professing church in that day, as shown in the seven assemblies in Asia;* second (chapters

* They are doubtless addressed as seven actual local churches that existed in John's day. This must not be forgotten. The evils existing were all in germ then that have been developed in-

ii., iii.), the things that are, viz., a historical sketch of the professing church from John's day to that of the Second Coming of the Lord; thirdly, the things that shall be hereafter, commencing with chapter iv. 1 end, showing the judgments that shall fall on the world after the church is translated to glory, on to the eternal state of things (chap. xxi. 1-8); the church's glory in the millennium, and the closing up of the book. I do not dwell, therefore, further on this, leaving my reader to judge in the presence of God as to the truth of the interpretation, only perhaps bringing out as I go on points which shall confirm it.

I proceed then to chapters ii., iii., which commence the second division of the book, according to the Lord's own division of it.

CHAPTER II.

Each assembly had an angel, or representative messenger, that had the state of that assembly on his heart, and to whom the Lord addresses Himself. (Comp. Matt. xviii. 10; Acts xii. 15.) To the angel of the church in Ephesus, He addresses Himself as the One that held the seven stars* in His hand and walked in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. To the church in Smyrna, as the First and the Last, who was dead and is alive. To the church in Pergamos, as the One who had the sharp sword with two edges. To the church in Thyatira, as the Son of God, who had His eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like unto fine brass. These titles correspond to the different symbols attached to His

to full flower since. They are addressed as *assemblies*, because they were in a province. (Comp. Gal. i. 2; 1 Cor. xvi. 19.) But there was only one assembly in each town.

* Stars are subordinate authorities under Christ (Gen. xxxvii. 9).

Person in chapter i. 13-18. To the church in Sardis, He addresses Himself as the One who had the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars. To the church in Philadelphia, as the Holy One and the True, who had the keys of David, who opened and no man shut, who shut and no man opened. To the church in Laodicea, as the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God.

Ephesus represents the church in its primitive state and beauty, set up in relationship with the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, as His family (Eph. i. 1-14), with Christ as Head of His body (Eph. i. 19-23; ii. 1-18), and with the Holy Spirit, as God's house and household (Eph. ii. 19-23). It was the love of God that had placed it in that place, and it was responsible to walk in love, as Christ had loved it (Eph. v. 1). But alas she had lost the sense of God's love, and consequently had left her first love. But first He who held the seven stars in His right hand, and that walked in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, commended her for what He could: I know thy works, He says, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them that are evil, and thou hast tried them that say they are apostles but are not, and hast found them liars, and hast borne and hast patience, and for my Name's sake hast laboured and hast not fainted. There were plenty of works and labour and patience, but the faith, and hope, and love, which were joined to these in the church at Thessalonica, were wanting (see 1 Thes. i.); Christ had somewhat against her that she had left her first love. The spring of everything had waned, the sense of the love of Christ had departed, and consequently the reflux back had been left. For we love Him because He first loved us.

Ah, dear reader, be very jealous of this both in

yourself and the church. Christ is very jealous of the church showing affection to any object but Himself. It is He that has bought her for Himself, from the depths of ruin, to be a testimony of His love in the world, and that at all events when everything else has cast Him out, there is one that shows true affection to Him, and that is His Bride. The first departure of the church from Christ was not in outward actings. It was in inward love—from having lost the sense of His love to her.

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen! Where had she been placed? Seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, by the everlasting counsels of God's love; and kept there too by the same counsels. But as to the sense of it in responsibility to her Head, she had departed, and was getting earthly, forgetting that all her blessings and calling were heavenly. Repent, says the jealous Husband, and do the first works, the work of faith, the labour of love, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick (thy light-bearing testimony) out of his place, except thou repent. (Comp. Ezek. viii. 5, Jer. ii., as to Israel.)

And here I must digress for a moment for the sake of those who are ignorant of their church-standing and privileges. Satan has taken advantage of this to pervert this scripture as if it upheld the monstrous doctrine that a Christian could fall from grace. But the fact is the verse does not address an individual Christian at all. It addresses the church as a corporate body—as Christ's light-bearer in the world, for the candlestick which He threatens to remove, is the light-bearer. The threatening then means that the local church would be removed as Christ's light-bearer in the world unless there was repentance. It is perfectly plain that a local church can be set up and bear fruit for a while in the world, and then be scattered or re-

moved, whilst individual souls—perhaps all in it—might be eternally saved. A church that is removed from being Christ's witness in the world, is totally independent of God's sovereign grace which saves souls for eternity, and the next verse or two shows it. The candlestick of Ephesus was removed, but individual overcomers in it, who perhaps were in it at the time of its actual removal, shall eat of the tree of life that is in the midst of the Paradise of God. (See ver. 7.) Blessed contrast between God's eternal counsels of grace to the believer now, and His government in regard to the first responsible man Adam, who was barred, in consequence of his sin, from ever eating of the tree of life in the earthly Paradise.

Yes, thank God, though the Ephesian church has as to her corporate responsibility not held fast to her first estate, has forgotten God's eternal counsels of love to her, yet God is faithful to every individual soul that does, who is in reality upheld by His grace, and the tree of life in the Paradise of God in heaven shall be open to that soul. There was another good point about this assembly that Christ mentions, she hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes which He also hated, namely, those that overthrew the Lordship of Christ, and turned the grace of God into lasciviousness—the Antinomians of the day. (Comp. Jude 3; 2 Pet. ii. 1-4.)

But I must digress once more, for there is a difficulty in the minds of many as to overcoming. What is it to overcome? Why it is simply to cling by faith to the Great Overcomer of whom we read in chapter i. 17, 18. The principle by which we overcome is shown us in 1 John v. 4, 5. The one born of God is the overcomer; the principle of overcoming is faith; the objective power is the Person of Jesus the Son of God, and the blood and the water are the means of overcoming. (1 John

v.) But this is in the world. Alas, here it is in the church! But if we recollect what the first chapter taught us, that the professing church had already become an object of Christ's judgment in John's day, the principle is easy. The church as a corporate body has failed. The individual is called to overcome in its midst; and to hear what the Spirit says unto the churches. Not to hear the church as Rome presumptuously says, but to hear what the Spirit says to the churches, for they are the objects of judgment.

In Smyrna we have a better state of things. It is an overcoming church, and overcoming like Christ through death. Christ presents Himself to her under the character of the Great Overcomer—the first and last, who was dead and is alive. God ever existing for the church on the solid basis of death and resurrection, victorious over death and the whole power of the enemy. He knew their works, and tribulation, and poverty; but they were rich. God had allowed the stream of persecution to flow in, to check the downward progress of the church, and it had produced good effects in the assembly in Smyrna. Prophetically we can take this as referring to the age of the church, following the apostles' day, when God allowed ten fierce persecutions to roll in upon a declining church, thus checking its downward progress.

Christ knew also the blasphemy of those who said they were Jews and were not, but were of the synagogue of Satan. Perhaps they were literally Jews of that day; but God had set aside the nation as being His; consequently it had become Satan's synagogue. The fruit of much evil in the early church was mixing up Judaism with Christianity. But the assembly in Smyrna was to fear none of those things that it should suffer. The devil would cast some into prison, that they might be tried—

the church should have tribulation for ten days. Christ calls on her to be faithful unto death, and He would give her a crown of life. Still, with all this the individual was to hear what the Spirit said to the churches, and to overcome. An overcoming assembly now is composed of overcoming individuals; and these should not be hurt of the second death, Christ having drunk up the cup of wrath and judgment Himself.

In Pergamos there is further decline. Christ presents Himself to the angel of the assembly, as the One that has the sharp sword with two edges; the Word piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit for self-judgment. He knew her works, and where she dwelt, even where Satan's throne was, and she held fast Christ's Name, and did not deny His faith even in those days when Antipas was Christ's faithful martyr, who was slain among them where Satan dwelt. But this assembly evidently lacked keeping Christ's word. There was lack of self-judgment, of returning to Gilgal—the place of circumcision (Joshua v.). Consequently, she allowed evil doctrine in her midst. Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, a prophet of God who taught Balak, king of Moab, to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel (the people of God of that day), to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication.

I have no doubt that this principle is that of the clergy joining themselves to worldly rulers, and teaching them how to mix up the assembly of God with the world and its idolatry, and fornication. Fornication is taken in a spiritual sense by the prophets; to denote Israel's leaving Jehovah, her true Husband, and joining herself with Egypt and Assyria and other earthly lovers, forgetting her place of separation to God. Some of the church's teachers, like Balaam, were the first to instruct

worldly rulers like Constantine and others how to do this. And in his days, though Christ's Name was still confessed, His Word was departed from, the church joined herself to the world, and the worship of relics and images, and the adoration of saints and the Virgin Mary began. The body of the church may not yet have all been defiled, but the evil was allowed in, and a little leaven was leavening the whole lump. The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes—the turning of the grace of God into lasciviousness—was also allowed. The clergy had practically taken the place of true ministry in the church.

Repent, says Christ, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and fight against them with the sword of my mouth. The individual was to hear what the Spirit said unto the assemblies, and the overcomer had the promise of God giving him to eat of the hidden manna. Christ was once humbled here, but now hidden away in glory; like a sample of the manna was put away into the ark and kept in the holiest of all before Jehovah, ever reminding Him of that dear object of His bosom that humbled Himself to death to do His will. (See Exodus xvi. 32-34.) The overcomer should also have the white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knew saving he that received it. This was one of the marks of approval given by Eastern princes to faithful subjects who met their approval. When the church failed to follow Christ the individual believer would be found to have overcome. The church accepted the world; the overcomer rejected it with the humbled Christ. This would be his reward in the other world; with the other mark of approval.

In Thyatira we have further departure, not only was evil doctrine allowed, but a false prophetess was allowed to teach and to seduce the servants of

God. Christ presents Himself to this assembly as the Son of God, who had His eyes as a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass. I know thy works, He says, and thy love, and thy service, and thy faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have against thee, because thou sufferest that woman (literally thy wife) Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. This no doubt refers historically to the history of the church, when the false system of Rome sprang up in the midst of the professing church, and ruled the leaders of Christendom. The princes of Christendom, like Ahab the wicked king of Israel of old, instead of trusting the Son of God allied themselves to this false system of religion, and the servants of God were seduced into mixture with the world, and into mingling with Rome's idolatrous practices. The Son of God holds the whole church responsible for this; and addresses Himself as such to the assembly, as contrasted with what Rome presses, that He is the Son of Mary. He has given this false system time for repentance since the Reformation, but she has not repented. Fearful will be her judgments. I will cast her on a bed, says the Son of God, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent; I will kill her children with death; and all the assemblies shall know that I am He that searcheth the reins and hearts, and I will give to every one of you according to your works.

Thus we see here not only the assembly joined to the world, as in Constantine's day, but actually a false church figured by a bad woman sprung up in the midst, and bearing children of her own. Another thing we see; here for the first time, a remnant is owned and separated. Unto you I say,

and unto the remnant in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you none other burden, but that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

The Coming of the Lord is here introduced, thus showing that taking the prophetical view, this finishes the history of the church as a whole, it takes us down to the Coming of the Lord. A remnant owned—perhaps the Waldenses and churches who in the midst of Rome have stood fast to fundamental truth.

The overcomer, who kept Christ's works to the end, would have association with Him in His power over the nations, persecuted and trampled upon as he might be now, he shall then rule them with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel; even as the Son had received power from the Father. Besides, he would get the heavenly reward, the morning star, viz., Christ Coming before the judgments to take the church to glory.

The promise to the overcomer in the last four churches comes before the call, He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the assemblies. This shows that it was all over with the church as a whole. It had no ear to hear. The overcomer alone had an ear to hear that which the Son of God by the Spirit calls them to hear.

CHAPTER III.

In the addresses to the last three assemblies mentioned in chap. iii., whilst no doubt they were addressed to actual assemblies at the time, we have a prophetic picture of a partial state of the professing church in three different states pictured by Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, all of them taking us down to the Coming of the Lord, and there-

fore, as prophetically viewed, they will run alongside one another till Christ's Coming. Sardis answers to Protestantism coming out of Thyatira, the circle of Greece and Rome; Philadelphia coming out of Sardis, and Thyatira; and Laodicea out of Philadelphia, Thyatira and Sardis. Thus we may expect four distinct general states of the professing church just before Christ comes.

In the address to Sardis, the Lord speaks as the One who has the complete power of the Spirit in government, and who has all the messengers of the assemblies in His hand. When He is prophesied of as the One coming to reign, in Isaiah xi.; the Spirit in seven different characters is seen on Him, with every qualification necessary for government, as well as of power. Blessed for the assembly if it had believed in Him in this character. But, alas, the assembly itself had but a name to live and was dead!

This as to prophecy I have no doubt is a picture of the professing church after it had come out from Rome figured by Jezebel, at the Reformation. It pictures the state of the Protestant churches separate from Rome and Greece.* There was complete power in Christ in government to set everything right. He held all the angels of the assemblies in His hand; but, alas, there was no faith to take hold of this as to continuance. At first, when there was faith, and the reformers went forth in the energy of the Spirit preaching justification by faith, whole countries were delivered from the yoke of Rome, a proof of the power of Christ; but then instead of trusting Him, they fell back on the human rulers of those countries, and the church fell into the hands of the world. It had a name to live. Justification by faith, and with it life, was held as a

* The Anglican or Episcopal church may be in the Thyatira circle, for she suffers Jezebel, *i.e.*, Rome, to teach in her midst.

doctrine, but the mass of the church was dead. Be watchful, the Lord continues, and strengthen the things which remain, which are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God. True doctrine was there, but the Life which ought to have been connected with it, was wanting, and hence the works, as the necessary fruit were imperfect. At different intervals did the Lord send messengers to the failing church, calling upon it to remember how it had received and heard, and to hold fast and repent, specially in what answers to it in modern times prophetically, by Whitfield, and Wesley, and other chosen servants, but all in vain as to the mass. What is then the future of this circle? If therefore thou shalt not watch I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. It had thrown itself on the world for support; it would be judged like the world; for the Lord would come upon it in the same character that He is coming in to judge the world. (Comp. 1 Thes. v.)

There were but a few names in Sardis who had not defiled their garments; they should walk with Christ in white, for they were worthy. Oh, sad picture of the general state of Protestantism, with all its fancied revivals! He that overcame should be clothed in white raiment. Christ would not blot his name out of the book of life, but He would confess His name before His Father and before the angels. The mass of professors whose names were in the human registers of church members down here would be blotted out, but not the name of the overcomer. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the assemblies.

In Philadelphia the moral character of the blessed Lord comes out. We do not see one of the

aspects here mentioned in the first chapter. There is His power in government, but in connection with opening the door and shutting it; as also for giving an open door of service to the assembly—feeble in itself.

It is government founded on eternal counsels of grace, such as David's was in the earthly sphere. He is the Holy set apart One. He cannot go on with the world, as He said, For this cause I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. There He is in the heavenly glory entirely set apart from the world, and has sent down the Holy Ghost on those that believed, associating them with Himself there, and thus not ashamed to call them His brethren. He is the True One, when everything around was false, and whoever heard His voice would thus get instructed in the truth by the Spirit of Truth, who should guide into all the truth.

But as having the power of government in His hands, the key of David,* He opened and no man shut, He shut and no man opened. The keys of the kingdom of heaven had been committed to Peter, but everything had failed in man's hand; the world had come in and swamped the testimony. Now the Lord holds the key in His own hand as the security. He opens; He shuts. Blessed for those who hear His voice, and follow Him; and so this is the only assembly that escapes as a whole at the Coming of the Lord (See ver. 10). It is the type of those who heard His voice about fifty years ago, and came back to be satisfied with their association with Him alone.

I know thy works, the Lord says, behold I have

* David was the man after God's own heart, raised up, after everything in Israel had failed. The priesthood had failed (See 1 Sam. i.—vii). The prophets had failed. Saul, the first king, had failed. But David, as God's man, was raised up.

set before thee an open door which no man can shut; for thou hast little strength, and hast kept my Word, and hast not denied my Name. There is no power in the assembly itself, it has little strength, but it clings to Christ's Word, and does not deny His Name. Association with Him who is Holy and True, marks the Philadelphian assembly, with obedience to His Word. They will neither have unholiness nor worldliness; neither will they have untruth in regard to His blessed Person or Word.

Satan opposes in trying to restore Judaism in the church, in the form of ritualism, or in mixing up the church with the hopes of Israel, but Christ assures the church of His favour, and that such will be forced to own that the truth was with Philadelphia. For this assembly there is a blessed promise, Because thou hast kept the Word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial that is coming upon all the world, to try them that dwell on the earth. Obedience to the Word of the patience of Christ, who is waiting in glory for His Coming, is the great thing here. Evil abounds, there is little strength in the assembly itself to meet it, but there is the waiting for Christ, and learning of Him, and in consequence the reward of deliverance as a whole when the Lord comes, from the great tribulation coming on the world.

The coming of the Lord for the saints thus becomes the distinct hope of this assembly. He will descend into the air, according to promise, and it, with all the saints scattered elsewhere, will be caught up to meet Him in the air, and never come as an assembly into judgment, as the professing church will as a whole, in the day of the Lord. Oh, to be found amongst this happy circle when the Lord comes. Looking at it in the prophetic view, there is such a circle on earth now, dear

reader. Are you found in it; in an assembly which, as a whole, with much weakness mixed up with it, cleaves to Christ alone, as the Son of God, the Head of His body, that keeps His Word, that does not deny His holy and true Name, that is keeping the Word of His patience, looking out for the coming of the Lord? Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast that thou hast that no man take thy crown. What a picture we have here in the midst of the ruin of the house of God, of an assembly governmentally saved, out of all the ruin, by the unfailing counsels of Him who has given to His Christ the key of David. It is the only assembly which escapes the judgments coming on the world, which ceases to exist on earth at the coming of the Lord for His saints. Thyatira prophetically, except the remnant, is judged with Jezebel, in the day of the Lord. Sardis becomes the world, and is judged like the world. Laodicea is spued out of Christ's mouth. Philadelphia only as a corporate circle is saved. Alas, it fails, as a circle like everything else, and we have got to overcome in it. Still it has, as an assembly, the promise of deliverance at Christ's coming. False professors are doubtless there, and they individually will be left behind for judgment when the Lord comes, but the assembly corporately has the promise of deliverance.

How important then to be amongst the overcomers in this assembly. It is the faith of the overcomers that preserves the assembly as a whole. They may be little thought of amidst the failure of the mass, may appear weak in the eyes of many of their brethren even, through the influence of the false professors, but such will become pillars in the temple of Jesus' God; they should no more have to go out for Christ's sake like they had to here. Jesus would write upon him the name of His God, the Father, and the name of the city of His God,

New Jerusalem, *i.e.*, the Bride—the Lamb's wife (Comp. chap. xxi.), and He would write upon him His New Name. Is it the Name of Jesus, Saviour? earned rightfully by the work of redemption. Thus He signs His Name at the bottom of the letter to the seven assemblies (chap. xxii. 16). Oh, blessed association with the God and Father of Jesus, with the Bride of Jesus, with the Person of Jesus, and the dwelling place, the temple of the God of Jesus, from whence we shall never go out.

Alas, even here, the conscience of the assembly is so dull it cannot hear. The word comes then to the overcomers, Let him that hath an ear hear what the Spirit saith unto the assemblies.

Laodicea follows, and ends the history of the addresses to the seven assemblies. Ominous name, "the justice of the people," substituted for the authority of the Lord in the assembly. Is it not the history of the professing church, culminating in the gainsaying of those who said to Moses and Aaron, the Mediator, King and Priest, We are as good as you, seeing all the congregation is holy, and the Lord is amongst them, wherefore lift ye up yourselves against the *congregation of Jehovah*? It is the assembly of God, lukewarm to Christ and His claims, claiming in a way equality with Him; usurping His place as Mediator, King and Priest, as well as the place of those connected with Him, (as the sons of Aaron in type.) A Levite heads them, a professed servant of God. Christ addresses Himself to this assembly, as the Amen, the Verily, the One in whom all the promises are true, the Fulfiller of the whole Word of God. He is also the Faithful Witness, faithful amidst unfaithfulness, answering to His character when He was on earth; the Beginning of God's creation, of that which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth (See Ephes. iv. end). Alas, the assembly had gone

back, as we shall see, to the ground of the flesh, as to its standing before God, I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing.

Sad history of the failing church ! In Ephesus we see it set up in its relationship to the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, as His family, the subject of His eternal counsels. It is established in its relationship to Christ as Head of His body, coming again to claim it as His Bride ; in relation to the Holy Ghost, as builded together to be His habitation (See Ephes. i., ii.).

In Colosse we see the half-way place. Greek philosophy and rationalism and Jewish ritualism had come in, and had a hold of the saints, and the assembly was in danger of not holding the Head. They needed to be instructed as to their completeness in Christ, who was the First-born of all creation, and the Head of His body the church. But here, alas, there is indifference to Christ, lukewarmness to His blessed Person, and the church, saying, I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing. In Philadelphia, Christ's Name and Word are all to the church, she is of little strength ; but here the church is rich, there is the corporate I in full swing, and lukewarmness to Christ's Name. She knew not she was wretched, and miserable, (literally the wretched and miserable one !) and poor, and blind and naked. The need of the divine nature of Christ, the gold which had been tried in the fire of God's judgment, was little felt. (Comp. 1 Pet. i. 7 ; 2 Pet. i. 3-9.) The practical righteousness figured by the white raiment, as the fruit of the righteousness of God, was little valued, and the single eye, springing from an ungrieved Spirit (Comp. Rev. i. 17, and John's Epistles), which had been communicated to the assembly, was little sought after. Hence real spiritual poverty,

nakedness and blindness. Samson over again in the hands of the Philistines.

The mass of the assembly had not even the marks of chastisement upon them; they lacked the mark of sons. (Comp. Heb. xii.) As many as I love, the Lord says, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent. He stands outside the door of the assembly and knocks; He is not with it as a corporate body, though grieving over it, for it has fellowship with the camp and its religion; but if any man in it should hear His voice and open the door, He would come into that heart, and hold fellowship there.

The overcomer should sit with Christ on His throne in the kingdom, even as He overcame, and has sat down with the Father on His throne.

The overcomers in Philadelphia, who cleave to the heavenly Christ, have the reward connected with the heavenly glory; the overcomers of Laodicea, have the promise of earthly reward in the kingdom. Such is the prophetic history of the professing church. It begins with Ephesian establishment, leaves first love, gets persecuted, and its decline is stayed for awhile, joins itself to the world, through the doctrine of the hired Balaams of the day, allows a false system, Rome, to spring up in its midst, a remnant is separated, and this brings down its history to the Coming of the Lord as a whole (See chap. ii.). In Sardis we see Protestantism come out from Rome, having a name to live but dead, and running alongside till the day of the Lord, when it is judged like the world. In Philadelphia there is a further coming out, a returning to Christ, His Holy and True Name and Word, and then to a waiting in patience for His Coming. This assembly is preserved from the tribulation coming on the world. Lastly, owing to its failure, Laodicea is formed, but proves indifferent, lukewarm to Christ,

and the corporate I, with no doubt high sounding titles attached to it, takes the place of Christ and His glory. This assembly is finally spued out of Christ's mouth. Thus we may expect to find four circles at the Coming of the Lord, running alongside each other in the professing church: Thyatira answering to Greece and Rome, and perhaps Anglicanism; Sardis to Protestantism, Philadelphia to that which is true to Christ's Name and Word, and Laodicea to that which is lukewarm to Him. My dear reader, I leave you to judge where you are found; but as I trust I have shown, Philadelphia alone as a corporate body is governmentally saved, at the Coming of the Lord for His saints. Individual saints are saved in all the other circles, and together with the saved Philadelphians will form the Bride of the Lamb. May you and I be found in that circle which is alone corporately pleasing to Christ when He comes!

One word more before I go on. Is not Philadelphia a circle characterised by brotherly love? As John says, We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren! Yet this brotherly love needs correcting and guiding by Him that is Holy and True presenting Himself to it. We must have a true Christ in connection with it. Has not this been one of the great questions being solved during the last fifty years? Terrible failure there has been, but the eternal counsels of grace prevailing (even as David was raised up after the priesthood and Israel had utterly failed under the law—See 1 Sam.), by Him who has the key of David. The mass of the people of God may be found in this circle, when Jesus comes, and be caught up without dying. The Laodicean overcomer may seem to overcome after the manner of Christ, having to pass through death. A high privilege and honour in one way, but having a mark of

chastisement perhaps mixed with it, as belonging to such an assembly. May God give us eyes to see and hearts to understand. May we be found in that circle, which is alone pleasing to Christ, when He comes.

CHAPTER IV.

In chap. iv. we come to the third division of the book of Revelation, a division of which we have the assurance, by the Holy Ghost's own words (chap. i. 19). Church history has now ended on earth. The Laodicean condition closes the scene, and John in spirit is taken up to heaven, where he is shown the things that must take place, after the church history on earth is closed. The translation of the church in mystery may be seen in John's own translation to heaven, but as the subject of the book is the government of God, and not His counsels, this could not be seen in any other manner.

The creatorial throne is seen in heaven, with One sitting upon it; He that sat on it was like a jasper, and a sardine stone; a type of the glory of God, in chapter xxi.; there was a rainbow round about the throne, showing God's purposes of mercy in regard to the earth (comp. Gen. ix.), in sight like unto an emerald. During church history God's dealings with the world were purely of grace; the blood on the mercyseat had turned it into a throne of grace; any sinner could come into an opened heavens, but now on account of mercy despised, God retires back to His governmental throne to vindicate His Son's rights and glory—in fact His own glory first of all as Creator. The creation must be purged by judgment. Creator rights are owned by the inhabitants of heaven, in chapter iv., in praise; and Redemption rights, in chapter v., where the Lamb is introduced. Around about the throne, John saw four and twenty thrones, and

upon the thrones twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. Who are these? They are intelligent creatures, for they worship the Creator for creation in chapter iv., and the Lamb for redemption in chapter v. 9, 10. They are not angels, or cherubim, or seraphim, for these are named distinct from them (ver. 6, and chap. v. 11). They have a royal position, for they are seated on thrones, and crowned; a priestly position, being clothed in white raiment and worshipping; white raiment also in this book is described as the righteousness of saints. Who can they be then but the redeemed from the past and present dispensations now translated to heaven, and sitting at perfect ease before the throne of government and judgment, made kings and priests unto God. In fact we find in looking into 1 Chron. xxiv. 1-19, the priesthood divided by David into twenty-four courses for the worship of Jehovah in the temple which was about to be built. Here is then their great antitype in heaven just before the great Solomon takes his great power and reigns, seen seated round the glory of God's heavenly throne.

This is a most important thing for the saints of God to understand. Before ever one seal of judgment is opened, before ever one trumpet of judgment is blown, before ever one vial of wrath is poured out, the heavenly saints are seen translated to heaven, seated clothed and crowned, filling up their place in heaven as a kingdom of priests unto God.

Out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunders and voices, types of God's irresistible almighty power in judgment, but the saints are in the midst of it all unhurt, unharmed, blessed witnesses of what is going to take place. Seven lamps of fire are burning before the throne, which are

the seven Spirits of God; His completeness in governmental power and shining for judgment.

Before the throne likewise was a sea of glass like unto crystal—a state of fixed purity, and in the midst of the throne and round about the throne were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind, type of complete discernment and intelligence. The first living creature was like a lion, for strength; the second like a calf, for firmness in treading; the third had the face of a man, for intelligence; and the fourth like a flying eagle, for swiftness. This was their cherubic character, connected with God's righteous judgment in connection with man's responsibility. When man was cast out of Paradise the cherubim was first seen barring the way of the tree of life. The sword of the cherubim required death from man if he was to get to the tree of life now that he had sinned. When God set up His government at Mount Sinai in the midst of Israel in the tabernacle, the cherubim were attached to the ark and mercy seat, which was in fact God's throne then, and it was only the blood of the sacrifice sprinkled on the mercy seat yearly that prevented these officers of judgment and justice from doing their official work. (Psalm lxxxix. 14.) In Solomon's temple they looked outward, a type of the glorious time coming when righteousness should reign on the earth, through the Person of Messiah. In Ezekiel's time (chap. i.) they are seen in full action, God being about to remove His throne from the midst of Israel, who had failed in responsibility. Judgment and justice in government must take their course. We see the glory, therefore, gradually departing from the temple in chapters viii.-xi.; and finally leaving it altogether, carried away by the cherubims.

In verse 8, the living creatures take the seraphim character of Isaiah vi. Each of them had

six wings: and they rest not day nor night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah Elohim, Shaddai, which was, and is, and is to come.

The seraphims cared for the glory of God, and His counsels. They appear in Isaiah after everything in Israel had failed in responsibility—the nation, the man, the woman, and the king. The prophet even is unclean in the vision of the glory of Jehovah Messiah, but the seraphim takes a coal from off the altar, and touches his lips and his sin is taken away; and he is sent back to the people to unveil the counsels of God, all the rest of the people being handed over to judicial blindness.

Thus whilst man is to be dealt with in connection with His responsibility in righteous government, the counsels of God in connection with His glory and Messiah will be carried out in connection with the earth, and the rest handed over to final judgment.

So when those living creatures give glory, and honour, and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders, full of intelligence, fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created. God's rights as Creator are owned by His worshipping redeemed saints.

CHAPTER V.

The book of earthly judgments has now to be opened. A seven-sealed book is seen in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne. Who was worthy to open it, and to loose the seals thereof? No man in heaven, or in earth, or under the earth

was able to open the book, nor to look thereon ! This made the apostle John weep because no one was found worthy, neither of those in heaven, nor on earth, nor in hades.

One of the elders then said to John, Weep not ; behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof. Thus the redeemed saints in heaven knew of one great Overcomer, the One amongst the many overcomers who had conquered in the fight. He was the Royal Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, the Messiah of Israel ; about to assert His rights, and to vindicate that nation's cause, and set up His throne in Jerusalem.

And John beheld and lo in the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and twenty-four elders, stood a Lamb (literally a little Lamb, the despised and rejected of men) as it had been slain, having seven horns, *i.e.*, complete power, and seven eyes, complete intelligence and perception, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.

And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne. And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to loose the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and nation, and tongue, and hast made them to God kings and priests, and they shall reign over the earth.

Here is the despised little Lamb going to take the earth in the power of redemption, going to avenge the cause of His murdered brethren, whether heavenly or earthly, hush creation's groans, and

bring in the restitution of all things as we read of in Acts iii.

Oh, how the Lamb of God must be the central object in glory to all eternity! Redemption was God's thought before creation. It is alone on that basis that His glory is maintained, and that He has been able to carry out all His marvellous counsels and purposes, whether towards the church, Israel, or the nations, or creation. It is not merely the payment of the price by blood that embraces the thought of redemption, but the complete forgiveness and deliverance by power, first, of the church and heavenly saints, who are here in heaven praising the Lamb for redemption, and for others who should be redeemed afterwards; then of Israel, then the inheritance, creation restored, and of the nations also. He is also the Kinsman, Avenger or Redeemer of His slain brethren (Comp. Deut. xix. 1-13).

The sight of the Lamb awakens universal praise in heaven. The inside circle of worshippers was composed of the four living creatures and four and twenty elders. Outside of them John beheld and heard the voice of many angels, round about the throne, and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Outside the circle of the angels was seen the whole creation which was in heaven, or in earth, or under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, praising the Lamb and saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen! And the four and twenty

olders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever. Here is the whole purpose of God seen! Creation then is about to partake of redemption, and we have seen the final result in the purpose of God of universal praise ascending to God and the Lamb from every creature.

The ways in the government of God in carrying out this are seen in the following chapters.

CHAPTER VI.

The Lamb now opens the seals one by one, and one after another of the four living creatures say to John, Come and see. The first thing he saw was a great conqueror on a white horse, with a bow, a sign of distant warfare, going forth conquering and to conquer. I do not think this signifies the Lord Jesus, though He comes forth on a white horse in chapter xix., when He comes to reign. But here He is in heaven, opening the seven-sealed book, and the conqueror on the white horse is a distinct object. It is the Lord acting providentially through some great man, possibly the last head of the Roman Empire, in conquest and war.

The second seal is opened, and the voice of the second living creature says, Come. A red horse comes forth, and to him was given power to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword. This is evidently wide spread war, and internal revolution, nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

The third seal is opened, and the third living creature is heard saying, Come. John sees a black horse, and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. He heard also a voice saying, A measure of wheat for a penny, and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine. Here is no doubt wide-

spread famine and high prices in consequence. The wine and the oil are preserved.

The fourth seal is opened, and the fourth living creature's voice is heard saying, Come. John sees now a pale horse, and his name that sat upon him was Death, and hades followed with him. And power was given to them, over the fourth part of the earth (most likely the circle of Christendom), to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. Here we have pestilence specially marked, but all the four sore judgments mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel, in chapter xiv. end, are here. The order of providential judgments coincide remarkably with the Lord's prophecy to His disciples, in Matthew xxiv., which, though it refers primarily no doubt to what happened partially before the destruction of Jerusalem, yet will not be fully fulfilled till the end. Here then we have mentioned, first wars and rumors of wars, then famines, pestilences, and earthquakes (ver. 6, 7).

The fifth seal is opened, and John saw under the altar, (which is evidently by the figure of the temple in the outer court of heaven,) the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony that they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Master, holy and true, dost Thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? Here is persecution which likewise follows in the order Matthew xxiv. 9 describes the events. All this happens in the first part of the last week of years mentioned in Daniel ix., for there is a farther company slain further on during the reign of Antichrist, who rules in Jerusalem in the last half week of years. Sixty-nine weeks of years had been fulfilled since the order to rebuild Jerusalem, in Ezra and Nehemiah's time, to the crucifixion of Messiah. Then He was cut

off, and the history of the nation ceased to be reckoned as to time. Between the rejection of Messiah and His return, the church is being gathered out of the world; when it is translated to glory, most likely the last week of Daniel will commence to be counted. White robes were given to these martyrs, and it was said to them that they should yet rest for a little season, until their fellow-servants and their brethren should be killed as they were. The cry of these martyrs agrees better with the cry of the persecuted remnant of the Jews in the Psalms, than with that of the church. The latter does not cry for vengeance, but for mercy on its persecutors. But now God is acting in judgment on the world, and no longer in grace, so that the cry of the martyred remnant agrees well with His action.

The sixth seal is opened, 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 to the earth, even as a fig-tree casts 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 freeman, 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 upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? Evidently here are great convulsions of nature, and of the natural phenomena of sun, moon and stars. Joel prophesies of such events taking place before the day of the Lord, when He shall return to judgment. Matthew xxiv. speaks of the same thing, as also

Mark and Luke. It is not the day of the Lord itself, but these convulsions of nature cause all men to fancy it is, and to cry out in anticipation of it, as if it had actually taken place.*

CHAPTER VII.

We come now to an interval between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals. Four angels are represented standing in the four corners of the earth, and holding the winds. Another angel is seen ascending from the East, having the seal of the living God, crying out to the four angels that they should not hurt the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till the servants of God were sealed. It is evidently an interval of grace, during which God acts for the gathering out of His remnant on earth, both among Jews and Gentiles, which shall form the nucleus of the millennial earth. It is not the

* A minor fulfilment on the year-day principle has been allowed. There is no doubt that the professing church had come to a point in John's day which only needed a short time for it as a whole to be spued out of Christ's mouth. The leaven was there, and allowed. Consequently, it is not surprising that, after John's death, it is only seen in the heavenlies; disowned as a public testimony on earth, though borne with, as to the whole, and God taking His seat in government, and through the Lamb once slain, acting providentially on the surroundings that seduced it. The first four seals then in this aspect are the judgments on the Roman Empire during its Decline before the days of Constantine. The fifth seal, the martyrs slain during that period, who by their cry already showed the successful efforts of the Judaising party in the church. The sixth seal, the moral convulsions in the Roman Empire in Constantine's day, resulting in the downfall of heathendom in that Empire. The seventh chapter, the salvation of Jew and heathen during that period of outward prosperity, a prosperity which also resulted in the downfall of the church to the level of the world. A remnant doubtless was owned on the earth during this period, chiefly among the Novatians who during the third and fourth centuries spread everywhere in the Roman earth; but the church as a whole was disowned; the unity being preserved in Christ in heaven, and only a remnant owned on the earth.

heavenly saints. They are already translated to heaven. Moreover one of the elders explains to John (ver. 13) who this company of the Gentiles is. It is God's purpose shown in regard to the earth. The judgments on the world will not hinder His saving a people, through the great tribulation, for the millennial earth. The heavenly saints had been translated like Enoch, but others will be carried through the great tribulation to the new earth like Noah; and here is the remnant shown forth. In the church too there are neither Jews nor Gentiles; but here Jews and Gentiles are mentioned distinctly, showing that the unity of the body of Christ is not spoken of here.

The remnant of Israel is first sealed: 12,000 of each tribe. The tribe of Dan is left out, and the two tribes of Joseph mentioned instead. Then the Gentiles follow. The full result in the purpose of God is seen. The throne of God will be then connected more definitely with the earth. I mean after the great tribulation, which is the last half week of years before Christ's reign. The explanation of who they are is given to John by one of the elders, and the answer is given in connection with their full reward. This carries us on beyond the time which the chapter actually speaks of, viz., their salvation and sealing. But I believe notwithstanding many of the expressions seem to connect their salvation with heaven, that they are really the spared remnant of the Gentiles for the millennial earth.

They are said truly to stand before the throne and before the Lamb, but so are the 144,000—in chapter xiv. 1-3—who are there standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion. The throne of God will then have a more definite character in connection with the earth after it is cleared by judgment. The judgment-seat of the Lamb will then be set on

the earth, and before Him shall be gathered all nations (Matt. xxv.).

Are not these the sheep on His right hand? They stand there with white robes, justified, with the palms of victory in their hands. They are those of whom Isaiah in chapters xxv. and xlix. speaks. But he speaks of millennial blessing on the millennial earth! not of glory in heaven.

They came out of great tribulation, had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They thus partook of the efficacy of redemption, but their praise was to God on the throne and to the Lamb, not to the Father and the Son. They are before the throne of God on the ground of redemption, 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 which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Most of these similes are taken from Isaiah xlix. 10, which alludes to millennial blessing after the present day of salvation is over. (Comp. with 2 Cor. vi. 2.)

CHAPTER VIII.

The seventh seal is now opened, and there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour. Seven angels are now prepared to sound seven trumpets. Christ is seen as the angel of Jehovah in a priestly character, holding a golden censer, with much incense, wherewith to offer the prayers of the earthly saints, who were still on the earth. These were offered on the golden altar before the throne. The answer is in judgment. The angel

took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar, and cast it upon the earth, and there were voices and thunderings and lightnings and an earthquake. The seven angels which had the seven trumpets then prepare themselves to sound.

The trumpets had to do with calling assemblies, or with the order of march in the wilderness, or in connection with Israel's enemies. On the first day of the seventh month there was a special feast connected with blowing of trumpets, and a type of Israel's restoration in the last days. Psalm lxxxi. celebrates this in the words, "Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on the solemn feast day. This He ordained in Joseph for a testimony when he went out through the land of Egypt; where I heard a language I understood not." In Egypt they groaned for deliverance, like the saints here, and Jehovah answered them by earthly judgments on the Egyptians, such as these mentioned here.

Here however the judgments are on a larger scale; extending at least over the area of the Roman earth, expressed by the third part of things, or else perhaps the circle of Christendom.

The first angel sounded, and there followed fire and hail mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth, and the third part of the trees was burnt up. This was something like the seventh plague in Egypt, only on a larger scale.

The second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain cast into the sea, and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. Something like the first plague, only on a grand scale, and caused by volcanic agency.

The third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning like a lamp; perhaps a

great meteor: and it fell upon a third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the star is called Absinthe; and the third part of the waters became like it; and many men died from the waters because they were made bitter.

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 the third part of it, and the night likewise. Trees, grass, sea, rivers, sun, moon and stars, all smitten! Alas for the day!

But worse woes were to follow! And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!*

CHAPTER IX.

Men are now the special objects of the judgment

* In the year-day fulfilment of prophecy, we have now God acting providentially through angels. It is no longer the Lamb opening the seals in connection with a suffering people on the earth (see chap. vi. 9--11), but now a Judaised condition of things; the church had ceased to suffer in Constantine's day, and the saints in more outwardly prosperous circumstances call for judgment on their enemies. The first four trumpets seem to answer to the Gothic invasions on the Western Roman Empire, the trees and the grass then partaking of a symbolic character, as the grandees of the earth; the sea, the unformed mass of nations, judgments on that; the rivers, the peoples; the sun, moon and stars, the outward forms of earthly government. All smitten. The fifth and sixth trumpets would refer to the irruption of the Saracens and Turks in the East: the former of whom were a terror to Christendom for about 150 years, and the latter finally overthrowing the Western Roman Empire in 1453. The reign of terror of the Saracens lasted from about 622 to about 772. The Turks' began about the year 1063. The remnant line of testimony was preserved at this time most likely through the Paulicians, who arose in the East about the eighth century.

just as their surroundings were in the last four trumpets.

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. This seems clearly Satan, who will be cast out of heaven most likely just before the beginning of the last half week of Daniel. (Comp. chap. xii.) He opens 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 because of the smoke of the pit. Here is direct Satanic agency. 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, nor any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men that had not the seal of God in their foreheads. This is judgment then on apostate Judaism (comp. chap. vii. 1-8).

And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months, *i.e.*, 150 days; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when it striketh a man. It is seemingly an antichristian power poisoning the minds of those giving way to it. 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 to horses prepared to battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns of 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 it as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. All this seems to picture an overwhelming power like the Roman beast, treading down every-

thing. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails, and their power was to hurt men for five months. And they had a king over them, the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue, was Abaddon; but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. Chapter xiii. would seem to me to give light on this woe, as following the downfall of Satan described in chapter xii. It is a formidable oppressing power energised by Satan, and poisonous with antichristian doctrine, ruling over the apostate Jews. One woe is past, and behold there come two woes more hereafter.

The sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar, which is before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. (This was the Eastern boundary of the Roman earth.) And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, (391 days and one hour,) for to slay the third part of men. This seems judgment on the apostate Roman Empire, by some Eastern enemy beyond the Euphrates, perhaps the Assyrian of the latter day. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand. John heard the number of them.

He saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these were the third part of men killed, by the fire, and the smoke, and the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouths 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 that 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 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.

CHAPTERS X., XI.

Chapters x., xi. 13, seems to point to another parenthesis in the book. A mighty angel is seen descending from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. Is not this the angel of Jehovah come down to the earth, from the golden altar before the throne, where we saw him (chap. viii.) to assert Jehovah's rights over creation? Men might act as His sword in judgment, but to Him creation belonged; and the rainbow round the angel's brow told of His covenant in regard to it. He had in his hand a little book open; and he set his right foot on the sea, and his left on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as a lion roareth; and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who made heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea, that there should be no longer delay: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when

he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He had declared unto His servants the prophets. It was a mystery that blindness in part had happened to Israel whilst blessing had gone on amongst the Gentiles, but now that the fulness of the Gentiles had come in, God would again take up Israel, and bring in universal blessing through them to the world. (Comp. Rom. xi. 25, 26.) When the reign of Christ began, which is announced by the angel of the seventh trumpet, the mystery of God should be closed.

The voice from heaven again speaks to John, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth on the sea and on the earth. And he went to the angel and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said, Take and eat it; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And John took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in his mouth sweet as honey; because of the honour of the revelation, and as soon as he had eaten it his belly was bitter, because of the sadness the judgments contained therein brought to his soul. And the angel said unto him, Thou must prophecy again before many people, and nations, and languages, and kings.

The little book, followed by the temple of God being measured, seem to carry one back to the beginning and end of Ezekiel again. The roll Ezekiel ate, full of lamentations, and mourning, and woe, contained prophecies of judgments that he was commissioned to utter. Then the prophet saw at the end, the man with the linen garment on, measuring the ground for the future temple to be built. Here it is a little open book not sealed. It seems to me to be the details of the last apostacy, the groundwork of which was laid in chapter xi.,

but which does not begin in detail till the last verse of the chapter; and connected with Israel as the centre. God in delivering creation, will at the same time be faithful to the covenant made with His earthly people. A fresh testimony is to be given before the whole scene is closed up and Christ takes His great power and reigns.

This introduces us to the last half week of Daniel. And there was given me, says John, a reed like unto a rod; and the angel stood saying, Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court that is without the temple leave out, and measure it not, for it is given to the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread underfoot forty and two months. This is clearly the temple of Jerusalem rebuilt by the returned Jews, but under the possession of the Gentiles—the prince of the Roman Empire and Antichrist. (See Dan. ix.-xi.) Daniel ix. shows us that the prince of the Roman Empire will make a covenant with many of the Jewish nation seven years before the end; most likely under it they will rebuild their temple and commence again the sacrifices. But in the midst of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and there will be an idol set up in the temple. At this time God will give an adequate testimony in His two witnesses—most likely Moses and Elias personally—and they shall prophesy 1260 days clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth, of whom Zerubbabel and Joshua were the type in the prophet Zechariah's day. Only then there was only one candlestick, type of the Jewish remnant, and the two olive branches pouring oil in were Joshua and Zerubbabel. Here the two witnesses stand for both the remnant and the support of it,—an adequate testimony to the God of the earth.

From Nebuchadnezzar's day, when the glory departed from Jerusalem's temple, God had given up His claim to the earth. He was the God of heaven,* and has remained so through the times of the Gentiles, but now He is about to reassert His title and take possession, and so the two witnesses are His testimony. And if any man should hurt these two 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, like Elias; and have power over waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will, after the manner of Moses. And when they have finished their testimony, the beast which ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them and shall overcome them and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the streets of that great city, *i.e.*, Jerusalem, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be buried. And they that dwell on the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. And after three days and a half, the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and a great fear fell upon them that saw them. And they heard a great voice saying unto

* The Times of the Gentiles begin with the Captivity of Judah in Jehoiakim's day (B.C. 603-606), and last till the Second Coming of the Lord. Seven times are 2520 days. Nebuchadnezzar remained like a beast for seven years (Daniel iv.). The nation of Israel likewise was to be punished seven times for their sins.

them from heaven, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them.

It has been a difficulty to know at what time these witnesses prophesied. But I think it will be seen that if the last week of Daniel begins with the opening of the seals, and that the trumpets follow in succession at the opening of the seventh seal, the events must have carried us down to well-nigh the last half week. The casting down of Satan from the heavenlies apparently takes place shortly before the last half week. (See chap. xii. 6-12.) If the fifth trumpet coincides with this, and this woe lasts 150 days, it would answer to the poisoning of the minds of the Jews already in league with the Roman emperor, and preparing them for Antichrist, who sets up his image in the midst of the last week of Daniel. The witnesses prophesy during the sixth trumpet, when the Assyrian comes against Antichrist, who has set up his idol in the temple. Their death, resurrection, and ascension would then coincide with the last days of Antichrist, just before the return of the Lord with His heavenly saints to execute judgment and to reign. The little open book seems to me to be the development of events connected with the last apostacy before God intervenes in direct judgment, and brings everything to a close. There is certainly a going back from chapter xi. 19 and onwards, before the last woe thoroughly takes place—seeming like a new revelation.

At the period of the ascension of the witnesses there is a great earthquake. The tenth part of the city fell; 7000 men were killed, and the remainder were affrighted and gave glory to the God of heaven.

This closes the sixth trumpet, the second woe. The plague of the horsemen was to last 391 days;

but if it goes down to the end of the testimony of the witnesses, we must be taken down close to the time of the Coming of the Lord to reign. The seventh trumpet and last woe must then be first the vials of the wrath of God (chap. xvi.); then the judgment of Babylon (xvii., xviii.), and the destruction of the beast and Antichrist when the Lord returns from heaven (chap. xix. end).

When the seventh trumpet sounds, the reign of Christ is celebrated. The four and twenty elders worship God, and celebrate the final result of the judgment which goes on to the end of time. The details of the last woe are not entered into here, but the facts of the nations being angry, and God's wrath having come, is celebrated, which answers to the details in chapters xvi.--xix. The time of the dead being judged is seen in chapter xx., as well as the reward of the saints. In the meantime there is a fresh revelation, beginning from ver. 19. The little open book seems to give further details about the purposes of God and the great apostacy. The temple of God is opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament; bringing out the thought of His purposes in regard to Israel, and the New Covenant, which are now going to be carried out and fulfilled. With this revelation there are lightnings and voices and thunderings, and a great hail. All this must be carried out by means judgments on the earth.

CHAPTER XII.

The woman mentioned here is Israel. She is seen clothed with the sun, the symbol of supreme authority; the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. These symbols remind us of Joseph's dream, and give a kind of key of identity as to who the woman is. In that dream

Jacob the head of the family was the sun, his wife the moon, the twelve sons of Jacob the twelve stars—the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel under their father. The crown of twelve stars may point to the final triumph of Israel as a nation. The woman is seen travailing in birth and pained to be delivered. A great dragon is seen standing by, having seven heads and ten horns; a symbol of Satan acting in the Roman Empire, ready to devour the child as soon as it was born. The third part of the angels of heaven seem to be drawn after him. The child was born who was to rule the nations with a rod of iron; and was caught up to God and to His throne. This is clearly Christ; the church is included too in the thought; for the same thing is said of her in chap. ii. end, as of Christ. The moment Christ was born, Herod was there to devour Him. But the purposes of God so far have been carried out. He has ascended up to God and His throne, and His bride the church has been well-nigh gathered out too.

After the rapture of the manchild, the woman Israel flees into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared for her of God, that they should feed her a thousand two hundred and threescore days. Verses 7–12 seem to me a parenthesis, showing what was the cause of her flight. There was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon fought with his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the 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.

Satan now ranges in the heavenlies, he accuses the brethren, and so, in the very Epistle which discloses to us the heavenly character and position of the church of God, we are told to be strong in the

Lord, and to put on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; we are told that we wrestle with wicked spirits in the heavenly places. And when the mystical manchild is fully caught up to God and His throne, that is when the church is translated to glory, then Satan's career in the heavenlies closes. The church goes up to heaven. Satan is then cast down. Blessed and yet sad contrast to what we read of in Acts i., ii., the former chapter of which tells of Christ's ascension to heaven, the latter of the Holy Ghost coming down to the earth. But now the day of grace is over, man has filled up his career of iniquity by resisting the Holy Ghost, and persecuting the church of God; God therefore will let Satan do his worst on the earth, and take the place of the Holy Ghost after the latter in the church has gone away to glory.

When this event of the casting down of Satan from heaven has taken place, there was a loud voice heard 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 who accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death; therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that his time is short. Thus whilst Christ sits at the right hand of God as Priest, Satan accuses the brethren for whom Christ intercedes. They overcome by the blood of the Lamb should they sin, and by the word of their testimony should they walk like the Lord who overcame the devil that way. When the last member of the body of Christ is called out, and the

church translated to glory, the devil will be cast down. Then will heaven rejoice, and woe come to the inhabitants of the earth.

On earth he finds the woman Israel as the object of the earthly counsels of God. Her he persecutes, and it is on account of him that she flees. Thus we see that directly the manchild is translated, Israel reappears as God's nation on the earth, as represented by the true remnant. This remnant for a while remains at Jerusalem, but after a while flees to the wilderness, during the three and a-half years of Antichrist's reign in Jerusalem, and becomes the nucleus of God's testimony for the millennial earth.

CHAPTER XIII.

Chapter xiii. shows us the opposing power of the enemy, to the counsels of God, in reference to Israel. John stood in vision on the sand of the sea, and he saw a wild beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the names of blasphemy. This is the revived Roman Empire under its last form. He had all the marks of the four beasts of Daniel vii. combined in one. He was like a leopard, his feet like a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his throne, and his power and great authority. Swiftmess, power and fierceness were his characteristics.

One of his heads was wounded unto death, and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast. Thus there will be a mimic resurrection of Jesus the Son of God. The Roman beast rises out of the sea, the mass of unformed troubled nations, like Napoleon from out of the French Revolution, one of his heads

is wounded to death, and there is reviving and healing, and all the world wonders. The result is the world worships the dragon, the energizing spirit of evil, and the beast also. Verse 5 shows that his career will last three and a-half years, the same period during which the remnant of Israel is hid away in the wilderness.

This corresponds with Matt. xxiv. The signal of the abomination of desolation set up in the holy place makes the remnant flee, and then the great tribulation takes place. The beast opens his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His Name, His temple, and those that dwell in heaven. Thus, whilst he blasphemes heavenly things, and the inhabitants of heaven, he persecutes the Jewish saints on earth, and power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations. And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear let him hear.

No doubt this has a secondary meaning, that would have given light to the saints of the middle ages, during the long dark night of papal darkness and superstition. In this aspect the first beast would signify the secular power of the papacy, putting its heel on the kings of the western powers, and succeeding the downfall of pagan Rome, its deadly wound thus healed, and persecuting the saints of God for well-nigh 1260 years. It was the saints' part to suffer, not to resist. Resistance always did more harm than good, and it was always true in the government of God, that he that led into captivity, should go into captivity; he that killed with the sword, should be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and faith of the saints. So this principle is to actuate the saints who shall live during the actual reign of the beast and Anti-

christ. Dan. vii., referring to this same beast, viz., the last head of the revived Roman Empire, says of him (verse 25), He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, *i.e.*, the saints of the latter day amongst the Jews, and they shall be given into his hand for a time, and times, and the dividing of time, namely, three years and a-half.

It would be interesting to the reader of prophecy, at this time, to enquire a little into the passages that refer to this period of time, which is severally alluded to in scripture, as the midst of the week (See Dan. ix. 27); as time, times and dividing of time (Dan. vii. 25, xii. 7; Rev. xii. 14), as 1260 days (Rev. xii. 6, xi. 3), and as forty-two months (Rev. xi. 2, xiii. 5).

Matt. xxiv. 15–22 clearly refers to this same period, identifying it with the time when the abomination of desolation is set up in the holy place, alluded to in Dan. xii. 2; ix. 27; a time which immediately precedes the Second Coming of Messiah. It is, therefore, the day of the great tribulation which is coming on the earth, the day of Jacob's trouble, alluded to in the prophets, when the Jews shall have made a covenant with death, *i.e.*, with the last prince of the Roman Empire (Comp. Isaiah xxviii. 14–22 with Dan. ix. 27). He will make a covenant with the mass of the Jewish nation for seven years before the end. It is the last week of Daniel. The temple at Jerusalem will be rebuilt, the sacrifices restored, but, in the midst of the week, He shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease; His idol or image (comp. Rev. xiii. 14, 15) will be set up in the temple, *i.e.*, the abomination of desolation, which will last for 1260 days. During that period the saints are persecuted, and obliged to flee from Jerusalem. They remain hid in the wilderness for this period. The two witnesses prophesy

in Jerusalem during the same time, and are slain. Antichrist and the beast reign supreme, finally to be destroyed at the end, when the Lord returns from heaven. The church, thank God, will be delivered from all this, having been previously caught up to meet the Lord in the air (Comp. Luke xxi. 36; Rev. iii. 10; 2 Thes. ii. 1-7; 1 Thes. iv. 14-18).

The second beast, of Rev. xiii. 11, now comes before us, who has two horns as a lamb, but speaks as a dragon. He is the great minister and witness of the first beast (which we have seen is the last great secular head of the Roman Empire), as Christ was the great Minister and Witness of the Father. It is the Antichrist of 1 John ii. 22, the man of sin, and the wicked one of 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. The king who does after his own will (Isaiah xxx. 33; Dan. xi. 36-39).

The first beast rises out of the mass of unformed nations, in a state of revolution, pictured by the troubled sea. The second beast rises out of the earth, after the government of the first beast is settled, and the nations all obey him. His government is apparently like a lamb, but he speaks as a dragon. He exercises all the power of the first beast before him, and causes the nations of the earth to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. He does great wonders, causing fire to come down from heaven, after the manner of Elijah (comp. 2 Thess. ii. 8-10), thus deceiving man by means of the miracles that he does in the sight of the Roman Emperor. He incites them to make an image to the beast, and has power given him to give life to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause, that as many as would not worship the beast should be killed. All, rich

and poor, bond or free, were to have the mark of the beast upon them; no one was to buy or sell, save he that had the mark of the image of the beast or bore his name.

What fearful days to live in! My reader, be warned by what is coming on the earth. Understand, oh, understand the progress and end of this present evil age. Man will then fully accept the place that the devil offered him at the beginning: Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. Reader, have you ever judged yourself to be capable, if you had the power and ability, to set yourself up as God, on the earth, to be worshipped? Thus the last head of the Roman Empire revived, will have this minister of his in Palestine, carrying out his will and wishes, setting up his image in the temple, and persecuting the saints. He is no doubt a temporal king from Dan. xi., but takes at the end the character of false prophet (See chap. xix. 20), when he is finally with the beast hurled alive into the lake of fire. He is the false Messiah, the Anti-christ of the Scriptures. (See his character depicted in Psalms ix., x.) 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 666, a number which in a three-fold sense, is one short of perfection, consequently it is the opposite. Men have thought to spell it in the words *Lateinos*, *Napoleonti*, and other words, but the wise shall understand in the day when he shall be revealed.*

The end of the twelfth chapter, then, and the thirteenth, show us the devil's opposition to the earthly counsels of God, being carried out in regard to the woman, Israel, and her seed. In the

*Taking the long period of a day for a year, the second beast might refer to the ecclesiastical heads of Rome, who have always caused those over whom they had power to bow down to the pope.

fourteenth we see the assurance that God will carry out His counsels, notwithstanding the devil's opposition. The Lamb is seen standing on Mount Zion, attended by 144,000 of the saved remnant of Israel, whom we have seen sealed already in chapter vii. It is the spared remnant of the twelve tribes who shall be brought through the tribulation to form the nation during the millennium.

CHAPTER XIV.

Four things will be fulfilled before this blessed^{*} portion of the remnant of Israel will be manifested. First, the everlasting gospel will be preached to all nations (ver. 6, 7); Second, the destruction of Babylon will take place (ver. 8); Third, the worshippers of the beast and false prophet will receive their judgment (ver. 9-13); Fourth, the Son of man will come in judgment, and judge the Gentiles, and the apostate Jews (ver. 14-20).

The remnant mentioned in verses 1-5 are clearly the same that were originally sealed in chapter vii. 3-9. The Messiah's Father's Name will be written on their foreheads. They sing a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders, and no man could learn that song except the 144,000 that were redeemed from the earth. In a day when corruption was corrupting the whole earth, through the teachings of Babylon and the false Messiah, these kept themselves from being defiled with women; they remained virgins. Their reward was, therefore, to follow the Lamb whithersoever He went. These were redeemed from amongst men, and were a firstfruits unto God and the Lamb, a firstfruits for the millennial earth. In their mouth was found no guile, they are without fault before the throne of God. The throne, as has been remarked before,

will be more in immediate connection with the earth, in that day, when Messiah reigns. The same thing about the position before the throne is said about the redeemed Gentiles, who come out of the great tribulation, in chapter vii. 9-17.

In order for this blissful time to be brought in, the everlasting gospel must be preached to all nations. It is the gospel of the kingdom (Comp. Matt. xxiv. 14), and the Jewish messengers, the King's brethren, will be the heralds of it (See Matt. xxv. 40-45). The nations will be judged at the appearing of the Lord, in accordance with the way they treated these messengers. Such as receive them will be the sheep on the right hand; such as reject them, the goats on the left. The church will not be in this judgment, except to be manifested on the side of Christ, and to judge the nations with Him. Together with the proclamation of the approach of the King, is the cry, Fear God and give honour 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. Such a proclamation was necessary when the whole nations had been seduced into idolatry. Another angel follows announcing the fall of Babylon—the false professing church on earth. Another angel follows with a dreadful warning, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive the mark in his forehead, or in his hand, everlasting torment should be his judgment. No rest day and night, for ever, and ever, and ever, in the lake of fire.

Patience was to mark the saints at this period, and the keeping of the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. Those that are martyred, as a consequence, in chapter xv., sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb. Such is not the song of the church, but of such who, in this transitional

period, are born again, and keep the law, looking for the Messiah to come.

Ver. 13. John hears now, in connection with this, a voice from heaven, saying, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth saith the Spirit; that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them". These should partake of the first resurrection, and be amongst the heavenly saints, a more blessed place than any earthly saints should be in. Great should be their reward in heaven (comp. Matt. v. 12, 13).

The vision of the Son of man on the white cloud, thrusting in His sickle to reap the harvest of judgment on the earth, closes the scene. The Gentiles are first reaped, they are the harvest of the earth; then the apostate Jewish nation, the vine of the earth. They are to be trodden down in the wine-press of the wrath of Almighty God, and the blood of them extends to a distance of 1600 furlongs or 200 miles, about the length of Palestine, the Holy Land.

CHAPTER XV.

The last vials of the wrath of God are now about to be poured out. Iniquity had come to the full. The Roman Emperor, reigning in the West, with Babylon on his back, and Antichrist, sitting as God in the temple of Jerusalem, in the East, both martyring the saints, were causing the patience of God to draw to a close. His wrath was now to be poured out, finally, to clear the scene for His Christ to appear. But, before the last seven vials are poured out, the martyred remnant are seen in heaven, standing on the fixed sea of glass, with harps in their hands. They sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb, as we have seen, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Jehovah, God Almighty, just and true are Thy ways, oh, King of nations.

(Such is the true rendering in the original.) Who shall not fear Thee, oh, Jehovah, and glorify Thy Name! for Thou only art Holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee, for Thy judgments are made manifest. They celebrate the time, such as the prophets had before spoken of, "When Thy judgments are abroad on the earth, then will the inhabitants of the earth learn righteousness."

Verse 5. The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony of God in heaven was opened; the new covenant must now be carried out with Israel, the apostate earth must be cleared. The seven angels come forth, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke, from the glory of God, and from His power: and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. Thus, there is a martyred remnant who will be made partakers of the first resurrection (Comp. chap. xx. 4, 5, 6), as well as a spared remnant (chap. vii., xiv. 1-5) who will be carried through the tribulation, like Noah and his family, into the millennial earth. Some of this remnant were martyred in the first half of the week of Daniel (See chap. vi. 9-11), and the rest during the last half week, under the antichristian persecution. They are the saints of the Most High, mentioned in Dan. vii. 25, whilst the kingdom will finally be given to the people of the saints of the Most High (Dan. vii. 27), that is the spared remnant of Israel, who will form the nation for the millennial earth.

All this shows clearly that the church of God is not in question in these passages, except, perhaps,

in quite a secondary meaning. It does not sing the song of Moses. Moses delivered the nation for earthly blessing. The church is delivered for heavenly blessing. The church does not stand on Mount Zion, but in heaven, though in spirit it is said to have come there. There is no question of Jew and Gentile in the church. All through these chapters there is; and the Jew specially after chapter xi. end, is the subject of God's counsel. May my reader be one who needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing God's Word of truth.

CHAPTER XVI.

A voice is now heard out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. It is the wrath of God here; in chapter vi., the wrath of the Lamb. The rights of God in creation must be maintained, whilst the Lamb is going to take all in the power of redemption. Consequently, though the vials and trumpets are greatly similar in the various judgments, the vials are more universal, and extended over the whole creation. The first vial is poured on the earth, *i.e.*, the settled, civilized part of the nations, and a noisome sore comes upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them that worshipped his image.

The second angel pours out his vial on the sea, *i.e.*, the unformed, uncivilized part of the nations, and it becomes blood; wholesale carnage and war. It may possibly be really so, for who can limit God!

The third angel pours out his vial on the fountains and rivers of water, and they became blood; viz., the sources and heads of the civilization of the nations. All this may be literal however, for the angel celebrates the judgment in ascribing righte-

ousness to God, who had given blood to drink to those who had shed the blood of the martyrs. Who will limit the power of God that once turned the waters of the Nile literally into blood, and can finally do it on a larger scale, when He comes to tread the winepress of the wrath of God in respect to all nations?

The fourth angel pours his vial on the sun; and power was given him to scorch men with fire; and men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God which had power over these plagues, and they repented not to give Him glory.

Verse 10. The seat of the beast is the scene of the fifth vial, and his kingdom was full of pain; and they knawed their tongues with pain; and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and sores, and repented not of their deeds. This is a plague specially on Rome and on the Western nations.

The sixth angel pours out his vial on the great river Euphrates, the Eastern boundary of the Roman Empire. From thence apparently will judgment come on it in the end. The kings of the East will come against her, perhaps headed by the Assyrian, the great Northern enemy of Israel. Thence, too, will the ten lost tribes of Israel return whence they had been carried away captive.

Three unclean spirits now come forth from the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, Satan's mock Trinity of evil, working miracles. They go forth to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them together to the great battle of that great day of God Almighty.

The Lord now takes up the word; Behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. An allusion to the night when the Lord was taken, when the young man was awaked

out of his sleep, and hastily wrapping himself about in a garment, he ran out to see what was the matter, and followed the Lord, when they caught hold of it, and he ran away from them naked ! (Mark xiv. 51, 52.)

The nations are finally gathered together into a place called, in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.

The seventh angel now pours out his vial into the air ; and there came a voice out of the temple of God in heaven, saying, It is done ! Great voices were heard, and a great earthquake, and the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and great Babylon came into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the fierceness of His wrath. Every island fled away, and a great hail fell, men blaspheming God and not repenting.

CHAPTERS XVII., XVIII.

Chapters xvii., xviii. recount the judgment of Babylon. There came one of the seven angels unto me, says John, which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither, and I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters ; with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication ; and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away into the wilderness ; and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations, and filthiness of her fornication. And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MO-

THER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH! And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her, I wondered with great astonishment.

Who could this be that John thus saw? The church is spoken of in 2 Cor xi., under the figure of a chaste virgin espoused to Christ. In chapter xix. as the Bride of the Lamb. But this woman is a whore—an opposite thing to a chaste virgin. She sits upon many waters; a figure of many nations and languages. The kings of the earth are represented as committing fornication with her, showing her illicit intercourse with the kings of the earth. Israel in the Old Testament is said to have committed adultery with Egypt and Babylon in having intercourse and commerce with them, Jehovah being her true husband. The church is not yet married to Christ; as to her real aspect she is a chaste virgin, but alas, as to her professing aspect she too nearly is pictured by this woman to be passed by. Is she not then a picture of that which calls herself the Church on earth, but which has allied herself with the commerce and idolatries of the world, especially of the Roman Empire.

The scene is all a wilderness to the Spirit of God. She is seen sitting on a scarlet-coloured beast, with seven heads and ten horns. This betokens the alliance between the church and the revived Roman Empire at the end. She is adorned with all the glory of the world, having a cup in her hand full of her corruptions and idolatries. Her name is—Babylon the Great, the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. She is drunken with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus. Who could this be but the harlot Church of Rome, the mother of all the false churches in the world, who are her daughters? Where has the blood of

the martyrs of Jesus been found but in her and those of a like nature with her? France, Spain, Austria and Italy are red with the blood of the saints; and, alas, whilst Rome held sway in England, it was so in a modified sense there. No wonder John wondered with great astonishment when he saw the church had come to this on the earth.

But let us go on to the explanation of the woman and of the beast as given by the angel to John, and as seen from ver. 7--18. The beast that John had seen, the angel said, Was and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit and go into perdition. This gives us three states of the Roman Empire. She *was* in the days of the apostles and those preceding them, and is not now. Since the year 476 A.D., the Western Roman Empire has ceased to be; indeed you may say the Roman Empire ceased to exist in its integrity. But there is a time coming when she shall revive in a Satanic form. She shall ascend out of the bottomless pit and go into perdition. This does not answer to papal Rome. She is the woman, not the beast, and it is most important to keep the two personages distinct in the mind. The woman rides the beast, is in union with it, but is not it. All the inhabitants of the earth shall wonder at the revival of the Roman Empire in its last Satanic form.

The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth. This is clearly Rome (comp. ver. 18), commonly called the Seven Hilled City. They are also seven kings, or the septiform form of government. Five have fallen, kings, consuls, dictators, military tribunes, decemvirs; one is, that of the emperors, and another is not yet come; and when he is come, he must abide a little space. And the beast which was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goes to perdition. It may be that Napoleon was the seventh head,

who for a time revived the ancient empire by his conquests, and abode for a short space, but the eighth head is identified with the beast. It is its last Satanic form, in which it goes to perdition. The beast cannot be mistaken as identified with the fourth great empire, described in Daniel vii. The little horn there agrees essentially with the actings of the beast in this chapter and chapter xiii.

The ten horns that John saw are ten kings who have not yet begun to reign; but they shall take power and reign at the same time as the beast. Daniel adds that the little horn subdues three of the kings, which leaves eight at the last, which perhaps agrees with the eight heads that we have described finally in chapter xvii. These kings give their power and authority to the beast. These finally wage war with the Lamb of God at His return from heaven (comp. chap. xix.), but the Lamb shall conquer them; and those that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

The waters signified the nations and languages on which the whore sat. Finally the ten horns should hate the whore, and should desolate her, should spoil her, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. Thus God would use them to accomplish His will, and have one purpose—to give their kingdom to the beast till His words were fulfilled. Finally the woman John saw was that great city, *i.e.*, Rome, which reigned over the kings of the earth. No other city did but her in John's day.

Thus, my reader, we have the future of the harlot Church of Rome, and the Roman Empire stretched out before us. Babylon will yet again, for a short time, ride the beast, *i.e.*, the secular power. But the latter will finally throw her off, spoil her, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. But will there be a turning to God? No. The ten kings will give their power to the beast, who will

reign supreme, and all together will be found at open war with the Lamb of God when He appears.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Chap. xviii. describes the judgment of Babylon. Another mighty angel now descends; so powerful that the whole earth is illuminated with his glory. He announces the fall of Babylon. She is become the abode of demons and of every unclean spirit. All the nations had drunk of the wine of her fornication; the kings of the earth had committed fornication with her, and the merchants had made themselves rich in the abundance of her delights. Another voice is then heard, saying, Come out of her, my people, and be not partakers of her sins, that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have mounted up to heaven, and strong is the Lord God that judges her. She says, I am a queen, and no widow, and shall never see sorrow. Therefore her plagues, her sorrow and famine, have come upon her in one day. God has remembered her iniquities.

The kings of the earth now mourn over her, who have committed fornication with her; the merchants likewise, who have got rich by her, mourn because no person any more buys of their merchandise, viz., gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linen, purple, silk, scarlet, all sorts of smelling wood, ivory, vessels, costly wood, brass, iron and marble, cinnamon, perfumes, incense, wine, oil, fine flour, sheep, horses, chariots, slaves and souls of men. Thus Tyrian commerce joins itself to the world-glory and religion of Babylon, and mourns at her fall. Alas, alas for England, which is the queen of the commerce of the world. She is seen linked with Babylon in the last day. All the mariners and pilots, likewise all those who traffic by sea, they will add to the wailing of that day.

Heaven rejoices, apostles and prophets rejoice, because God has taken up their cause. Lastly, an angel with great force takes a stone, like a great millstone, and throws it in the sea, and says, Thus with violence shall Babylon, that great city, be thrown down, and shall not be found any more. The voice of the players on harps, and of musicians, and of all kinds of music shall not be heard again in thee, no workman or mechanic shall be found again in thee, neither shall the light of a candle shine again in her, nor shall the voice of the husband and wife be heard any more in her. Her merchants were the princes of the earth; and because of her seductions all the nations were carried away. In her was found all the blood of the prophets, and of the saints, and of those who were put to death on the earth.

Such is the description, in short words, of Babylon's judgment, my reader. I would, before going on to chapter xix., just review shortly, from Old Testament scripture, what Babylon is as to her principles. Babel—Babylon took its rise from Nimrod, the grandson of Ham, who began to be mighty on the earth (See Gen. x. 8). He mixed up hunting with religion, as is described, he was a mighty hunter before the Lord. In Gen. xi., together with this, we have men associating themselves together to build a great tower and city, to make to themselves a name in selfwill and independence of God, upon which God comes down and confounds their tongues; wherefore the name of the city is called Babel (chap. xi. 4–9). Nimrod builds up his kingdom on the confusion. Babylon is the power that seduces the people of God in Hezekiah's day, and finally oppresses them and leads them captive for their sins.

In Daniel ii. we see the world-glory of Babylon. She has taken the people of God captive for their

sins. In Daniel iii. Nebuchadnezzar has a national religion of idolatry, and whoever will not fall down and worship his image, is persecuted and thrown into a burning fiery furnace. Thus it is not the natural pagan world typified by Egypt, out of which God's people first come, nor is it the unclean world like Sodom, out of which Lot is delivered, nor the infidel world typified by Nineveh, but it is the religious world, that takes captive the people of God for their sin, and persecutes the saints of God on the earth. It unites amusement, world-glory, with religion and the Name of the Lord, but it is really for making itself a name independent of God. (Compare Isaiah xiv., and especially Jeremiah li., as types of the modern Babylon of the Apocalypse.) There is a mixture of Babylon with Tyrian commerce and merchandise in chap. xviii. But Satan is the energizing spirit of evil in each case. (Comp. Isaiah xiv. and Ezekiel xxviii.; see also Ezekiel xxvii., for Tyre.)

Comp. Jer. l. 8, with Rev. xviii. 4-6; Isa. xlvii. 7-9, with Rev. xviii. 7-9. See also Isa. xiii. Comp. Jer. li. 6, 45, with Rev. xviii. 4, 5; Jer. li. 7, 8, with Rev. xvii. 4, xviii. 2, 3. As to Tyre, comp. Ezek. xxvi. 16, with Rev. xviii. 9; Ezek. xxvii. 27, with Rev. xviii. 11-19.

CHAPTER XIX.

Chapter xix. shows us the whole heavens rejoicing over Babylon's fall. What a contrast between man's wailing and heaven's rejoicing! They sang—Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, be unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are His judgments; for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication; and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And again they said, Alle-

luia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great.

Another scene now opens. Ver. 6. John now hears the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.

Babylon was a woman, and a city, so here the true church is the Bride of the Lamb, and in chapter xxi. the city, the heavenly Jerusalem. Now, she is only espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ (2 Cor. xi.); she is the body of Christ, formed by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, who baptized all believers into one body, and builded them together to be God's habitation through the Spirit. But the body of Christ is not yet complete; Christ's building is still growing up to be a holy temple in the Lord; but when the heavenly Bridegroom descends into the air, the Bride will be complete, and she will answer joyfully His call. She will rise to meet Him in the air, and then it will be said, the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready.

What a wondrous relationship, my reader, to be in! Surely it is above all thought of nature. Ephes. ii. 1-3 shows the dark pit and quarry out of which this wondrous Personage has been delivered and brought. Oh, how the true heart yearns for such a consummation of the desires of Christ for His Bride. Long she has waited, long she has wandered through the dark, howling wilderness, but soon

shall the voice of Her Beloved be heard, soon will she bound up to meet Him; and who will she meet? The Son of the Father, the Creator of the universe, the Heir to the throne of the worlds. The more, my reader, we meditate on the glories of the Heavenly Bridegroom, and who He is, the more shall we sink prostrate and adore! In Him, the highest relationship possible! the highest moral and official glories! In us, what shall I say?

Nothing, nothing, nothing,
Only to lie at His feet,
A broken, empty vessel,
Made for my Lord most meet.

That is what we say now! But in that day, what, my reader? I can only answer in the words of the fifth of Ephesians, Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word, *that He might present it to Himself as a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.* This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Will Old Testament Saints form a part of the Bride? I judge not (ver. 9). They are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, it may be. But the body of Christ is the Lamb's wife, and the Lamb's wife is the city (Ephes. i. end, v. 22-32; Rev. xix., xxi. 2, 9, 10). The body of Christ could only be formed after the Head was in heaven, and after the middle wall of partition was broken down between Jew and Gentile (See Ephes. i. 19-23, ii. 15-18). It was a mystery hid in God till Paul's day (Ephes. iii.).

Adam was first formed, then Eve; Isaac was first born, and died and rose again in figure, before Rebecca was called to be his bride. So the Head of the new creation had first to be made flesh, and die

and rise again, before He could take His place in union with the church, His Bride.

John, who had stood amazed as he saw the woman, Babylon, now falls down and worships the angel, as he sees, the Bride, the Lamb's wife; but the angel lifts him up, forbidding the homage. I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. He is the Centre of it all.

Verse 11. Heaven is now open once more, and Jesus comes forth attended by His heavenly saints. He is the Heavenly Bridegroom, joined to His Heavenly Bride, at the beginning of the chapter, the hope and joy of the Philadelphian saints. He is the glorious King, coming forth to reign, and to take the kingdoms of the world into His hands at the end of the chapter, the hope of the Laodicean overcomer (Comp. notes on chap. iii. end).

The heavens are only spoken of being opened once in the Old Testament days, and that for judgment, when the throne and glory of the Lord were about to remove from Jerusalem (See Ezek. i., also vii.--x.). But directly Jesus crosses the Jordan, and takes His proper place before His Father as the Heavenly Man, the heavens opened to Him, and gazed down on a perfect Heavenly Man, the Son of God on earth! (See Matt. iii.; Luke iii. 21, 22). The whole Trinity was revealed in connection with this object. When Jesus died, and by His obedience unto death had fully glorified God, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, as a figure that now the heavens were opened to man through Jesus; but not till Stephen's death. Acts vii. 55-60, was the blessed truth fully realized, when a man on earth, full of the Holy Ghost, gazed on the Glorified Man in heaven through an opened heavens, and saw the glory of God! and was taken

immediately in there. Paul, likewise, had a glorious sight of Jesus in heaven, and heard the wonderful additional truth, that the church on earth was one with Him in heaven; He was subsequently caught up and heard unspeakable words, that it was not lawful for a man to utter.

John, finally (chap. iv. 1), saw a door opened in heaven, after the end of the church history on earth, and saw the redeemed saints already seated there, before the pouring out of any of the judgments, seated, clothed and crowned, and singing the song of redemption. Here the Lord is seen coming forth with His redeemed heavenly saints to reign, and, finally, as He said at the end of John i., the disciples should see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man. That will be the millennium!

Thus, except for judgment and to Christ—the Perfect Man—the heavens were never opened to man, except after redemption was accomplished, and this truth was never understood, apparently till the days of Stephen and Paul, who bring out the double truths of the saints' present heavenly standing and state, and union with Christ in one body. Then I believe, John being taken up into the open door into heaven, is a mystic figure of the church's translation to heaven, before the judgments are poured out. The whole interval between chapters iv. and xix. then takes place, ending up with the scene of the marriage of the Bridegroom and heavenly Bride in heaven, and then He comes forth, out of the opened heavens, to judge this world in righteousness. Oh, Sardis! church that hath a name to live and art dead, hear the words of thy Heavenly Lord, If thou shalt not watch, I will come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know the hour in the which I shall come upon thee.

Protestantism will be judged like the world (Comp. chap. iii. 4, 5).

The Lord now comes forth on a white horse: 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 Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood (Comp. Isaiah lxiii.); and His Name is called the Word of God! Here, when He came the first time, He was the expression of God in grace. Here, coming the second time, He is the expression of God in judgment. The armies that followed Him out of heaven were upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. Who are they but the heavenly saints?

Out of His mouth went a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations; and He shall rule them with a rod of iron, and He treadeth the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God. And He had on His vesture and on His thigh written, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Here is the description of God's Anointed coming forth to take the kingdom. The scene now turns to what is going on on the earth at that moment (ver. 17). An angel is seen standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God. That ye may eat 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 men, both free and bond, both small and great. The picture is taken from Ezek. xxxix. 17-20, showing that the judgment is not over till the great Northern army is destroyed on the mountains of Israel, viz., Gog and Magog. But in Revelation

the scene is limited to the destruction of the armies of the beast and false prophet. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army, and the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worship his image. These both were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain, with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

What a different scene to that described at the beginning of the chapter! All light and love above, all pitch darkness and hate below, lightened up by the glory of the descending Christ and His saints. Babylon has disappeared. The Roman Emperor with his confederate kings, and Anti-christ, who has turned into the false prophet, are gathered against Christ. Zechariah xiv. shows us where this will be, viz., at Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses shall be rifled, the half shall go into captivity, then shall Jehovah come forth and smite those nations. The Lord my God shall come and all Thy saints with Thee! Dan. vii. 8-13 will then have been fulfilled, and the Son of man shall then take the kingdom. See Dan. xi., xii. likewise. The beginning of the day of the Lord will then take place, lasting 1000 years (Comp. 2 Pet. iii. 8-11 with Rev. xx.), at the end of which the present heavens and earth shall pass away, and the elements melt with fervent heat. Satan will be bound (chap. xx. 1), and Christ and His saints will reign for a thousand years in the meanwhile.

CHAPTER XX.

The twentieth chapter opens with Satan being bound and put into the bottomless pit. Perhaps Michael, the archangel, will have this office, the great prince of the Jewish people. At that time will the Jewish nation be delivered, and Israel will come out of their graves, and be restored to their land, the wicked amongst them being cut off (See Dan. xii. 1, comp. with Ezek. xxxvii.). The 1260 days, which began with the daily sacrifice being taken away, and the idol of the Roman Emperor put up in the temple, will finish. Thirty days extra will be taken to put away the abomination (See Dan. xii. 11), and forty-five days more before there is the full consummation of blessing (ver. 12); altogether 1335 days. Satan will remain bound during the whole of the 1000 years; then he must be loosed for a little season.

Christ now sets up His throne of judgment on the earth, and the raised saints of the Old and New Testament sit on thrones, judging with Him. The judgment of the living nations takes place as to how they have treated the messengers of the King, who preached the everlasting gospel (See Matt. xxv. 31-46; Rev. xiv. 6, 7). The saved ones from the Gentile nations enter the millennial kingdom, the rest are sent away to hell. Those who had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God (See chap. vi. 10, 11), and which had not worshipped the beast nor his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or upon their hands are also raised and live and reign with Christ for 1000 years. But the rest of the dead, *i.e.*, the wicked dead, lived not again till the 1000 years are accomplished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that has 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 for a thousand years.

This is the day of the Lord, which succeeds the present day of grace. Now, grace reigns; on that day righteousness shall reign, in the eternal state righteousness shall dwell. There will be also two resurrections; first, the resurrection of life (See John v. 29), called the first resurrection here, and alluded to in 1 Cor. xv. 23 as the resurrection of those that are Christ's at His Coming, and second, the resurrection of judgment (John v. 29), called the end in 1 Cor. xv. 24, 1000 years after. The first resurrection takes in that of the church and Old Testament saints, whom we have seen already in heaven, since chapters iv., v., under the figure of the twenty-four elders, and finally as the Bride of the Lamb, and those called to the marriage supper in chapter xix. 7-9. It also takes in the martyred remnant, that are slain after the translation of the church, and before the King comes to reign. These we have seen mentioned in chapters vi. 10, 11, xiv. 13, and xv. They all are raised and live and reign with Christ for 1000 years.

Verse 7. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of prison, and shall go out and deceive the nations 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 of the Beloved City; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

We must remember that all the Old Testament prophecies, in regard to the glory of Jerusalem, and the blessing of the nations, will then have been fulfilled. Christ will have been reigning as King on the throne of David for 1000 years, per-

haps represented there permanently by the Prince, mentioned in Ezek. xlv. 1-3. Israel's tribes will have been dwelling in safety, under their vine and fig tree, according to the arrangement of the tribes mentioned in Ezek. xlviii. The temple will have been rebuilt in its appointed place, in the midst of the land, and the city of Zion shall have been then the joy of the whole earth. The glowing description of Isaiah ii., Micah iv., Isaiah lx., and Zech. xiv., and other passages, will then have been fulfilled. But man is allowed once more to be put under test, as to whether he will bow to Christ's sceptre, even after having enjoyed its order and blessedness for 1000 years. What is the result? Alas, just the same as ever when Satan is loosed. Unconverted man rises up in rebellion against God and His Christ, tempted by the arch deceiver, who is finally cast headlong into the lake of fire, and all his dupes are destroyed by fire.

The end of the day of the Lord now comes. The present heavens and present earth pass away; Christ takes His position on the great white throne. The time for the judgment of the dead is arrived. All the dead, small and great, having been raised, stand before God. Cain the murderer is there! Pharaoh the enemy of Israel is there! Esau the hater of Jacob is there! Saul the persecuter of David is there! The fornicators and self-abusers of Sodom and Gomorrah stand there in all their pollution! Balaam and his line of false prophets; the false priests of Baal, Rome, Greece and of all the false churches of Christendom stand there! Kings like Jeroboam, Ahab, Ahaz, Belshazzar, Nero and Domitian, and other monsters of rulers, will swell the list of the doomed to hell! All the oppressors of God's poor; the slave masters who have practised cruelties on their slaves, and lashed them because they refused to yield to the cravings of their

devilish lusts, will have to answer then for their crimes. The books shall be opened !

Oh, my reader, think of it ! Are you converted ? thank God you will not be there for judgment. The blood of Christ has redeemed you, the resurrection of Christ has justified and delivered you ; the first resurrection shall have finally delivered your body. You have been made partaker of the first resurrection, you will have then already lived and reigned with Christ for 1000 years. Are you unconverted ? Oh, my reader, I beseech you before you lay-down this book, to think of the awful position of standing before the great white throne in all your sins, to be judged according to your works.

Another book was opened, which is the Lamb's book of life. Oh, beloved saints, think of the glory of being manifested before the judgment of the assembled nations, as on Christ's side ! How sinners will quail at the sight ! Christ's poor, despised people will then shine—yea have been already shining for 1000 years. But now they are manifested before their dead persecutors and oppressors.

The dead were judged out of those things written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hades (literally) delivered up the dead that were in them, and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. Thus, the last enemy that is destroyed is death. The second death, *i.e.*, the lake of fire swallows him up. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. A lake ! but not a drop of water to wet the tongue ! It is a lake of fire !

CHAPTERS XXI., XXII.

The eternal state now begins. A new heavens and new earth are formed; the first heavens and first earth are passed away, and there is no more sea. In the first creation, the heavens and earth were created first, and prepared for man's habitation, who was created last; but man fell and spoiled all God's handy-work. But in the new creation, the men of it are first formed and tested, and having been proved victorious through Christ the Head of it, their final habitation is prepared, the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Thus the new creation can never fail, and the new habitation can never be spoiled. Christ sustains the whole.

The holy city, New Jerusalem, is prominent in this new habitation. She comes down from her abode, out of heaven, as a Bride adorned for her husband. It is the church, the Lamb's wife, wife of the great Mediator who has gathered everything back to God. A great voice is heard out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.

And He that sat on the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And He said unto me, These things are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit these things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But

the fearful, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (ver. 5--9).

Such is the short sketch of the eternal state of things when Jesus shall have delivered up all things to God and the Father; when God shall be all in all (Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 24--28). Then shall be fulfilled 2 Pet. iii. 10--13, the day of the Lord having lasted for one thousand years, at the end of which the old heavens and old earth have passed away, and are destroyed by fire, and the new heavens and new earth are created, wherein dwelleth righteousness. The voice from the throne closes the whole scene of time. The wicked are judged and put into the lake of fire, the old heavens and old earth have passed away, the new heavens and new earth have been created. All the redeemed are safely housed there. Then the voice says, It is done; and lest there should be any escape to the thought that the wicked should be shut out (ver. 8) repeats their fearful doom.

Who is a liar then but he that, not only denies that Jesus is the Anointed, that He is the Son of God, and has wrought the work of atonement, but he also who denies the eternal judgment of the wicked in the lake of fire? It is the rejecting of the doctrine of Christ in its first principles (See Heb. vi. 1, 2). It is not only not going on to perfection, but going back from that which is the way of the beginning of Christ. It is the bringing in of damnable heresies, denying the Master that bought them. Who denies the Master that bought them, my reader, but those who deny man's responsibility to the Master, and say, practically, "You can do as you please in this world, you will be finally saved, either through a purgatory or

without a purgatory, in the world to come?" Who is a liar but he that says the wicked cease to be after death, and that the second death is annihilation? Why then does it say everlasting punishment in Matt. xxv. 46, if punishment is not everlasting? Why does it say everlasting fire, if fire is not everlasting? What does eternal life mean, but that life is eternal and goes on for ever? It is much more than that, for it is the character of life that is in Christ Jesus, and not in Adam at all; but it does mean that. Nearly 70 times or more, if I mistake not, is the word *aionios* used in the New Testament, and generally applied to life, but about ten times to hell, spoken of under various names, and also to redemption, the Spirit, and to God. There is no other word that expresses the word. Is God then going to cease to be? Is the Spirit? It were blasphemy to say so. Are these men going to rob us of the certainty of eternal redemption, the eternal inheritance, and eternal life? Bless God they cannot, but He will rob them of their fatal delusion, and except they repent they will wake up in the eternal prison house, where eternal justice and love itself will confine the incorrigible rebels, that have, from the beginning, torn up God's fair garden of creation, and persecuted and oppressed, and killed His Son and family. Is it not the very mark of a good beneficent government to confine incorrigible rebels, for the sake of the good of the kingdom, and its orderly, peaceful inhabitants?

Verse 9 to chapter xxii. 5 give the picture of the glory of the church during the millennial reign of Christ, and in connection with God's administration of government towards the world. It is likened to a city called the Holy Jerusalem, having the glory of God; her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone,

clear as crystal. The city had a wall, great and high, separating her from all outside, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. Three gates on each side, the city being foursquare. These gates were in connection with the earthly administration of the government of the world, of which the nation of Israel was the centre.

The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. It was built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (See Ephes. ii.). He that talked with John had a golden reed, wherewith to measure the city, and the gates and the walls. He measured the city with a reed, it was 12,000 furlongs, *i.e.*, 1500 miles. The length, breadth, and height of it were equal. And he measured the wall of it, which was an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is the angel. The building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, a type of what is divine, like unto clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, a sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz, the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. No guile there!

No temple was there; Jehovah Elohim, Shaddai, and the Lamb were the temple thereof. The city had no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and

the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their honour into it. This shows its connection with the earth during the millennium. 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 the 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.

A pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceedeth out of the throne of God and the Lamb. Along its course, on each side of it, was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations; there shall no more be any curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face, and His Name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, nor the light of the sun, for Jehovah Elohim gives them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Such is the description of the heavenly city. Words would fail to add description to it; but what more blissful place could there be, where God and the Lamb are its temple, God and the Lamb its light, and where God and the Lamb are enthroned? There the clear river of the water of life has its source; there the tree of life blooms in unfading splendour! It is the church's millennial glory, for there are still kings and nations on the earth, where there is also defilement, and need of healing. But this heavenly city is outside it all, but in it provisions for the healing of the nations. Christian heart, are you anticipating the glories of this scene as your own? Jesus says, To him that overcometh

will I write upon him the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which descendeth out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon Him my new Name !

The summing up of the book now takes place, with a threefold warning, yea fourfold, that Jesus is coming quickly (ver. 7, 12, 16, 17, 20).

The first announcement is in connection with a blessing on him that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. At the announcement, John again falls down to adore the angel, but is lifted up and forbidden to do it, on the ground that he was but a fellow-servant amongst those that kept the sayings, himself. God was the One to be worshipped. The prophecy was not to be sealed, but to be kept open, for the time was at hand. When the Lord came it would be the settling of the doom of all. He that was unjust should be unjust still after that day; he that was filthy should be filthy still; he that was righteous should be righteous still. He that was holy should be holy still. The Coming of the Lord is only complete when He appears to the world. Then the servants get their reward.

The second announcement of the Lord's Coming is in connection with the responsibility of men. His reward would be with Him to give to every man according to his works. The judgment-seat would be set, and the rewards would be given. The Lord was the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

The third announcement is not direct: it is a secret one, yet known by those that fear the Lord

for His secret is with them. It is the glorified Jesus that speaks. The One that took the Name, when He, the Jehovah of Israel, became a man to save His people from their sins. The One that has been to the cross, and put away all our sins. The One in whose holy body sin in the flesh was condemned. The rejected One of the world, who, in His death, died to sin, the law, and the world, who so glorified God that heaven has been opened to Him, and God was glorified in Him. It is the accepted man that speaks; the One in whom the righteousness of God is manifested; the Eternal Life, who was with the Father and was manifested unto us; the One who is now calling out, in union with Himself, a body, to be His Bride; the ever living Intercessor for His believing people to sustain their faith; our Advocate with the Father if we sin. The Name He took in incarnation; the Name which was written up on the cross; the Name which Peter preached, and Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch; the Name by which He revealed Himself to Paul, is the same precious Name revealed at the end! Oh, my reader, it is the same One, who in the awful aspect of Judge, had sent His angel to testify these things in the churches (See chap. i.). He was the One before whom John fell as dead, but was lifted up by His sweet Fear not! The great Overcomer is Jesus! The Judge of the professing church, that has departed from Him, is the Saviour of His church, His body, His Bride. Oh, sweet assurance of complete salvation to the believer, before the day of judgment comes at all!

Yes, my reader, He it is that speaks. Do you know His voice? Don't trust the church: it is under judgment. It has departed from its Bridegroom, its Saviour, and therefore must be judged. But His sheep hear His voice. The true Bride knows the Bridegroom, as we shall see just now. He

continues to speak, "I am the root and the offspring of David"; to fulfil all the promises made to Israel, to bring in the glorious time spoken by Isaiah xi., where He is seen under this title (ver. 1-11). But no response is given to His call. Why? Alas, Israel has rejected her true Messiah; she abides without a king, without a prince, without sacrifice, without an image, without an ephod, without a teraphim. (Hosea iii.) There is no one to answer to such a voice now. Presently Israel shall seek again the Lord, and shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

Jesus speaks again, "I am the bright and morning Star"! Immediately there is a response from the earth, from some one who knows Him. Who is she? The Spirit and the Bride say, Come! Ah, my reader, the secret is out. The true church, the body of Christ, the Bride of the Lamb, knows Him unto the title of Jesus, the bright and the morning Star! He is the Coming One, coming for His Bride before the fierce rays of the Sun of Righteousness descend on this poor doomed, devil-possession world. Just as the morning star rises sometimes four hours or more, sometimes three, sometimes two, sometimes one hour or less before the sun rises, so Jesus is coming to save His church, to take her to glory, before Malachi iv. 1, 2, is fulfilled. He may come to-day, to-morrow, next month, next year, any time. Oh, glorious hope, glorious prospect! Oh, blessed deliverance from judgment and wrath! Blessed consummation of the patience of Jesus, of all the blessed hopes of His suffering, tried people! Then the true Isaac will meet His Rebecca, and take her into His mother's tent. Then the Second Adam will look upon His Eve, and she will delight in her dear Bridegroom's love. The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the dead in

Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be for ever with the Lord (1 Thess. iv.). The Spirit presents her holy and without blemish to the Bridegroom, and He now, as her Gatherer and Conductor, cries out in her and with her, "Come". There are those, alas, who are true children of God in the midst of the ruin, that have to be woke up to the true destiny, calling and hope of the church. And so the church addresses them, "Let him that heareth say, Come".

The circle widens! Jesus speaks again, "And let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely". Every sinner must be invited. No one will be able to say, I was shut out without invitation. No, sinner, if you are shut out, it is because you have so filled yourself with the husks and the wine of Babylon's fornication, that you have no room for the living water of God's grace which is offered you freely. It is because you will not come to Christ that you may have life. Oh, fatal delusion! Oh, the madness of sinners!—to exchange a few hours of pleasure, and riot, and ease, for an eternity of blessedness with Jesus.

The book closes with an awful warning against adding to the words of this prophecy, or taking away from it. Oh, Pharisees of the day, listen! Oh, Saducees of the day, beware! All the plagues written in the book will be added to the one; his name taken away out of the book of life, will be the portion of the other. He which testifieth to these things saith, "Surely I come quickly". Here is the fourth and last announcement! Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.



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