

AN OUTLINE OF “THE REVELATION”

FROM *THE FAITH AND THE FLOCK*

BY WALTER SCOTT



The deeply insightful comments contained in this reprint first appeared in the early twentieth-century periodical, *The Faith and The Flock*, as a series of twelve articles published across 1910 and 1911. These articles have been collected together, each beginning with a *Section*.

While working on this book, I have thoroughly enjoyed the author’s strong appreciation of the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, Whose revelation this is: “...which God gave to Him,” (1:1). It is indeed His as a gift from His Father, which He shares with us. And in His marvelous grace, He has given it to us, not merely to satisfy a curiosity we may have, but so that we may know and long for His soon return.

Has His love for us so engaged our affections for Himself, that we echo the words of the Bride, “Come!” (22:17)?

—DAW, 2025



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Introduction

There are clear indications that we are on the eve of the Coming. Faith rests on God's Word, not on signs, yet these latter are highly significant, such as the budding of the fig-tree, the national reappearance of Israel, just before the end (Matt. 24:32, 33), and the present condition of the Christian profession exactly before the rise of the personal Antichrist, or, Man of Sin (2 Thess. 2). But, beloved Christian reader, "signs" do not constitute your Hope. What wait we for? The Lord Himself would have your heart, your spirit, your whole being wrapped up in those grand words—

"I will come again and receive you unto Myself" (John 14:3),
and

"Behold, I come quickly" (Rev. 3:11).

Lean all your weight of faith and hope on those soul-stirring words! "The Revelation" is just the book for the hour. Its reading will bless you, and its study arm you for immediate conflict, while preserving from surprise, as events unfold themselves in rapid succession. Personally, we have no fear of what is coming, no dread of what may happen. We know the end from the beginning. The course of events is mapped out in orderly sequence in the prophetic pages of the Divine Word. The full and final result of all now transpiring in the Church and in the world, yea the doom of the professing Church,* and of the world itself, are unfolded in this remarkable

* The Church as the House of God, or the public profession of Christianity wherein the Holy Ghost dwells and acts is given over to judgment (1 Peter 4:17). True Christians are "caught up." The mass of spurious professors is "spued out." Both acts are the necessary consequence of the Lord's descent into the air. The

book of human destiny. Not only has the midnight cry been sounded, “Behold, the Bridegroom (omit ‘cometh’), go ye out to meet Him” (Matt. 25:6), but we are a step nearer the goal of Christian desire. The general dread all over is expressed in the earnest and pleading request of the foolish, unsaved Virgins, to their wise companions, “Give us of your oil, *for our torches are going out.*” But God alone is the Dispenser of Grace. In the midst of their perplexity, the Bridegroom came. Beloved, He is just at the door! Hark to his footfall!

Our divinely assured portion is grace upon us, and peace within (Rev. 1:4, 5), and thus we calmly contemplate the future. The marvelous disclosures unfolded in this book of plan and purpose fill us with a certain moral greatness; that we—sinners, only sinners saved through grace—should be privileged to enter Heaven’s Watch-tower, and from thence survey the future—one of mingled judgment and glory. This high honor is not the privilege of the few, but is freely open to all God’s people irrespective of attainment, education, or age.

Governments have their very existence threatened on every hand by the wild and determined forces of Anarchy and Socialism, the end of which is plainly foretold in Rev. 6:12-17. The reorganization of the social system on a democratic basis, and in which all are reduced to one dead level. The end of all these socialistic ideas—for they will never be realized—is declared in Rev. 13. Universal submission to a Devil-appointed authority, or death in case of refusal, lies before the

Church as the Body of Christ is a divine work from its conception (I Cor. 12:13) till its establishment in glory (Eph. 1:22, 23), and consequently cannot become a subject of judgment.

peoples of Christendom. The professing Church, now the home of the Holy Ghost, becomes at the close—and when rejected by God—the dwelling place of the demon host of hell (Rev. 18:2). But why multiply? “The Revelation” is the book of eternal results, as “Genesis” is the book of sources; the former gives the end of all things, the latter the beginning of things.

When man has played his last card, and gone over the theatre of human history ending in shame and judgment, then the triumph of God, and the Kingdom of God, and the Rest of God over the rebellions of men and angels are celebrated in the songs of the redeemed in the heavens and earth, “Alleluia,” sing we, and say angels, “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” This, then, is our grand outlook and in which we shall have our part.

Section 1 – Chapter 1:1-8

The introduction occupies the first eight verses, and must rank as almost unequalled and second to none for fulness and variety of subject compressed into so brief a compass. We have first a *Preface* (vv. 1-3); second, a Divine *Salutation* and a suited response (vv. 4-6); third, a prophetic *Testimony* (v. 7); fourth, the Lord’s own announcement of certain Divine Titles (v. 8).

The Divine program unfolded in this marvelous book of plan and purpose is indeed a revelation of thrilling interest. We have here the completion of all previous prophecy—spoken and written; here, too, are given the closing stages in the exciting drama of human history. The mysteries and wonders of time and eternity; of heaven, earth, and the lake of fire are herein disclosed. The veil is rolled back, the curtains *drawn aside* as the very word “Revelation” implies.

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ." *This* should have been the title of the book. It is not a Revelation *of* Jesus Christ personally, so much as a communication to Him from God of things which must shortly come to pass. At the same time the whole scheme of prophecy is here seen to converge on Jesus Christ, and given to Him by God. Jesus Christ is the faithful custodian of the prophetic word of our God.

The direct object of the book is then stated. "To shew unto His *servants* things which must shortly come to pass." The word *servants* or *bondmen* is by no means confined to a special or official class of persons in the New Testament. All God's people are here contemplated not as priests, nor pilgrims, but as servants. Then Christ's angel and His servant John, are introduced as the mediums through and by whom the Revelation is passed on to us.

This seems a round-about way of communication. Distance and reserve are because prophecy ever supposes a state of hopeless ruin. In this book the Church, Israel, and the world are regarded as apostate and fit subjects of divine judgment, while, of course, a remnant in each, approved of God, *i.e.*, distinctly recognized, in the central part of the book (Chaps. 6-19.). God is here viewed as apart from His professed people as a whole, and speaking to "His own" through the intermediary of the prophet. "Who bare record of the Word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, all things that he saw." The deletion of the second "and" in the verse as in the Revised Version and other authorities is to be carefully noted. The meaning is that the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ are the two subjects of the book, and are embraced in the visions beheld by the seer. "All things that he saw" is not an independent statement, but constitute in brief the Word of God and the

testimony of Jesus Christ. All were beheld in vision on one day (v. 10). The visions in Daniel and Zechariah were witnessed during the *night*. The Apocalyptic sights were seen during the *day*. Both the word and testimony are of a judicial character in keeping with the grand object of the book which is to shew the public intervention of God, as also the steps preparatory to Christ’s assumption of His world-kingdom (11:15).

Then follows a word of cheer and encouragement to all who *read*, *hear*, and *keep* the words of the prophecy (v. 3). It is also a warning—a much needed one—against the neglect of this invaluable book, and every form of indifference with which it has been treated in all ages, and never more so than now. The book is guarded as no other Divine book, both at its beginning and at its close (see 22:6-9, 18-20). “*He that readeth...they that hear...and keep.*” All cannot read. No doubt, however, the public reading of the Word of God—a Jewish and Christian custom—is referred to here (Luke 4:16-20; Acts 13:15). To this public reading of the Word Paul exhorted Timothy (1 Tim. iv. 13). Read “the Revelation” in your assemblies and in your households. And do not confine the reading to the first three chapters, as many do, but if you desire the Lord’s special blessing, then read in orderly sequence the whole book; read it also to others so that they too may share in the promised benediction. But why the imperative demand to read the book and hear it read? Not only is there blessing accruing therefrom, but the grand reason is stated in one emphatic declaration, “*for the time is at hand.*” Every vision of every prophecy is about to be fulfilled. Prophecy leaps over times and circumstances and sets us down on the very eve of its accomplishment. The tread of the Master’s footstep, almost the sound of His voice is heard. “The time is at hand.” Thus fitly closes

this interesting preface to this delightful book—a book which has done, more for the writer than tongue can tell. Does the expression “The time is at hand” seem inconsistent with an almost 2,000 years’ lengthened delay? Ah! they count time differently in heaven. The years of earth are but moments in heaven. According to Divine reckoning the Lord has not been absent in the heavens two days yet (2 Peter 3:8).

We have had a Divine benediction pronounced on all who read, hear, and keep the words of this book; now we have a Divine salutation addressed to “the seven churches which are in Asia,” which in their totality comprehend the whole body of the redeemed. John’s direct service to the Church now commences. It is the beloved apostle no doubt—for there is but one John to every Christian heart. The apostle who always in his gospel and epistles writes in the third person, is expressly named five times in this book (1:1, 4, 9; 21:2; 22:8).

“The *seven* churches.” “Seven” is the ruling number in the Apocalypse, and intimates what is morally or spiritually **complete**. The church is here regarded as a whole. There were more churches or assemblies in Asia than seven, but that symbolic numeral in its moral force sweeps the whole earth and contemplates in its range the Church of God on earth at any given moment. Now observe that ere the mutterings of the coming storm of judgment are heard, ere one threatening word is uttered, ere seal is opened, trumpet blown, or vial poured out, the God-head, each in His own Divine Person, unites in a message of grace and peace to the whole body of the redeemed on earth. This twofold blessing is the common property of all the saved, and is given and secured to us by God Himself. Grace, God’s full, free, sovereign, unclouded favor, ever

rests upon His own, and peace, their blessed, happy state within. Need we say, that, ere the horrors of the coming day burst upon the scene we shall have been “caught up.” Every saint of God at the Coming is translated from earth to the air to meet the Lord. This Divine salutation is from Jehovah in the eternity and greatness of His Being— “which is,” then “which was,” intimating His relation to all the past, whether of things, angels, or men, “and which is to come,” His connection with the future. What a tower of strength! and this God is our God, great in His greatness.

The “seven Spirits.” The Holy Spirit is not presented here as the Comforter, but as the perfect agent in all God’s ways. Then, “from Jesus Christ,” Who is presented in connection with the past, present, and future.

- (1) “The faithful witness.” What He was on earth. Faithful in all His rugged path. He never swerved in His pathway from the manger to the cross. He never compromised the claims of God nor adapted the Divine requirements to the caprice, or fear, or favor of man.
- (2) The present: “the first begotten of the dead”; and
- (3) the future: what He will be: “The Prince of the kings of the earth.”

The moment Christ is presented thus, there comes an immediate response from His own. “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” Notice how all this brings out the characteristics of those who form the church. They are in the consciousness of Christ’s love; the great proof of which has been given in His blood.

They know that all their sins have been taken away. They are fully aware of their place of privilege “a kingdom of priests,” and they are intelligent as to the place that belongs to Christ, and anticipate with heartfelt desire the time when all will be His.

Such is their response to Him, but, then, turning, as it were, round upon the world, they bear this testimony: “Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also Which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen.” How solemn is this announcement ; and how different the attitude of the world towards Christ to that of those who know what it is to be loosed from their sins in His blood.

Then, before the communication John has to make is opened, there is again a reminder that we are brought into the presence of One Who is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending—the Almighty. If everything is to be shaken, and all pass away that does not come up to the divine standard, yet He abides, Who was before anything existed, and remains when everything of man disappears. Almighty to uphold or destroy, and able to give effect to all that He purposes.

Section 2 – Chapter 1:9-20

We trust every reader has secured a copy of the Chart issued with the February number of *The Faith and the Flock*, in which the twelve sections of the Revelation are shewn. In turning then to the chart, we find this section thus characterized: **Christ in the midst of the seven Golden Lamp-stands**. This, then, is the first of the visions beheld by the seer in the lonely isle of Patmos—a convict place of banishment for prisoners peculiarly obnoxious to the Emperor and

Government. All passed before the rapt gaze of the prophet on the Lord’s day—the first day of the week. “I was” or “became in Spirit”; that is, the Seer for the time being was taken possession of by the Spirit—heart, mind, and in fact the whole man controlled by the Holy Spirit; the absence of the article before “Spirit” marks the action as specially characteristic. Whatever Domitian—one of the cruellest of the emperors—laid to the charge of his distinguished prisoner, yet the real ground of his banishment is there stated to be his uncompromising testimony to “the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.” That no political offence was justly chargeable upon the aged apostle is shewn from the fact that on the accession of the just and humane Nerva, the apostle was released. This would not have been done had a political offence been proved, for *all* the Roman emperors were exceedingly jealous of their sovereign rights—such offences were not forgiven, nor readily forgotten.

In the closing words of the previous section (v. 8), the voice of God is heard. In the opening of this section, we listen to the words of man (verse 9). There are awful scenes revealed in this book, enough and more to appall the stoutest heart, but He who stilled the angry and raging elements which sought to get out of control of their Creator (Matt. 8:26), who trod on the billows of the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 9:24-27), speaks once again, before ever the storm of divine wrath bursts forth from the throne (Rev. 4:5), and from the altar (Rev. 14:18). The voice of God is the terror of the wicked. To us His voice is the sheet anchor of our souls, and as we travel through the numerous and sublime scenes unfolded in this wonderful book, we carry with us the voice of v. 8, and our souls are calmed. It is

grand in these days to be lost in the greatness of Another—and that other even *God Himself*.

John announces himself as the channel of these divine communications—not as an apostle, but in words of severe simplicity—“I, John, who also am your brother and companion in *tribulation*, and in the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus” (omit “Christ”). Those three things embrace all the saints of this age and those of Apocalyptic times as well.

Let us now put together the various separate links in one chain which introduce John into the prophetic scene. There were many distinguished men bearing the honored name of John, but to the heart of the church there is but one such. On moral and spiritual grounds the writer of the fourth Gospel, the three epistles ascribed to the same writer, and the reposer *in* the bosom of Jesus (John 8:25, R.V.), is the John *the* writer of The Revelation. Banished from the haunts of men, he is the more alone with God. His natural powers for the occasion were held in abeyance—he “became in Spirit.” The visions were beheld in one day—the *first* day of the week in more senses than one. The emperor unwittingly accomplished the purpose of God in sending His servant to Patmos, the very center of the prophetic situation. In front of him lay the Asiatic assemblies whose history and end he is about to relate. Jerusalem crowded with sacred memories lay south. Rome, whose prisoner he was, but whose doom the Seer is going to unfold, lay west. Babylon, the enslaver of God’s people of old, lay to the east. Russia, the Magog of prophecy, lay north. Here in Patmos, the visions contained in the book were beheld.

“*I...heard behind me a great voice*” (v. 10). “*And I turned to see the voice that spake with me*” (v. 12). Evidently, the seer had his mind and eyes directed onward to the kingdom, but ere the glories of Messiah’s reign could be entered upon, the fortunes of the professing church—the most responsible witness for God of all others—must first be depicted. The ruin of the church necessarily precedes the full revelation, and establishment of the kingdom. The “great voice” was the voice of God. He is the Source of all authority in this book— “All power is of God.” He has already morally judged the professing Christian body on earth, but the sentence of utter rejection (Rev. 3:16) is not yet executed. Till then, that body is God’s public witness to bear His name and exhibit His character on earth. Alas! it has miserably failed. The church as the body of Christ is intact, and is maintained in essential unity before God. *It* cannot come into judgment as in its inception, maintenance, and perfection in glory—all is secured by God Himself. And it is not in this aspect the church is presented in Revelation, but as the House of God.

The seven churches in Asia to whom John was to write are severally named (v. 11). These various churches had each their own special message sent them, but apart from the local and distinctive application, the seven churches separately and together formed the coloring and background on which the history of the church as a whole could be depicted, from her moral fall (Rev. 2:4) till her rejection (3:16). Note that here the churches as such are addressed; whereas in the next section the representatives are written to.

“**I saw seven golden candlesticks**” or lamps. In the Spirit’s interpretation of the symbol we read “*the seven candlesticks...are the seven churches*” (v. 20). Each lamp stands on its own base. Each church is within its own sphere, responsible *alone* to God. There is

no Metropolitan church on earth. Each assembly in its own geographical locality is directly and solely responsible to Christ, and not to another or group of such, whether in London or Rome. The mystical body of Christ is composed of the aggregate of saints (1 Cor. 12:13). A confederation of assemblies may display a certain external unity, but only for a brief season. The thing is bound to break up, and the truth of this has been amply verified in our own days. The Spirit’s unity is that of *all saints*, not of many, or all assemblies.

“The seven golden candlesticks.” The numeral seven points to what is spiritually complete, while the gold refers to what is righteous before God. The meaning is, that the Church here viewed as the House of God (1 Tim. 3:15) was constituted in Divine righteousness. In the symbol, therefore, of the Seven Golden Candlesticks, we have the Church shewn as God sees it, morally complete and divinely righteous as His vessel of testimony on the earth—not what the Church *became*, but what it was in God’s sight, and this it should have been practically—a reflex of God’s character.

But the seven golden lamps do not form *the* subject of this introductory vision. What is the church apart from Christ? Its life, glory, and blessedness are derived from Him. Beloved reader, let us come out of our narrow and circumscribed surroundings and contemplate with profoundest reverence the One here characteristically described as in the midst of the Seven Candlesticks— “*One like unto [the] **Son of Man.***” The church has moved from her center. She has got out of touch and contact with her Head in heaven. She has lost faith in the Living God. She has lost sight of the glorious One in her midst. Hence the drifting process, rapidly bearing her down till the climax of horrors is

reached, and she fathoms the depths of Satanic wickedness (Rev. 18:2).

It is the characteristics of the Son of Man that here come before us. In the character of Son of Man He touches the human race. Under that same title He shall exercise universal sovereignty, and to Him as Son of Man all judgment is committed. The judicial glory and majesty of Christ overwhelmed the Seer (verse 17). What effect has it wrought upon the soul and conscience of the writer and reader?

“Clothed with a garment down to the foot” intimates calm, deliberate, dignified judgment. *“Girt about the paps (breasts) with a golden girdle.”* Divine Righteousness and Divine Faithfulness constitute the girdle, but these are never separated from the love of His blessed heart, though these have to be restrained. *“His head and hairs white like wool, as white as snow.”* This part of the description identifies Him with **“The Ancient of Days”** (Dan. 7:9). The Son of Man and the Ancient of Days are distinct in Person, but certain characteristics and actions are similar to both (Dan. 7:13, 22; Rev. 1:13, 14). Divine wisdom—essentially so—and absolute purity in the color named—white—is what we gather from the head and hairs. Divine wisdom is ever exercised in essential purity. The uncovered head points to what He is personally, not what He is officially. *“His eyes as a flame of fire.”* Nothing escapes His keen penetrating judgment. *“His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.”* Firm, unyielding, judicial judgment upon all that which His eye searches out in the churches. *“His voice as the sound of many waters.”* The waves of human passion and rebellion will yet as before rise and hurl themselves against the throne of the Eternal, but the majesty and terror of His voice—more powerful than many cataracts—will break and utterly overwhelm every combination of evil (Ps. 93).

In v. 16 certain official glories are presented, and we may add, what is relative also. “*He had in His right hand seven stars.*” Stars are meant to shine in a dark night and reflect the light of heaven on earth. “*The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches*” (v. 20). Christ is the source of all gifts to His church, and they are upheld by His power; whether for administration or edification.

All here is viewed in Divine order. (Compare with 3:1). As the night darkens, may every spiritual ruler and guide shine increasingly, and draw his resources more deeply from Christ. He will sustain every faithful servant in His “right hand.” Further, “*Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.*” The execution of Divine judgment by the irresistible force of His word (see 2 Thess. 2:8). Christ never puts His hands on His foes. He speaks, and at once the judgment is executed. “His countenance as the sun shineth in his strength.” Supreme glory is indicated in His blessed face, and glory of such sort as no mortal can gaze upon.

The sight was all too much, even for the disciple peculiarly loved of the Lord. John himself narrates the effect of the vision. “*When I saw Him I fell at His feet as dead*” (v. 17). This was the overwhelming effect of the vision. “*And He laid His right hand upon me.*” O how the gentle pressure of that hand must have thrilled the heart of John as he lay at the feet of his adorable Lord. Then, once again, the familiar “Fear not” would calm and quiet the soul.

“*I am the **First** and the **Last**.*” Here is a title essentially Divine and a rock of strength for human weakness and sorrow. Build upon it, rest your soul’s weakness upon it. Jehovah takes that same title in the book of Isaiah three times (Chaps. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12). Christ applies it also to Himself three times in our book (Chaps. 1:17 ; 2:8 ; 22:13).

As the “First” He is supreme and before all. As the “Last” He is the end, the Consummation. He is source and end. And this One is none other than Jesus of Nazareth, now glorified in the heavens.

Then He says—who says ? not the Seer, but the Lord Himself, “**I am He that liveth.**” The Living One victorious over death and all the circumstances of life. “Was dead,” or “became dead.” Death had no claim upon Him. He voluntarily entered into the domain of death. He laid down His life. Death is the stronghold of Satan and the result of sin. Men enter it of necessity. He voluntarily passed through its portals. Now hear the shout of the victor, “**BEHOLD I AM ALIVE FOR EVERMORE.**” This, then, is our everlasting strength, our strong consolation. Our Lord calls attention to a mighty truth practically forgotten by the church. It was the battle cry of Luther. The Lord lives! The Lord lives! “*And have the keys of death and of hades*” (not the English word “hell”). He is Master of the whole situation. He is Lord of death and hades, of the bodies and souls of all—but especially does He preserve those of His own.

There are two commands to write (vv. 11, 19), but between these we have the glorious visions of Christ and the consolatory truths contained in vv. 17 and 18. What the Seer is to write is contained in three divisions into which the contents of the book are distributed, *not* including the Introduction (chap. 1:1-8), nor the closing section (chap. 22:6-21). “Write the things which thou hast seen (*past*) and the things which are (*present*) and the things which shall be hereafter” (*future*). Those three divisions are consecutive; they do not overlap. Each is complete in itself, and contains within itself its own group of events. The first division is found in chap. 1. The second division occupies chaps. 2 and 3. The third division is the largest,

commencing with chap. 4 and closing with chap. 22:5. [The mystery of the stars and candlesticks (v. 20) has been already referred to.]

Section 3 – Chapters 2 & 3

A reference to the Chart in the February issue shews that this section of our book is titled **The Things which are**. Had those two chapters been omitted from *The Revelation*, we would have suffered an irreparable loss. In them we have the Spirit’s history of the Christian profession from the close of the Apostolic period, right down through the ages, till its rejection. It is, therefore, an exceedingly important section, and one fruitful in lessons both to the Church and individual. The history is necessarily brief—not many particulars are given, but rather the statement of general principles. The down-grade course of the Church from its *first* point of departure (2:4) till its absolutely Christless condition (3:17, 20) is here sketched by a Divine pen. The history is open to all who have ears to hear.

Will the reader carefully note that we have—

- Church History in Rev. 2 and 3.
- Kingdom History in Matt. 13.
- Gentile Political History in Dan. 7.
- Jewish National History in Gen. 49.
- Governmental History of Israel in Deut. 33.
- Ecclesiastical History of Israel in Lev. 23.

In the Chart, the Churches here addressed are separately named, and a brief word or sentence added so as to point out the main

characteristics of each. Attention to this will materially assist the reader in the understanding of these Apocalyptic Epistles.

In all, there are seven Churches, which presents the Church as a whole in its totality, its completeness. But the seven are divided into two groups—three and four. In the first three, namely, Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamos, the call, “He that hath an ear, let him hear” precedes the address to the overcomer; whereas in the second groups, namely, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, the overcomer is first addressed followed by the call to hear.

Again, the first group presents consecutive periods of history. In the second group the beginnings of history are as distinctly marked as in the first, but their close brings us down in a general way to the coming of the Lord; they overlap each other. In the first group, the main point is a call to repent and return to the pristine condition of the Church as in Pentecostal youth and beauty. In the second group, the hopeless condition of the Church is shewn, recovery is impossible, hence in each the goal of hope is the Kingdom and the Coming of the Lord.

In all the Churches, mingled praise and blame are meted out in exact proportions to their actual state, save in two—Smyrna and Philadelphia. The former was characterized by *suffering*, the latter marked by *weakness*, hence neither is blamed. Their condition rather called for sympathy and support.

1. **Ephesus** (2:1-7). Paul, 30 years previously, addressed a letter to the *Saints* in Ephesus. John sends his communications to the angel of the Church in Ephesus. In the former there is intimacy; in the latter there is reserve. We believe the difference can be accounted for. In Paul’s time, *love* was the predominant feature of the Church

life of Ephesus. Love is variously mentioned in the Pauline Epistle nearly 20 times. In John’s day, *love* was characteristically absent in the Ephesian assembly, hence he cannot write to the saints directly but to their “star” or representative, i.e., the angel. “Nevertheless I have against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” The word “somewhat,” wrongly inserted in our English Bibles, weakens the sense. The absence of first love is a positive and grave cause of complaint, and must on no account be palliated.

Love is the life-breath of the Church and of the Christian. It is the hidden spring of all Christian activity, of all true devotedness, of all service and worship acceptable to God. We cannot do better than beg careful perusal of the Holy Spirit’s commentary on love—the first and most enduring of all Christian graces—in 1 Cor. 13. The *first* step in the Church’s downward career is here noted, “**Thou hast left thy first love.**” Where love to Christ is lacking, or but feebly alive in the soul, that Church or Christian that can be justly so charged is in grave danger of making moral shipwreck of faith, of conscience, and even of common morality. God alone can read the heart. If Christ is absent *there* (Eph. 3:17), you are in gravest peril. The root of all that is wrong in church-life and personal life is the absence of first love to Christ. Divine love is the kernel of Christianity and the firm maintenance of it in the soul the power of a subjective and practical Christianity.

Praise always precedes blame. Such is the order in the addresses to these Churches; see also I Cor. 1:4-7. Our God delights to own every good in His people, hence the serious indictment against the Ephesian Church (Rev. 2:4) comes after the hearty and unqualified commendation of their practical life as detailed in vv. 2 and 3. How ready we are to find fault, how slow to appreciate in others what

God by His Spirit has produced and what, perhaps, may be lacking in ourselves.

The removal of the Ephesian candlestick (v. 5) has had its solemn counterpart today and through the ages. Many an assembly originally distinguished for zeal, devotedness, service, suffering and firm opposition to all ecclesiastical pretension has fallen under the judgment which befell the Church in Ephesus. Let us never forget that Christ *yet* walks in the midst of the Churches as the ecclesiastical Judge thereof (v. 1).

There was much to commend in the Church in the close of the first century, but its characteristic defect was a waning love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. **Smyrna** (2:8-11). In order to recover the Church, fast drifting away from devotedness and love to Christ, God threw His people into the fires of persecution. The pagan imperial powers of Rome were His instruments. For about 250 years, successive periods of suffering culminating in the Diocletian persecution of ten years—the worst of all—overtook the Church (v. 10). Satan got the dross. God had the gold. Faith shone brilliantly. Love triumphed, and the eighth of Romans (35-39) was verified to the very letter.

“The Synagogue of *Satan*” (v. 9) points—not to individual effort as before to ruin the Church by the introduction of Judaism in principle and practice (Phil. 3:2)—but to a collective and established system within the Church itself determined to wreck and ruin the Church as the vessel of God’s grace in the world.

To the suffering Church, Christ presents Himself in the grand and consolatory titles taken from chap. 1:17, 18. How fitting the titles to

the conditions of His people exposed to suffering, and death in its cruelest forms. The “Crown of Life” (v. 10) and immunity from Divine judgment (v. 11) are the promised rewards of the Smyranean overcomer.

The witnessing company of Heb. 11 is complete. The overcoming company of Rev. 2 and 3 is in process of formation. May reader and writer be found amongst the completed number of overcomers to receive each for himself the Lord's own personal approval in the day of His and our glory.

3. **Pergamos** (2:12-17). Diocletian, the last of the Pagan Emperors, and Constantine, the first of the Christian Emperors, are set in sharp contrast in the writings of the historians. The former is sternly denounced; the latter is warmly praised. Yet, strange to say, the Church flourished under Diocletian and sank under Constantine. The judgment of the world as to these things is very different from that of the enlightened Christian. The world regards the era of Constantine as the triumph of Christianity, whereas its public downfall as to strangership with Christ, and of separation from the world, dates from that period. Constantine patronized Christianity, forced its adoption upon his heathen subjects at the point of the sword in various instances, raised prominent Christians to positions in the State, used the gorgeous temples of Paganism for the celebration of Christian worship, and effected the union of Church and State, the results of which continue to this day. The unholy alliance of the Church and world had a dazzling effect upon mankind. It was Satan's masterpiece. The Church sat down in the presence of Satan's throne (v. 13). Yet amidst it all a few maintained intact the faith of God's elect and resisted even unto death the ungodly alliance (v. 13). The Church lived in gorgeous splendor,

walked in golden slippers, *that* was her ruin. In scripture the world and the Church are in principle and practice diametrically opposed. Paul the Apostle of faith (2 Cor. 6:14-18), Peter, the apostle of hope (1 Pet. 4), James, the apostle of works (James 4:4), and John, the apostle of love (1 John 2:15-17) all declare the impossibility of walking with God whilst cultivating the friendship of the world. May we lay the lesson to heart. Add to this the Lord’s emphatic declaration, “*They* are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John 17:14, 16).

4. **Thyatira** (2:18-29). In the circumstances connected with this Church, we are transported into the dark or middle ages when the Papacy reigned supreme. The hopeless condition of the Church is here shown inasmuch as its one and only hope is the Personal Coming of the Lord and the establishment of the Kingdom here presented for the first time in these addresses. Thyatira is the first of the second group of these Churches, and in its character and what is related of it, runs down to the end. It is the longest address of any of the seven, that to Smyrna being the briefest. The blending of what is personal (v. 28) with public glory (vv. 26, 27) is exceedingly fine. The first part of the descriptive glory of Jesus, “the Son of God” (v. 18) is not found in the Revelation of Him as in chap. 1, *there* it is in the characteristic glory of Son of Man. *Here* He takes that very character on which the Church is built (Matt. 16:16-18)—the confession of Himself as Son of the living God.

There are four women referred to in The Revelation, but these do not represent persons but *systems*. Thus Jezebel (v. 20), stands for the Papacy; a woman invested with the fulness of governmental authority (12:1) represents Israel; the woman and whore sets forth

the Apostate Church (17); while the bride and wife signify the Church in eternal association with Christ (19).

The Papacy has been the curse of Christendom. It withers and blights everything it touches. The rule of the priest is inimical to material progress, to national prosperity. It is an absolute impossibility for any nation or people to progress under Papacy. Take Spain and the South of Ireland as examples.

A remnant—separated from the mass—is now formally recognized (v. 24), and yet one other interesting feature, there was and is in the midst of that system—the most wicked and anti-Christian—that which the Lord heartily commends (v. 19). May we have grace to do so likewise.

5. **Sardis** (3:1-6). In the previous church, we have in word and symbol the Papacy pictured. Here, we have the Reformation and Protestantism brought before us. Jezebel—the Papacy—exercised sway over Europe for a thousand years, but God in mercy interposed, and the voice and pen of Luther and the printed Bible broke in upon the scene of death, superstition, and gross corruption characteristic of medieval times. Europe awoke as from a nightmare, and to a large extent threw off the Papal yoke. The Reformation of the sixteenth century was a Divine movement so far as it went. The grandest work of that period was an open Bible—not as before confined to Bishop and Priest, many of whom were so ignorant that they could not read, but the Bible was publicly read in Church, Chapel and Assembly, and the doctrines of grace expounded openly and in the hearing of all. But the Reformers came short, “I have not found thy works perfect (or complete) before God” (v. 2). The distinguishing truth of Justification by Faith in opposition to works

as developed in Paul’s epistles to the Romans and Galatians, was substantially the limit of biblical attainment by the Reformers. Their struggles with the Papal authorities left them but little time for enlarged study of the Word.

What succeeded the Reformation was Protestantism as a system. The Church as developed in 1 Cor., Eph. and Col. was almost utterly unknown. Hence, the leaders in Protestantism began to *make* Churches instead of recognizing that *God’s* Church consisting of all the saved is on the earth. God’s assembly is a divine thing on the earth. It was established at Pentecost. and has existed ever since in divine unity. But Protestantism with its numerous sects smothers the scriptural idea of the Church, and has sunk down into a state of deadness and powerlessness, hence the frequent use of the word “name” and “names” (vv. 1, 4, 5). Protestantism simply lives on tradition—on what it was and did. It is lifeless, and utterly powerless to stem the advancing inroads of its old and bitter enemy the Papacy. It awaits the judgment of God (v. 3.)

6. **Philadelphia** (3:7-13). We have had the Papacy in Thyatira with, however, a remnant recognized, such as the Albigenses and Waldenses of the thirteenth century. Thus in Sardis we have what might have proved a magnificent work for God and man. The Reformation did much, but it did not go far enough. It stopped short, and instead of a complete recovery of long neglected and unknown truth, buried from soon after the close of the first century, a system was established in opposition to the Papacy. The life, the vitality of Christianity is absent in Protestantism, hence *another* Reformation was needed.

Philadelphia contemplates a state of things which had their origin in the early part of the 19th century. Three things characterized the movement: the revival of genuine Godliness, the true nature of the Church as the body of Christ, and consequently our vital associations with Christ in heaven; and the Personal Return of the Lord from heaven as the true Christian Hope; and the study of the prophetic word. All this forms the true complement to the work of the Reformation. The Reformation of the 19th century is just as important as the Reformation of the 16th century.

There is no word of blame addressed to the Angel of the Church in Philadelphia, but there is unstinted praise and promise to the overcomer (v. 8-12). The rewards and promises here are peculiarly rich and full. The revived testimony of the Lord had been maintained in much weakness in Philadelphia—Christ’s word, name, patience and coming. Here too the Philadelphian saints are cheered by another blessed announcement, “Behold, I come quickly” (v. 11). Philadelphian state and conditions spring from personal associations with Christ. In this address, *He is everything*. In Laodicea He is outside, and the Church boasts in unbounded self-satisfaction. Here Christ is clung to, and His word prized beyond all else.

7. **Laodicea** (3:14-22). We have here a clearly defined picture of Christless profession. Christ is rejected by the mass, and so He is here seen outside, and entreating for individual fellowship (v. 20). We do not hesitate to assert that the Laodicean state characteristic of today is the most appalling of any Church condition. The greater number of so-called Christian people are unsaved—destitute of Divine righteousness for God—“gold tried in the fire.” The practical righteousness of saints before the world, “white raiment” is also wanting. Neither is there perception of need—no spiritual

discernment—no “eye-salve” (v. 18). Laodicea is self-satisfied and boasts largely and loudly of her wealth, but Christ is outside. What does the Lord think of all this? How does He regard this Church and her boasting and material wealth? Let verse seventeen answer. Fellowship with the Lord is becoming intensely individual. The corporate conditions await judgment—there is no remedy, no hope (v. 16). Thus “the things which are”—the second great division of our book—closes up in judgment, our hope is to be caught up (1 Thess. 4:15-17).

Section 4 – Chapters 4 & 5

The prophetic program as unfolded in the third division of the Apocalypse (“the things which shall be hereafter,” 1:19), which we have now reached, is the product of the Divine mind. The Whole extends over eighteen chapters and five verses (4-22:5), covering a thousand years and more of the world’s future history; it is one gigantic struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness; the streets of the earthly Jerusalem are seen running in blood, and outside the holy city, torrents of blood proclaim the vengeance of God; the scenes shift and change, but no haste; the orderly arrangement of the events, surprising to an onlooker, yet more startling to those whose part is apportioned therein. All this and more witness to a master mind. The conception of this orderly and complete prophecy leaves the human mind staggered at its greatness and completeness. The *end* of it all is the triumph of God and the eternal shining forth of His glory.

While the prophetic division of the book commences with chap. 4, prophetic action does not begin till chap. 6.

This fourth section of the chart of the Revelation which we are now about to consider contains certain heavenly scenes which are described in two deeply interesting chapters (4 and 5). They show the saints of Old and New Testament times in heaven, but not *how* they got there. The predicted translation—the whole company of those “caught up” (1 Thess. 4:17)—*must* have its magnificent answer between the close of chapter 3 and the opening of chapter 4. We again assert that it *must* be so, for while the translation is solely a Pauline revelation (1 Thess. 4:15), yet, the writer of the Apocalypse rightly assumes it. Two things are certain: first, that the church period terminates at the close of chapter 3; second, a body of redeemed risen and glorified saints are recognized in heaven in chapter 4. *How* they got there Paul informs us. John simply announces the fact of their presence in heaven. *Spirits* on thrones, crowned and clothed (4:4), is a thought foreign to scripture. “Elders” speak of *men*, not of souls or spirits.

These two chapters form a heavenly vision of what will be after the present church period is over, and *before* the first series of prophetic judgments (6) are inflicted. We love these two chapters. We have often anticipated the holy and majestic calmness of chapter 4, and the magnificent anthem of chapter 5. The mysterious grandeur of the one and the everlasting songs of the other have thrilled our souls and bowed us before the Lamb in worship.

The elders—the heads of the heavenly and redeemed priesthood—are found in action in both chapters. In chapter iv. the Creation glory of God is grandly celebrated. The beasts--or living ones--the ministers of the throne of the Eternal, and the elders proclaim in testimony, but not in song, the creatorial glories and rights of the Lord God Almighty and Jehovah (vv. 8, 11). “A door opened in

heaven,” (verse 1) is for *one* to pass in. “And I saw heaven opened” (19:11) is to allow *many* to come out. The Seer passed in and saw such glories and heard in song and testimony such things which can only be known when realized.

The first object beheld in this heavenly vision is a *throne*; the first object witnessed by the translated saints is a *Person*. We pass with our Lord into heaven, and the first sight which greets our gaze is a throne—vast and great. It is the sign of stability, of order, of government. It is “set” or established in heaven in contrast to the tottering thrones of earth. The “rainbow round about the throne” (verse 3) is God’s witness to the race that in coming days of judgment He will remember mercy. Round the throne of the Eternal are grouped the thrones (not seats) of the redeemed.

The elders, *i.e.*, the redeemed of past and present ages “cast their crowns before the throne” in the profound acknowledgment that their royal dignity is absolutely dependent upon and sustained by the throne of the Almighty and Living God. This magnificent chapter closes with the worship of the living ones, and with that of the elders. The former worship God in His various relations of old (v. 8), as also in the greatness, sovereignty, and eternal existence of His Being (v. 9); while the elders, prostrate, and their crowns cast down before the throne, directly worship the Creator. The worship of the latter is more profound and more direct than that of the living ones. *They* speak of God; the elders speak *to* God. “Glory and honor and *thanks*” are ascribed by the living ones (verse 8). “Glory and honor and *power*” form the doxology of the redeemed.

The central subject of chapter 4 is **The Throne** and its various glories and accessories and consequent worship. In chapter 5, the

central object is **The Slain Lamb** and His redemption glories and rights. The contents of chapter 5 do not form an independent vision, but rather a continuation of events beheld in the previous chapter. The two chapters constitute one vision.

Chapter 5 opens with Jehovah on the throne and holding in His right hand a book written within and without—such the fulness of the revelation, and of its contents. The book is sealed with seven seals. Next, a strong angel challenges creation or the intelligent universe to produce One morally competent to approach God’s right hand, take the book, break the seals in succession, and accomplish the purposes of God respecting the earth. The contents of the book cover the period from chapter 7 until 22:55. The book is **The Revelation of the Divine purposes respecting the world, and how they are to be carried out.** No created being can answer the challenge. The Lamb slain enters upon the scene, and to Him every eye turns. There is combined in Him the majesty of the lion with the meekness of the lamb (vv. 5, 6). He has right in Himself as also acquired glories. He approached the throne of Jehovah in all right and title and amidst the songs of the redeemed and the acclaim of angels. The worship of the Lamb widens and deepens till all intelligent creatures in the universe proclaim His worthiness. The chapter with its wondrous story of the Lamb slain, of redemption, of song, of universal worship, is, perhaps, the grandest in these respects in the sacred volume. There is no song, no redemption, no blood, no Lamb, no memorials of Calvary in the previous chapter, which is one of unusual grandeur. This one absorbs our affections, captivates our hearts, and leaves us entranced.

Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,
That every knee to Thee should bow.

Section 5 – Chapters 6 to 8:1

The Apocalyptic judgments under the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Vials are heaven-sent chastisements upon Christendom. But why are these lands to be swept by the hurricane of Divine judgment?

Apostasy has long settled down on the east. The Bible has been supplanted by the Koran, and Christ by Muhammed. Now in the west, the scene of gospel light and triumph, the dark clouds of apostate unbelief and contempt of God are settling down. *Soon* the west will be a vast moral ruin, and given over to Satanic rule and occupation. The flood gates of hell shall be opened (Rev. 9; 18:2), and the earth turned into a veritable pandemonium. Need we be surprised, therefore, at the increasing severity of the threefold series of judgments—comparatively light under the Seals but widespread; heavier under the Trumpets, yet not embracing such a wide sphere of operation as the earlier ones; then the Vials in which the concentrated wrath of God is poured out without mixture?

Connect the Lamb with the Seals; Angels with the Trumpets; and God directly with the Vials.

A reference to the Chart, issued with the February number, shews this section distributed into three parts: first, six Seals occupy chapter 6; second, the Seventh Seal announcing the Trumpets is noted in chapter 8:1; third, an interesting parenthetical episode of great importance forms the subject matter of chapter 7.

Further, the seven Seals are divided into two groups—four and three. Each of the four is characterized by a living creature and a horse. The living creature is the unseen power, and the horse, the instrument in effecting the providential purposes of God respecting

His then government of the earth. The three remaining Seals have not this character so distinctly impressed upon them.

First Seal, vv. 1, 2

Under this Seal we witness the *first* great political event consequent on the removal of the Old and New Testament saints to heaven. For those therefore, who believe in the verbal or word inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, it is not without interest to note that the words “I saw” occur twice, and that the cardinal *one* and not the ordinal *first* are characteristics of this Seal. We may also remark that the words “and see,” in vv. 1, 3, 5 and 7 should on the best of authority be omitted. These verses do not present a call to John as the retention of the words would indicate, but a call from the living creatures to the human agents to come and accomplish the providential task assigned them.

All power is of God. Every kind and character of power has its source in God. In its administration, however, the creature is responsible. The living creatures who represent the governmental and judicial action of the throne summon the human instruments and guide and move them to the divinely appointed judgment. What is the first recorded judgment ?

A conqueror, either of royal birth or of royal position, enters the prophetic scene and carries all before him in a career of triumph and victory. The *white* war horse on which he sits denotes victorious power. The rider is not named. Speculation as to the name of this brilliant warrior of universal fame, and from what quarter of the earth he arises, is useless and mischievous. We must respect the silence of scripture on those points. Both Psalm 45 and Rev. 19. as

to time and circumstances must negate the thought entertained by many that Christ is the unnamed royal conqueror of the first Seal. Others strongly hold the opinion that the Antichrist, who first comes upon the scene as a King, is the distinguished rider on the white horse. There is a measure of probability in this supposition, but that is all. Certainty there is not, for on the point scripture has not spoken.

“A crown was given unto him” signifies that he was invested with royal dignity. “He went forth conquering and to conquer” intimates a career of unchecked and brilliant victories. The crown was given *before* the victorious monarch entered upon his conquests. His power, his name, and a certain prestige will no doubt greatly contribute to his wonderful success.

Immediately, or soon after the translation of the redeemed to the Father’s House, the spectacle will be witnessed of a crowned head of fame and name leading his invincible and victorious armies, making conquests of kingdoms and countries, and bearing down all opposition, more by stratagem and diplomacy than by actual warfare. Certain characteristic signs point to the providential rise of just such a personage. Unless we except the national restoration of Judah to Palestine, the first prophetic and political event of importance is the rise of the white-horsed rider and his marvelous career.

Second Seal, vv. 3, 4

“And there went out another horse that was red.” The personal witness of the Seer, “I saw,” or “I beheld” is omitted in the introduction of the second seal, but is found in all the others. Then

the words, “another horse” show that this Seal both as to time and circumstances is not independent as the others are in its character. There is a certain connection between the two first Seals. The white and red horses stand related to each other.

The red horse denotes *bloodshed*. There was given to the rider on the white horse “a crown.” There was given to the rider on the red horse “a great sword.” This latter has a twofold commission entrusted to him. which he no doubt fulfils to the letter: (1) to take peace from the earth; (2) to create a time of mutual slaughter. The state of things contemplated under this Seal is not that of civilized war-nation against nation, but to the providential advent on the scene of a man of fierce and ungovernable passion—one who in every part of the prophetic earth breaks in upon the general peace and sets the peoples and inhabitants of cities, towns, and villages against each other. It will be a time of civil war. Blood! blood!! *blood!!!* everywhere. Probably the time when the forces of socialism and of order come into deadly grips—for such a conflict is as sure as the sun shines in the heavens. “Kill one another” is the simple yet awful account of this scene of almost universal and mutual slaughter. May God graciously preserve our children and loved ones from ever having a part in these scenes of apostasy and bloodshed. We Christians—all Christians—shall be caught away previous to the opening of the Seals—they are opened by the Lamb and in our presence in heaven.

Third Seal, vv. 5, 6

The various horses represent separately an aggressive power in action. The white horse signifies *conquest*, the red horse *bloodshed*, the

black horse in the third seal *mourning*, and the pale horse in the fourth seal *death*.

Under the second Seal, agricultural pursuits must have largely ceased, and commercial life become paralyzed on account of the masses being engaged in deadly strife and mutual slaughter. The inevitable consequence is pointed out in the third Seal. The rider “had a pair of balances in his hand.” Bread is sold by weight and at famine prices. The necessities of life are scarcely obtainable. A famine ensues. Thousands—probably millions—will endure hunger and starvation. A general scene of lamentation and mourning in these Christian lands is intimated in the color of the horse—the aggressive power providentially and judicially employed of God for this purpose, namely, famine, starvation, and death.

“And see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.” The command to spare the luxuries of the rich while dealing in judgment with the absolute necessities of life is significant. Socialism is spreading rapidly. Class hatred is fomented, and the doctrine of public plunder of the wealthy and forcible distribution of their money and property is the open and avowed purpose of an atheistic and godless socialism. Hence the masses, the working classes who are so eagerly imbibing the “Gospel of equality”—a doctrine illogical and mischievous—are the first to suffer in the recoil *sure* to follow. The rich, with all others, come in for judgment under the sixth Seal.

Fourth Seal, vv. 7, 8

Here for the first time the name of the horseman is given—Death. The name of his attendant is also told us—Hell or Hades. Death demands the bodies of men. Hades the souls of men. These two are

the respective custodians of the body and soul till the resurrection, when at the command of Christ they yield up their prisoners and are themselves destroyed, as their work is forever over (Rev. 20:13, 14). The lake of fire takes the place of Hades. The former is eternal, the latter is temporary. It will be noticed that the fourfold judgment—sword, hunger, death, and beasts, is limited to one part of the prophetic earth—probably the worst (verse 8). These “four sore judgments” (Ezek. 24:21) are contemporaneous, not successive. The “beasts” must be understood as literal wild animals, who will flock in upon the starving inhabitants to kill and devour. What a mercy that God has limited the operation of these judgments to a fourth part of the earth—whether in Europe or Asia we cannot say.

Fifth Seal, vv. 9-11

Each of the four Seals already briefly considered is characterized by a living creature giving the word of command to a special aggressive power. But in the three Seals to follow there is no mention of either living creatures or horses. In the *four*, the course of providential judgment is traced. God is not seen in them. But in the *three*, God’s activities—His heart in the fifth and His hand in the sixth and seventh Seals—are witnessed.

The imperial persecutions under pagan Rome, as those subsequently under the papacy, have not exhausted the wrath of the human heart against the faithful followers of the Lamb. Persecution again bursts forth. The church is in heaven during the martyrdom of saints under the fifth Seal, whose souls under the altar cry aloud for vengeance. Probably they are Jewish sufferers. Their cry is right and in keeping with the character of the then dispensation—one of judgment. The cry of the Christian martyr is one of grace (Acts 7:60), in keeping

with the present age of grace and of God’s long suffering. We should ever breathe the spirit of the dispensation in which our lot is cast. The sacrificial word *slain*, not killed (verse 9), helps to the understanding that these are Jewish witnesses. Gentiles as well as Jews are contemplated in verse 11, hence the word *killed*, not slain, as in the earlier reference. God hears the cry, and bestows on each a white robe expressive of His approval and pleasure. But their appeal for vengeance is not immediately answered. They are to wait “a little season” till their number is augmented by a company of fellow martyrs. These latter suffer under the Beast. Both companies are subsequently seen in the separate state, “I saw the souls of them” (Rev. 20:4), also as raised, “and they lived.” What led to the fierce and Satanic outburst against these martyrs is stated—“Slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.” It is ever so, faithfulness to God and to revealed truth rouses the slumbering enmity of the human heart. Man hates God, God loves men.

Sixth Seal, vv. 12-17

The scene herein described is one of awful sublimity and of equal horror. The powers of nature are summoned to set forth a catastrophe which for magnitude and character is unequalled in the world’s history. The general idea is that of the total subversion of all governing authority—supreme and dependent. Everything deemed secure and stable on earth breaks up. Crowns are shattered, governments overturned, and every phase and character of even social order goes in the universal wreck. *This* is what the socialism of the day leads to—*this*, its goal. The effect upon all from the highest to the lowest is next shewn. It is an hour of mortal dread. There is a universal cry of terror, not to God, but to mountains and rocks to screen them from the Sitter on the throne and from the wrath of the

Lamb. Vainly they hide themselves in cave and rock, vainly they appeal for shelter, and in their awful terror they imagine that the wrath of the Lamb has overtaken them. But that wrath is yet future, and even more awful days and times are yet to come. We gather that out of the vast political, civil and ecclesiastical system thus utterly smashed up, the Roman Empire, strong and powerful, will emerge. It would be difficult to suppose the existence of the Empire during the state of things described under the sixth Seal.

Seventh Seal, Chap. 8:1

The opening of the seventh Seal completes the revelation of God's counsels respecting the earth. The secrets of God are disclosed and lie open to view. The immediate effect of opening this Seal is not judgment, but "silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." Trouble on earth yet silence in heaven. The throne in heaven is the source of the judgments on earth. Silence there, means that there is a brief pause, a brief cessation of further chastisement. The seventh Seal introduces the Trumpet series of judgments, and it may be that during the brief pause in heaven the sealing of Israel (Chap. vii.) has its place.

Two Parenthetic Visions, Chap. 7

"I saw" introduces the first vision which concerns Israel (vv. 1-8). "I beheld" connects itself with the second vision, which relates to the Gentiles (vv. 9-17). Both are visions of grace. The contents of this chapter are introduced between the sixth and seventh Seals, and yet form no part of the Seals. It is a chapter without dates. The chapter anticipates the millennium. The hundred and forty-four thousand of all Israel are sealed and preserved, and must not be confounded with

the hundred and forty-four thousand of Judah on Mount Sion (Chap. 14:1-3). This later company emerges out of the great tribulation, not so the former company.

Then the Seer calls attention to the blessedness of a countless multitude of Gentiles who have come out of the great tribulation. Probably they are the same Gentiles received into millennial life at the return of the Lord in glory (Matt. 25:34). Here, however, their blessedness is more fully developed. But the chapter in its two parts and two classes of mankind presents scenes of blessedness on earth in the coming day, and not in heaven as is supposed by some. Verse 15 refers to a moral standing and position before the throne.

Section 6 – Chapters 8:2 to 11:18

In the Trumpet series of judgments, the angels are prominent, and even the Lord Himself is introduced more than once in Angelic Character (8:3). In the former series of Divine chastisements, the Lamb prominently figures. Not only are the judgments under the trumpets successively inflicted, but they follow the seals, and are not contemporaneous as some suppose. It is the seventh seal which introduces the trumpets, and these latter bring us down to a subsequent date.

The first four trumpets are briefly described in vv. 7-12. The remaining three are termed “Woe” trumpets (verse 13). These latter are more severe and searching in character than the “four.”

Before the first trumpet is sounded, circumstances of unusual interest are introduced (vv. 3-5). During the period here contemplated there will be a body of suffering saints on earth—from amongst Jews and Gentiles. These sufferers are evidently

characterized by prayer and intercession. The troubles through which they pass will exceed all the sorrows of past ages (Mark 8:19). The glorified saints in the heavens are intensely interested in the struggles and witness-bearing of those on earth (v. 8), but deeper still is our adorable Lord in heaven. Christ is the Angel-Priest of our chapter who goes from the brazen altar to the golden altar adding efficacy to the prayers of these holy sufferers on earth. *He* alone could do this. The prayers of earth are answered in heaven, for in immediate response to these tears and prayers, “there were voices, and thunderings and lightnings, and an earthquake” (verse 5).

First Trumpet, V. 7

Detailed exposition is impossible owing to the necessarily brief space at our disposal, and the largeness of the subject. “Hail and fire mingled with blood” refer to the destructive agencies and powers of nature. “The earth” in contrast to the sea, signifies Christendom under settled government. “Third part”—eleven times in our chapter—points to Western Europe or the revived Roman Empire (see 12:3, 4). “Trees” eminent persons in the political and social life of the empire. “Green grass” a general state of prosperity amongst the populations within the Empire. Under this trumpet, therefore, is intimated judgment from heaven upon all the distinguished persons in authority and influence, and the destruction of the general prosperity in the revived Latin kingdom.

Second Trumpet, V. 8, 9

“A great mountain burning with fire” signifies a great earthly power under Divine judgment (Jer. 51). Nations in a state of anarchy and

confusion. “Became blood,” spiritual and physical death. “Had life died,” moral death. as in 2:23; 3:1. “Ships,” commerce.

What is intimated is the infliction of Divine judgment upon the peoples, then in wild commotion, and by a great world-power, itself under Divine judgment. The revolutionary peoples here contemplated are visited with death—physical and moral—as also the destruction of trade and commerce. A state of misery on every hand is the sure result of these heaven-sent chastisements.

Third Trumpet, V. 10, 11

“There fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp,” points to a distinguished dignitary in moral relation with God, but apostate and under judgment. “Rivers,” the principles which guide and order the life of nations. “Fountains of water,” the sources of the principles and influences which mark the life of a nation or people. “Wormwood,” bitter.

The character and dire results here produced are worse than those under the previous trumpets. In fact, the increasing severity of those judicial dealings is a solemn indication of the increasing hardness of heart on the part of men determined to break all Divine bands and cords (Psa. 2:3). But God has His grip upon men. and judgment must follow judgment, till the iron will is broken and men lie humbled in the dust before God. Here an apostate power infuses his own character amongst the peoples, poisoning the political, civil, and social life of the nations—corrupting their principles at the fountain head, hence all the springs of action are similarly affected. Nations without a religion! Without a code of morals! Without one principle of practical righteousness for guidance in life! Without

morality and without God! Such is *only* the negative side of this awful picture of national misery. What must it be when the character of Satan is imprinted upon that nation and people who have deliberately cast off God?

Fourth Trumpet, V. 10, 11

“Sun,” supreme governing authority. “Moon,” subordinate and derived authority. “Stars,” lesser authorities. The sun, moon, and stars combined as here, present a complete system of earthly government in all its parts. The Roman world revived in territorial extent—ten kingdoms—is here in its government, political and social, the subject of this judgment. There is a complete description of the bonds which unite the empire in all its parts. The effect of this visitation is that moral darkness (*night*) settles down upon the empire and envelopes it as a funereal pall.

Fifth Trumpet, 9:1-12

We come now to the three “Woe” trumpets (8:13). The first of these occupies the first twelve verses; the second the remainder of the chapter; the third is mentioned in chapter 11, vv. 14-18.

This awful judgment has its source in “the pit of the abyss” (R.V.)—the lowest depths of Satanic misery and wickedness. The abyss, or bottomless pit, occurs seven times in the Apocalypse. But “the pit of the abyss” is only here employed. Here it is opened by a distinguished fallen star. There are two such. We read of one in Chap. 8:10; the other in Chap. 9:1. The apostate dignitary of our chapter is the personal Antichrist of prophecy. He acts religiously on behalf of Satan, first in Palestine, second in the wider sphere of Christendom. He opens the pit and the long imprisoned darkness in

which the demon host of Satan dwelt bursts forth. The smoke gave birth to the locusts—not literal. The description of the locusts points to a horde of Satanic agencies let loose upon Palestine—not now a “third part.” It is not the revived power of Rome, but apostate Israel in her land which is the subject of this dire judgment—upon the “men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads”—in contrast to sealed Israel (ch. 7). The locust army is resistless, cruel, and directly Satanic. Satan is the unseen yet real leader, while the Antichrist is the human commander. Men in their awful misery will seek death as a welcome release but even that is denied them (v. 6). The last state of Israel is distinctly Satanic—worse than ever it has been (Matt. 12:45). Israel’s Saturday night of agony has to be endured ere the millennial day of Sabbatic rest dawns upon the land and people of Jehovah’s choice. But for the apostate part of the nation, here the subject of Divine judgment, there can be no peace either in time or eternity.

Sixth Trumpet, 9:13-21

Here the “third part” reappears (v. 18). We are transported once again into the territory of the guilty Latin kingdom. The first woe falls on apostate Israel. This second woe descends on the equally guilty Western Empire. The first on *Jews*, the second on *Gentiles*. There is no destruction of human life under the first woe, but “torment” more awful than death inflicted under the leadership of Satan; but, under the second woe, we witness the “yellow peril” in actual accomplishment. The East will overrun the West, devastating these lands with the abominable doctrines and teachings for which the East is famed. The Crescent will supplant the Cross. We had locusts under the first woe. Here we have horses. These latter we saw under the Seals signified aggressive agencies. The Euphrates—

the eastern boundary of the Roman Conquests—is named as the quarter from whence this judgment proceeds (v. 14). Vast hordes from the east will invade the west, bringing with them soul-destroying doctrines, and marked also by a vast and unparalleled destruction of human life. The east will conquer the west. But the multifarious idolatry, gross wickedness, and various forms of Spiritualism within the Empire are as rampant as ever (vv. 20, 21). “Repented not” is the Holy Spirit’s comment. This truly awful judgment leaves the peoples of the revived Empire hardened as ever. The two concluding verses of the chapter reveal an awful picture of human depravity. What then remains? The Personal Return of the Lord in Power.

Seventh Trumpet, 11:14-18

It is not now Israel as under the first woe, nor the Gentiles in Christendom under the second woe, but the third “woe” and concluding trumpet involves judgment upon men universally. The whole scene under heaven is more or less visited in judgment. God’s hand is felt—north, south, east and west. Christ comes in public manifested power. The angry nations are crushed and broken under God’s wrath. The setting up of the kingdom, universal in its territorial extent, righteous and gracious in its character, and enduring as the ordinances of heaven, is anticipated (v. 15). In truth, the results of the sounding of the seventh trumpet embrace both the Millennium and the eternal state. What a range of weighty subjects is contained in verse 18! Thus we are brought down to the very end of man’s misrule and government, and even beyond that, to the blessed era of Christ’s kingdom and God’s eternal rest.

The Second Great Parenthesis, 10:1 to 11:1-13

This weighty parenthesis comes in between the sounding of the sixth and seventh trumpets, as before we had the interesting parenthesis (ch. 7) between the sixth and seventh seals.

In Chapter 10, we have the descent of the Lord in angelic power and character to assume the government of the earth. It is His by right of purchase (Matt. 13:4:4, 38); His by Divine decree (Psa. 2.); and His because of the rights of His Person (Col. 1:16). His sovereign rights are indisputable. The action is very grand. The rainbow round His head tells of governmental goodness, and that in wrath He remembers mercy. His feet on earth and sea implies His possession of the *whole* world.

Then, with uplifted hand, the mighty angel swears by God—the Creator—that there will be no further delay. The mystery of God in bearing with human iniquity is to be brought to a close. Christ assumes the Sovereignty of the earth. The Jubilee of earth has come.

The first thirteen verses of Chapter 11 transport us to the City of Jerusalem. The Lord has special witnesses there who are immortal and invulnerable so long as their testimony lasts—1,260 days. They work miracles similar in character to those wrought by Moses when Israel was in *Captivity*, and by Elijah when Israel was *apostate*. These two states exactly characterize the coming days of Judah previous to the advent of the Lord. When the defined period of witness-bearing is up, then the Beast breaks in upon Jerusalem and slays the witnesses, whose dead bodies lie in the street for shameful and public exposure. What a scene of hellish rejoicing over the temporary triumph of the Beast! (v. 10). But it is short-lived. In full

view of the affrighted enemies of the Lord and of His people, these witnesses are called up to heaven, “and they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.” Both their resurrection and ascension were public events (vv. 11, 12). The triumph of the witnesses and the hour of retributive judgment upon the city and guilty inhabitants of Jerusalem are closely connected (v. 13).

Section 7 – Chapters 11:19-14

The contents of this wonderful book are divided into two parts. The *first* part brings us down to the judgment of the dead (11:18), that great and solemn fact forms the link between time and eternity. The *second* part begins with Israel (11:19) and closes with an awful sight—the lake of fire! the eternal place of punishment to the Devil, his spiritual associates in evil, and the unsaved of the human race (21:8). The Church in governmental splendor (21:9-22:5) has its historical place in Chap. 20:4, 6. Chapter 12 should commence with verse 19 of the previous chapter. This section pre-eminently concerns Israel. She is on the earth, but the signs relating to her are seen in heaven. Read “sign” not “wonder” in vv. 1, 3. Chapter 12 is one of “*great*” subjects, the adjective is used six times. Heaven is the source of the great events on earth in the prophetic crisis nigh at hand.

The first sign beheld by the Seer is a Woman invested with the fulness of governmental authority on earth. Without doubt this is Israel in millennial days (Gen. 37:9). Israel is here presented as a woman, a queen, and a mother. There are four representative women mentioned in the Apocalypse: Jezebel (2:20), the *papal* system; woman clothed with the sun (12:1), *Israel* in millennial splendor; the great whore (17:1), the corrupt, loathsome, and apostate *Christian profession*; the bride and wife of the Lamb (19), the

Church. The “Man Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron” (see Psa. 2) is **Christ**. Israel then is the mother of the Child of Might. It is absurd to suppose the Church as the mother of the Lord according to the flesh. Why, the Church had no existence till the Lord’s ascension and the descent of the Holy Ghost. Israel was the mother of the Man Child (Isa. 9:6 ; Rom. 9:5 ; Isa. 7:14, with Matt. 1:21-23). Israel the mother, and the Church the bride of the Lord. The controversy of centuries would never have arisen as to the mother of the Child, had two facts been fully admitted: first, that the Man Child is Christ personally, second that the Church dates her existence, not from or before the birth of Christ, but from His ascension, thirty-three years afterwards.

Next, we have presented the “great red dragon” with seven heads and ten horns. The *heads* are crowned. In Chapter 13, the *horns* of the beast are crowned; the heads of the one, the horns of the other. Satan is the dragon who through Herod sought the death of the Man Child, but was foiled in his murderous attempt (Matt. 2).

Observe the double parenthesis in our chapter: the first, between the birth and ascension of Christ (v. 5). Between these two events related in the passage before us, the life and ministry of our Lord comes in, which is the subject of the gospels; second, between the rapture of the Man Child and the woman’s (Israel) flight into the wilderness, the whole history of Christianity comes in parenthetically—a period covered by the Epistles. The woman’s flight is yet future, and has its start in the middle of Daniel’s prophetic week of seven years. The reason why Christ is brought into this chapter is to connect Him with Israel.

Why Israel has to flee is told us from vv. 7-13. There is war in heaven. The contending hosts are angels. Michael is the leader on the one hand; the Devil the commander on the other. The latter is defeated and is cast down from heaven to earth, and his militant host with him. The war takes place during the first half of the closing week (seven years) of prophecy. Satan never regains his old place in the heavens, never again shall he accuse the saints there. As cast down, he turns his rage against Israel, or at least Judah, then standing as a witness for God. He seeks to destroy the woman who is providentially delivered from his purposed cruelty (v. 16). The Man Child was preserved (Matt. 2), so now the mother. How wonderful are the ways of God!

The next chapter (13) presents to our view the two chief ministers of Satan’s activity on earth. The two beasts are two men—apostates from God and truth. The first beast is a Gentile (v. 1-10); the second beast is a Jew (vv. 11-18). Rome is the capital seat of the first beast. Jerusalem is the center of the operations of the second beast. Brute force characterizes the first, religious influence, Satanically inspired, marks the career of the second beast. The first beast is without doubt the revived power of Rome distributed into ten kingdoms, and headed by that great apostate and blasphemer—the little horn of Dan. 7. The second beast is the Antichrist, or man of sin. The two cooperate and through them Satan seeks to work out his plans and purposes. The two associates in evil are associated in one common doom. Both are cast alive into the lake of fire (19:20). The second beast first acts in Jerusalem, then in the wider sphere of Christendom.

Now that we have had the sources of good and evil (Chapter 12), the human instruments (13), we witness the final results in a sevenfold series of events (14.). These are as follows:

(1) An hundred and forty-four thousand of Jews standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion. It is an anticipative millennial scene of great beauty. This numbered company must not be confounded with that of Chapter 7. The former is of Jews who have emerged out of the great tribulation; the latter is of all Israel. The two companies are distinct (vv. 1-5).

(2) The preaching of the everlasting Gospel. This second event in the chapter commences the chronological order of subjects. The Gospel of God’s grace to a ruined world as proclaimed now, the Gospel of the kingdom preached after the removal of the Church must both be distinguished from the everlasting Gospel. The Creator and not the creature is the alone object of worship, and that is the great and fundamental truth insisted upon here (vv. 6, 7).

(3) The fall of Babylon is next announced. The false, corrupt, apostate Church—the consolidated religious system of the future is the next link in the chain of events. But while briefly and tersely announced as “fallen,” it yet occupies a large portion of prophetic teaching, even more than that devoted to the beast (see Chs. 16, 17, 18, 19)—these portions give details of Babylon’s character, doings, and doom. Here the simple fact of her fall is alone noted (v. 8).

(4) The worshippers of the beast and their awful doom. Babylon having been destroyed the beast enters on a brief

career of wickedness and impiety. It knows no check. The beast is universally worshipped, but here we have the doom of those who do so. Vv. 10, 11 are unequalled in the Word of God for horror (vv. 9-12).

(5) The blessedness of the *then* righteous dead is announced. They are just about to enter on their eternal scene of undying happiness. They will not have long to wait. “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from *henceforth*,” *i.e.*, from the time contemplated in the passage, just on the eve of the Lord’s assumption of the kingdom (v. 13).

(6) The two closing stages in the history of this age are the harvest and the vintage. The former is first presented to view. The harvest of the earth is to be reaped. The separation of the vile from the precious, of the wicked from among the just is intimated in the harvest—a discriminating judgment (see also Matt. 13:49). This judgment is executed by the Son of Man, His instruments the angels (vv. 14-16).

(7) The final scene is an awful one—judgment pure and simple. It is the time of Isa. 63, when the Lord treads the wine press alone—blood upon His garments and vesture, and vengeance in His heart. The carnage is so awful, the slaughter so immense that blood is said to reach to the bridles of the horses, and flows for about 200 miles. In Palestine and its vicinity will be witnessed the awful spectacle of apostate Jews and apostate Gentiles—Judaism and Christendom exposed to the utmost fury of an angry God. These events are nigh at hand.

Section 8 – Chapters 11:19-14

The Vials of God’s Wrath

In the Vials, we witness the outpouring of God’s righteous and holy vengeance upon the guilty world, to be followed by the wrath of the Lamb—*personally*-executed judgment at His Coming.

Will the careful reader and student of these prophecies notice that in the Seventh Vial or bowl (16:19), Babylon, the corruptress of the earth, is singled out for special judgment. We connect, therefore, the last vial with the fall of Babylon—the third of the series of events noticed in the fourteenth chapter. This is important, as it enables us to fit into the Apocalyptic history the place, character and doom of Babylon. Chapters 14:8, 16:19, 17, 18, 19:1-3, give in full the Story of Babylon, and should be read as one connected whole.

After the fall of Babylon, the solemn events recorded in Chap. 14:9-20 have each their successive fulfilment, that is after the pouring out of the seventh vial.

It is a common mistake to regard the seventh vial as bringing us down to the end of the age. The closing acts of judgment upon Christendom are the Harvest and the Vintage, and these with other events have their place *after* the pouring out of the seventh vial upon Babylon. That iniquitous system is destroyed by the Beast (17:16), a short time before the advent of the Lord in power. The Beast is itself destroyed by the Lord in Person, and the ten kingdoms forming the territorial strength of the Empire, crushed to atoms (Rev. 19:20, 21; Dan. 2:35, 7:11, 26).

The first verse of this section intimates that the series and sum of providential judgments are to be closed up in the pouring out of God’s wrath. By *providential* judgments, we mean those inflicted prior to the Lord’s return, which have all more or less this character. But the Wrath of God concentrated in the Vials gives place to the yet more awful chastisements *openly* inflicted, and spoken of as “the wrath of the Lamb.”

The “sea of glass” (v. 2) is not, of course, an actual sea of that material, for the Seer writes, “I saw *as it were* a sea of glass mingled with fire,” nor is the “sea of glass like unto crystal” (4:6) and spread out before the throne of the Eternal, a veritable sea. It is what they represent which concerns us. In the earlier vision is intimated a fixed state of purity, the solid calm of a scene of unsullied light (chap. 4). But in our chapter, the crystal is omitted, and “the glass is mingled *with fire*.” In the former scene, the saints above had not emerged out of the fiery tribulation under the Beast. In fact, the saints in heaven seen in chap. 4 had not been in the Coming Tribulation at all; being expressly exempted from it (3:10). But those of a later day—a large company of Martyred Saints under the Beast—are here witnessed standing on the sea of glass. “Mingled· with fire” refers to the cruel persecutions endured in that awful period yet future. Pagan persecutions and the more refined torments under the Papacy are to be surpassed in the horrors of “The Great Tribulation” (Mark 8:19, 20).

Did the Beast really triumph (8:7) over the Martyrs of the Lamb? *He* is doomed to the lake of fire, while the victims of his cruelty are here witnessed in harp and song celebrating the works and ways of the Lord God Almighty (vv. 2-4).

Next, the Temple comes into view (vv. 5-8), not the Temple on earth which at the very time contemplated in this vision will be occupied by the man of sin (2 Thess. 2:4), impiously claiming Divine Worship; nor is the Temple here seen in heaven a material one, for, says the Seer in a later vision, “I saw no Temple therein,” *i.e.*, in the heavenly City. The Temple opened in heaven is a scenic representation of the Righteousness and Holiness befitting the presence of the God of Light. God is about to judge the earth, not from the *Throne* as in the Seal and Trumpets judgment, but from the Temple.* In this respect, the Vial chastisements stand alone. These latter are necessarily more severe than either those under Seal or Trumpet. God’s Holy Nature is here seen roused to judicial action. The thought is God judging evil according to His nature. Both Throne and Temple are seen united in the execution of judgment in chap. 16:17.

First Bowl of Wrath, Chapter 16:2

God is angry with the wicked, and He is about to express His just indignation in a series of rapid strokes, much more severe than any yet inflicted. The Holy Nature of God is roused to action. The very Holiness of God demands stern and inflexible judgment.

“The earth” is the scene of these plagues. Need it be said, that the term “the earth” is not to be understood in its wide geographical

* The reference to the Temple and the Ark in Chap. 11:19, shews God’s interest in His people; this, God’s judgment upon His and their enemies. Verse 4 explains why the Temple is referred to. The effect of the judgment will be that all nations will come and worship before God. The judgment will accomplish what the gospel has failed to do.

sense, but prophetically viewed as the whole of the guilty scene coming within the range and scope of prophetic vision. The first four Trumpets are in their operation restricted to the Roman world, Western Europe; but the Vials sweep in their range a much wider area, and of greatly increased severity.

What a solemn reflection that the vials or bowls sacred to the use of Temple service and worship are here seen devoted to purposes of judgment!

The judgment here inflicted is spoken of as a “noisome and grievous sore,” or ulcer, causing intense mental anguish. The sixth Egyptian plague (Exod. 9:10, 11) was of a similar character, only there it was an actual bodily infliction, here in keeping with the symbolic character of those plagues, the judgment is of a moral kind (not that physical suffering is absent). Torment in the soul and conscience is the prominent thought. The adherents and worshippers of the Beast are the specific objects of this God-inflicted judgment.

This terrible chastisement precedes the fall of Babylon (v. 19), whereas the everlasting torment of the Beast-worshippers (14:9, 10) *succeeds* that mighty event. All who bow to the Beast are thus tormented in time and eternity.

Second Bowl of Wrath, V. 8

The “Sea”—*i.e.*, those nations and peoples in revolutionary disorder, outside the Roman world—becomes “blood, as of a dead man.”

The Egyptian plague of the waters turned to blood (Exo. 7:17) was, of course, literally accomplished, but here moral death is signified. The apostasy from God, from truth, from Christianity, is complete. All religious profession and even external relation to God is

abandoned. The masses are regarded as “twice dead” (Jude 12)—dead in sins, and dead in apostasy, and this even when physically alive. “Every living soul died in the sea.” Individual shipwreck of faith, conscience, and truth is here intimated. We have had the *pagan* world, later the *papal* world, now the *apostate* world—worst of all.

Third Bowl Of Wrath, Vv. 4 to 7

God’s wrath is poured on the “rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood.” The third Trumpet (8:11) corresponds to the third vial. In both, the waters and fountains are similar in judgment. But in the earlier reference they became *wormwood*, here they are turned into *blood*. In the former, national life and character are morally poisoned—both in their sources (*fountains*), and ordinary course (*rivers*) of political and social government. Here, the corruption is deeper. It is moral death (*blood*), complete alienation from God. Utter apostasy from every principle of right, and the open and distinct avowal of Atheism. Nations and peoples without God, without any principle of right, truth nonexistent.

Verse 5. The Universe, men, nations, and the elements and forces of nature are all under Angelic control. “The Angel of the Waters,” *i.e.*, the peoples (17:15), justifies God in this awful and retributive judgment (v. 6). The peoples had “shed the blood of saints and prophets,” hence in righteous retribution they are doomed to drink blood, that is to realize the awfulness of death in the soul and conscience. The brazen altar of judgment vindicates God in these holy and righteous dealings (v. 7).

Fourth Bowl Of Wrath, Vv. 8, 9

The first four vials correspond to the first four Trumpets. In both, the order is the same: earth, sea, rivers, and sun. But as has been already observed, the judgments under the vials are more severe and searching in character, and also embrace in their operation a wider area than those under the Trumpets.

The sun, the governing authority on earth, becomes the instrument of intolerable anguish to men. There is no necessity for understanding literal fire, either here or in Matt. 25:41. What is signified is intense mental anguish, an agony endured, far exceeding that caused by literal fire. What is the effect of this and previous Divine chastisements upon men? Do they glorify God in these visitations of wrath? Are they humbled and crushed under the hand of God? No. These judgments harden men. They “blasphemed the God of heaven, which hath power over these plagues.” Unlike the Ninevites of old, who repented under the threat of judgment, *these* “repented not to give Him glory.” Alas! Alas! what is man! Had repentance instead of increased hardness of will, been produced, no doubt the advancing torrent of Divine wrath Would have been rolled back, for God “had authority over these plagues.” The control of the Universe, down to the tiny insect and least atom, is under the governing hand of God. He is the source and author of all the Apocalyptic judgments.

Fifth Bowl Of Wrath, Vv. 10, 11

The throne of the Beast is next smitten by judgment, not its personal head, *that* is reserved for the Lord to deal with at His Coming (19:20). It is important to notice that the executive of the

Empire is here the subject of judgment. Neither the last emperor, nor his subjects and worshippers are specially contemplated, although all suffer from the highest down to the lowest. The throne, the source and stability of the Empire is reached by this all-searching judgment. The Devil had established the Kingdom (13:4). God smites it in judgment, in its very center and strength, too. It is here that the persecution of the Beast against the Saints of God ceases. How can the Beast further persecute the saints when itself is being dealt with by the heavy hand of judgment? The Kingdom of the Beast was “full of darkness” not *physical*, but what is infinitely worse, *moral*. Such is the horror, the intolerable anguish created thereby, that “they gnawed their tongues for pain”—such the excruciating agony. But the proud and suffering spirit refuses to bow in repentance. Under the previous vial, men blasphemed the *Name* of God—here they blaspheme *God* Himself.

Sixth Bowl Of Wrath Vv. 12 to 16

We have had judgment poured out on the West. Now, the East is to be reached. *“The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river, Euphrates, and the water thereof was dried up that the way of the Kings from the East might be prepared.”*

Rome never pushed her conquests beyond that famous river, the Euphrates. It bounded and secured their conquests on the East. The Euphrates is also the prophetic limit of enlarged Palestine in millennial days. Bearing this in mind, we can see the force of that great Asian river being literally dried up, so that the powers on its eastern side may come to Armageddon—God’s appointed rendezvous for the Kings and nations of the whole world. Not only will the East mingle with the West in deadly strife in the vicinity of

Jerusalem, but God Himself will pour out upon the assembled nations the fury of His wrath. The most guilty of all—the West—is first visited in dire judgment. But how and by what means could the Kings and peoples of earth be gathered to one common camping ground? Satanic agency accredited by miracle is employed to gather the vast assemblage (vv. 13, 14). God controls the vast movement. “He gathered them together” (v. 16).

Seventh Bowl Of Wrath, Vv. 17 to 21

“The seventh angel poured out his vial into the air.” This is the most penetrating and universal judgment yet disclosed; that under the sixth seal is universal in its effects (6:12-17), but the earthquake under the seventh vial exceeds in horror anything hitherto witnessed or felt on earth (v. 18), which, with other attendant circumstances constitutes this judgment the most appalling of all which has yet come before us. “The great city was divided into three parts.” That is, the empire is broken up into a tripartite division; its utter ruin to follow in due course. “The cities of the nations fell,” signifying the smashing up of the seats and centers of commerce outside the Roman world. Next, great Babylon is specially singled out for judgment. Her history and causes of her downfall are written in the two following chapters. Islands and mountains are next the objects of God’s unsparing wrath. By the former is meant independent interests apart from and outside any human confederation. Mountains are seats and sources of authority deemed stable and lasting. Both islands and mountains completely disappear in the general wreck. Under the sixth Seal these “were moved out of their places,” here, they “were not found.” In addition to all this, the climax is reached, “there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven,” such a hurricane of heaven-sent judgment in its weight and

disastrous effects is beyond anything that history records.” Every stone about the weight of a talent,” *i.e.*, 125 lbs. How crushing! How overwhelming the judgment! Men suffering under the mighty hand of God again blaspheme that Blessed One How patient is God! How perverse is the creature!

Section 9 – Chapters 17 and 18

The relation of Babylon to the Beast (see Chap. 8) and to the political powers of Christendom, along with details of her judgment, are, in the main, the subject matter of the Chapters now under consideration. Babylon is the concentration of all antagonistic to God *religiously*. The first Beast of Rev. 8, her partner in crime, is the embodiment of the powers hostile to God *politically*. The former is the more wicked of the two. The seductive influence of Babylon is to the ruin of souls. The brute force of the Beast is exercised in connection with the temporal interests of men. As systems they co-exist and co-operate in the coming crisis. Babylon, however, is destroyed before the Beast. It is the Beast which effects the political ruin of Babylon, whereas the Lord at His coming destroys the Beast.

Chapter 17 is a deeply interesting one, and naturally divides into two main parts: (1) Babylon described, vv. 1-6; (2) the Beast in its relation to Babylon and to the Lamb, vv. 7-18.

Babylon; or The Great Whore, Vv. 1 to 6

The name Babylon, *confusion*, which had its historic rise in Shinar (Gen. 11:1-9), points to the professing Church in moral ruin and disorder. The Whore, in contrast to the Bride, represents the professing body as utterly loathsome and corrupt. She sits upon

“many waters” (v. 1). These waters signify “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (v. 15). She rules over vast populations. Her sway over the nations is nigh universal. The severance of Church from State may be witnessed in our days, but prophecy points to a union of the two more general than history records. The Church—corrupt and loathsome—will yet again be in the ascendant, and ride the Beast. The great whore will be Satan’s counterfeit of the true church. The pretensions and wickedness of the vast consolidated systems of Christendom—fused into one—is justly and rightly termed the Whore and harlot, and mother of all religiously apostate and vile—not the papacy only, *that*, with the 1,300 sects now in existence, shall then be the display of the Devil’s unity. It will be a gigantic system of spiritual whoredom—the vilest thing beneath the sun. “The kings of the earth, and the inhabitants of the earth,” that is, Christendom in its widest extent, is brought within the sphere of the harlot’s awful influence (v. 2). Then the woman, that is the system, sits upon a scarlet-colored beast, the civil power (v. 3).

The Beast is the revived power of Rome presented first in a ten-kingdom form, then as one great and mighty empire under its renowned head “the little horn” (Dan. 7), who unifies the Empire. The greatness and glory of the Empire is intimated in the *scarlet* color of the Beast. The first mention of the Beast in the Apocalypse is in Chap. 11:7, where it is witnessed in its last and worst character, not “out of the sea” (8:1), its historical rise, but “out of the bottomless pit,” its Satanic revival in the last three years and a half of its existence. But the Beast is further described as “full of names of blasphemy,” that is open, daring blasphemy will characterize the Empire in all its parts, throughout its whole extent. The “seven

heads” represent successive forms of government, and its “ten horns” signify so many kings or individual rulers (vv. 10, 12; compare with 8:1).

We have had a passing glance at the Beast (v. 3). Now the Seer, amazed, turns once again to view the harlot—the vilest thing on God’s earth. Her grandeur, her pomp, her pride, her idolatry, and her bloody character, are all found in the so-called Christian church in the last days. The woman made the inhabitants drunk with her fornications (v. 2), now she is herself *drunk* with the blood of God’s saints (v. 6).

The Beast and The Harlot, Vv. 7 to 18

The mystery of the woman and the Beast is next disclosed by the angel. The history of the Beast is summed up in four brief crisp sentences (v. 8). “The Beast that thou sawest.” The imperialism of the Empire and as it existed in John’s day. “And is not.” The mighty Empire of Rome is, politically, non-existent. The Empire as such has ceased to exist for nearly 15 centuries. “Shall ascend out of the bottomless pit,” or abyss. The Empire in the last phase of its existence shall be Satanic in its source and character. “And go into perdition,” its eternal doom. The resurrection of the Empire, amidst, and out of, universal civil and political chaos, is a wonder to the Christian apostates of that day. Both the woman and the Beast have their seat in Rome (vv. 9, 18). The Antichrist makes Jerusalem the seat of his government (Dan. 11:36-39; 2 Thess. 2). The Beast is of the seven, yet an eighth (v. 11). The meaning is that the historical rise and course of the Empire (8:1) will present certain features characterizing it to its close, but the last emperor is a distinct

monarch unlike his predecessors, *the only one Satanically inspired*—an eighth, he stands alone.

The ten kingdoms forming the territorial extent of the Empire are first presented as separate kingdoms (v. 12). Then the “ten” wearied, we suppose, with mutual jealousies, and unable longer to preserve the balance of power, combine, and with one consent place themselves—kings, kingdoms, and armies—under the rule of the Beast. We have had alliances of certain kingdoms, but the one contemplated in the prophecy before us, is undoubtedly the most gigantic confederation of powers the world has ever witnessed. Will this mighty alliance of kingdoms in Western Europe work for blessing? *No*. There are two objects which the Beast, towering in his strength and arrogant in his pretensions, seeks to accomplish. (1) To make war with the Lamb. (2) To destroy the woman—the Great Whore. The Beast does both. The order, however, in the text is not the order in historical sequence. Babylon is first destroyed, then the war against the Lamb is undertaken, the issue of which is the irremediable destruction of the Beast.

The ten kings (horns) and the Beast (v. 16) very quickly throw off the authority of the Whore, and become openly profane. Brute force characterizes the Beast and the royal heads of the various kingdoms. Every semblance of religion goes in the destruction of the whore. God and Christ are openly defied (Psa. 2). All this, and more, is simply the accomplishment of the Divine Will (v. 17). The Whore is now out of the prophetic circle of events. The Beast in its after brief history is simply an exhibition of brute force. It knows no law human or divine. Its own will is its sole authority. It marches in its pride, its arrogance, its strength, and, we may add, in its madness to do battle with God Almighty and the heavenly army. And this is

Europe! All the powers great and small are gathered in the last decisive conflict. The powers of Christendom, and not merely the ten kingdoms of the western part of Europe, hurl themselves against the Rock of Ages (19:19), only to suffer a destruction eternal in result.

It will be observed that in the last verse of our chapter the Woman is named, not the Whore. This last is her title and character in the closing hours of the crisis, nigh at hand. The Woman represents the papacy located in Rome—the seven hilled city.

Chapter 18 must not be regarded as a continuation of the subjects of the previous chapter, *i.e.*, Babylon and the Beast. Our Chapter opens with the well-known biblical formula, “After these things,” which intimates a subject by itself, and really forms a vision distinct from what has gone before or from what follows. Babylon is the prophetic subject of the Chapter. Here we have no mention of the human instruments in her destruction. Neither the ten kings nor the Beast come into view. The material forces and political ascendancy of the Whore are noted in Chapter 17. But here, God is regarded as the Source of the utter judgment of that iniquitous system so abhorrent to Him. Here too, her destruction is complete. The burning referred to in vv. 8 and 18, is *subsequent* to that of the previous chapter, v. 16. After her destruction by the ten kings and the Beast, she exists, but as the representative of hell on earth (v. 2).

If the kings of the last great confederacy destroy the Whore (17:16), other kings mourn her destruction (18:9). Her political dethronement has been accomplished by the Beast and ten kings (17), to be followed by her complete and final downfall (18). All outside the Roman world who had been enriched by her mourn and

lament. Her ruin is thorough (v. 8) and sudden (v. 10). Heaven and all who have ever suffered at her hands rejoice (v. 20; 19:1-3). What a strange scene! The utter extinction of the religious corruption of the earth mourned and lamented in the great religious circle of Christendom, while all heaven and the redeemed rejoice and sing. In the Church the Holy Ghost now dwells, but in the corrupt church of the future, Satan will take up his abode. The contrasts between the Whore and the Bride are numerous and suggestive.

Section 10 – Chapters 19 to 21:8

In this interesting section of the Apocalypse, which covers the ground from the destruction of Babylon till the eternal state—some of the most stirring and solemn events are found. We shall briefly note these.

Rejoicings in Heaven, 19:1-9

Four times the beautiful Hebrew “Hallelujah” (found nowhere else in the New Testament) is triumphantly rung out in the heavenly courts (vv. 1, 3, 4, 6). In the last five Psalms, it is the opening and closing word of each. “Praise ye Jehovah” shall yet resound throughout heaven and earth, thus bringing them into blessed unison. The first recorded song was led by Moses, accompanied with timbrel and dance by Miriam (Exod. 15), but the songs and triumphs of the heavenly hosts are personally conducted by the Savior and Lord—risen and glorified (Heb. 2:12).

There are three grounds for the songs of triumph in heaven. The *first* ground of heaven’s joy is the utter destruction of the Apostate religions system—a confederated system of satanic wickedness.

Babylon is no more. Her downfall and utter ruin fill heaven, in all its vastness, with joy. The destruction of the whore is a more important matter, and creates more interest in heaven than even that of the Beast, *i.e.*, the confederated nations of Western Europe.

The *second* reason of Heaven’s joy is the reign of the Lord God Omnipotent. He takes the reins of Universal Authority and the Kingdom into His mighty hands. But who is He who sways the scepter? It is Jesus Christ who assumes the government of the world. The *world* is His Kingdom (11:15). The *Universe* is His Dominion (Psa. 8). All things are put into His hands for *administration* (John iii. 35), and all things are put under His feet in *subjection* (1 Cor. 15:27). Wherever man is found on earth, limits the extent of the Kingdom. Wherever a created thing is, that His Inheritance covers. The Inheritance is of larger extent than the Kingdom, which He takes in His favorite character and title as Son of Man.

The *third* cause of rejoicing in the Heavens is the marriage of the Lamb. Had a mere human pen written v. 7, it would have been, “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to *her*: for the marriage of the *bride* is come.” But no, it is not her joy that is in question, but *His*. *He* now sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied. Heaven breaks out in song. The Lamb is married in heaven amidst the rejoicings of the heavenly hosts. It is the Church—not Israel nor a remnant thereof—which is the cherished bride and wife of the Lamb (Eph. 5:25-32). The harlot put aside, God is now free to introduce the Lamb and His Bride into the scene.

It will be observed that between the destruction of the harlot and the marriage of the Lamb, the Kingdom-reign is celebrated, but that

is in vision only. The Kingdom is not set up till after the marriage. We may further remark that the harlot is destroyed *before* the marriage. The Beast or political confederacy, *after* the marriage. There is a moral necessity for the destruction of the whore ere the marriage of the Lamb could take place, and God display the bride in her beauty. Then the consolidated powers in opposition to the Lamb must necessarily be crushed before the Kingdom could be established.

The Beast and Christendom at War with the Lamb, 19:11-21

The section opens with the Apocalyptic formula, “After these things.” which refers to the fall and destruction of Babylon (17 and 18). That momentous event is viewed with lamentation on earth and rejoicing in heaven. The whore and the bride cannot co-exist. When the former is destroyed, the latter is displayed in her beauty, and God-given glory. The bride is the Church of the New Testament—the Complement of saints from Pentecost till the Rapture. The guests of whom John the Baptist is the most distinguished, are Old Testament saints—the friends of the Bridegroom (John 3:29; Rev. 19:9). The martyred saints of the Apocalypse are not raised till after the marriage, so they are as a class distinct from either the bride or guests. But the bride, guests, and martyred saints are all partakers of the heavenly calling. The earthly calling must be distinguished from the heavenly calling. The millennial earth is the destined home of those embraced in the former. The millennial heavens become the abode of those included in the latter.

“I saw,” writes the seer, “heaven opened.” In an earlier vision, “a door was opened in heaven” (4:1), this latter was for the prophet to

pass in. But heaven opened is for the warrior King and His invincible hosts to come forth out of their royal home in heaven. We here witness a spectacle absolutely unlike anything ever beheld. The scene is one of surpassing interest. The triumphal procession out of heaven of Christ in victorious power, while saints and angels follow in His train, will be a sight grand beyond all telling. The white horses on which sat the Conqueror and His militant hosts denote *victorious power*. The most of the description refers to personal and official attributes borne by him Who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords—the King of all who reign, and Lord of all who exercise authority. The war itself is a righteous one (v. 11). He alone bears a sword, *i.e.*, the *Divine Authority of His Word*, which in itself executes judgment (v. 15).

Before the conflict commences with the contending hosts on earth, the ravenous birds of prey are summoned to supper (v. 17). The might, the greatness, the chivalry, the civilization of Europe as embodied in its kings, captains, mighty men, etc., are gathered together in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

“*He* was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood.” Not so the heavenly and triumphant hosts of saints who follow the Lord. Their robes of spotless white—not stained by blood—proclaim the purity and integrity of each one of the redeemed army. Christ alone executes judgment (John 5:27). We, with Him, rule the rebellious peoples with a rod of iron. But the sword is alone used by Christ.

What an assemblage of forces! “And I saw the beast,” the ten confederated kingdoms of Western Europe; “and the kings of the earth,” the kingdoms outside the Roman World—of Christendom, “and their armies gathered together to make war against Him that

sat on the horse and against His army.” So Great Britain, France, Spain, Germany, etc., shall bury in one common grave their mutual political and social dislikes, and gather together for one fell purpose. Hatred to the Lamb of God and to the heavenly saints overpowers national and political animosities, and, lured on by Satan, they dare attack the Lord of glory. Their aerial fleet and land forces are crushed to atoms. The two leaders—the Beast and the False Prophet—are consigned without trial to the lake of fire, while their less-guilty followers are judicially slain. These thousands or millions are raised a thousand years afterwards to stand their trial before the Great White Throne set up when time is no more.

The Binding and Imprisonment of Satan, 20:1-3

The unseen, yet real, leader of the gigantic confederation of kings and armies, described in the previous chapter is now dealt with. An unnamed angel, having the authority of the abyss, and of sufficient power to cope with Satan (for all angels are not equally powerful—Dan. 10:13), proceeds to bind the ancient enemy of God and of His people. The “key” and the “great chain” in the angel’s hand are, of course, symbolic. It must be remembered that Satan is a spirit, and that a literal chain is thus out of the question. The *key* implies authority over the abyss or bottomless pit, and the *chain*, that Satan is bound or restrained. His four titles (v. 2), as in 12:9, are each significant and worthy of attention. The history of Satan, from his creation in beauty, power, and wisdom (Ezek. xxviii. 12-19), on through the course of the ages till he is finally cast into the lake of fire—the most degraded of created beings and the greatest sufferer in the Universe (Rev. 20:10)—is the most awful record conceivable. We may remark that both “Hades” and the “Abyss” are but temporary places of abode. The lake of fire is eternal. The location

of the abyss is not revealed. Satan, then, is imprisoned, chained, and sealed up in the abyss for a thousand years. What a rest to the wearied sons of men! What a relief to the suffering part of creation! The great instigator of evil, the enemy of the human race, the tempter of men is now confined and the earth freed from his presence for a thousand years.

The Glorious Reign with Christ, 20:4-6

Christ shall reign *over* the earth for a thousand years, and on it by His representative—a prince of the royal house of David (Ezek. 44-48). The duration of the reign is stated in express terms, they “reigned with Christ a thousand years.” The main character of the reign is *righteousness*. This character of rule, kings and governments have been striving to affect for nigh 6,000 years, but to the world it is yet an ideal state of things. Christ will display it in perfection, in governmental administration. The world will be *one* vast kingdom, its principle of rule, righteousness, and its King, the Lord of Glory. The earthly features of the millennial reign are unfolded in the writings of the Hebrew Prophets; the heavenly character of the kingdom is disclosed in the New Testament writings.

There are three groups of saints who are said to reign with Christ (v. 4). “I saw thrones and they sat upon them and judgment was given unto them.” These are evidently the saints of Old and New Testament times and are spoken of as “elders.” “And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God.” This class of martyred saints are seen under the fifth seal (6:9-11). “And *such* as worshipped not the beast, neither his image and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand” (R.V.). This second group of martyrs is slain at a period

subsequent to those in the earlier scene, and under totally different circumstances.

“The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished” (v. 5). This refers to the wicked dead of all ages (compare with v. 12).

Satan’s Last Actions And Final Doom, 20:7-10

The glorious reign is over. The imprisonment of Satan is at an end. Christ has been on the throne and Satan in the Abyss. Has Satan profited by his long term of penal servitude? Have the nations who have basked under the smile, and glory, and beneficent sway of God’s Son bowed in heart and will to the king? Alas! no. Satan uses his freedom to go throughout the whole earth and deceive the nations once again—his last work on earth. The feigned obedience of the peoples is quickly thrown off, and they march under the leadership of Satan, covering the face of the earth for numbers. Jerusalem, the beloved city, and the camp of the saints gathered round it, are the objects of this—the largest confederacy ever witnessed. To crush and destroy the beautiful work of God on earth—a picture of governmental perfection—is the aim of the satanic hosts and their renowned leader. “Fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them”; all lie in the silence of Death. Satan’s doom is recorded in v. 10. This is the last notice of Satan in the Holy Scriptures. First cast out of heaven (ch. 12), then into the abyss (ch. 20), and finally into the lake of fire to endure its agonies for ever—not to reign, but to suffer.

The Judgment Of The Dead, 20:11-15

The throne of judgment is set up in eternity. It is termed “a great white throne.” Its vastness and intense purity, the greatness of the Judge, and the eternal issues at stake, invest the scene with unusual solemnity. This is the last inquest. It is an individual judgment, unlike that of a thousand years earlier (Matt. 25). In the Matthew judgment, we have *nations* before us. In the Apocalyptic judgment we witness *individuals* only. In the former, there are three classes, in the latter, but one. The judgments differ in time, in place, and in character. The Son of Man is the Judge (John 5:22). “I saw the dead, small and great, stand before *the throne*” (R.V.). Works, deeds, sins form the ground of judgment, not the nature which produced them. We are not responsible for the existence of the evil nature in each one—saint and sinner. We were born with it. But we are responsible for the allowance of the nature, and it is this latter which is in question in the final judgment. Condemnation—the irrevocable sentence of the Judges pronounced and executed, founded on the record of each one’s life and actions. “The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. “The lake of fire becomes the eternal depository of all and everything contrary to God. The last notice of the lake of fire and of its miserable inhabitants is contained in the last notice of eternity (21:8).

The Eternal State, 21:1-8

The last act in time is the raising of the wicked dead, the first recorded event in eternity is the judgment of the dead. That awful judgment has its place between the passing away of the millennial heavens and earth, and the introduction of the new heaven and

earth. The judgment of the dead *must* be eternal, for all measures and limitations are connected with space and time, and these necessarily ceased with the disappearance of the then existing heavens and earth. The Judgment of the Dead is in the infinitude of eternity. What is eternity? It is the duration of God Almighty. His life measures eternity—that ocean without shore or bottom.

These precious verses open with a new vision beheld by the seer—a new heaven and a new earth, but in the latter “no sea.” The size, configuration, and beauty of these eternal abodes of heavenly and earthly saints are not given. Then in a separate vision, we have the bride, after a thousand years of bliss and glory, still as a bride adorned for her husband. She enters the eternal state in the joy and purity of her marriage nuptials. Her affections are unchanged; she is a joy for ever. Then follow certain characteristic features of the unchanging condition which is fashioned after the nature of God who is *light* and who is *love*. What a scene of no sickness, no tears, no sorrow, no death, no pain. The sun shall never go down, the gold shall be undimmed, the flower shall never fade; no bursting heart shall be there. God, all and in all, shall uphold these worlds of perfection for endless ages. But the horrors of the lake of fire are equally real and true (v. 8).

Section 11 – Chapters 21:9 to 22:1-5

The Bride Displayed in Millennial Glory

We have had the last gathering of the nations. Swayed by one deadly impulse they converge upon one common center—Jerusalem. They march to sudden and overwhelming judgment. Then their leader is consigned to the lake of fire. The dead are judged. Next follows a

description of the eternal state—the grand ages of God’s everlasting rest—when the universe will be brought into harmony with God’s nature. The lake of fire will eternally witness to God who is **light**. We cannot possibly get beyond this. Eternity bounds our sight. Hence in this section we are recalled to the Kingdom. We had a passing allusion to it in Chap. 23:4-6. So the subject matter of our section is not described in historical sequence, but is retrospective.

*The special place of the Church, as the vessel for the display of the glory of God, and as the Lamb’s bride and wife, is very fully unfolded from Rev. 21:9-22:5, in symbols borrowed from creation and Judaism. There is a correspondence between the terms used in setting forth Jerusalem on earth, and those to describe Jerusalem on *high*, with this marked difference, that in the latter case, they are figures merely, yet figures of real and substantial truths. The true union of Church and State also awaits the coming days of glory; exhibited in perfection in the close connection between the heavenly city and the earthly one.

The Bride

Rev. 21:9-22:5 describes *not* a literal city, but the bride, the Lamb’s wife (v. 9). The harlot is spoken of as a city (17, 18), so also the bride. The literal Jerusalem on earth is the subject of Isa. 60; but that to which the Apocalyptic seer calls our attention is the Church of the New Testament in governmental splendor—in relation to the millennial earth—the true union of Church and State.

Features

Here are some of the many interesting features of the glorified bride: Her state is *holy*, her home is *Heaven*, and her source is *God* Himself

(21:10). She is enriched with the glory of God—our present hope (v. 11; also Rom. 5:2).

Her Light

Her light (v. 11), or shining, is as jasper—symbol of the glory of God (Rev. 4:3). God covers the city with His glory. The wall is built of jasper (v. 18), and forms the first foundation (v. 19); that is, the glory of God is the light, security, and foundation of the heavenly city.

The Wall

“The wall, great and high” (v. 12), denotes strength and security; everything unsuited to the glory of God can find no admittance to that holy place. All within are safe and divinely guarded.

Gates and Angels

“Twelve gates and twelve angels” (v. 12). The gate was the place of judgment. The rule and administration of the world to come is not committed to angels, but to man (Heb. 2:5). We shall judge the world (1 Cor. 6:2), and the twelve apostles from their place on high will specially govern Israel (Matt. 19:28), hence the names of the twelve tribes are written on the gates. Angels never rise above the position of *servants*; we are *children* and *sons*. Angels wait at the gates to obey.

Foundations

The twelve foundations of the wall of the city had in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (v. 14). The apostles have a distinctive place in the Church (Eph. 2:20), besides being in special

relation to Israel. The twelve foundation stones are unequalled for size, strength, and splendor (v. 19). Severally, they set forth some distinctive feature of the glory of God, while combined they present God Himself in the moral glory of His being and nature, the Church’s *one* foundation of incomparable strength and grandeur.

Measured

The city, gates, and wall are divinely measured, and a perfect square is the result (v. 15). A line of flax to measure the earthly city (Ezek. 40); a *golden reed*—divine righteousness—is the only and adequate rule to measure the Church in glory. The result is “*the stature of the fulness of the Christ*” (Eph. 4:13).

The Wall Measured

The wall is specially measured, but by the same rule, and instead of the “equal” and amazing size of the city, the wall is but 144 cubits; the former measurement expresses the Church’s perfection in the glory *according to God*; the latter, the Church’s perfection in glory *according to men and angels* (v. 17).

Building of the Wall

The building of the wall was of jasper, that is, the glory of God will be our defense and security, while the city itself was pure gold, like clear glass; as to the gold, we are made the righteousness of God in Him even *now* (2 Cor. 5:21); *then*, it will be displayed—the purity will be transparent (v. 18).

Gates of Pearl

The gates were pearls; every gate was of *one* pearl (v. 21). The gates are set in a right worthy setting, even in the wall of glory—the pearl in the jasper. Israel, angels, and men will then learn, as they look upon the gates of pearl, that Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for *it*—the one pearl of priceless value to Him (Matt. 13:46).

Street of the City

The golden and transparent street of the city tells us that the walks of the wilderness are over. The *sand* of the desert exchanged for the golden street of the golden city. No more defilement; no more foot-washing. We shall walk on that which cannot possibly defile, or be defiled (compare with 2 Cor. 6:16). Street, not streets (v. 21).

No Temple

“No temple therein” (v. 22). There will be no “holy” and “most holy”; no curtains and veils; no temple confining the glory of God to a favored few. All shall see Him alike. The feeblest believer shall see Jesus equally with Paul. “We see Jesus” says the apostle (Heb. 2:9). “We see Jesus” is the language of “I saw no temple therein.” God and the Lamb make themselves known equally to all in the city of gold.

No Created Light

The city needs no created light as the “sun,” nor borrowed light as the “moon,” nor artificial light as the “candle,” for the uncreated

glory of God is its light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The city is one blaze of glorious light (v. 23).

The Nations

The nations shall walk in its light. What we ought to be *now*—the light of the world (Matt. 5:14-26)—that we shall be *then*. The Lamb shall light the city *within*; we shall reflect the light *without* (v. 24).

Homage

The kings and nations shall yield their homage, and pour their treasures at our feet (compare vv. 24-26 with Chap. 3:9). The seat, too, of universal government is the glorified city (v. 26).

Gates Ever Open

It is not “the gates ajar,” but they “shall not be shut at all by day.” Absolute security; the open gates tell the certainty of perfect rest and quiet; but will they not be closed as the shades of evening draw their curtains over the face of creation? No, no; “for there shall be no night there.” Blessed and everlasting day that knows no evening! “*No night there*,” twice repeated. No night with its weird shadows—no night with its fears and terrors. No night with its troubled dreams. No night with its darkness and hidden dangers. All is light, all is day, all everlasting sunshine (v. 25).

No Defilement

“And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth.” It is the home of the holy and glorified; no plea nor title of any sort will admit, save those washed in blood, and whose names were written in the Lamb’s book of life (v. 27).

The Throne

The throne of God and the throne of the Lamb—but it is one throne (22:1, 3)—majesty and meekness combined—maintain the blessing for ever; grace through righteousness then as now (Rom. 5).

River of Life

The river of life will flow uninterruptedly; now, the waters should flow freely from us (John 7:38). Alas! that its course should be so often checked and hindered by the working of flesh (v. 1).

Tree of Life

Not only does the river of life refresh and gladden, but the tree of life, with its varied and abundant supply of fruit, affords eternal nourishment, while its “leaves” will be the witness of grace to the millennial nations (v. 2).

No Curse

“No more curse.” What then? The throne of God and of the Lamb combined shall be in it, upholding the glory and sustaining the blessedness, while “His servants shall serve Him” unceasingly. We serve Him in weakness and imperfection *now*; then we shall serve Him in strength, perfectly, and *for ever* (v. 3.)

His Face

We “shall see His face” (v. 4); *that* is a blessing beyond harp, or crown, or robe, or glory. The best wine is here poured out. We *shall* see the face of Him who died, and His name shall be on our foreheads. Like Rebecca of old when she lifted up her eyes at the

close of her wilderness travel, and beheld Isaac, she veiled her face that she might shine in his likeness; so in that day His name on our foreheads will be the public bearing of His likeness, morally (1 John 3:2) and *corporeally* (Phil. 3:21).

The Reign

They “shall reign for ever and ever.” The millennium and eternity are here embraced. Both our service and reign are eternal, and our joys as well. Thus closes this truly marvelous and magnificent description of the Church in the glory, with a statement that reaches far beyond the millennial age. In the eternity of God, the Church reigns in a glory that shall never sink-never go down (v. 5).

Section 12 – Chapter 22:6-21

Concluding Testimonies and Warnings

It will be observed that the first five verses of the Chapter are introduced with the formula “And He shewed me,” thus intimating a new Vision. God and the Lamb together constitute the strength and glory of the redeemed in Millennial and Eternal ages. How fitting, therefore, that the prophecy proper should close with the revelation of God and the Lamb and their *one* throne. What a combination of majesty, tenderness, and strength! What a fitting conclusion to these sublime prophecies!

The voice of prophecy is no more heard. For two thousand years, God has been silent. The last word has been spoken, the last vision has been seen, the last Divine Communication has been addressed to the Church. The sure word of prophecy is about to be translated into fact and blessed realization. What wait we for?—the gathering

shout of the Lord. We dare not allow any intervening event or circumstance, be it prophetic, political, social, or personal. We are on the tip-toe of expectation. His Shout and Voice may fall upon our waiting souls at *any moment*. Are our loins girt? Are lamps trimmed? Are lights burning?

Comment on the concluding verses of the book seem needless. A few suggestive remarks will suffice. In vv. 6 and 7 we have the prophecy authenticated by the Lord God of the prophets through His intermediary “His Angel.” Thus the prophecies contained in “The Revelation” with those embodied in the books of the Old Testament form one harmonious whole. The unity of the prophetic word, from Gen. 3:15 to Rev. 22:20, evidently manifests a Divine plan—the product of the Divine mind.

Three times the Lord Himself announces His speedy return (vv. 7, 12, 20). The first announcement connects itself with our responsibility to keep the prophetic word (v. 7). The second as to our *stewardship* (v. 12) and righteous reward. The third—the last word from heaven—is *consolatory* (v. 20).

Verse 11 unfolds and enforces a principle of profound importance. By Death or Christ’s Coming, the character and state of all are eternally fixed. Progression or change of condition is impossible. The immutability of character in eternity should rouse to instant and continuous holy action *now*. Habits form character and character fixes destiny. On the other side of death, all is fixed and irrevocable. In verse 13 we hear, as in the beginning of the book (vv. 1, 8, 17), the divine speaker announcing certain Divine titles, and just those suitable for ruined circumstances, and hence for faith to build and rest upon.

The generally accepted reading of verse 14 clears up certain difficulties and removes well-founded objections to the legalism in the text, as it appears in our English Bibles: “Blessed are they that wash their robes that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city.” (R.V.). Thus grace—not law—is the above title to blessing, and this is the testimony of Scripture throughout. Those outside the Holy City are summarized under various characters or classes (v. 15). By their sin they exclude themselves.

“I Jesus” (v. 16). We greatly love the quiet calm and dignity in this assertion of the precious and personal name—Jesus. Our salvation and happiness are wrapped up in this Name of names—none so sweet to a believer’s ear. “*I am the root and the offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star.*” The former title connects Him as God (the root) and Man (the offspring), with the permanent establishment of royalty in the house of David—David’s Lord and David’s Son. The second title is the one which most appeals to us. Before the day breaks for Israel, ere as the Sun of righteousness He lightens the Holy Land of Palestine and throws the skirts of His glory over the people and land he loves so well, He first of all appears to His Church as the Bright and Morning Star. The watchers cannot fail to see the Star—it is “bright”—O so bright. It is Christ’s Personal Coming for us before He chases away darkness, and every enemy from Israel and the world. What is the response to the voice of the Bridegroom? Love instantly responds, “And the Spirit and the Bride say Come.” The cry is addressed to Him. It is not the call of the evangelist to the world, but the cry of the Bride to her heavenly and Divine Bridegroom. Every hearer is next invited to take part in the call of love in which the Spirit too unites. Then the next two

invitations address sinners who thirst, and whosoever will, to come ere the door of grace and hope is for ever closed. (v. 17).

Verses 18 and 19 solemnly warn all against unholy tampering with the words of this prophetic book. This may be done either by *adding* to them (v. 18), or *taking* from them (v. 19). To do either is to incur the guilt which merits the severest judgments contained in the book.

The Lord’s final message to His Church is found in v. 20, “*Surely I come quickly.*” Triumphantly we answer, “*Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus.*” His last challenge to our hearts. Our last word of bridal affection to Him and of Him. The Old Testament closes with a threatened *curse*. The New Testament is finished with a benediction of *grace*—grace in its fulness to all saints.