

Revelation 12–14 — The Jewish Remnant and the Great Tribulation

Notes on The Revelation with Practical Reflections

H. H. Snell

Chapter 12 – 14: The Jewish Remnant and the Great Tribulation

The twelfth chapter may be read in company with the thirteenth and fourteenth, as forming another distinct section of the apocalyptic book. Though the range extends from the birth of the Messiah to His return to tread the winepress of the wrath of God, yet it is principally occupied with the great events of the last half of Daniel's seventieth week. In the twelfth and thirteenth chapters, we have for the most part a record of events in relation to the earth -- Satan, the beast, and the false prophet being the principal actors in the scene; but in the fourteenth chapter we have an emerging into light, and God brought in upon the scene, and therefore it is not how things stand in relation to Satan and the beast, but how they stand in relation to God. The instruction of the twelfth chapter is very extensive in its range, though the subject is especially Israel. It takes us back farther than any part of the Apocalypse, even to the birth of Jesus, and carries us on to the remnant in affliction, just before the Lord Himself appears as their deliverer. The woman spoken of in the first verse is described as clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars (Rev. 12:1).

She is invested with supreme authority, and all light and rule are derived from, and are subordinate to her, as the moon's is to the sun. (Cp. Dan. 7:27.) We find in Genesis that one of Joseph's dreams was, that the sun, and the moon, and the eleven stars made obeisance to him {Gen. 37:9};

and when he told it to his father, Jacob understood that the dream referred to himself and the mother and brethren of Joseph; therefore he rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee on the earth? (Gen. 37:9, 10).

The number twelve is the administrative rule of God in the hands of man. From all this we gather, that the woman, in the opening of our chapter, refers to the house of Israel, from which, according to the flesh, our Lord came. Unto us a Child is born {Isa. 9:6};

for He was the son of Abraham (Matt. 1:1),

and was

There was, however, another wonder in heaven, which we are told, in the ninth verse, was that old serpent which is called the Devil, and Satan. This terrible being is presented to us as a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads (emblematic of his holding the

sway of the Roman empire, and that the vision is of a time previous to the ten kings being crowned (Rev. 13:1), and drawing a third part of the stars of heaven with his tail, and casting them on the earth. This great devourer is followed in the train by those, perhaps potentates of the world, whose proper duty it was to rule in the fear of God, but who, by his drawing, come under his power. The attitude which this awful dragon takes is that of watching for Messiah's birth, and to swallow Him up, if possible. The dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born (Rev. 12:4).

Now, who can have attentively read the second chapter of Matthew without seeing how literally this was accomplished! Directly the birth of Jesus was announced, Herod and all Jerusalem were troubled {see Matt. 2:3},

and the king, as if imbued fully with the subtlety of the great deceiver; though he professed a desire to worship (Matt. 2:8)

Jesus, only had an earnest longing to destroy Him (Matt. 2:13),

and afterwards in great wrath issued a command to put to death all the young children from two years old and under, hoping in this way to include the Son of God -- the man child, who should yet have the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. As we might expect, the entrance of Jesus into this world would be connected with a mighty opposing energy of Satan; so in no period of the Divine record do we find such hosts of Satanic powers working on the earth, and especially in the land of Israel, as during the days of our Lord in His flesh. We know, too, that though Herod's murderous scheme only turned out to his utter confusion -- to the complete failure of the roaring lion -- yet afterwards, as the wily serpent, he tempts the blessed Lord with, If Thou be the Son of God, etc {Matt. 4:3-6}.

made of the seed of David, according to the flesh (Rom. 1:3);

But, as at all other times, the great red dragon was so utterly confounded, that the

thus connected with all the promises to Abraham, and all the royalties through David. Therefore we read in the next verse,

devil left Him, and angels came and ministered unto Him {see Matt. 4:11}.

And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered {Rev. 12:2}.

From these records in the gospel it is clear that Satan was especially set upon devouring this man child.

Notes on the Revelation

We are further told, And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne {Rev. 12:5}.

This shows us that, however the hatred of Satan and man might rage, yet the God of resurrection could raise up Jesus from the dead, and seat Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies. And what child was ever born of a woman that will sway the universal sceptre, but Jesus? Who else shall rule the nations with a rod of iron, or break them to shivers as a potter's vessel, but Jesus? His death on the cross, instead of checking the onward course of this man child, only manifested God's love and man's wickedness, and was so infinitely meritorious to God, that we are told He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, etc. {Phil. 2:8-11}.

So we read, Her child was caught up unto God and to His throne.

It is ascension, prior to His taking future government (for there is nothing said about the life or even death of this man child), that is here brought out; and while the Church must always be included when the resurrection and ascension of Christ are brought out, nevertheless, the subject of this chapter is not the Church, but the history of those (of Israel especially) who suffer under Satan and his great minister, the Man of Sin, during the apocalyptic week. Though at present the people of Israel are virtually cut off, yet they are beloved for the fathers' sakes; and though the ten tribes are scattered to the four winds, God is able to gather them again to their own land; and, even before that, His eye will be upon a remnant, and He will bring them through the fire of unparalleled tribulation and anguish into their long promised blessing, when there shall be the days of heaven on the earth (Deut. 11:21). The woman whom we have just before noticed as invested with dignity and glory, and giving birth to a man child who was to rule all nations, is now seen fleeing into the wilderness (Rev. 12:6). Here there is a great break of more than 1800 years in the chapter. It is a remnant of Jewish people under the oppression of Satan and the Man of Sin in the last half of Daniel's week. Their experience is often recorded in the psalms. (See Psa. 79 and 80.) Israel was the nation whom the Spirit of Christ called His own {Psa. 78:52},

and one of its prophets had said, Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder (Isa. 9:6);

another prophet had declared that Bethlehem Ephratah

should be the place from which He should come forth that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting (Micah 5:2);

and other prophets predicted the unparalleled tribulation that the seed of Jacob will yet have to pass through -- the period referred to, I believe, in this and the following chapter. Jeremiah says,

Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it (Jer. 30:7).

Daniel also says, There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time: and at that time thy people [always, in Daniel, referring to Israel] shall be delivered,

every one that shall be found written in the book (Dan. 12:1).

Before, however, “the woman” flees into the wilderness, the heaven must be cleared of Satan and his angels. Though in our chapter this is not the order of narration, yet we know that it is by his power that that master-piece of iniquity, “the Man of Sin,” and his attendant evils, are brought about. Satan is still the deceiver of the world, and also the accuser of the brethren; but he will yet fall, like lightning from heaven, and be cast down to earth. After his horrible purposes have been accomplished, he shall be bound with a chain, and cast into the bottomless pit for a season, and after a thousand years let loose for a time, before he is banished to the eternal misery of the lake of fire. Satan seems to be aware of his doom; for the devils said to Jesus, Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time? {Matt. 8:29}.

The point in Satan’s work which is referred to here is his being cast down from the heavenlies as the accuser of our brethren {Rev. 12:10}.

What are we to understand by this? Is it not true that the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience {Eph. 2:2},

has access into God’s presence to accuse us there? There can be no doubt of this. We see it in Job. When the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth Thy hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord (Job 1:6-12).

We find, also, when Joshua, the high-priest, is seen standing before the angel of the Lord, that Satan is also standing at his right hand (Zech. 3:1). In Ephesians we see Satan having access to the heavens, and our fight is described as against principalities and powers, against wicked spirits in heavenly places (see margin Eph. 6:12); that is, like as Joshua and the men of Israel fought against those who hindered their full possession and enjoyment of the land that God had given them and brought them into, so our character of conflict is not down here with flesh and blood, but with Satan and his host in the heavenlies, who seek to hinder our

enjoyment of that communion with the Father in the holiest of all, which we are brought into, through the riches of Divine grace in Christ, and through His blood. As Satan cannot swallow us up, because our life is hid with Christ in God, he does all that he can to hinder our fellowship with the Father, and to cast us down from the enjoyment of our high calling and standing in Christ: They only consult to cast him down from his excellency (Psa. 62:4).

If we are abiding in Christ, we are impregnable to the devices of Satan. As to his being the accuser of the brethren, our consolation is, that Christ is in heaven as our Advocate, to meet every accusation; so that we need not fear. By the power of angelic agency, Satan and his hosts must yet be cast down; and let us remember, that angels, principalities, and powers are made subject unto Christ. We read that Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels {see Rev. 12:7};

but Satan, who is always opposed to the Lord Jesus, will resist, though it will be in vain: The dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven {Rev. 12:7, 8}.

The result will be, that Satan's power then will be wholly concentrated on earth; and as I presume that this will occur in the midst of the week (see Dan. 9:27),

the Man of Sin will be then developed as fully energized by Satanic power, the whole world will be under such a delusion as to wonder after "the beast"; and "the woman," representing those of the Jews who stand out for the true God, will pass through the severest persecution. Hence we read, The great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. . . . Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time {Rev. 12:9-12}.

These verses, from the seventh to the twelfth inclusive, are clearly parenthetical, and therefore the sixth verse is taken up again in the fourteenth. The parenthesis seems purposely introduced, to account for the persecution of the woman, and the full development of the abomination which maketh desolate, the third and most dreadful woe to the inhabitants of the earth. We must not overlook, however, in this parenthesis, a loud voice (mark, not voices) which John heard in heaven at this time. It was a voice, saying, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ {Rev. 12:10};

for clearing the heavens of Satan and his angels seems the first act of Christ in power, in relation to the kingdom. We notice that this voice is heard in heaven, and is accompanied with triumph at the casting down of Satan. Who it is that utters this voice we are not told; but the heavenly saints being at this time in heaven, like Abraham in the mount, who beheld the dreadful judgment and smoke of the doomed cities, but was not in them, so the saints in heaven will look down on the dreadful things coming upon the earth, and worship in the knowledge of the glory and power of Christ. By the expression,

our brethren {Rev. 12:10},

I understand the voice to refer to us who will then be around the throne of God in heaven, when it will be said, The accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death {Rev. 12:10, 11}.

Three things characterize these overcomers of Satan; first, they make the blood of the Lamb their confidence and shelter; secondly, they used the sword of the Spirit, the written word of God -- the word of their testimony; thirdly, they esteemed the love of Christ beyond the love of life; they could say, Thy lovingkindness is better than life {Psa. 63:3}: They loved not their lives unto the death {Rev. 12:11}.

Surely these are the three elements of vital Christianity. There is another very important thought added. It is this: Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth {Rev. 12:12}

Here we have two distinct classes-those dwelling in heaven called on to rejoice, and those dwelling on earth under an awful woe. Now, I ask, are not those dwelling in heaven, who are called on to rejoice at the casting down of the accuser of the brethren, the heavenly saints? Again, besides the inhabitants of the earth generally, "the woman" who flies into the wilderness is especially the object of Satan's wrath and hatred. Surely it could not be strictly said, that he is in wrath with those who obey him, and are deceived by him at this time; it is, then, particularly against "the woman" who brought forth the man child that his wrath is directed. Therefore we find her distinguished in this chapter, as well as the dwellers in heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. The saints in heaven had overcome by the blood of the Lamb; the woman who keeps the commandments of God is persecuted by Satan and his allies on earth. With regard to the woman's flight, we are told in Matt. 24, that when the Man of Sin is developed, that is, when the abomination of desolation is set up, of which Daniel prophesied concerning his city and people, Then,

said our Lord, let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains: let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house: . . . But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day {Matt. 24:16-20}.

However much the flight of many at the siege of Jerusalem was like this, the following verse, and also the fifteenth, show that it can only have its full accomplishment in the days of the Man of Sin, in Israel's last or seventieth week spoken of by Daniel. For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved (Matt. 24:21, 22).

Accordingly, as the result of the dragon's hatred and persecution, the woman {Rev. 12:6}

Notes on the Revelation

of our chapter is seen fleeing into the wilderness: but she is still the object of God's care; for she is not only helped in her flight with two wings of a great eagle {Rev. 12:14},

but a place there is prepared of God for her, and she is nourished from the face of the serpent for a thousand two hundred and threescore days, or a time, times, and half a time. (Compare verses 6 and 14.) Satan, however, still pursues her, and casts water out of his mouth as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. But as the prophet said, When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him (Isa. 59:19);

so God, in His providential care over the persecuted remnant, will cause a wonderful deliverance, and shield her from the overflowing scourge of her mighty foe. We are told that the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth (Rev. 12:16).

But though Satan is disappointed and confounded in his pursuit of those who flee into the wilderness, his wrath is not lessened, and it would seem as if, giving up those of Judæa who had fled into the wilderness, he found the remnant of her seed {Rev. 12:17}

elsewhere; it may be in the city of Jerusalem. These are characterized by being faithful to Moses' law, and having the oracles of God: they keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Rev. 12:17).

The malice of Satan against the godly is remarkably brought out in this chapter. Now his hatred and power are directed against the Church of God, because it is God's present witness in the earth, she testifies of God's perfect love, and the unsearchable riches of Christ, she glories in the Cross, waits for the Son from heaven, and knows the world to be deceitful and doomed. Now the manifold wisdom of God is known by the Church unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies; but after the Church has been caught up, and God has other witnesses, then Satan's wickedness and enmity will be directed against them. But they are objects of God's care, beloved for the fathers' sakes; and when they call upon God in the day of trouble, He will deliver them, and they shall glorify Him. They are on Jewish ground, keeping the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ, that is, the Scriptures which testify of Christ, the prophetic word concerning the coming kingdom and glory of Messiah. Hence we are told that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Rev. 19:10),

and this prophetic book, the Revelation, is called the testimony of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:2).

Their pleading, however, in the 79th and 80th Psalms, is very remarkable. After praying for wrath {Psa. 79:6}

and the revenging of blood {Psa. 79:10}

upon the heathen, and complaining of God's beautiful vineyard which He had planted for Himself being cut down, etc., they say, Let Thy hand be upon the man of Thy right hand, upon the son of man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself. So will not we go back from Thee: quicken us, and we will call upon Thy name. Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved {Psa. 80:17-19}. (See also Psa. 58.)

The unparalleled manifestation of diabolical and human blasphemy is seen in the thirteenth chapter. Satan finds one to accept at his hand the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, which Jesus refused. He who was a liar and murderer from the beginning has been most successful in his deceivings by being an imitator of God. We often see this in Scripture. God has wise virgins; Satan has virgins also -- false. Christ sows good seed -wheat; Satan sows seed too -- tares. God has a vine -the true vine {John 15:1};

Satan has a vine also -the vine of the earth {Rev. 14:18, 19}.

Christ has a bride; Satan has a harlot. God has a city -- the New Jerusalem; Satan has also a city -- Babylon. But none of his imitations seem so vile as in this chapter, none so perfect in blasphemy against God. For instance, God had a man, His wellbeloved Son, to bear witness for Him in the earth. Satan will have a man also -- the Man of Sin. God did miracles, and wonders, and signs {Acts 2:22},

by Jesus of Nazareth; Satan's Servant will come too, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders (2 Thess. 2:9) (compare Acts 2:22 with 2 Thess. 2:9);

God will have all worship Jesus, and bow the knee to Him, for He is worthy; Satan also will have all that dwell upon the earth to worship "the beast," whose names are not written in the book of life. The saints of God will have His name in their foreheads {Rev. 14:1, 22:4};

so the worshipers of "the beast" will receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads. But worse than all is the direct blasphemy against God. The gospel of the grace of God now gives testimony to the love and wisdom and power of the triune God -Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; so we see in this chapter, that Satan has a trio also -- the beast, the false prophet, and the image that doth speak -- all energized by one lying spirit, all united in blaspheming God and deceiving men. This infernal scheme, venting itself in direct antagonism to Christ, seems to fill up the measure of iniquity, and bring speedy vengeance from heaven by the glorious appearing of the Son of man in power and great glory, who will consume this wicked one with the Spirit of His mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of His coming. Both the beast and the false prophet will then be cast alive at once into the lake of fire burning with brimstone (2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 19:20).

Happy for us to know, that when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory (Col. 3:4).

Satan having been cast out of heaven into the earth, as recorded in the previous chapter, we are not surprised at finding this chapter commencing with the rising up of the beast. The apostle says, I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the names of blasphemy (Rev. 13:1).

He rises up out of the sea; which teaches us that he had been previously hid from the eye of man. Coming out of the sea may, perhaps, mean that he issues from peoples more or less civilized. Daniel saw also the great Gentile powers emerge from the sea: They came up from the sea {Dan. 7:3}.

There were four great beasts. The first like a lion, the second like a bear, the third like a leopard, and the fourth beast dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. I beheld till the Ancient of days did sit, etc. (Dan. 7:3-8).

This was Daniel's vision of the great Gentile powers. The beast which John saw seems to include the whole of these great beasts; for he says, The beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion . . . and there was given to him a mouth speaking great things (Rev. 13:2, 5).

The times of the Gentiles will be then still running on in the fourth or Roman empire -- the legs of the image with its ten toes; or, as we have just seen, the ten-horned beast with its ten crowns -- all, it would seem, personified in the first beast of the Apocalypse, or the little horn of Daniel, with man's eyes, and mouth speaking great things. He is one under direct Satanic inspiration and power -- he ascends out of the bottomless pit; and we are further told, that Satan gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority {Rev. 13:2}.

Daniel's little horn intimates that he issues from the Roman earth; and from the statement, Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers (Dan. 11:37),

we may expect that he will be a Jew. He will have the iron teeth, and dreadful and terrible strength of the fourth monarchy; for it will be said, Who is able to make war with him? {Rev. 13:4}.

We must remember, that although the development of the beast will not take place till the hindering power the Church indwelt by the Holy Ghost -- is removed, and Satan is cast out into the earth, yet that the mystery of iniquity (2 Thess. 2:7)

was working in Paul's day, and is still going on. John saw it also, and said,

Even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time (1 John 2:18).

The antichristian principle is working all around us, and growing rapidly; and we need grace and spiritual power from God to discern the evil, and flee from it. Sight and sense are not enough; for there is power with Satan's work; and he imitates God as far as he can, so as to be more effectual in deceiving. The soul taught by the Holy Ghost, and in subjection to the written Word, thus walking by faith and not by sight, trusting to the living God, and not leaning to his own understanding, is alone able to stand with God, or walk with God. Seeing that self-will and self-exaltation will characterize the Man of Sin, let us watch against these two evils, which are in every one of our hearts by nature, and let us seek to be conformed to our blessed Jesus, who was meek and lowly in heart, and who humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross! Perhaps it is difficult to say what we are to understand by one of his heads, as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed {Rev. 13:3},

further than, that if it does not carry us back to the old Roman empire -- defunct as it has been, but again to arise -- then it must be some check given to the beast's success after he is manifested; but it is only for a time; for he is restored again, and comes forth under the flattery of a world-wide admiration: All the world wondered after the beast (Rev. 13:3).

It is to be observed, that this period will be characterized by devilworship; for "the dragon," that is, the devil and Satan (Rev. 12:9), who gave power unto the beast, will be "worshipped" (Rev. 13:4). The

beast, too, will be worshipped; for all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain (Rev.13:8).

Those who have been watching the moral changes and course of events for many years, must have noticed the rapid increase of irreverence for the things of God, the steady advance of infidelity, and the earnestness with which many have fallen in with spiritrapping and consulting with familiar spirits; and, by men accustoming themselves to such things, we can understand how gradually the great deceiver is paving the way for the development of his wickedness, which is so soon to be connected with open infidelity and blasphemy. The well-instructed child of God cannot but observe the occurrence of remarkable events, especially of late, and see that the day of the Lord is approaching with great rapidity. Saints are expected to see this, and are therefore taught to assemble themselves together, and to exhort one another; and so much the more as they see the day approaching (Heb. 10:25). The day of the Lord is not set before us, strictly speaking, as our hope; but the Lord Himself. He is the one hope of our calling (1 Thess. 1:10),

and we are to serve God, and wait for His Son from heaven. He says to us, Surely, I come quickly {Rev. 22:20}!

and our response should be, Even so, come, Lord Jesus {Rev. 22:20}!

Notes on the Revelation

But while thus in a waiting posture for Christ, many events may and do occur which show us that the day is approaching -- the day when Christ will be manifested in glory with His saints -- the day of the world's judgment, and of Israel's restoration and blessing. But the calling, standing, and hope of the Church, is heavenly. Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:20).

In fact, prophecy relates for the most part to the earth; but, as members of Christ's body, while taking heed to the sure word of prophecy, and learning much of God in tracing His dealings in the earth, we are instructed to look for the Lord Himself, who shall descend from heaven with a shout, when those who are alive and remain, and all the dead in Christ, shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). To return to our chapter. We find that this time of pride and blasphemy is limited. It will continue forty and two months (Rev. 13:5).

Daniel also speaks of power given to this enemy for a time, times, and the dividing of time. Regarding "time" as being equivalent to a year, as the marginal reading of Dan. 11:13, "times, even years," would seem to warrant, both these periods would be exactly three years and a half; the period of the half of the last week of Daniel, during which the beast will continue in open manifestation, after having caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease (Dan. 9:27). The beast will not only speak great things, but will open his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle or dwelling, and them that dwell in heaven (Rev. 13:6). It is remarkable that we get the dwellers in heaven noticed again here, as we observed in the previous chapter (Rev. 12:12); and the more so because we find "saints" under the oppression of the beast in the next verse. Now, if we understand the

dwellers in heaven to be the heavenly saints, who, ere this period, have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air, who are the “saints” brought before us here? It may be well to notice, that “saint” is not a title peculiar to the New Testament. Daniel repeatedly speaks of the saints, and as on the earth too during the time of the Antichrist. But Daniel does not speak of the Church; his prophecies are concerning his city and people. He says, He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High (Dan. 7:25).

He also says, The horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them . . . and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom (Dan. 7:21, 22).

There is no mention here of resurrection or rapture, and therefore they cannot be the Church. He also intimates that some will be brought through this great tribulation; for he tells us, At that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that is written in the book (Dan. 12:1; Rev. 13:7, 8).

The prophet Daniel thus speaks of saints, evidently Jewish, who are brought through the fire into their own promised blessing in the earth. Jeremiah calls it the time of Jacob’s trouble. Our Lord also says, that for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened {Matt. 24:22}.

If they were not shortened, the oppression of the beast would go on to exterminate all who do not worship him; so that except those days should be shortened, there would no flesh be saved {Matt. 24:22}.

Israel is called repeatedly in Scripture God’s “elect.” On comparing Matt. 24:31 with Isa. 27:12, 13, it will be clearly seen that the “elect” there mentioned are not the Church, but the seed of Jacob. Isa. 45:4; 65:9, 22, also show that Israel is called God’s “elect.” Another prophet says, that in all the land two parts shall be cut off and die, and that God will bring a third part of them through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: They shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God (Zech. 13:8, 9).

All these are clearly people suffering great tribulation on the earth, and brought through it into blessing; like Noah and his family, carried through the tribulation, and brought into the purged earth. With these prophecies our chapter agrees. We are told, It was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them. . . . He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints (Rev. 13:7-10).

This shows us that many are killed, and some are brought through: -- they overcome, not by carnal weapons, but by faith and patience. This is the Divine rule, that no flesh shall glory in God’s presence. The saints, in the great tribulation, will have to learn that by strength shall no man prevail {1 Sam 2:9}.

They will not overcome by their own sword or power; for he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword, etc.

God will then be glorified, as He is now, by patient faith; hence it is added, Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

They will be fully delivered by the personal return of the Messiah in glory, and be brought into the millennial blessing. Those who are faithful unto death, and lose their earthly inheritance, will have a place in the first resurrection (as we learn from Rev. 20:4), and reign with Christ. The time of Nebuchadnezzar is remarkably typical of the period we have been contemplating. The king, in self-will and pride, set up a golden image, and commanded all on pain of death to bow down to it. Nearly all obeyed. A very few were the exceptions. They refused to worship the image, and were faithful to the living and true God; they suffered and overcame, not by sword, but by faith and patience. They were cast into the fiery furnace. God was with them in it, and delivered them out of it. They were brought into greater honor and blessing in the earth than they had ever known before. The infidel king was abased, and their oppressors consumed. So will it be in the days of the beast. Happy, those whose citizenship is in heaven, who are partakers of the heavenly calling, and members of the body of Christ; for as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly; and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall

also bear the image of the heavenly. In a little while He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. The second beast, or false prophet, is now brought before us. So apostate is the earth, the place of civilization, that it gives forth this false Messiah. This man, and the first beast are both spoken of in the 19th chapter as persons, and receive special judgment from Christ at His coming (Dan. 7:11; Rev. 19:20). The first beast, as we saw, seems identified with the Roman empire, and is characterized by power and blasphemy. The second beast, though coming in his own name, a false Christ, comes up out of the earth, instead of from heaven, as the true Christ. He will have some outward semblance of the meek and lowly Jesus; but in his heart he is devilish, and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh {Matt. 12:34}. He had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon (Rev. 13:11).

How unlike that blessed One who spake as never man spake, and concerning whom the people wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth {Luke 4:22}!

He was able to speak a word in season to him that was weary, to bind up the brokenhearted, to heal every sin-sick soul, to comfort the mourner, to invite all the weary and heavy-laden to His own bosom for rest, and He cast out none that came to Him. He pleased not Himself. His heart of matchless love was set upon doing good. No case was sunk too low for His arm of mercy to reach, no one was too vile for His love to minister unto. In short, the Cross of Calvary was the only way in which His sinner-loving heart could fully manifest itself, and there He accomplished the work of eternal redemption for all those who take refuge in His precious blood. Surely He was full of grace and truth! "On such love my soul shall ponder, Love so vast, so full, so free; Say, why lost in holy wonder, Why, O Lord, such love to me? Hallelujah! Grace shall reign eternally."

How different, then, was He who came in His Father's name to him who will come in his own name (John 5:43). The false prophet, we are informed, exerciseth all the power of the first beast, and that, too, in his presence. The two are clearly one in heart, mind, and power. It is unity, but diabolical. The power is from beneath. He bows almost all hearts to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. He works miracles, and they are mighty to deceive all those who walk by sight and sense.

How solemn to think that these things are shortly about to come to pass. How busily the powers of darkness are engaged to bring about this crisis; and how needful that believers should believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, and test everything by the written word. Christ wrought miracles, and so will the false Christ; for, as we have previously noticed, Satan deceives by imitating. The counterfeit of true Christianity is all around us, and is rapidly going into infidelity. In days of old, God's power was manifested in fire coming down from heaven to consume the burnt offering and the fat (Lev. 9:24). Again, there went out fire from the Lord

in devouring judgment on those who sinned in His service (Lev. 1:2). When Solomon finished the building of the temple, the presence and power of God were manifested by fire coming down from heaven and consuming the burnt offering and sacrifices (2 Chron. 7:3). We also find, that when Elijah testified for the living and true God before the apostate Israelites, God answered His servant by sending down fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice (1 Kings 18). Afterwards, the prophet brought fire down from heaven and consumed the captains and fifties which the king sent for him (2 Kings 1). And so Satan, in the apocalyptic period, will energize the false Christ to deceive, by making fire to come down from heaven. We read that he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire to come down from heaven in the sight of men. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do, in the sight of the beast (Rev. 13:13, 14).

This is the time of the "strong delusion" which Paul referred to when he said, For this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness (2 Thess. 2:11, 12).

Our chapter still further unfolds the deluding power of the false prophet. He commands men to make an image to the beast . . . and he had power to give breath unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should . . . speak (Rev. 13:14, 15). {See also in JND's translation.}

How terrible is this miraculous power of the wicked one -- to give breath and speech to a dead, corruptible image of man's fashioning! How can those possibly escape the snare, who pride themselves on their intellectual powers, and boast of the light of reason and the potency of scientific research? What can philosophy say to this? Where can the reasoner hide himself? What will the freethinker's argument avail now? The unhesitating reply is, that all, save those whose trust is in God, and whose eye is on His revealed word, will be willingly enveloped in this thick cloud of strong delusion, and worship the beast. They will be like the luxurious Babylonians, and all the surrounding nations, languages, and tongues, who fell down to worship the image that Nebuchadnezzar set up, at the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music. This sure word of prophetic testimony shines like a bright light upon the believer's path. It shows us where the present workings are tending, and what a fearful crisis is at hand. We dare not shut our eyes to the elements that are abounding on every side so calculated to exalt man, set aside truth, dishonor God, and bring in the flood of infidelity, that makes ready for this terrible delusion. Happy indeed are those who are born again of the Spirit, and whose only standing now before the Lord is on the ground of the precious blood of Christ! Such have peace with God, are delivered from the power of darkness, are translated into the

kingdom of God's dear Son, are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, and are commanded by the Holy Ghost to rejoice in the Lord always, and to give thanks to the Father for having made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. How precious is Jesus to such. Their song is --

Notes on the Revelation "Oh, I am my Beloved's, And my Beloved's mine! He brings a poor, vile sinner Into His 'house of wine.' I stand upon His merit, I know no other stand, Not e'en where glory dwelleth in Immanuel's land."

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased {Matt. 3:17, 17:5; 2 Pet. 1:17};

and the finished work of redemption which He accomplished on the cross, a savour of rest to God, and gives rest also to the sinner that believes. "Jesus, I rest in Thee; Myself in Thee I hide; Laden with guilt and misery, Where could I rest beside? 'Tis on Thy meek and lowly breast My weary soul alone can rest.

In the days of "the beast" there will be no room for neutrality, or for men to content themselves, as many do now, by making no profession at all. Men must either be for God or for Satan. Then the words of Jesus, so slurred over now, will be fully proved --

"Thou holy One of God! The Father rests in Thee; And in the savour of that blood, Which speaks to Him for me. The curse is gone; through Thee I'm blest; God rests in Thee, in Thee I rest."

He that is not with me is against me {Matt. 12:30; Luke 11:23}.

It really is so now, only it is not manifested. There will be the sentence of death then upon all who will not worship the beast. Those who do so will receive a mark, in order that those who do not bow down to the beast may be distinguished, and be known as men that none should either buy or sell with. There will be no exception. Neither riches, age, influence, nor rank, will avail anything. Shall Christ or Antichrist be obeyed and worshipped? will be the question. We are told that he had power to cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name (Rev. 13:15-17).

How injurious to souls, and destructive to the spread of the truth of God, is the mistaken thought, that the millennium is to be brought in by the gradual spread of the gospel. Alas! what awaits this poor doomed world! Who can say but that many around us may be taken in this snare which is coming on the face of the whole earth, and be led on by Satan to this time of "strong delusion"? How earnest it should make us in seeking the salvation of souls! and how responsible we are not to help on the spirit of worldliness, which is infidelity, and thus aid Satan in deceiving, instead of our being lights in the world! With regard to the number of the beast, many have been the conjectures. It is better, however, to confess our ignorance where we have not clear light. Daniel tells us, that

The actings of the beast are repeatedly referred to in the following chapters of the Revelation; for his course is contemplated until the Lord Himself returns with His saints, as seen in the nineteenth

chapter; so that we shall again have to notice his ways. May we be so able to bring the light of the future on our present path, that it may have practical power on our hearts and ways! In the fourteenth chapter we have several distinct actions, but each giving us God's mind in relation to things then connected with the earth. 1. We have God and the Lamb in relation to the remnant of Israel. 2. God's testimony of the everlasting gospel to an apostate world. 3. God's witness to the fall of Babylon. 4. God's warning against worshipping the beast. 5. A voice from heaven pronouncing blessing on those who henceforth die in the Lord. 6. The harvest of the earth. 7. The vintage, or treading the winepress of the wrath of God. Let us now look a little more particularly at each of these actions.

the wise shall understand {Dan. 12:10};

so, when it is necessary, we may be assured that there will be no difficulty. We are informed that it is the number of a man, and his number is 6 6 6 {Rev. 13:18}.

This shows us at least that there is no rest or perfection in connection with the beast; for the number seven speaks to us both of perfection and rest. We have repeatedly called attention to the former point in our previous meditations. With regard to the latter, we are told that God rested on the seventh day. It is a Sabbath number. But with all the popularity, unity, power, and miracles of the beast, his number is that of a man -- fallen, apostate man, in league with Satan, and has no element of perfection or rest in its constitution. Perfection and rest, I need scarcely say, are the two special characteristics of the gospel. It tells us of the perfection of the person of Jesus the Son of God, of whom the Father could say,

1. The Remnant of Israel John says, I looked, and; lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name (or, according to the best copies, His name and His Father's name) written in their foreheads {Rev. 14:1}.

They are presented in blessed rest and companionship with the Lamb. They are servants of God, sealed in their foreheads; and however much they had been oppressed by the beast, nevertheless they are seen as having proved the faithfulness of Jehovah, and the sure abiding of His word of promise, in caring for them and exercising His own power in bringing them through the fire. John, who had before seen them so hotly pursued by Satan, now has a vision of them with the Lamb; and not only so, but on mount

Zion, the place of promised blessing on the earth, the metropolis of past and future national glory -- the mountain, not of Sinai blackness and darkness, but the place of royal grace, where David and Solomon were honored by Jehovah, and where again the true Messiah, the greater than Solomon, shall yet manifest His wondrous power and grace, bring glory to His people Israel, and reign before His ancients gloriously. These hundred and forty and four thousand at that time will be blessed in the earth. It is prospective; for they can only be there with the Lamb after His appearing. They have not their Father's name, but His Father's name, written in their foreheads. Those who compose the Church of God, the body of Christ, -- are a heavenly people, they know their sonship, have received the indwelling Spirit, the Spirit of adoption, and know God as their Father. But these are not the Church; yet, like every redeemed company, whether heavenly or earthly, they owe all their blessings to the

Lamb; for the blood of the Cross is the foundation of all lasting good. While John was thus beholding this favoured remnant, he heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder {Rev. 14:2}.

He heard also the voice of harpers harping with their harps {Rev. 14:2}.

These, too, were heavenly sounds; for he goes on to tell us that they sang as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the elders {see Rev. 14:3}

Let the reader notice here, that we have, first, the company on mount Zion; secondly, the elders in heaven; and, thirdly, harpers harping before the elders. Here are three distinct companies -- one on earth, and two in heaven; and though all are redeemed and brought into their blessing by the blood of the Lamb, it is impossible to identify them, or to regard them as only different visions of the same company, for reasons assigned when considering the seventh chapter. The question for us now is, Who are the harpers? 1. We are distinctly told they are in heaven, singing as it were a new song before the elders. 2. There seems to be a remarkable sympathy between the "harpers" and the hundred and forty-four thousand on mount Zion, for no man but these could learn their song. 3. We only get one company in the Revelation having harps besides the elders in the fifth chapter, and these are that part of the faithful remnant who are martyred for not worshiping the beast, who get the victory over him by having a place in heaven on the sea of glass, and to them are given the harps of God. They are described in chapter 15 as singing the song of victory and of the Lamb; but it is Jewish in character, for they sing the song of Moses. They will reign with Christ. But further. In this first action in the chapter before us, the remnant are clearly spoken of as on mount Zion with the Lamb, as redeemed, as learning directly from heaven to sing the new song. We can understand what true sympathy there will be between the spared remnant on earth and the slaughtered remnant in heaven. We may notice further, that the hundred and forty-four thousand are called virgins, and have escaped the foul defilement of an adulterous generation; they have been true to God, and are only now engaged in following the

Lamb whithersoever He goeth. In their mouth is found no guile or lie, and they are without fault. The last words, Before the throne of God {Rev. 14:5},

are omitted by the best critics. We must regard this first scene, in Rev. 14, on earth as anticipative, and as existing at the same time as the harpers seen in heaven in chapter 15. There are two other points deserving special notice in the description here given of the remnant on mount Zion. First, they are redeemed from the earth from among men, the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb (Rev. 14:3, 4); and, secondly, they were faithful to God. The first point is of importance, because it shows us that this company is on the mount of earthly favour and blessing, redeemed from the earth -- an election from among the people of Israel for the earth. There is no thought here of the Church, the body of Christ. It is a remnant of Israel, which will be brought through the great tribulation into the millennial blessing. With regard to their being the "firstfruits," we are to understand the firstfruits from the earth for earthly blessing: the harvest of the earth is to follow. They, are pure and uncorrupted, for they are virgins {Rev. 14:4}.

Living in a time when violence and the foulest corruption fill the earth, when the world is overrun with infidelity, men are under the strong delusion {2 Thess. 2:11},

and the only Lord God in every way denied, they stand boldly out for the living and true God, and refuse to worship the beast; they are therefore not defiled, and in their mouth was found no guile -the lie of the beast. The power of the God of Abraham encircled them; and brought them through the time of temptation, and they are now with the Lamb, following Him whithersoever He goeth, and are without fault, or blameless.

2. The Everlasting Gospel This is a remarkable testimony. It would seem to be the last before the great and terrible day of the Lord. The faithful had gone out with "the gospel of the kingdom," and some of them had been put to death (Rev. 6:9). The two witnesses also testified, as we have seen in the eleventh chapter, until the beast killed them. And now the seer at Patmos says, that he saw an angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel, etc. (Rev. 14:6)

We must not confound the different ways in which "gospel" is brought before us in the word of God. We have "the gospel preached to Abraham," promising blessing through his seed. The gospel for the land of Canaan (Heb. 4:2). We read also of "the gospel of Christ," which testifies of Christ's work, -- redemption through His blood. We have also "the gospel of God," which enters into the eternal purpose, grace, and glory of God in our salvation in Christ, and through His blood. Then we have what Paul called his gospel -my gospel {Rom. 2:16, 16:25; 2 Tim. 2:8};

which may include the mystery {Rom. 16:25}

revealed to him of the oneness of believers with Christ the Head in heaven. We read also of

Notes on the Revelation the gospel of the kingdom {Matt. 4:23, 9:35; Mark 1:14},

which promises blessing in the earth to the faithful when Messiah shall appear, when it will be seen that those who endure to the end shall be saved. But here we have the everlasting gospel.

At a time when infidelity and great delusion {see 2 Thess. 2:11}

have overspread the world, and God is denied, not only as Redeemer, but also as Creator, when man will set himself up above all that is called God and be worshipped, this testimony to the living God, which has been true in all ages, and will be for ever, goes forth, that God is worthy to be acknowledged and glorified by man. It implies that there will be blessing to those who, refusing to worship the beast, do homage to the living and true God. The testimony is, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come; and worship Him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters (Rev. 14:7).

It is proclaimed with

3. The Fall of Babylon Babylon is doomed. Her fall, which is by the hand of God, precedes the coming of the Lord. It has both a civil and religious aspect, and is a mighty system permeating almost every other, spreading its influence among all nations and ranks. It is a terribly corrupting system,

dwelling in ease and luxury, and supported by the strength of the nations. She now says in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow {Rev. 18:7}.

But her loftiness must be laid low, her glitter pass away, her delusions exposed, and her adultery judged. Hence the announcement from heaven -Babylon is fallen, is fallen . . . because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication {Rev. 14:8}.

Ah, how little do men think they are under a terribly deceiving power, when they take the intoxicating drink from the cup of this false system. So important a consideration is Babylon in the mind of God, that two chapters are occupied with its details, which we hope to consider in due time. Here her fall is simply announced.

a loud voice

to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people (Rev. 14:6, 7).

4. God's Warning Against Worshiping the Beast

It seems to be God's last publication of glad tidings, just before the time of actual judgment arrives, and it asks simply that the living God, the Creator, be given glory to, and owned and feared. Blessing in the earth has always been connected with the acknowledgment of the Creator.

This testimony follows the two previous announcements, and is most plain, solemn, and decisive. It reminds us of another inspired testimony --

To what a terrible crisis men are hastening! How lamentable is the fact, that, with all the world's boast of Christianity and enlightenment, Christ is coming in flaming fire to take vengeance on those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, -- who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power. But where will the Church be then? Blessed be God, we shall be vessels of mercy filled with Christ, and bringing glory and admiration to Christ, through what will be seen of Him in us.

that is, accursed when the Lord cometh. How few think that we are rapidly hastening to this fearful crisis! Alas! man's pride and self-will hurry him on to judgment. This awful warning seems to be the last before Christ is actually revealed from heaven, and it is uttered with a loud voice:

When He shall come to be glorified IN

-- not with, but in -His saints and to be admired IN all them that believe {2 Thess. 1:10}.

Then the world will believe that the Father sent His Son to die for sinners, and that He loves us even as He loves Jesus. "Jesus, Thou art enough The mind and heart to fill; Thy life-to calm the anxious soul Thy love-its fear dispel. "O fix our earnest gaze, So wholly, Lord, on Thee, That, with Thy beauty occupied, We elsewhere none may see."

If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha {1 Cor. 16:22};

If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his right hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name (Rev. 14:9-11).

Nothing can be plainer or more awful -- drinking God's wrath, having no rest; and tormented day and night for ever and ever. Let us try to think of its dread reality; for it might make us more in earnest with souls, and more decided in our testimony. Multitudes are acting on the principles of the beast and his image, little thinking that by setting aside the authority of the Scriptures, and acting out a religiousness according to their own mind and will, they are thus helping on the work of the great deceiver, and rushing onward to the impending crisis. The Lord pauses after this announcement to notice again the patience of the saints, the remnant who are passing through the fiery tribulation. Their zeal for the observance of God's

commandments -- the law of Moses -- and also their faith in the coming Messiah, are not overlooked by Him.

will therefore sever the wicked from among the just, and take out of His kingdom them that offend and do iniquity, and cast them into a furnace of fire. The seer says,

5. The Voice From Heaven

I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle, and the earth was reaped (Rev. 14:14-16).

This is very remarkable, but beautifully fitting in with the character of the whole chapter. For one of the faithful remnant of Israel to die at this time would not be considered by them at all desirable, because they are expecting the Messiah to appear, and are looking forward to enjoy the glorious land with Him. This voice from heaven, therefore, is very tender of the Lord, and will be particularly cheering to any of those who may suffer death under the beast; for it assures them that they are still "blessed." Though they die before Messiah comes to reign, and thus lose their earthly inheritance, yet being in the Lord they are peculiarly the "blessed"; and while the worshipers of the beast have no rest day nor night, they shall rest from their labours, and their works do follow them {Rev. 14:13}.

They will have part in the first resurrection {Rev. 20:4-6}.

There is nothing new in its being blessed to die in the Lord; but the peculiar application of this action to those who are the faithful in Israel is very interesting, and shows the graciousness of God.

From henceforth {Rev. 14:13}

shows that they get into their blessing immediately.

6. The Harvest of the Earth We have had the “firstfruits” of the earth, now we have the harvest of the earth {Rev. 14:15}.

This is reaped at the coming of the Lord. The prophetic testimony to Israel was, not only that when the Messiah came He would tread down the wicked as ashes under the soles of His feet, but that, as the Sun of righteousness, He would arise upon Israel with healing in His wings. Thus blessing to the elect nation, and judgment on the wicked, attends the revelation of the Lord from heaven. Isaiah says of this time, The day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come {Isa. 63:4}.

We get some account of the former in the concluding action of this chapter, and it is more fully brought out in the nineteenth chapter. The harvest of the earth

shows us the latter. It is the Son of man, making the cloud His chariot, as in Rev. 1:7, crowned with a golden crown, and having in His hand a sharp sickle, with which He gathers to His bosom the fruit of His own sowing. Angels are associated with the Lord in the work. It is evidently the end of the age of Matt. 13, when the wheat is gathered into the barn; and the next action shows us the tares under the wrath of God. There is no idea here of the resurrection of the dead, or of any being removed to heaven, but of gathering the living righteous -- reaping the wheat. A separation between good and bad, and judgment on the latter, constitute the instruction of the last two scenes in this chapter. The Lord is coming to establish His millennial kingdom in righteousness. He

7. Treading the Winepress This is not the harvest, but the vintage, gathering and treading grapes fully ripe. Now Satan works in sowing tares, and God bears with it till the iniquity is full. Christ is the true vine, and Israel is called a vine brought out of Egypt; but this is called the vine of the earth {Rev. 14:16}.

Not connected with Christ risen and ascended into heaven; it is carnal, Satanic, earthly religion. The tares are the children of the wicked one. It may be apostate Jews and apostate Gentiles, but now they are fully ripe. They have unmixed judgment -- wrath without any mercy. The extent is beyond anything the world has ever known. It may be figurative, but we are surely to understand by it its unparalleled character. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs (Rev. 14:20).

Notes on the Revelation