

**THE REVELATION
OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE**
Commentary by A. R. FAUSSETT

INTRODUCTION

AUTHENTICITY.--The author calls himself *John* (Re 1:1, 4, 9; 2:8). JUSTIN MARTYR [*Dialogue with Trypho*, p. 308] (A.D. 139-161) quotes from the Apocalypse, as *John the apostle's* work, the prophecy of the millennium of the saints, to be followed by the general resurrection and judgment. This testimony of JUSTIN is referred to also by EUSEBIUS [*Ecclesiastical History*, 4.18]. JUSTIN MARTYR, in the early part of the second century, held his controversy with TRYPHO, a learned Jew, at *Ephesus*, where John had been living thirty or thirty-five years before: he says that "the Revelation had been given to John, one of the twelve apostles of Christ." MELITO, bishop of *Sardis* (about A.D. 171), *one of the seven churches addressed*, a successor, therefore, of one of the seven angels, is said by EUSEBIUS [*Ecclesiastical History*, 4.26] to have written treatises on the *Apocalypse of John*. The testimony of the bishop of Sardis is the more impartial, as Sardis is one of the churches severely reprov'd (Re 3:1). So also THEOPHILUS OF ANTIOCH (about A.D. 180), according to EUSEBIUS [*Ecclesiastical History*, 4.26], quoted testimonies from the Apocalypse of John. EUSEBIUS says the same of Apollonius, who lived in Asia Minor in the end of the second century. IRENÆUS (about A.D. 180), a hearer of POLYCARP, the disciple of John, and supposed by ARCHBISHOP USHER to be the *angel of the Church of Smyrna*, is most decided again and again in quoting the Apocalypse as the work of the apostle John [*Against Heresies*, 4.20.11; 4.21.3; 4.30.4; 5.36.1; 5.30.3; 5.35.2]. In [5.30.1], alluding to the mystical number of the beast, six hundred sixty-six (Re 13:18), found in all old copies, he says, "We do not hazard a confident theory as to the name of Antichrist; for if it had been necessary that his name should be proclaimed openly at the present time, it would have been declared by him who saw the apocalyptic vision; *for it was seen at no long time back, but almost in our generation, towards the end of Domitian's reign.*" In his work *Against Heresies*, published ten years after Polycarp's martyrdom, he quotes the Apocalypse twenty times, and makes long extracts from it, as inspired Scripture. These testimonies of persons contemporary with John's immediate successors, and more or less connected with the region of the seven churches to which Revelation is addressed, are most convincing. TERTULLIAN, of North Africa (about A.D. 220), [*Against Marcion*, 3.14], quotes the apostle John's descriptions in the Apocalypse of the sword proceeding out of the Lord's mouth (Re 19:15), and of the heavenly city (Re 21:1-27). Compare *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* [27]; *A Treatise on the Soul*, [8, 9, &c.]; *The Prescription Against Heretics*, [33]. The MURATORI fragment of the canon (about A.D. 200) refers to John the apostle writing to the seven churches. HIPPOLYTUS, bishop of Ostia, near Rome (about A.D. 240) [*On Antichrist*, p. 67], quotes Re 17:1-18, as the writing of John the apostle. Among HIPPOLYTUS' works, there is specified in the catalogue on his statue, a treatise "on the Apocalypse and Gospel according to

John." CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (about A.D. 200) [*Miscellanies*, 6.13], alludes to the twenty-four seats on which the elders sit as mentioned by John in the Apocalypse (Re 4:5); also, [*Who Is the Rich Man Who Shall Be Saved?* 42], he mentions John's return from Patmos to Ephesus on the death of the Roman tyrant. ORIGEN (about A.D. 233), [*Commentary on Matthew*, in EUSEBIUS *Ecclesiastical History*, 6.25], mentions John as the author of the Apocalypse, without expressing any doubts as to its authenticity; also, in *Commentary on Matthew*, [16.6], he quotes Re 1:9, and says, "John seems to have beheld the Apocalypse in the island of Patmos." VICTORINUS, bishop of Pettau in Pannonia, who suffered martyrdom under Diocletian in A.D. 303, wrote the earliest extant commentary on the Apocalypse. Though the *Old Syriac Peschito version* does not contain the Apocalypse, yet EPHREM THE SYRIAN (about A.D. 378) frequently quotes the Apocalypse as canonical, and ascribes it to John.

Its *canonicity* and inspiration (according to a scholium of ANDREAS OF CAPPADOCIA) are attested by PAPIAS, a hearer of John, and associate of POLYCARP. PAPIAS was bishop of Hierapolis, near *Laodicea*, one of the seven churches. WORDSWORTH conjectures that a feeling of shame, on account of the rebukes of *Laodicea* in Revelation, may have operated on the Council of Laodicea, so as to omit Revelation from its list of books to be *read publicly* (?). The Epistle of the churches of Lyons and Vienne to the churches of Asia and Phrygia (in EUSEBIUS, [*Ecclesiastical History*, 5.1-3]), in the persecution under Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 77) quotes Re 1:5; 3:14; 14:4; 22:11, as Scripture. CYPRIAN (about A.D. 250) also, in *Epistle 13*, quotes Re 2:5 as Scripture; and in *Epistle 25* he quotes Re 3:21, as of the same authority as the Gospel. (For other instances, see ALFORD'S *Prolegomena*, from whom mainly this summary of evidence has been derived). ATHANASIUS, in his *Festival Epistle*, enumerates the Apocalypse among the *canonical* Scriptures, to which none must add, and from which none must take away. JEROME [*Epistle to Paulinus*] includes in the canon the Apocalypse, adding, "It has as many mysteries as words. All praise falls short of its merits. In each of its words lie hid manifold senses." Thus an unbroken chain of testimony down from the apostolic period confirms its *canonicity* and authenticity.

The ALOGI [EPIPHANIUS, *Heresies*, 51] and CAIUS the Roman presbyter [EUSEBIUS, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.28], towards the end of the second and beginning of the third century, rejected John's Apocalypse on mere captious grounds. CAIUS, according to JEROME [*On Illustrious Men*], about A.D. 210, attributed it to Cerinthus, on the ground of its supporting the millennial reign on earth. DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA mentions many before his time who rejected it because of its obscurity and because it seemed to support Cerinthus' dogma of an earthly and carnal kingdom; whence they attributed it to Cerinthus. This DIONYSIUS, scholar of ORIGEN, and bishop of Alexandria (A.D. 247), admits its inspiration (in EUSEBIUS [*Ecclesiastical History*, 7.10]), but attributes it to some John distinct from John the apostle, on the ground of its difference of style and character, as compared with John's Gospel and Epistle, as also because the name John is several times mentioned in the Apocalypse, which is always kept back in both the Gospel and Epistle; moreover, neither does the Epistle make any allusion to the Apocalypse, nor the Apocalypse to the Epistle; and the style is not pure *Greek*, but abounds in barbarisms and solecisms. EUSEBIUS wavers in opinion [*Ecclesiastical History*, 24.39] as to whether it is, or is not, to be ranked among the undoubtedly canonical Scriptures. His antipathy to the millennial doctrine would give an unconscious bias to his judgment on the Apocalypse. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM (A.D. 386), [*Catechetical Lectures*, 4.35,36], omits the Apocalypse in enumerating the New Testament Scriptures to be read privately as well as publicly. "Whatever is not read in the churches, that do not even read by thyself; the apostles and ancient bishops of the Church who transmitted them to us were far wiser than thou art." Hence, we see that, in his day, the Apocalypse was not read in the churches. Yet in *Catechetical*

Lectures, 1.4 he quotes Re 2:7, 17; and in *Catechetical Lectures*, 1; 15.13 he draws the prophetic statement from Re 17:11, that the king who is to humble the three kings (Da 7:8, 20) is the *eighth king*. In *Catechetical Lectures*, 15 and 27, he similarly quotes from Re 12:3, 4. ALFORD conjectures that CYRIL had at some time changed his opinion, and that these references to the Apocalypse were slips of memory whereby he retained phraseology which belonged to his former, not his subsequent views. The sixtieth canon (if genuine) of the Laodicean Council in the middle of the fourth century omits the Apocalypse from the canonical books. The Eastern Church in part doubted, the Western Church, after the fifth century, universally recognized, the Apocalypse. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA [*On Worship*, 146], though implying the fact of some doubting its genuineness, himself undoubtedly accepts it as the work of St. John. ANDREAS OF CÆSAREA, in Cappadocia, recognized as genuine and canonical, and wrote the first entire and connected commentary on, the Apocalypse. The sources of doubt seem to have been, (1) the antagonism of many to the millennium, which is set forth in it; (2) its obscurity and symbolism having caused it not to be read in the churches, or to be taught to the young. But *the most primitive* tradition is unequivocal in its favor. In a word, the objective evidence is decidedly for it; the only arguments against it seem to have been subjective.

The personal notices of John in the Apocalypse occur Re 1:1, 4, 9; Re 22:8. Moreover, the writer's addresses to the churches of Proconsular *Asia* (Re 2:1) accord with the concurrent tradition, that after John's return from his exile in Patmos, at the death of Domitian, under Nerva, he resided for long, and died at last in Ephesus, in the time of Trajan [EUSEBIUS, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.20,23]. If the Apocalypse were not the inspired work of John, purporting as it does to be an address from their superior to the seven churches of Proconsular *Asia*, it would have assuredly been rejected *in that region*; whereas the earliest testimonies *in those churches* are all in its favor. One person alone was entitled to use language of authority such as is addressed to the seven angels of the churches--namely, John, as the last surviving apostle and superintendent of all the churches. Also, it accords with John's manner to assert the accuracy of his testimony both at the beginning and end of his book (compare Re 1:2, 3, and 22:8, with Joh 1:14; 21:24; 1Jo 1:1, 2). Again, it accords with the view of the writer being an *inspired apostle* that he addresses the angels or presidents of the several churches in the tone of a *superior* addressing inferiors. Also, he commends the Church of Ephesus for trying and convicting "them which *say they are apostles*, and are not," by which he implies his own undoubted claim to apostolic inspiration (Re 2:2), as declaring in the seven epistles Christ's will revealed through him.

As to the difference of style, as compared with the Gospel and Epistle, the *difference of subject* in part accounts for it, the visions of the seer, transported as he was above the region of sense, appropriately taking a form of expression abrupt, and unbound by the grammatical laws which governed his writings of a calmer and more deliberate character. Moreover, as being a Galilean Hebrew, John, in writing a Revelation akin to the Old Testament prophecies, naturally reverted to their Hebraistic style. ALFORD notices, among the features of resemblance between the styles of the Apocalypse and John's Gospel and Epistle: (1) the characteristic appellation of our Lord, peculiar to John exclusively, "the Word of God" (Re 19:13; compare Joh 1:1; 1Jo 1:1). (2) the phrase, "he that overcometh" (Re 2:7, 11, 17; 3:5, 12, 21; 12:11; 15:2; 17:14; 21:7; compare Joh 16:33 1Jo 2:13, 14; 4:4; 5:4, 5). (3) The *Greek* term (*alethinos*) for "true," as opposed to that which is shadowy and unreal (Re 3:7, 14; 6:10; 15:3; 16:7; 19:2, 9, 11; 21:5; 22:6). This term, found only once in Luke (Lu 16:11), four times in Paul (1Th 1:9; Heb 8:2; 9:24; 10:22), is found nine times in John's Gospel (Joh 1:9; 4:23, 37; 6:32; 7:28; 8:16; 15:1 Joh 17:3; 19:3, 5), twice in John's First Epistle (1Jo 2:8; 5:20), and ten times in Revelation (Re 3:7, 14; 6:10; 15:3; 16:7; 19:2, 9, 11; 21:5 Re 22:6). (4) The *Greek* diminutive for "Lamb" (*arnion*,

literally, "lambkin") occurs twenty-nine times in the Apocalypse, and the only other place where it occurs is Joh 21:15. In John's writings alone is Christ called *directly* "the Lamb" (Joh 1:29, 36). In 1Pe 1:19, He is called "as a lamb without blemish," in allusion to Isa 53:7. So the use of "witness," or "testimony" (Re 1:2, 9; 6:9; 11:7, &c.; compare Joh 1:7, 8, 15, 19, 32; 1Jo 1:2; 4:14; 5:6-11). "Keep the word," or "commandments" (Re 3:8, 10; 12:17; compare Joh 8:51, 55; 14:15). The assertion of the same thing positively and negatively (Re 2:2, 6, 8, 13; 3:8, 17, 18; compare Joh 1:3, 6, 7, 20; 1Jo 2:27, 28). Compare also 1Jo 2:20, 27 with Re 3:18, as to the spiritual *anointing*. The seeming solecisms of style are attributable to that inspired elevation which is above mere grammatical rules, and are designed to arrest the reader's attention by the peculiarity of the phrase, so as to pause and search into some deep truth lying beneath. The vivid earnestness of the inspired writer, handling a subject so transcending all others, raises him above all servile adherence to ordinary rules, so that at times he abruptly passes from one grammatical construction to another, as he graphically sets the thing described before the eye of the reader. This is not due to ignorance of grammar, for he "has displayed a knowledge of grammatical rules in other much more difficult constructions" [WINER]. *The connection of thought* is more attended to than mere grammatical connection. Another consideration to be taken into account is that two-fifths of the whole being the recorded language of others, he moulds his style accordingly. Compare TREGELLES' *Introduction to Revelation from Heathen Authorities*.

TREGELLES well says [*New Testament Historic Evidence*], "There is no book of the New Testament for which we have such clear, ample, and numerous testimonies in the second century as we have in favor of the Apocalypse. The more closely the witnesses were connected with the apostle John (as was the case with IRENÆUS), the more explicit is their testimony. That doubts should prevail in after ages must have originated either in ignorance of the earlier testimony, or else from some supposed intuition of what an apostle *ought* to have written. The objections on the ground of internal *style* can weigh nothing against the actual evidence. It is in vain to argue, a priori, that John *could* not have written this book when we have the evidence of several competent witnesses that he *did* write it."

RELATION OF THE APOCALYPSE TO THE REST OF THE CANON.--GREGORY OF NYSSA [tom. 3, p. 601], calls Revelation "the last book of grace." It completes the volume of inspiration, so that we are to look for no further revelation till Christ Himself shall come. Appropriately the last book completing the canon was written by John, the last survivor of the apostles. The New Testament is composed of the historical books, the Gospels and Acts, the doctrinal Epistles, and the one prophetic book, Revelation. The same apostle wrote the last of the Gospels, and probably the last of the Epistles, and the only prophetic book of the New Testament. All the books of the New Testament had been written, and were read in the Church assemblies, some years before John's death. His life was providentially prolonged that he might give the final attestation to Scripture. About the year A.D. 100, the bishops of Asia (the angels of the seven churches) came to John at EPHESUS, bringing him copies of the three Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and desired of him a statement of his apostolical judgment concerning them; whereupon he pronounced them authentic, genuine, and inspired, and at their request added his own Gospel to complete the fourfold aspect of the Gospel of Christ (compare MURATORI [*Fragment on the Canon of Scripture*]; EUSEBIUS [*Ecclesiastical History*, 3.24]; JEROME [*Commentary on Matthew*]; VICTORINUS on the *Apocalypse*; THEODORET [*Ecclesiastical History*, 39]). A Greek divine, quoted in ALLATIUS, calls Revelation "the seal of the whole Bible." The canon would be incomplete without Revelation. Scripture is a complete whole, its component books, written in a period ranging over one thousand five hundred years, being mutually connected. Unity of aim and spirit pervades the entire, so that the end is the necessary sequence of the middle, and the middle of the beginning. Genesis presents before us

man and his bride in innocence and blessedness, followed by man's fall through Satan's subtlety, and man's consequent misery, his exclusion from Paradise and its tree of life and delightful rivers. Revelation presents, in reverse order, man first liable to sin and death, but afterwards made conqueror through the blood of the Lamb; the first Adam and Eve, represented by the second Adam, Christ, and the Church. His spotless bride, in Paradise, with free access to the tree of life and the crystal water of life that flows from the throne of God. As Genesis foretold the bruising of the serpent's head by the woman's seed (Ge 3:15), so Revelation declares the final accomplishment of that prediction (Re 19:1-20:15).

PLACE AND TIME OF WRITING.--The best authorities among the Fathers state that John was exiled under Domitian (IRENÆUS [*Against Heresies*, 5; 30]; CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA; EUSEBIUS [*Ecclesiastical History*, 3.20]). VICTORINUS says that he had to labor in the mines of Patmos. At Domitian's death, A.D. 95, he returned to Ephesus under the Emperor Nerva. Probably it was immediately after his return that he wrote, under divine inspiration, the account of the visions vouchsafed to him in Patmos (Re 1:2, 9). However, Re 10:4 seems to imply that he wrote the visions immediately after seeing them. Patmos is one of the Sporades. Its circumference is about thirty miles. "It was fitting that when forbidden to go beyond certain bounds of the earth's lands, he was permitted to penetrate the secrets of heaven" [BEDE, *Explanation of the Apocalypse* on chap. 1]. The following arguments favor an earlier date, namely, under Nero: (1) EUSEBIUS [*Demonstration of the Gospel*] unites in the same sentence John's banishment with the stoning of James and the beheading of Paul, which were *under Nero*. (2) CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA'S story of the robber reclaimed by John, after he had pursued, and with difficulty overtaken him, accords better with John then being a younger man than under Domitian, when he was one hundred years old. Arethas, in the sixth century, applies the sixth seal to the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70), adding that the Apocalypse was written before that event. So the *Syriac version* states he was banished by Nero the Cæsar. Laodicea was overthrown by an earthquake (A.D. 60) but was immediately rebuilt, so that its being called "rich and increased with goods" is not incompatible with this book having been written under the Neronian persecution (A.D. 64). But the possible allusions to it in Heb 10:37; compare Re 1:4, 8; 4:8; 22:12; Heb 11:10; compare Re 21:14; Heb 12:22, 23; compare Re 14:1; Heb 8:1, 2; compare Re 11:19; 15:5; 21:3; Heb 4:12; compare Re 1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:13, 15; Heb 4:9; compare Re 20:1-15; also 1Pe 1:7, 13; 4:13, with Re 1:1; 1Pe 2:9 with Re 5:10; 2Ti 4:8, with Re 2:26, 27; 3:21; 11:18; Eph 6:12, with Re 12:7-12; Php 4:3, with Re 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; Col 1:18, with Re 1:5; 1Co 15:52, with Re 10:7; 11:15-18, make a date before the destruction of Laodicea possible. Cerinthus is stated to have died before John; as then he borrowed much in his Pseudo-Apocalypse from John's, it is likely the latter was at an earlier date than Domitian's reign. See TILLOCH'S *Introduction to Apocalypse*. But the Pauline benediction (Re 1:4) implies it was written after Paul's death under Nero.

TO WHAT READERS ADDRESSED.--The inscription states that it is addressed to the seven churches of Asia, that is, Proconsular Asia. John's reason for fixing on the number *seven* (for there were more than seven churches in the region meant by "Asia," for instance, Magnesia and Tralles) was doubtless because *seven* is the sacred number implying totality and universality: so it is implied that John, through the medium of the seven churches, addresses in the Spirit the Church of all places and ages. The Church in its various states of spiritual life or deadness, in all ages and places, is represented by the seven churches, and is addressed with words of consolation or warning accordingly. Smyrna and Philadelphia alone of the seven are honored with unmixed praise, as faithful in tribulation and rich in good works. Heresies of a decided kind had by this time arisen in the churches of Asia, and the love of many had waxed cold, while others had advanced to greater zeal, and one had sealed his testimony with his blood.

OBJECT.--It begins with admonitory addresses to the seven churches from the divine Son of man, whom John saw in vision, after a brief introduction which sets forth the main subject of the book, namely, to "show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass" (the first through third chapters). From the fourth chapter to the end is mainly prophecy, with practical exhortations and consolations, however, interspersed, similar to those addressed to the seven churches (the representatives of the universal Church of every age), and so connecting the body of the book with its beginning, which therefore forms its appropriate introduction. Three schools of interpreters exist: (1) The Preterists, who hold that almost the whole has been fulfilled. (2) The Historical Interpreters, who hold that it comprises the history of the Church from John's time to the end of the world, the seals being *chronologically* succeeded, by the trumpets and the trumpets by the vials. (3) The Futurists, who consider almost the whole as yet future, and to be fulfilled immediately before Christ's second coming. The first theory was not held by any of the earliest Fathers, and is only held now by Rationalists, who limit John's vision to things within his own horizon, pagan Rome's persecutions of Christians, and its consequently anticipated destruction. The Futurist school is open to this great objection: it would leave the Church of Christ unprovided with prophetic guidance or support under her fiery trials for 1700 or 1800 years. Now God has said, "Surely He will do nothing, but He revealeth His secrets unto His servants the prophets" (Am 3:7). The Jews had a succession of prophets who guided them with the light of prophecy: what their prophets were to them, that the apocalyptic Scriptures have been, and are, to us.

ALFORD, following ISAAC WILLIAMS, draws attention to the parallel connection between the Apocalypse and Christ's discourse on the Mount of Olives, recorded in Mt 24:4-28. The seals plainly bring us down to the second coming of Christ, just as the trumpets also do (compare Re 6:12-17; 8:1, &c.; Re 11:15), and as the vials also do (Re 16:17): all three run parallel, and end in the same point. Certain "catchwords" (as WORDSWORTH calls them) connect the three series of symbols together. They do not succeed one to the other in historical and chronological sequence, but move side by side, the subsequent series filling up in detail the same picture which the preceding series had drawn in outline. So VICTORINUS (on Re 7:2), the earliest commentator on the Apocalypse, says, "The order of the things said is not to be regarded, since often the Holy Spirit, when He has run to the end of the last time, again returns to the same times, and supplies what He has less fully expressed." And PRIMASIUS [*Commentary on the Apocalypse*], "In the trumpets he gives a description by a pleasing *repetition*, as is his custom."

At the very beginning, John hastens, by anticipation (as was the tendency of all the prophets), to the grand consummation. Re 1:7, "Behold, He cometh with clouds," &c. Re 1:8, 17, "I am the beginning and *the ending* . . . the first and *the last*." So the seven epistles exhibit the same anticipation of the end. Re 3:12, "Him that overcometh, I will write upon Him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven"; compare at the close, Re 21:2. So also Re 2:28, "I will give him the morning star"; compare at the close, Re 22:16, "I am the bright and morning star."

Again, the *earthquake* that ensues on the opening of the sixth seal is one of the catchwords, that is, a link connecting chronologically this sixth seal with the sixth trumpet (Re 9:13; 11:13): compare also the seventh vial, Re 16:17, 18. The concomitants of the opening of the sixth seal, it is plain, in no full and exhaustive sense apply to any event, save the terrors which shall overwhelm the ungodly just before the coming of the Judge.

Again, *the beast out of the bottomless pit* (Re 11:7), between the sixth and seventh trumpets, connects this series with the section, twelfth through fourteenth chapters, concerning the Church and her adversaries.

Again, the sealing of the 144,000 under the sixth seal connects this seal with the section, the twelfth through fourteenth chapters.

Again, the loosing of the four winds by the four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, under the sixth seal, answers to the loosing of the *four* angels at the Euphrates, under the sixth trumpet.

Moreover, links occur in the Apocalypse connecting it with the Old Testament. For instance, the "mouth speaking great things" (Da 7:8 Re 13:5), connects the *beast that blasphemes against God, and makes war against the saints*, with *the little horn* (Da 7:21; Re 13:6, 7), or at last king, who, arising after the ten kings, shall *speak against the Most High, and wear out the saints* (Da 7:25); also, compare the "forty-two months" (Re 13:5), or "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (Re 12:6), with the "time, times, and the dividing of time," of Da 7:25. Moreover, the "forty-two months," Re 11:2, answering to Re 12:6; 13:5, link together the period under the sixth trumpet to the section, Re 12:1-14:20.

AUBERLEN observes, "The history of salvation is mysteriously governed by holy numbers. They are the scaffolding of the organic edifice. They are not merely outward indications of time, but indications of nature and essence. Not only nature, but history, is based in numbers. Scripture and antiquity put numbers as the fundamental forms of things, where we put ideas." As number is the regulator of the relations and proportions of the natural world, so does it enter most frequently into the revelations of the Apocalypse, which sets forth the harmonies of the supernatural, the immediately Divine. Thus the most supernatural revelation leads us the farthest into the natural, as was to be expected, seeing the God of nature and of revelation is one. *Seven* is the number for perfection (compare Re 1:4; 4:5, the *seven* Spirits before the throne; also, Re 5:6, the Lamb's *seven* horns and *seven* eyes). Thus *the seven churches* represent the Church catholic in its totality. *The seven seals* (Re 5:1), *the seven trumpets* (Re 8:2), and *the seven vials* (Re 17:1), are severally a complete series each in itself, fulfilling perfectly the divine course of judgments. *Three and a half* implies a number opposed to the divine (seven), but broken in itself, and which, in the moment of its highest triumph, is overwhelmed by judgment and utter ruin. *Four* is the number of the world's extension; *seven* is the number of God's revelation in the world. In the *four* beasts of Daniel (Da 7:3) there is a recognition of some power above them, at the same time that there is a mimicry of the *four* cherubs of Ezekiel (Eze 10:9), the heavenly symbols of all creation in its due subjection to God (Re 4:6-8). So the four corners of the earth, the four winds, the four angels loosed from the Euphrates, and Jerusalem lying "foursquare" (Re 21:16), represent world-wide extension. The sevenfoldness of the Spirits on the part of God corresponds with the fourfold cherubim on the part of the created. John, seeing more deeply into the essentially God-opposed character of the world, presents to us, not the *four* beasts of Daniel, but the *seven* heads of the beast, whereby it arrogates to itself the *sevenfold* perfection of *the Spirits of God*; at the same time that, with characteristic self-contradiction, it has *ten* horns, the number peculiar to the world power. Its unjust usurpation of the sacred number *seven* is marked by the addition of an *eighth* to the *seven* heads, and also by the beast's own number, six hundred sixty-six, which in units, tens, and hundreds, verges upon, but falls short of, *seven*. The judgments on the world are complete in *six*: after the sixth seal and the sixth trumpet, there is a

pause. When *seven* comes, there comes "the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ." Six is the number of the world given to judgment. Moreover, *six* is half of *twelve*, as *three and a half* is the half of *seven*. *Twelve* is the number of the Church: compare the *twelve* tribes of Israel, the *twelve* stars on the woman's head (Re 12:1), the *twelve* gates of new Jerusalem (Re 21:12, 21). *Six* thus symbolizes the world broken, and without solid foundation. Twice twelve is the number of the heavenly elders; twelve times twelve thousand the number of the sealed elect (Re 7:4): the tree of life yields twelve manner of fruits. Doubtless, besides this symbolic force, there is a special chronological meaning in the numbers; but as yet, though a *commanded* subject of investigation, they have received no solution which we can be sure is the true one. They are intended to stimulate reverent inquiry, not to gratify idle speculative curiosity; and when the event shall have been fulfilled, they will show the divine wisdom of God, who ordered all things in minutely harmonious relations, and left neither the times nor the ways haphazard.

The arguments for the year-day theory are as follows: Da 9:24, "Seventy weeks are determined upon," where the *Hebrew* may be *seventy sevens*; but MEDE observes, the *Hebrew* word means always seven of *days*, and never seven of *years* (Le 12:5; De 16:9, 10, 16). Again, the number of *years'* wandering of the Israelites was made to correspond to the number of *days* in which the spies searched the land, namely, *forty*: compare "each day for a year," Nu 14:33, 34. So in Eze 4:5, 6, "I have laid up on thee the *years* of their iniquity, according to the number of the *days*, three hundred and ninety days . . . forty days: I have appointed thee *each day for a year*." John, in Revelation itself, uses *days* in a sense which can hardly be literal. Re 2:10, "Ye shall have tribulation *ten days*": the persecution of *ten years* recorded by EUSEBIUS seems to correspond to it. In the year-day theory there is still quite enough of obscurity to exercise the patience and probation of faith, for we cannot say precisely *when* the 1260 years *begin*: so that this theory is quite compatible with Christ's words, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man" [Mt 24:36; Mr 13:32]. However, it is a difficulty in this theory that "a thousand years," in Re 20:6, 7, can hardly mean one thousand by three hundred sixty days, that is, three hundred sixty thousand years. The first resurrection there must be literal, even as Re 20:5 must be taken literally, "*the rest of the dead* lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (Re 20:5). To interpret the former spiritually would entail the need of interpreting the latter so, which would be most improbable; for it would imply that "*the rest of the (spiritually) dead lived not (spiritually)*" until the end of the thousand years, and then that they did come spiritually to life. 1Co 15:23, "they that are Christ's at His coming," confirms the literal view.

CHAPTER 1

Re 1:1-20. TITLE: SOURCE AND OBJECT OF THIS REVELATION: BLESSING ON THE READER AND KEEPER OF IT, AS THE TIME IS NEAR: INSCRIPTION TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES: APOSTOLIC GREETING: KEYNOTE, "BEHOLD HE COMETH" (Compare at the close, Re 22:20, "Surely I come quickly"): INTRODUCTORY VISION OF THE SON OF MAN IN GLORY, AMIDST THE SEVEN CANDLESTICKS, WITH SEVEN STARS IN HIS RIGHT HAND.

1. Revelation--an apocalypse or *unveiling* of those things which had been veiled. A *manifesto* of the kingdom of Christ. The travelling manual of the Church for the Gentile Christian times. Not a *detailed history* of the future, but a representation of the great epochs and chief powers in developing the kingdom of God in relation to the world. The "*Church-historical*" view goes counter to the great principle that Scripture interprets itself. Revelation is to teach us to understand the times, not the times to interpret to us the Apocalypse, although it is in the nature of the case that a reflex influence is exerted here and is understood by the prudent

[AUBERLEN]. The book is in a series of parallel groups, not in chronological succession. Still there is an organic historical development of the kingdom of God. In this book all the other books of the Bible end and meet: in it is the consummation of all previous prophecy. Daniel foretells as to Christ and the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, and the last Antichrist. But John's Revelation fills up the intermediate period, and describes the millennium and final state beyond Antichrist. Daniel, as a godly statesman, views the history of God's people in relation to the *four world kingdoms*. John, as an apostle, views history from the *Christian Church aspect*. The term *Apocalypse* is applied to no Old Testament book. Daniel is the nearest approach to it; but what Daniel was told to *seal and shut up till the time of the end*, John, now that *the time is at hand* (Re 1:3), is directed to *reveal*.

of Jesus Christ--coming *from Him*. Jesus Christ, not John the writer, is the Author of the Apocalypse. Christ taught many things before His departure; but those which were unsuitable for announcement at that time He brought together into the Apocalypse [BENGEL]. Compare His promise, Joh 15:15, "All things that I have heard of My Father, I have made known unto you"; also, Joh 16:13, "The Spirit of truth *will show* you things to come." The Gospels and Acts are the books, respectively, of His first advent, in the flesh, and in the Spirit; the Epistles are the inspired comment on them. The Apocalypse is the book of His second advent and the events preliminary to it.

which God gave unto him--The Father reveals Himself and His will in, and by, His Son.

to show--The word recurs in Re 22:6: so entirely have the parts of Revelation reference to one another. It is its peculiar excellence that it comprises in a perfect compendium future things, and these widely differing: things close at hand, far off, and between the two; great and little; destroying and saving; repeated from old prophecies and new; long and short, and these interwoven with one another, opposed and mutually agreeing; mutually involving and evolving one another; so that in no book more than in this would the addition, or taking away, of a single word or clause (Re 22:18, 19), have the effect of marring the sense of the context and the comparison of passages together [BENGEL].

his servants--not merely to "His servant John," but to *all* His servants (compare Re 22:3).

shortly--*Greek*, "speedily"; literally, "in," or "with speed." Compare "the time is at hand," Re 1:3; 22:6, "shortly"; Re 22:7, "Behold, I come *quickly*." Not that the things prophesied were according to man's computation near; but this word "shortly" implies a corrective of our estimate of worldly events and periods. Though a "thousand years" (Re 20:1-15) at least are included, the time is declared to be *at hand*. Lu 18:8, "speedily." The Israelite Church hastened eagerly to the predicted end, which premature eagerness prophecy restrains (compare Da 9:1-27). The Gentile Church needs to be reminded of the transitoriness of the world (which it is apt to make its home) and the nearness of Christ's advent. On the one hand Revelation says, "the time is at hand"; on the other, the succession of seals, &c., show that many intermediate events must first elapse.

he sent--Jesus Christ sent.

by his angel--joined with "sent." The angel does not come forward to "signify" things to John until Re 17:1; 19:9, 10. Previous to that John receives information from others. Jesus Christ opens the Revelation, Re 1:10, 11; 4:1; in Re 6:1 one of the four living creatures acts as his informant; in Re 7:13, one of the elders; in Re 10:8, 9, the Lord and His angel who stood on the sea and earth. Only at the end (Re 17:1) does the one angel stand by Him (compare Da 8:16; 9:21; Zec 1:19).

2. bare record of--"testified the word of God" in this book. Where we would say "*testifies*," the ancients in epistolary communications use the past tense. The word of God constitutes his testimony; Re 1:3, "the words of this prophecy."

the testimony of Jesus--"the Spirit of prophecy" (Re 19:10).

and of all things that, &c.--The oldest manuscripts omit "and." Translate, "whatsoever things he saw," in apposition with "the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ."

3. he that readeth, and they that hear--namely, the *public reader* in Church assemblies, and *his hearers*. In the first instance, he by whom John sent the book from Patmos to the seven churches, read it publicly: a usage most scriptural and profitable. A special *blessing* attends him who *reads* or *hears* the apocalyptic "prophecy" with a view to *keeping* the things therein (as there is but one article to "they that hear and keep those things," not two classes, but only one is meant: "they who not only hear, but also keep those things," Ro 2:13); even though he find not the key to its interpretation, he finds a stimulus to faith, hope, and patient waiting for Christ. Note: the term "prophecy" has relation to the human medium or *prophet* inspired, here John: "Revelation" to the Divine Being who reveals His will, here Jesus Christ. God gave the revelation to Jesus: He by His angel revealed it to John, who was to make it known to the Church.

4. John--the apostle. For none but he (supposing the writer an honest man) would thus sign himself nakedly without addition. As sole survivor and representative of the apostles and eye-witnesses of the Lord, he needed no designation save his name, to be recognized by his readers.

seven churches--not that there were not more churches in that region, but the number *seven* is fixed on as representing *totality*. These *seven* represent the universal Church of all times and places. See TRENCH'S [*Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*] interesting note, Re 1:20, on the number *seven*. It is the *covenant number*, the sign of God's covenant relation to mankind, and especially to the Church. Thus, the *seventh day*, sabbath (Ge 2:3; Eze 20:12). Circumcision, the sign of the covenant, after *seven* days (Ge 17:12). Sacrifices (Nu 23:1; 14:29; 2Ch 29:21). Compare also God's acts typical of His covenant (Jos 6:4, 15, 16; 2Ki 5:10). The feasts ordered by *sevens* of time (De 15:1; 16:9, 13, 15). It is a combination of *three*, the divine number (thus the Trinity: the thrice Holy, Isa 6:3; the blessing, Nu 6:24-26), and *four* the number of the organized world in its extension (thus the *four* elements, the *four* seasons, the *four* winds, the *four* corners or quarters of the earth, the *four* living creatures, emblems of redeemed creaturely life, Re 4:6; Eze 1:5, 6, with *four* faces and *four* wings each; the *four* beasts and *four* metals, representing the four world empires, Da 2:32, 33; 7:3; the *four*-sided Gospel designed for all quarters of the world; the sheet tied at *four* corners, Ac 10:11; the *four* horns, the sum of the world's forces against the Church, Zec 1:18). In the Apocalypse, where God's covenant with His Church comes to its consummation, appropriately the number *seven* recurs still more frequently than elsewhere in Scripture.

Asia--Proconsular, governed by a Roman proconsul: consisting of Phrygia, Mysia, Caria, and Lydia: the kingdom which Attalus III had bequeathed to Rome.

Grace . . . peace--Paul's apostolical greeting. In his Pastoral Epistles he inserts "mercy" in addition: so 2Jo 3.

him which is . . . was . . . is to come--a periphrasis for the incommunicable name JEHOVAH, the self-existing One, unchangeable. In *Greek* the indeclinability of the designation here implies His unchangeableness. Perhaps the reason why "He which is to come" is used, instead of "He that shall be," is because the grand theme of Revelation is the Lord's *coming* (Re 1:7). Still it is THE FATHER as distinguished from "Jesus Christ" (Re 1:5) who is here meant. But so one are the Father and Son that the designation, "which is to come," more immediately applicable to Christ, is used here of the Father.

the seven Spirits which are before his throne--The oldest manuscripts omit "are."

before--literally, "in the presence of." The Holy Spirit in His sevenfold (that is, perfect, complete, and universal) energy. Corresponding to "the *seven* churches." One in His own essence, manifold in His gracious influences. The *seven* eyes resting on the stone laid by

Jehovah (Re 5:6). Four is the number of the creature world (compare the fourfold cherubim); *seven* the number of God's revelation in the world.

5. the faithful witness--of the truth concerning Himself and His mission as Prophet, Priest, and King Saviour. "He was *the faithful witness*, because all things that He heard of the Father He faithfully made known to His disciples. Also, because He taught the way of God in truth, and cared not for man, nor regarded the persons of men. Also, because the truth which He taught in words He confirmed by miracles. Also, because the testimony to Himself on the part of the Father He denied not even in death. Lastly, because He will give true testimony of the works of good and bad at the day of judgment" [RICHARD OF ST. VICTOR in TRENCH]. The nominative in *Greek* standing in apposition to the genitive, "Jesus Christ," gives majestic prominence to "the faithful witness."

the first-begotten of the dead-- (Col 1:18). Lazarus rose, to die again. Christ rose to die no more. The image is not as if the grave was the womb of His resurrection-birth [ALFORD]; but as Ac 13:33; Ro 1:4, treat Christ's *resurrection* as the epoch and event which fulfilled the Scripture, Ps 2:7, "This day (at the resurrection) have I *begotten* Thee." It was then that His divine Sonship as the God-man was manifested and openly attested by the Father. So our resurrection and our manifested sonship, or generation, are connected. Hence "regeneration" is used of the *resurrection-state* at the restitution of all things (Mt 19:28).

the prince--or Ruler. The kingship of the world which the tempter offered to Jesus on condition of doing homage to him, and so shunning the cross, He has obtained by the cross. "The kings of the earth" conspired against the Lord's Anointed (Ps 2:2): these He shall break in pieces (Ps 2:9). Those who are wise in time and kiss the Son shall *bring their glory* unto Him at His manifestation as King of kings, after He has destroyed His foes.

Unto him that loved us--The oldest manuscripts read the present, ". . . *loveth* us." It is His ever-continuing character, *He loveth us*, and ever shall love us. His love rests evermore on His people.

washed us--The two oldest manuscripts read, "freed (*loosed* as from a bond) us": so ANDREAS and PRIMASIUS. One very old manuscript, *Vulgate*, and *Coptic* read as *English Version*, perhaps drawn from Re 7:4. "Loosed us in (virtue of) His blood," being the *harder* reading to understand, is less likely to have come from the transcribers. The reference is thus to *Greek*, "*lutron*," the ransom paid for our release (Mt 20:28). In favor of *English Version* reading is the usage whereby the priests, before putting on the holy garments and ministering, *washed* themselves: so spiritually believers, as *priests* unto God, must first be *washed* in Christ's blood from every stain before they can serve God aright now, or hereafter minister as dispensers of blessing to the subject nations in the millennial kingdom, or minister before God in heaven.

6. And hath--rather as *Greek*, "And (He) hath."

made us kings--The oldest manuscripts read, "a kingdom." One oldest manuscript reads the dative, "for us." Another reads "us," accusative: so *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS. This seems preferable, "He made us (to be) a kingdom." So Ex 19:6, "a kingdom of priests"; 1Pe 2:9, "a royal priesthood." The saints shall constitute peculiarly a *kingdom* of God, and shall themselves be *kings* (Re 5:10). They shall share His King-Priest throne in the millennial kingdom. The emphasis thus falls more on the *kingdom* than on *priests*: whereas in *English Version* reading it is equally distributed between both. This book lays prominent stress on the saints' *kingdom*. They are kings because they are priests: the priesthood is the continuous ground and legitimization of their kingship; they are kings in relation to man, priests in relation to God, serving Him day and night in His temple (Re 7:15; 5:10). The priest-kings shall rule, not in an external mechanical manner, but simply in virtue of what they are, by the power of attraction and conviction overcoming the heart [AUBERLEN].

priests--who have pre-eminently the privilege of near access to the king. David's sons were priests (*Hebrew*), 2Sa 8:18. The distinction of *priests* and people, nearer and more remote from God, shall cease; all shall have nearest access to Him. All persons and things shall be holy to the Lord.

God and his Father--There is but one article to both in the *Greek*, therefore it means, "Unto Him who is at once God and His Father."

glory and dominion--*Greek*, "*the glory and the might*." The fuller threefold doxology occurs, Re 4:9, 11; fourfold, Re 5:13; Jude 25; sevenfold, Re 7:12; 1Ch 29:11. Doxology occupies the prominent place above, which prayer does below. If we thought of *God's glory* first (as in the Lord's Prayer), and gave the secondary place to our needs, we should please God and gain our petitions better than we do.

for ever and ever--*Greek*, "unto the ages."

7. with clouds--*Greek*, "*the clouds*," namely, of heaven. "A cloud received Him out of their sight" at His ascension (Ac 1:9). His ascension corresponds to the manner of His coming again (Ac 1:11). Clouds are the symbols of *wrath* to sinners.

every eye--His coming shall therefore be a personal, visible appearing.

shall see--It is because they do not now *see* Him, they will not believe. Contrast Joh 20:29.

they also--*they in particular*; "whosoever." Primarily, at His pre-millennial advent *the Jews*, who shall "look upon Him whom they have pierced," and mourn *in repentance*, and say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Secondly, and here *chiefly*, at the general judgment all the ungodly, not only those who actually pierced Him, but those who did so by their sins, shall look with trembling upon Him. John is the only one of the Evangelists who records the *piercing* of Christ's side. This allusion identifies him as the author of the Apocalypse. The reality of Christ's humanity and His death is proved by His having been *pierced*; and the *water and blood* from His side were the antitype to the Levitical waters of cleansing and blood offerings.

all kindreds . . . shall wail--all the unconverted at the general judgment; and especially at His pre-millennial advent, the Antichristian confederacy (Zec 12:3-6, 9; 14:1-4; Mt 24:30). *Greek*, "all the *tribes* of the *land*," or "the earth." See the limitation to "all," Re 13:8. Even the godly while rejoicing in His love shall feel penitential sorrow at their sins, which shall all be manifested at the general judgment.

because of--*Greek*, "*at*," or "*in regard to* Him."

Even so, Amen--Gods seal of His own word; to which corresponds the believer's prayer, Re 22:20. The "even so" is *Greek*; "Amen" is *Hebrew*. To both Gentiles and Jews His promises and threats are unchangeable.

8. *Greek*, "I am *the Alpha and the Omega*." The first and last letters of the alphabet. God in Christ comprises all that goes between, as well as the first and last.

the beginning and the ending--omitted in the oldest manuscripts, though found in *Vulgate* and *Coptic*. Transcribers probably inserted the clause from Re 21:6. In Christ, Genesis, the Alpha of the Old Testament, and Revelation, the Omega of the New Testament, meet together: the last book presenting to us man and God reconciled in Paradise, as the first book presented man at the beginning innocent and in God's favor in Paradise. Accomplishing *finally* what I *begin*. Always the same; before the dragon, the beast, false prophet, and all foes. An anticipatory consolation to the saints under the coming trials of the Church.

the Lord--The oldest manuscripts read "the Lord God."

Almighty--*Hebrew*, "*Shaddai*," and "*Jehovah Sabaoth*," that is, "of hosts"; commanding all the hosts or powers in heaven and earth, so able to overcome all His Church's foes. It occurs often in Revelation, but nowhere else in the New Testament save 2Co 6:18, a quotation from

Isaiah.

9. I John--So "I Daniel" (Da 7:28; 9:2; 10:2). One of the many features of resemblance between the Old Testament and the New Testament apocalyptic seers. No other Scripture writer uses the phrase.

also--as well as being an apostle. The oldest manuscripts omit "also." In his Gospel and Epistles he makes no mention of his *name*, though describing himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Here, with similar humility, though naming himself, he does not mention his apostleship.

companion--*Greek*, "fellow partaker in the tribulation." Tribulation is the necessary precursor of the kingdom," therefore "the" is prefixed. This must be borne with "patient endurance." The oldest manuscripts omit "in the" before "kingdom." All three are inseparable: *the tribulation, kingdom and endurance*.

patience--Translate, "endurance." "Persevering, enduring continuance" (Ac 14:22); "the queen of the graces (virtues)" [CHRYSOSTOM].

of, &c.--The oldest manuscripts read "IN Jesus," or "Jesus Christ." It is IN Him that believers have the right to the *kingdom*, and the spiritual strength to enable them to *endure patiently* for it.

was--*Greek*, "came to be."

in . . . Patmos--now Patmo or Palmosa. See [Introduction](#) on this island, and John's exile to it under Domitian, from which he was released under Nerva. Restricted to a small spot on earth, he is permitted to penetrate the wide realms of heaven and its secrets. Thus John drank of Christ's cup, and was baptized with His baptism (Mt 20:22).

for--*Greek*, "for the sake of," "on account of"; so, "*because of* the word of God and . . . testimony." Two oldest manuscripts omit the second "for"; thus "the Word of God" and "testimony of Jesus" are the more closely joined. Two oldest manuscripts omit "Christ." The Apocalypse has been always appreciated most by the Church in adversity. Thus the Asiatic Church from the flourishing times of Constantine less estimated it. The African Church being more exposed to the cross always made much of it [BENGEL].

10. I was--*Greek*, "I came to be"; "I became."

in the Spirit--in a state of ecstasy; the outer world being shut out, and the inner and higher life or spirit being taken full possession of by God's Spirit, so that an immediate connection with the invisible world is established. While the *prophet* "speaks" in the Spirit, the apocalyptic seer *is in* the Spirit in his whole person. The spirit only (that which connects us with God and the invisible world) is active, or rather recipient, in the apocalyptic state. With Christ this being "in the Spirit" was not the exception, but His continual state.

on the Lord's day--Though forcibly detained from Church communion with the brethren in the sanctuary on the Lord's day, the weekly commemoration of the resurrection, John was holding spiritual communion with them. This is the earliest mention of *the term*, "the Lord's day." But the consecration of the day to worship, almsgiving, and the Lord's Supper, is implied in Ac 20:7; 1Co 16:2; compare Joh 20:19-26. The name corresponds to "the Lord's Supper," 1Co 11:20. IGNATIUS seems to allude to "the Lord's day" [*Epistle to the Magnesians*, 9], and IRENÆUS [*Quæst ad Orthod.*, 115] (in JUSTIN MARTYR). JUSTIN MARTYR [*Apology*, 2.98], &c., "On Sunday we all hold our joint meeting; for the first day is that on which God, having removed darkness and chaos, made the world, and Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead. On the day before Saturday they crucified Him; and on the day after Saturday, which is Sunday, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught these things." To the Lord's day PLINY doubtless refers [*Epistles*, Book X., p. 97], "The Christians on a *fixed day* before dawn meet and sing a hymn to Christ as God," &c. TERTULLIAN [*The Chaplet*, 3], "On the Lord's day we deem it wrong to fast." MELITO, bishop of Sardis (second century), wrote a book *on the Lord's*

day [EUSEBIUS 4.26]. Also, DIONYSIUS OF CORINTH, in EUSEBIUS [*Ecclesiastical History*, 4.23,8]. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA [*Miscellanies*, 5. and 7.12]; ORIGEN [*Against Celsus*, 8. 22]. The theory that *the day of Christ's second coming* is meant, is untenable. "The day of the Lord" is different in the *Greek* from "the Lord's (an adjective) day," which latter in the ancient Church always designates our Sunday, though it is not impossible that the two shall coincide (at least in some parts of the earth), whence a tradition is mentioned in JEROME [*Commentary on Matthew*, 25], that the Lord's coming was expected especially on the Paschal Lord's day. The visions of the Apocalypse, the seals, trumpets, and vials, &c., are grouped in *sevens*, and naturally begin on the first day of the seven, the birthday of the Church, whose future they set forth [WORDSWORTH].

great voice--summoning solemn attention; *Greek* order, "I heard a voice behind me great (loud) as (that) of a trumpet." The trumpet summoned to religious feasts, and accompanies God's revelations of Himself.

11. I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; and--The oldest manuscripts, omit all this clause.

write in a book--To this *book*, having such an origin, and to the other books of Holy Scripture, who is there that gives the weight which their importance demands, preferring them to the *many books* of the world? [BENGEL].

seven churches--As there were many other churches in Proconsular Asia (for example, Miletus, Magnesia, Tralles), besides the seven specified, doubtless the number *seven* is fixed upon because of its mystical signification, expressing *totality* and *universality*. The words, "which are in Asia" are rejected by the oldest manuscripts, A, B, C, CYPRIAN, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac*; *Coptic* alone supports them of old authorities. These seven are representative churches; and, as a complex whole, ideally complete, embody the chief spiritual characteristics of the Church, whether as faithful or unfaithful, in all ages. The churches selected are not taken at random, but have a many-sided completeness. Thus, on one side we have Smyrna, a Church exposed to persecutions unto death; on the other Sardis, having a high *name* for spiritual *life and yet dead*. Again, Laodicea, in its own estimate *rich* and *having need of nothing*, with ample talents, yet *lukewarm* in Christ's cause; on the other hand, Philadelphia, with but a *little strength*, yet *keeping* Christ's word and having an *open door* of usefulness *set before* it by Christ Himself. Again, Ephesus, intolerant of *evil* and of *false apostles*, yet having *left its first love*; on the other hand, Thyatira, abounding in *works, love, service, and faith*, yet *suffering* the false *prophets* to *seduce* many. In another aspect, Ephesus in conflict with false freedom, that is fleshly licentiousness (the Nicolaitanes); so also Pergamos in conflict with Balaam-like tempters to fornication and *idol-meats*; and on the other side, Philadelphia in conflict with the Jewish synagogue, that is, legal bondage. Finally, Sardis and Laodicea without any active opposition to call forth their spiritual energies; a dangerous position, considering man's natural indolence. In the historic scheme of interpretation, which seems fanciful, Ephesus (meaning "the beloved" or "desired" [STIER]) represents the waning period of the apostolic age. Smyrna ("myrrh"), bitter suffering, yet sweet and costly perfume, the martyr period of the Decian and Diocletian age. Pergamos (a "castle" or "tower"), the Church possessing earthly power and decreasing spirituality from Constantine's time until the seventh century. Thyatira ("unwearied about sacrifices"), the Papal Church in the first half of the Middle Ages; like "Jezebel," keen about its so-called *sacrifice* of the mass, and slaying the prophets and witnesses of God. Sardis, from the close of the twelfth century to the Reformation. Philadelphia ("brotherly love"), the first century of the Reformation. Laodicea, the Reformed Church after its first zeal had become *lukewarm*.

12. see the voice--that is, *ascertain* whence the *voice* came; to *see* who was it from whom the *voice* proceeded.

that--Greek, "of what kind it was *which*." The voice is that of God the Father, as at Christ's baptism and transfiguration, so here in presenting Christ as our High Priest.

spake--The oldest manuscripts, versions, and Fathers read, "was speaking."

being--"having turned."

seven . . . candlesticks--"lamp-stands" [KELLY]. The stand holding the lamp. In Ex 25:31, 32, the seven are united in ONE candlestick or lamp-stand, that is, six arms and a central shaft; so Zec 4:2, 11. Here the seven are *separate* candlesticks, typifying, as that *one*, the entire Church, but now no longer as the Jewish Church (represented by the *one* sevenfold candlestick) restricted to one outward unity and one place; the several churches are mutually independent as to external ceremonies and government (provided all things are done to edification, and schisms or needless separations are avoided), yet one in the unity of the Spirit and the Headship of Christ. The candlestick is not light, but the bearer of light, holding it forth to give light around. The light is the Lord's, not the Church's; from Him she receives it. She is to be a light-bearer to His glory. The candlestick stood in the holy place, the type of the Church on earth, as the holiest place was type of the Church in heaven. The holy place's only light was derived from the candlestick, daylight being excluded; so the Lord God is the Church's only light; hers is the light of grace, not nature. "Golden" symbolizes at once the greatest *preciousness* and *sacredness*; so that in the *Zend Avesta*, "golden" is synonymous with heavenly or divine [TRENCH].

13. His glorified form as man could be recognized by John, who had seen it at the Transfiguration.

in the midst--implying Christ's continual presence and ceaseless activity *in the midst* of His people *on earth*. In Re 4:1-3, when He appears *in heaven*, His insignia undergo a corresponding change yet even there the rainbow reminds us of His everlasting covenant with them.

seven--omitted in two of the oldest manuscripts, but supported by one.

Son of man--The form which John had seen enduring the agony of Gethsemane, and the shame and anguish of Calvary, he now sees glorified. His glory (as *Son of man*, not merely *Son of God*) is the result of His humiliation as *Son of man*.

down to the foot--a mark of high rank. The garment and girdle seem to be emblems of His *priesthood*. Compare Ex 28:2, 4, 31; *Septuagint*. Aaron's robe and girdle were "for glory and beauty," and combined the insignia of royalty and priesthood, the characteristics of Christ's antitypical priesthood "after the order of Melchisedec." His being *in the midst of the candlesticks* (only seen in the *temple*), shows that it is as a *king-priest* He is so attired. This priesthood He has exercised ever since His ascension; and, therefore He here wears its emblems. As Aaron wore these insignia when He came forth from the sanctuary to bless the people (Le 16:4, 23, 24, the *chetoneth*, or holy linen coat), so when Christ shall come again, He shall appear in the similar attire of "beauty and glory" (Isa 4:2, *Margin*). The angels are attired somewhat like their Lord (Re 15:6). The ordinary girding for one actively engaged, was at *the loins*; but JOSEPHUS [*Antiquities*, 3.7.2], expressly tells us that the Levitical priests were girt higher up, about the breasts or *paps*, appropriate to calm, majestic movement. The girdle bracing the frame together, symbolizes collected powers. *Righteousness* and *faithfulness* are Christ's girdle. The high priest's girdle was only interwoven with gold, but Christ's is all of gold; the antitype exceeds the type.

14.--Greek, "But," or "And."

like wool--Greek, "like *white* wool." The *color* is the point of comparison; signifying *purity* and glory. (So in Isa 1:18). Not *age*, for hoary hairs are the sign of decay.

eyes . . . as . . . flame--all-searching and penetrating like fire: at the same time, also, implying *consuming* indignation against sin, especially at His coming "in flaming fire, taking vengeance" on all the ungodly, which is confirmed as the meaning here, by Re 19:11, 12.

15. fine brass--*Greek*, "*chalcolibanus*," derived by some from two *Greek* words, "brass" and "frankincense"; derived by BOCHART from *Greek*, "*chalcos*," "brass," and *Hebrew*, "*libbeen*," "to whiten"; hence, "brass," which in the furnace has reached a *white* heat. Thus it answers to "burnished (flashing, or glowing) brass," Eze 1:7; Re 10:1, "His feet as pillars of fire." Translate, "*Glowing* brass, as if they had been made fiery (red-hot) in a furnace." The feet of the priests were bare in ministering in the sanctuary. So our great High Priest here.

voice as . . . many waters-- (Eze 43:2); in Da 10:6, it is "like the voice of a *multitude*." As the Bridegroom's voice, so the bride's, Re 14:2; 19:6; Eze 1:24, the cherubim, or redeemed creation. His voice, however, is here regarded in its terribleness to His foes. Contrast So 2:8; 5:2, with which compare Re 3:20.

16. he had--*Greek*, "having." John takes up the description from time to time, irrespective of the construction, *with separate strokes of the pencil* [ALFORD].

in . . . right hand seven stars-- (Re 1:20; Re 2:1; 3:1). He holds them as a star-studded "crown of glory," or "royal diadem," in His hand: so Isa 62:3. He is their Possessor and Upholder.

out of . . . mouth went--*Greek*, "going forth"; not wielded in the hand. His WORD is omnipotent in executing His will in punishing sinners. It is the sword of His Spirit. Reproof and punishment, rather than its converting winning power, is the prominent point. Still, as He encourages the churches, as well as threatens, the former quality of the Word is not excluded. Its *two* edges (back and front) may allude to its double efficacy, condemning some, converting others. TERTULLIAN [*Epistle against Judaizers*], takes them of *the Old and the New Testaments*. RICHARD OF ST. VICTOR, "the Old Testament cutting externally our *carnal*, the New Testament internally, our *spiritual* sins."

sword--*Greek*, "*romphaia*," the Thracian long and heavy broad sword: six times in Revelation, once only elsewhere in New Testament, namely, Lu 2:35.

sun . . . in his strength--in unclouded power. So shall the righteous shine, reflecting the image of the Sun of righteousness. TRENCH notices that this description, sublime as a purely mental conception, would be intolerable if we were to give it an outward form. With the Greeks, æsthetic taste was the first consideration, to which all others must give way. With the Hebrews, truth and the full representation ideally of the religious reality were the paramount consideration, that representation being designed not to be outwardly embodied, but to remain a purely mental conception. This exalting of the essence above the form marks their deeper religious earnestness.

17. So fallen is man that God's manifestation of His glorious presence overwhelms him.

laid his right hand upon me--So the same Lord Jesus did at the Transfiguration to the three prostrate disciples, of whom John was one, saying, Be not afraid. The "touch" of His hand, as of old, imparted strength.

unto me--omitted in the oldest manuscripts.

the first . . . the last-- (Isa 41:4; 44:6; 48:12). From eternity, and enduring to eternity: "the First by creation, the Last by retribution: the First, because before Me there was no God formed; the Last, because after Me there shall be no other: the First, because from Me are all things; the Last, because to Me all things return" [RICHARD OF ST. VICTOR].

18. Translate as *Greek*, "And THE LIVING ONE": connected with last sentence, Re 1:17.

and was--*Greek*, "and (yet) I became."

alive for evermore--*Greek*, "living unto the ages of ages": not merely "*I live*," but I have life, and am the source of it to My people. "To Him belongs *absolute* being, as contrasted with

the *relative* being of the creature; others may *share*, He only *hath* immortality: *being in essence, not by mere participation, immortal*" [THEODORET in TRENCH]. One oldest manuscript, with *English Version*, reads Amen." Two others, and most of the oldest versions and Fathers, omit it. His having passed through death as one of us, and now living in the infinite plenitude of life, reassures His people, since through Him death is the gate of resurrection to eternal life.

have . . . keys of hell--*Greek*, "Hades"; *Hebrew*, "Sheol." "Hell" in the sense, the *place of torment*, answers to a different *Greek* word, namely, *Gehenna*. I can release from *the unseen world of spirits* and from DEATH whom I *will*. The oldest manuscripts read by transposition, "Death and Hades," or Hell." It is death (which came in by sin, robbing man of his immortal birthright, Ro 5:12) that peoples Hades, and therefore should stand first in order. *Keys* are emblems of authority, opening and shutting at will "the gates of Hades" (Ps 9:13, 14; Isa 38:10; Mt 16:18).

19. The oldest manuscripts read, "Write *therefore*" (inasmuch as I, "the First and Last," have the keys of death, and vouchsafe to thee this vision for the comfort and warning of the Church).

things which are--"the things which thou hast seen" are those narrated in this chapter (compare Re 1:11). "The things which are" imply the present state of things in the churches when John was writing, as represented in the second and third chapters. "The things which shall be hereafter," the things symbolically represented concerning the future history of the fourth through twenty-second chapters. ALFORD translates, "*What* things they *signify*"; but the antithesis of the next clause forbids this, "the things which shall be hereafter," *Greek*, "which are about to come to pass." The *plural* (*Greek*) "are," instead of the usual *Greek* construction *singular*, is owing to *churches* and *persons* being meant by things" in the clause, "the things which are."

20. in--*Greek*, "upon My right hand."

the mystery . . . candlesticks--in apposition to, and explaining, "the things which thou hast seen," governed by "Write." *Mystery* signifies the hidden truth, veiled under this symbol, and now revealed; its correlative is *revelation*. *Stars* symbolize lordship (Nu 24:17; compare Da 12:3, of faithful teachers; Re 8:10; 12:4; Jude 13).

angels--not as ALFORD, from ORIGEN [*Homily 13* on Luke, and *Homily 20* on Numbers], the guardian angels of the churches, just as individuals have their guardian angels. For how could heavenly angels be charged with the delinquencies laid here to the charge of these angels? Then, if a human angel be meant (as the Old Testament analogy favors, Hag 1:13, "the Lord's Messenger in the Lord's message"; Mal 2:7; 3:1), *the bishop*, or superintendent pastor, must be the angel. For whereas there were many presbyters in each of the larger churches (as for example, Ephesus, Smyrna, &c.), there was but *one* angel, whom, moreover, the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls holds responsible for the spiritual state of the Church under him. The term *angel*, designating an office, is, in accordance with the enigmatic symbolism of this book, transferred from the heavenly to the earthly superior ministers of Jehovah; reminding them that, like the heavenly angels above, they below should fulfil God's mission zealously, promptly and efficiently. "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven!"

CHAPTER 2

Re 2:1-29. EPISTLES TO EPHESUS, SMYRNA, PERGAMOS, THYATIRA.

Each of the seven epistles in this and the third chapter, commences with, "I know thy works." Each contains a promise from Christ, "To him that overcometh." Each ends with, "He

that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." The title of our Lord in each case accords with the nature of the address, and is mainly taken from the imagery of the vision, Re 1:12-16. Each address has a threat or a promise, and most of the addresses have both. Their order seems to be ecclesiastical, civil, and geographical: Ephesus first, as being the Asiatic metropolis (termed "the light of Asia," and "first city of Asia"), the nearest to Patmos, where John received the epistle to the seven churches, and also as being that Church with which John was especially connected; then the churches on the west coast of Asia; then those in the interior. Smyrna and Philadelphia alone receive unmixed praise. Sardis and Laodicea receive almost solely censure. In Ephesus, Pergamos, and Thyatira, there are some things to praise, others to condemn, the latter element preponderating in one case (Ephesus), the former in the two others (Pergamos and Thyatira). Thus the main characteristics of the different states of different churches, in all times and places, are portrayed, and they are suitably encouraged or warned.

1. Ephesus--famed for the temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the world. For three years Paul labored there. He subsequently ordained Timothy superintending overseer or bishop there: probably his charge was but of a temporary nature. John, towards the close of his life, took it as the center from which he superintended the province.

holdeth--*Greek*, "holdeth fast," as in Re 2:25; Re 3:11; compare Joh 10:28, 29. The title of Christ here as "holding fast the seven stars (from Re 1:16: only that, for *having* is substituted *holding fast* in His grasp), and walking in the midst of the seven candlesticks," accords with the beginning of His address to the *seven* churches representing the universal Church. *Walking* expresses His unwearied activity in the Church, guarding her from internal and external evils, as the high priest moved to and fro in the sanctuary.

2. I know thy works--expressing His omniscience. Not merely "thy professions, desires, good resolutions" (Re 14:13, end).

thy labour--Two oldest manuscripts omit "thy"; one supports it. The *Greek* means "labor unto weariness."

patience--persevering *endurance*.

bear--*evil men* are a *burden* which the Ephesian Church regarded as intolerable. We are to "bear (the same *Greek*, Ga 6:2) one another's burdens" in the case of *weak* brethren; but not to bear *false brethren*.

tried--by experiment; not the *Greek* for "test," as 1Jo 4:1. The apostolical churches had the miraculous gift of *discerning spirits*. Compare Ac 20:28-30, wherein Paul presciently warned the *Ephesian* elders of the coming false teachers, as also in writing to Timothy at Ephesus. TERTULLIAN [*On Baptism*, 17], and JEROME [*On Illustrious Men*, in Lucca 7], record of John, that when a writing, professing to be a canonical history of the acts of Paul, had been composed by a presbyter of Ephesus, John convicted the author and condemned the work. So on one occasion he would not remain under the same roof with Cerinthus the heretic.

say they are apostles--probably Judaizers. IGNATIUS [*Epistle to the Ephesians*, 6], says subsequently, "Onesimus praises exceedingly your good discipline that no heresy dwells among you"; and [*Epistle to the Ephesians*, 9], "Ye did not permit those having evil doctrine to sow their seed among you, but closed your ears."

3. borne . . . patience--The oldest manuscripts transpose these words. Then translate as *Greek*, "persevering endurance . . . borne." "Thou hast borne" My reproach, but "thou canst not bear the evil" (Re 2:2). A beautiful antithesis.

and . . . hast laboured, and hast not fainted--The two oldest manuscripts and oldest versions read, "and . . . hast not labored," omitting "and hast fainted." The difficulty which

transcribers by *English Version* reading tried to obviate, was the seeming contradiction, "I know thy *labor* . . . and thou hast *not labored*." But what is meant is, "Thou hast not been *wearied out* with labor."

4. somewhat . . . because--Translate, "I have against thee (this) *that*," &c. It is not a mere somewhat"; it is everything. How characteristic of our gracious Lord, that He puts foremost all He can find to approve, and only after this notes the shortcomings!

left thy first love--to Christ. Compare 1Ti 5:12, "cast off their first faith." See the Ephesians' first *love*, Eph 1:15. This epistle was written under Domitian, when thirty years had elapsed since Paul had written his Epistle to them. Their warmth of love had given place to a lifeless orthodoxy. Compare Paul's view of faith so called without love, 1Co 13:2.

5. whence--from what a height.

do the first works--the *works* which flowed from thy *first love*. Not merely "feel thy first feelings," but do works flowing from the same principle as formerly, "faith which worketh by love."

I will come--*Greek*, "I am coming" in special judgment on thee.

quickly--omitted in two oldest manuscripts, *Vulgate* and *Coptic versions*: supported by one oldest manuscript.

remove thy candlestick out of his place--I will take away the Church from Ephesus and remove it elsewhere. "It is removal of the candlestick, not extinction of the candle, which is threatened here; judgment for some, but that very judgment the occasion of mercy for others. So it has been. The seat of the Church has been changed, but the Church itself survives. What the East has lost, the West has gained. One who lately visited Ephesus found only three Christians there, and these so ignorant as scarcely to have heard the names of St. Paul or St. John" [TRENCH].

6. But--How graciously, after necessary censure, He returns to praise for our consolation, and as an example to *us*, that we would show, when we reprove, we have more pleasure in praising than in fault-finding.

hatest the deeds--We should hate men's evil *deeds*, not hate the men themselves.

Nicolaitanes--IRENÆUS [*Against Heresies*, 1.26.3] and TERTULLIAN [*Prescription against Heretics*, 46] make these followers of Nicolas, one of *the seven* (honorably mentioned, Ac 6:3, 5). They (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA [*Miscellanies*, 2.20 3.4] and EPIPHANIUS [*Heresies*, 25]) evidently confound the latter Gnostic Nicolaitanes, or followers of one Nicolaos, with those of Revelation. MICHAELIS' view is probable: Nicolaos (*conqueror of the people*) is the *Greek* version of Balaam, from *Hebrew* "*Belang Am*," "Destroyer of the people." Revelation abounds in such duplicate *Hebrew* and *Greek* names: as Apollyon, Abaddon: Devil, Satan: Yea (*Greek*, "*Nai*"), Amen. The name, like other names, Egypt, Babylon, Sodom, is symbolic. Compare Re 2:14, 15, which shows the true sense of Nicolaitanes; they are not a sect, but professing Christians who, like Balaam of old, tried to introduce into the Church a false freedom, that is, licentiousness; this was a reaction in the opposite direction from Judaism, the first danger to the Church combated in the council of Jerusalem, and by Paul in the Epistle to Galatians. These symbolical Nicolaitanes, or followers of Balaam, abused Paul's doctrine of the grace of God into a plea for lasciviousness (2Pe 2:15, 16, 19; Jude 4, 11 who both describe the same sort of seducers as followers of *Balaam*). The difficulty that they should appropriate a name branded with infamy in Scripture is met by TRENCH: The Antinomian Gnostics were so opposed to John as a Judaizing apostle that they would assume as a name of chiefest honor one which John branded with dishonor.

7. He that hath an ear--This clause precedes the promise in the first three addresses, succeeds it in the last four. Thus the promises are enclosed on both sides with the precept urging the deepest attention as to the most momentous truths. Every man "hath an ear" naturally, but he alone will be able to hear spiritually to whom God has given "the hearing ear"; whose "ear God hath wakened" and "opened." Compare "Faith, the ears of the soul" [CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA].

the Spirit saith--What *Christ* saith, *the Spirit* saith; so one are the Second and Third Persons.

unto the churches--not merely to the particular, but to the universal Church.

overcometh--In John's Gospel (Joh 16:33) and First Epistle (1Jo 2:13, 14; 5:4, 5) an object follows, namely, "the world," "the wicked one." Here, where the final issue is spoken of, *the conqueror* is named absolutely. Paul uses a similar image (1Co 9:24, 25; 2Ti 2:5; but not the same as John's phrase, except Ro 12:21).

will I give--as the Judge. The tree of life in Paradise, lost by the fall, is restored by the Redeemer. Allusions to it occur in Pr 3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4, and prophetically, Re 22:2, 14; Eze 47:12; compare Joh 6:51. It is interesting to note how closely these introductory addresses are linked to the body of Revelation. Thus, *the tree of life* here, with Re 22:1; deliverance from *the second death* (Re 2:11), with Re 20:14; 21:8; *the new name* (Re 2:17), with Re 14:1; *power over the nations*, with Re 20:4; *the morning star* (Re 2:28), with Re 22:16; *the white raiment* (Re 3:5), with Re 4:4; 16:15; *the name in the book of life* (Re 3:5), with Re 13:8; 20:15; *the new Jerusalem* and its citizenship (Re 3:12), with Re 21:10.

give . . . tree of life--The thing promised corresponds to the kind of faithfulness manifested. They who refrain from Nicolaitane indulgences (Re 2:6) and idol-meats (Re 2:14, 15), shall eat of meat infinitely superior, namely, the fruit of the tree of life, and the hidden manna (Re 2:17).

in the midst of the paradise--The oldest manuscripts omit "the midst of." In Ge 2:9 these words are appropriate, for there were *other* trees in the garden, but not *in the midst of it*. Here *the tree of life* is simply *in the paradise*, for no other tree is mentioned in it; in Re 22:2 the tree of life is "*in the midst of the street of Jerusalem*"; from this the clause was inserted here. *Paradise* (a Persian, or else Semitic word), originally used of any garden of delight; then specially of Eden; then the temporary abode of separate souls in bliss; then "the *Paradise of God*," the third heaven, the immediate presence of God.

of God-- (Eze 28:13). One oldest manuscript, with *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic*, and CYPRIAN, read, "MY God," as in Re 3:12. So Christ calls God, "*My God and your God*" (Joh 20:17; compare Eph 1:17). God is *our* God, in virtue of being peculiarly *Christ's* God. The main bliss of Paradise is that it is the *Paradise of God*; God Himself dwelling there (Re 21:3).

8. Smyrna--in Ionia, a little to the north of Ephesus. POLYCARP, martyred in A.D. 168, eighty-six years after his conversion, was bishop, and probably "the angel of the Church in Smyrna" meant here. The allusions to persecutions and faithfulness unto death accord with this view. IGNATIUS [*The Martyrdom of Ignatius* 3], on his way to martyrdom in Rome, wrote to POLYCARP, then (A.D. 108) bishop of Smyrna; if his bishopric commenced ten or twelve years earlier, the dates will harmonize. TERTULLIAN [*The Prescription against Heretics*, 32], and IRENÆUS, who had talked with POLYCARP in youth, tell us POLYCARP was consecrated bishop of Smyrna by St. John.

the first . . . the last . . . was dead . . . is alive--The attributes of Christ most calculated to comfort the Church of Smyrna under its persecutions; resumed from Re 1:17, 18. As death was to Him but the gate to life eternal, so it is to be to them (Re 2:10, 11).

9. thy works, and--omitted in two oldest manuscripts, *Vulgate*, and *Coptic*. Supported by

one oldest manuscript.

tribulation--owing to persecution.

poverty--owing to "the spoiling of their goods."

but thou art rich--in grace. Contrast Laodicea, *rich* in the world's eyes and her own, *poor* before God. "There are both poor rich-men, and rich poor-men in God's sight" [TRENCH].

blasphemy of them--blasphemous calumny of thee on the part of (or *arising from*) them.

say they are Jews, and are not--Jews by national descent, but not spiritually of "the true circumcision." The Jews blaspheme Christ as "the hanged one." As elsewhere, so at Smyrna they bitterly opposed Christianity; and at POLYCARP'S martyrdom they joined the heathens in clamoring for his being cast to the lions; and when there was an obstacle to this, for his being burnt alive; and with their own hands they carried logs for the pile.

synagogue of Satan--Only once is the term "synagogue" in the New Testament used of the Christian assembly, and that by the apostle who longest maintained the union of the Church and Jewish Synagogue. As the Jews more and more opposed Christianity, and it more and more rooted itself in the Gentile world, the term "synagogue" was left altogether to the former, and Christians appropriated exclusively the honorable term "Church"; contrast an earlier time when the Jewish theocracy is called "the Church in the wilderness." Compare Nu 16:3; 20:4, "congregation of the Lord." Even in Jas 2:2 it is "*your* (not *the Lord's*) assembly." The *Jews*, who might have been "the Church of God," had now, by their opposition and unbelief, become the synagogue of Satan. So "the throne of Satan" (Re 2:13) represents the *heathens'* opposition to Christianity; "the depths of Satan" (Re 2:24), the opposition of *heretics*.

10. Fear none, &c.--the oldest manuscripts read, "Fear *not* those things," &c. "The Captain of our salvation never keeps back what those who faithfully witness for Him may have to bear for His name's sake; never entices recruits by the promise they shall find all things easy and pleasant there" [TRENCH].

devil--"the accuser." He acted, through Jewish *accusers* against Christ and His people. The conflict of the latter was not with mere flesh and blood, but with the rulers of the darkness of this world.

tried--with *temptation* by "the devil." The same event is often both a *temptation* from the devil, and a *trial* from God--God sifting and winnowing the man to separate his chaff from his wheat, the devil sifting him in the hope that nothing but chaff will be found in him [TRENCH].

ten days--not the ten persecutions from Nero to Diocletian. LYRA explains *ten years* on the year-day principle. The *shortness* of the duration of the persecution is evidently made the ground of consolation. The time of trial shall be short, the duration of your joy shall be for ever. Compare the use of "ten days" for a short time, Ge 24:55; Nu 11:19. *Ten* is the number of the world powers hostile to the Church; compare the *ten* horns of the beast, Re 13:1.

unto death--so as even to endure death for My sake.

crown of life-- Jas 1:12; 2Ti 4:8, "crown of righteousness"; 1Pe 5:4, "crown of glory." The *crown* is the *garland*, the mark of a *conqueror*, or of one *rejoicing*, or at a *feast*; but *diadem* is the mark of a KING.

11. shall not be hurt--*Greek*, "shall not by any means (or possibly) be hurt."

the second death--"the lake of fire." "The death in life of the lost, as contrasted with the life in death of the saved" [TRENCH]. The phrase "the second death" is peculiar to the Apocalypse. What matter about the first death, which sooner or later must pass over us, if we escape *the second death*? "It seems that they who die that death shall be *hurt* by it; whereas, if it were annihilation, and so a conclusion of their torments, it would be no way hurtful, but highly beneficial to them. But the living torments are the second death" [BISHOP PEARSON]. "The life of the damned is death" [AUGUSTINE]. Smyrna (meaning *myrrh*) yielded its sweet perfume in

being bruised even to death. Myrrh was used in embalming dead bodies (Joh 19:39); was an ingredient in the holy anointing oil (Ex 30:23); a perfume of the heavenly Bridegroom (Ps 45:8), and of the bride (So 3:6). "Affliction, like it, is *bitter* for the time being, but *salutary*; preserving the elect from *corruption*, and *seasoning* them for immortality, and gives scope for the exercise of the *fragrantly breathing* Christian virtues" [VITRINGA]. POLYCARP'S noble words to his heathen judges who wished him to recant, are well known: "Fourscore and six years have I served the Lord, and He never wronged me, how then can I blaspheme my King and Saviour?" Smyrna's faithfulness is rewarded by its candlestick not having been removed out of its place (Re 2:5); Christianity has never wholly left it; whence the Turks call it, "Infidel Smyrna."

12. TRENCH prefers writing *Pergamus*, or rather, *Pergamum*, on the river Caicus. It was capital of Attalus the Second's kingdom, which was bequeathed by him to the Romans, 133 B.C. Famous for its library, founded by Eumenes (197-159), and destroyed by Caliph Omar. *Parchment*, that is, *Pergamena charta*, was here discovered for book purposes. Also famous for the magnificent temple of Æsculapius, the healing god [TACITUS, *Annals*, 3.63].

he which hath the sharp sword with two edges--appropriate to His address having a twofold bearing, a searching power so as to convict and convert some (Re 2:13, 17), and to convict and condemn to punishment others (Re 2:14-16, especially Re 2:16; compare also see on [Re 1:16](#)).

13. I know thy works--Two oldest manuscripts omit this clause; one oldest manuscript retains it.

Satan's seat--rather as the *Greek* is translated all through Revelation, "throne." Satan, in impious mimicry of God's heavenly throne, sets up his earthly throne (Re 4:2). Æsculapius was worshipped there under the serpent form; and Satan, the old serpent, as the instigator (compare Re 2:10) of fanatical devotees of Æsculapius, and, through them, of the supreme magistracy at Pergamos, persecuted one of the Lord's people (Antipas) even to death. Thus, this address is an anticipatory preface to Re 12:1-17; *Note*: "throne . . . the dragon, Satan . . . war with her seed," Re 12:5, 9, 17.

even in those days--Two oldest manuscripts omit "even"; two retain it.

wherein--Two oldest manuscripts omit this (then translate, "in the days of Antipas, My faithful witness," or "martyr"); two retain it. Two oldest manuscripts read, "My witness, MY faithful one"; two read as *English Version*. Antipas is another form for Antipater. SIMEON METAPHRASTES has a palpably legendary story, unknown to the early Fathers, that Antipas, in Domitian's reign, was shut up in a red-hot brazen bull, and ended his life in thanksgivings and prayers. HENGSTENBERG makes the name, like other apocalyptic names, symbolical, meaning one standing out "against all" for Christ's sake.

14. few--in comparison of the *many* tokens of thy faithfulness.

hold the doctrine of Balaam--"the *teaching* of Balaam," namely, that which he "taught Balak." Compare "the counsel of Balaam," Nu 31:16. "Balak" is dative in the *Greek*, whence BENGEL translates, "taught (the Moabites) for (that is, to please) Balak." But though in Numbers it is not expressly said he taught *Balak*, yet there is nothing said inconsistent with his having done so; and JOSEPHUS [*Antiquities*, 4. 6. 6], says he did so. The dative case is a Hebraism for the accusative case.

children--*Greek*, "sons of Israel."

stumbling-block--literally, that part of a trap on which the bait was laid, and which, when touched, caused the trap to close on its prey; then any entanglement to the foot [TRENCH].

eat things sacrificed unto idols--the act common to the Israelites of old, and the

Nicolaitanes in John's day; he does not add what was peculiar to the Israelites, namely, that they *sacrificed* to idols. The temptation to eat idol-meats was a peculiarly strong one to the Gentile converts. For not to do so involved almost a withdrawal from partaking of any social meal with the heathen around. For idol-meats, after a part had been offered in sacrifice, were nearly sure to be on the heathen entertainer's table; so much so, that the *Greek* "to kill" (*thuein*) meant originally "to sacrifice." Hence arose the decree of the council of Jerusalem forbidding to eat such meats; subsequently some at Corinth ate unscrupulously and *knowingly* of such meats, on the ground that the idol is nothing; others needlessly tortured themselves with scruples, lest *unknowingly* they should eat of them when they got meat from the market or in a heathen friend's house. Paul handles the question in 1Co 8:1-13; 10:25-33.

fornication--often connected with idolatry.

15. thou--emphatic: "So THOU also hast," As Balak and the Moabites of old had Balaam and his followers literally, *so hast thou also them that hold the same Balaamite or Nicolaitane doctrine* spiritually or symbolically. Literal eating of idol-meats and fornication in Pergamos were accompanied by spiritual idolatry and fornication. So TRENCH explains. But I prefer taking it, "THOU *also*," as well as Ephesus ("in like manner" as Ephesus; see below the oldest reading), hast . . . Nicolaitanes, with this important difference, Ephesus, as a Church, *hates them* and casts them out, but thou "*hast them*," namely, in the Church.

doctrine--teaching (see on [Re 2:6](#)): namely, to tempt God's people to idolatry.

which thing I hate--It is sin not to hate what God hates. The Ephesian Church (Re 2:6) had this point of superiority to Pergamos. But the three oldest manuscripts, and *Vulgate* and *Syriac*, read instead of "which I hate," "IN LIKE MANNER."

16. The three oldest manuscripts read, "Repent, *therefore*." Not only the Nicolaitanes, but the whole Church of Pergamos is called on to repent of not having *hated* the Nicolaitane teaching and practice. Contrast Paul, Ac 20:26.

I will come--I am coming.

fight against them--*Greek*, "war with them"; with the Nicolaitanes primarily; but including also *chastisement of the whole Church at Pergamos*: compare "unto THEE."

with the sword of my mouth--resumed from Re 1:16, but with an allusion to the drawn *sword* with which the angel of the Lord confronted Balaam on his way to curse Israel: an earnest of *the sword* by which he and the seduced Israelites fell at last. The spiritual Balaamites of John's day are to be smitten with the Lord's spiritual sword, the word or "rod of His mouth."

17. to eat--omitted in the three oldest manuscripts.

the hidden manna--the heavenly food of Israel, in contrast to the idol-meats (Re 2:14). A pot of manna was laid up in the holy place "before the testimony." The allusion is here to this: probably also to the Lord's discourse (Joh 6:31-35). Translate, "the manna which is hidden." As the manna hidden in the sanctuary was by divine power preserved from corruption, so Christ in His incorruptible body has passed into the heavens, and is hidden there until the time of His appearing. Christ Himself is the manna "hidden" from the world, but revealed to the believer, so that he has already a foretaste of His preciousness. Compare as to Christ's own hidden food on earth, Joh 4:32, 34, and Job 23:12. The full manifestation shall be at His coming. Believers are now hidden, even as their meat is hidden. As the manna in the sanctuary, unlike the other manna, was incorruptible, so the spiritual feast offered to all who reject the world's dainties for Christ is everlasting: an incorruptible body and life for ever in Christ at the resurrection.

white stone . . . new name . . . no man knoweth saving he--TRENCH'S explanation seems best. *White* is the color and livery of heaven. "New" implies something altogether renewed and

heavenly. The white stone is a glistening diamond, the Urim borne by the high priest within the *choschen* or breastplate of judgment, with the twelve tribes' names on the twelve precious stones, next the heart. The word *Urim* means "light," answering to the color *white*. None but the high priest knew the name written upon it, probably the incommunicable name of God, "Jehovah." The high priest consulted it in some divinely appointed way to get direction from God when needful. The "new name" is *Christ's* (compare Re 3:12, "I will write upon him *My* new name"): some new revelation of Himself which shall hereafter be imparted to His people, and which they alone are capable of receiving. The connection with the "hidden manna" will thus be clear, as none save the high priest had access to the "manna hidden" in the sanctuary. Believers, as spiritual priests unto God, shall enjoy the heavenly antitypes to the hidden manna and the Urim stone. What they had peculiarly to contend against at Pergamos was the temptation to *idol-meats*, and *fornication*, put in their way by Balaamites. As Phinehas was rewarded with "an everlasting priesthood" for his zeal against these very sins to which the Old Testament Balaam seduced Israel; so the heavenly high priesthood is the reward promised here to those zealous against the New Testament Balaamites tempting Christ's people to the same sins.

receiveth it--namely, "the stone"; not "the new name"; see above. The "name that no man knew but Christ Himself," He shall hereafter reveal to His people.

18. Thyatira--in Lydia, south of Pergamos. Lydia, the purple-seller of this city, having been converted at Philippi, a Macedonian city (with which Thyatira, as being a Macedonian colony, had naturally much intercourse), was probably the instrument of first carrying the Gospel to her native town. John follows the geographical order here, for Thyatira lay a little to the left of the road from Pergamos to Sardis [STRABO, 13:4].

Son of God . . . eyes like . . . fire . . . feet . . . like fine brass--or "glowing brass" (see on [Re 1:14,15](#), whence this description is resumed). Again His attributes accord with His address. The title "Son of God," is from Ps 2:7, 9, which is referred to in Re 2:27. The attribute, "eyes like a flame," &c., answers to Re 2:23, "I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts." The attribute, "feet like . . . brass," answers to Re 2:27, "as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers," He *treading* them *to pieces* with His strong feet.

19. The oldest manuscripts transpose the *English Version* order, and read, "faith and service." The four are subordinate to "thy works"; thus, "I know thy works, *even* the love and the faith (these two forming one pair, as 'faith works by love,' Ga 5:6), and the service (*ministration* to the suffering members of the Church, and to all in spiritual or temporal need), and the endurance of (that is, shown by) thee (this pronoun belongs to all four)." As *love* is inward, so *service* is its outward manifestation. Similarly, *faith* and persevering *endurance*, or "*patient continuance* (the same *Greek* as here, Ro 2:7) in well-doing," are connected.

and thy works; and the last--Omit the second "and," with the three oldest manuscripts and the ancient versions; translate, "And (I know) thy works which are last (to be) more in number than the first"; realizing 1Th 4:1; the converse of Mt 12:45; 2Pe 2:20. Instead of retrograding from "the first works" and "first love," as Ephesus, Thyatira's *last works* exceeded her *first* (Re 2:4, 5).

20. a few things--omitted in the three oldest manuscripts. Translate then, "I have against thee *that*," &c.

sufferest--The three oldest manuscripts read, "lettest alone."

that woman--Two oldest manuscripts read, "THY wife"; two omit it. *Vulgate* and most ancient versions read as *English Version*. The symbolical Jezebel was to the Church of Thyatira what Jezebel, Ahab's "wife," was to him. Some self-styled prophetess (or as the feminine in

Hebrew is often used *collectively* to express a multitude, *a set of false prophets*), as closely attached to the Church of Thyatira as a *wife* is to a husband, and as powerfully influencing for evil that Church as Jezebel did Ahab. As Balaam, in Israel's early history, so Jezebel, daughter of Eth-baal, king of Sidon (1Ki 16:31, formerly priest of Astarte, and murderer of his predecessor on the throne, JOSEPHUS [*Against Apion*, 1.18]), was the great seducer to idolatry in Israel's later history. Like her father, she was swift to shed blood. Wholly given to Baal worship, like Eth-baal, whose name expresses his idolatry, she, with her strong will, seduced the weak Ahab and Israel beyond the calf-worship (which was a worship of the true God under the cherub-ox form, that is, a violation of the second commandment) to that of Baal (a violation of the first commandment also). She seems to have been herself a priestess and prophetess of Baal. Compare 2Ki 9:22, 30, "*whoredoms of . . . Jezebel and her witchcrafts*" (impurity was part of the worship of the Phœnician Astarte, or Venus). Her spiritual counterpart at Thyatira lured God's "servants" by pretended utterances of inspiration to the same libertinism, fornication, and eating of idol-meats, as the Balaamites and Nicolaitanes (Re 2:6, 14, 15). By a false spiritualism these seducers led their victims into the grossest carnality, as though things done in the flesh were outside the true man, and were, therefore, indifferent. "The deeper the Church penetrated into heathenism, the more she herself became heathenish; this prepares us for the expressions 'harlot' and 'Babylon,' applied to her afterwards" [AUBERLEN].

to teach and to seduce--The three oldest manuscripts read, "and she teaches and seduces," or "deceives." "Thyatira was just the reverse of Ephesus. There, much zeal for orthodoxy, but little love; here, activity of faith and love, but insufficient zeal for godly discipline and doctrine, a patience of error even where there was not a participation in it" [TRENCH].

21. **space**--*Greek*, "time."

of her fornication . . . she repented not--The three oldest manuscripts read, "and she *willeth not to repent of* (literally, 'out of,' that is, so as to come *out of*) *her fornication*." Here there is a transition from *literal to spiritual* fornication, as appears from Re 2:22. The idea arose from Jehovah's covenant relation to the Old Testament Church being regarded as a marriage, any transgression against which was, therefore, *harlotry, fornication, or adultery*.

22. **Behold**--calling attention to her awful doom to come.

I will--*Greek* present, "I cast her."

a bed--The place of her sin shall be the place of her punishment. The bed of her sin shall be her bed of sickness and anguish. Perhaps a pestilence was about to be sent. Or the bed of the grave, and of the hell beyond, where the worm dieth not.

them that commit adultery with her--spiritually; including both the eating of *idol-meats* and *fornication*. "With her," in the *Greek*, implies *participation with* her in her adulteries, namely, by *suffering her* (Re 2:20), or *letting her alone*, and so virtually encouraging her. Her punishment is distinct from theirs; she is to be cast into a *bed*, and her *children* to be *killed*; while those who make themselves partakers of her sin by tolerating her, are to be cast into *great tribulation*.

except they repent--*Greek* aorist, "repent" *at once*; shall have repented by the time limited in My purpose.

their deeds--Two of the oldest manuscripts and most ancient versions read "her." Thus, God's true servants, who by connivance, are incurring the guilt of *her deeds*, are distinguished from her. One oldest manuscript, ANDREAS, and CYPRIAN, support "their."

23. her children-- (Isa 57:3; Eze 23:45, 47). Her proper adherents; not those who *suffer* her, but those who are begotten of her. A distinct class from the last in Re 2:22 (compare *Note*, see

on [Re 2:22](#)), whose sin was less direct, being that only of connivance.

kill . . . with death--Compare the disaster that overtook the literal Jezebel's votaries of Baal, and Ahab's sons, 1Ki 18:40; 2Ki 10:6, 7, 24, 25. *Kill with death* is a Hebraism for *slay with most sure and awful death*; so "dying thou shalt die" (Ge 2:17). Not "die the common death of men" (Nu 16:29).

all the churches shall know--implying that these addresses are designed for the catholic Church of all ages and places. So palpably shall God's hand be seen in the judgment on Thyatira, that the whole Church shall recognize it as God's doing.

I am he--the "I" is strongly emphatical: "that it is *I* am He who," &c.

searcheth . . . hearts--God's peculiar attribute is given to Christ. The "reins" are the seat of the desires; the "heart," that of the thoughts. The *Greek* for "searcheth" expresses an accurate following up of all tracks and windings.

unto every one of you--literally, "unto you, to each."

according to your works--to be judged not according to the mere act as it appears to man, but with reference to the motive, *faith* and *love* being the only motives which God recognizes as sound.

24. you . . . and . . . the rest--The three oldest manuscripts omit "and"; translate then, "Unto you, the rest."

as many as have not--not only do not *hold*, but are free from contact with.

and which--The oldest manuscripts omit "and"; translate, "whosoever."

the depths--These false prophets boasted peculiarly of their *knowledge of mysteries* and *the deep things of God*; pretensions subsequently expressed by their arrogant title, *Gnostics* ("full of knowledge"). The Spirit here declares their so-called "depths," (namely, of knowledge of divine things) to be really "*depths of Satan*"; just as in Re 2:9, He says, instead of "the synagogue of God," "the synagogue of Satan." HENGSTENBERG thinks the teachers themselves professed to fathom *the depths of Satan*, giving loose rein to fleshly lusts, without being hurt thereby. They who thus think to fight Satan with his own weapons always find him more than a match for them. The words, "as they speak," that is, "as they call them," coming after not only "depths," but "depths of Satan," seem to favor this latter view; otherwise I should prefer the former, in which case, "as they speak," or "call them," must refer to "depths" only, not also "*depths of Satan*." The original sin of Adam was a desire to know EVIL *as well as good*, so in HENGSTENBERG'S view, those who professed to know "the depths of Satan." It is the prerogative of God alone to know evil fully, without being hurt or defiled by it.

I will put--Two oldest manuscripts have "I put," or "cast." One oldest manuscript reads as *English Version*.

none other burden--save abstinence from, and protestation against, these abominations; no "depths" beyond your reach, such as they teach, no new doctrine, but the old faith and rule of practice once for all delivered to the saints. Exaggerating and perfecting Paul's doctrine of grace without the law as the source of justification and sanctification, these false prophets rejected the law as a rule of life, as though it were an intolerable "burden." But it is a "light" burden. In Ac 15:28, 29, the very term "burden," as here, is used of abstinence from fornication and idol-meats; to this the Lord here refers.

25. that which ye have already-- (Jude 3, end).

hold fast--do not let go from your grasp, however false teachers may wish to wrest it from you.

till I come--when your conflict with evil will be at an end. The *Greek* implies *uncertainty* as to when He shall come.

26. And--implying the close connection of the promise to the conqueror that follows, with the preceding exhortation, Re 2:25.

and keepeth--*Greek*, "and he that keepeth." Compare the same word in the passage already alluded to by the Lord, Ac 15:28, 29, end.

my works--in contrast to "her (*English Version*, 'their') works" (Re 2:22). The works which I command and which are the fruit of My Spirit.

unto the end-- (Mt 24:13). The image is perhaps from the race, wherein it is not enough to enter the lists, but the runner must persevere *to the end*.

give power--*Greek*, "authority."

over the nations--at Christ's coming the saints shall possess the kingdom "under the whole heaven"; therefore over this earth; compare Lu 19:17, "have thou *authority* [the same *word* as here] over ten cities."

27. From Ps 2:8, 9.

rule--literally, "rule as a shepherd." In Ps 2:9 it is, "Thou shalt *break* them with a rod of iron." The *Septuagint*, pointing the *Hebrew* word differently, read as Revelation here. The *English Version* of Ps 2:9 is doubtless right, as the parallel word, "dash in pieces," proves. But the Spirit in this case sanctions the *additional* thought as true, that the Lord shall mingle mercy to some, with judgment on others; beginning by destroying His Antichristian foes, He shall reign in love over the rest. "Christ shall rule them with a *scepter* of iron, to make them capable of being ruled with a scepter of gold; severity first, that grace may come after" (TRENCH, who thinks we ought to translate "SCEPTER" for "rod," as in Heb 1:8). "Shepherd" is used in Jer 6:3, of *hostile rulers*; so also in Zec 11:16. As severity here is the primary thought, "rule as a shepherd" seems to me to be used thus: He who would have shepherded them with a pastoral rod, shall, because of their hardened unbelief, shepherd them with a rod of iron.

shall they be broken--So one oldest manuscript, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic Versions* read. But two oldest manuscripts, read, "as the vessels of a potter *are* broken to shivers." A *potter's vessel dashed to pieces*, because of its failing to answer the design of the maker, is the image to depict God's sovereign power to give reprobates to destruction, not by caprice, but in the exercise of His righteous judgment. The saints shall be in Christ's victorious "armies" when He shall inflict the last decisive blow, and afterwards shall reign with Him. Having by faith "overcome the world," they shall also rule the world.

even as I--"as *I* also have received of (from) My Father," namely, in Ps 2:7-9. Jesus had refused to receive the kingdom without the cross at Satan's hands; He would receive it from none but the Father, who had appointed the cross as the path to the crown. As the Father has given the authority to Me over the heathen and uttermost parts of the earth, so I impart a share of it to My victorious disciple.

28. the morning star--that is, I will give unto him *Myself*, who am "the morning star" (Re 22:16); so that reflecting My perfect brightness, he shall shine like Me, the morning star, and share My *kingly glory* (of which a *star* is the symbol, Nu 21:17; Mt 2:2). Compare Re 2:17, "I will give him . . . the hidden manna," that is, *Myself*, who am that manna (Joh 6:31-33).

CHAPTER 3

Re 3:1-22. THE EPISTLES TO SARDIS, PHILADELPHIA, AND LAODICEA.

1. Sardis--the ancient capital of Lydia, the kingdom of wealthy Croesus, on the river

Pactolus. The address to this Church is full of rebuke. It does not seem to have been in vain; for MELITO, bishop of Sardis in the second century, was eminent for piety and learning. He visited Palestine to assure himself and his flock as to the Old Testament canon and wrote an epistle on the subject [EUSEBIUS *Ecclesiastical History*, 4.26]; he also wrote a commentary on the Apocalypse [EUSEBIUS, *Ecclesiastical History*, 4.26; JEROME, *On Illustrious Men*, 24].

he that hath the seven Spirits of God--that is, He who hath all the fulness of the Spirit (Re 1:4; 4:5; 5:6, with which compare Zec 3:9; 4:10, proving His Godhead). This attribute implies His infinite power by the Spirit to convict of sin and of a hollow profession.

and the seven stars-- (Re 1:16, 20). His *having the seven stars*, or presiding ministers, flows, as a consequence, from His *having the seven Spirits*, or the fulness of the Holy Spirit. The human ministry is the fruit of Christ's sending down the gifts of the Spirit. *Stars* imply brilliancy and glory; the fulness of the Spirit, and the fulness of brilliant light in Him, form a designed contrast to the formality which He reproveth.

name . . . livest . . . dead-- (1Ti 5:6; 2Ti 3:5; Tit 1:16; compare Eph 2:1, 5; 5:14). "A name," that is, a reputation. Sardis was famed among the churches for spiritual *vitality*; yet the Heart-searcher, who seeth not as man seeth, pronounces her *dead*; how great searchings of heart should her case create among even the best of us! Laodicea deceived herself as to her true state (Re 3:17), but it is not written that she had a high *name* among the other churches, as Sardis had.

2. Be--*Greek*. "Become," what thou art not, "watchful," or "wakeful," literally, "waking."

the things which remain--Strengthen those thy remaining few graces, which, in thy spiritual deadly slumber, are not yet quite extinct [ALFORD]. "The things that remain" can hardly mean "the PERSONS that are not yet dead, but *are ready to die*"; for Re 3:4 implies that the "few" faithful ones at Sardis were not "ready to die," but were full of life.

are--The two oldest manuscripts read, "were ready," literally, "were about to die," namely, at the time when you "strengthen" them. This implies that "thou art dead," Re 3:1, is to be taken with limitation; for those must have some life who are told to *strengthen the things that remain*.

perfect--literally, "filled up in full complement"; Translate, "complete." Weighed in the balance of Him who requires living faith as the motive of works, and found wanting.

before God--*Greek*, "in the sight of God." The three oldest manuscripts, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic*, read, "before (in the sight of) MY God"; Christ's judgment is God the Father's judgment. In the sight of men, Sardis had "a name of living": "so many and so great are the obligations of pastors, that he who would in reality fulfil even a third of them, would be esteemed holy by men, whereas, if content with that alone, he would be sure not to escape hell" [JUAN D'AVILA]. Note: in Sardis and Laodicea alone of the seven we read of no conflict with foes within or without the Church. Not that either had renounced the *appearance* of opposition to the world; but neither had the faithfulness to witness for God by word and example, so as to "torment them that dwelt on the earth" (Re 11:10).

3. how thou hast received-- (Col 2:6; 1Th 4:1; 1Ti 6:20). What Sardis is to "remember" is, not *how* joyfully she had received originally the Gospel message, but how the precious deposit was committed to her originally, so that she could not say, she had not "received and heard" it. The *Greek* is not aorist (as in Re 2:4, as to Ephesus, "Thou *didst* leave thy first love"), but "thou hast received" (perfect), and still hast the permanent deposit of doctrine committed to thee. The word "keep" (so the *Greek* is for *English Version*, "hold fast") which follows, accords with this sense. "Keep" or observe the commandment which thou hast received and didst hear.

heard--*Greek* aorist, "didst hear," namely, when the Gospel doctrine was committed to thee. TRENCH explains "how," *with what demonstration of the Spirit and power* from Christ's ambassadors the truth came to you, and how heartily and zealously you at first received it. Similarly BENGEL, "Regard to her former *character* (*how* it once stood) ought to guard Sardis

against the future *hour*, *whatsoever* it shall be, proving fatal to her." But it is not likely that the Spirit repeats the same exhortation virtually to Sardis as to Ephesus.

If therefore--seeing thou art so warned, if, nevertheless, &c.

come on thee as a thief--in special judgment on thee as a Church, with the same stealthiness and as unexpectedly as shall be My visible second coming. As *the thief* gives no notice of his approach. Christ applies the language which in its fullest sense describes His second coming, to describe His coming in special judgments on churches and states (as Jerusalem, Mt 24:4-28) these special judgments being anticipatory earnestings of that great last coming. "The last day is hidden from us, that every day may be observed by us" [AUGUSTINE]. Twice Christ in the days of His flesh spake the same words (Mt 24:42, 43; Lu 12:39, 40); and so deeply had His words been engraven on the minds of the apostles that they are often repeated in their writings (Re 16:15; 1Th 5:2, 4, 6; 2Pe 3:10). The Greek proverb was that "the feet of the avenging deities are shod with wool," expressing the noiseless approach of the divine judgments, and their possible nearness at the moment when they were supposed the farthest off [TRENCH].

4. The three oldest manuscripts prefix "but," or "nevertheless" (notwithstanding thy spiritual deadness), and omit "even."

names--persons *named* in the book of life (Re 3:5) known by name by the Lord as His own. These had the reality corresponding to their name; not a mere *name* among men as *living*, while really *dead* (Re 3:1). The gracious Lord does not overlook any exceptional cases of real saints in the midst of unreal professors.

not defiled their garments--namely, the garments of their Christian profession, of which baptism is the initiatory seal, whence the candidates for baptism used in the ancient Church to be arrayed in white. Compare also Eph 5:27, as to the spotlessness of the Church when she shall be presented to Christ; and Re 19:8, as to the "fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of the saints," in which it shall be granted to her to be arrayed; and "the wedding garment." Meanwhile she is not to sully her Christian profession with any defilement of flesh or spirit, but to "keep her garments." For no defilement shall enter the heavenly city. Not that any keep themselves here wholly free from defilement; but, as compared with hollow professors, the godly *keep themselves unspotted from the world*; and when they do contract it, they wash it away, so as to have their "robes white in the blood of the Lamb" (Re 7:14). The *Greek* is not "to stain" (*Greek*, "*miainein*"), but to "defile," or besmear (*Greek*, "*molunein*"), So 5:3.

they shall walk with me in white--The promised reward accords with the character of those to be rewarded: keeping their *garments undefiled* and white through the blood of the Lamb now, they shall *walk with Him in white* hereafter. On "with me," compare the very same words, Lu 23:43; Joh 17:24. "Walk" implies spiritual life, for only the living walk; also liberty, for it is only the free who walk at large. The grace and dignity of flowing long garments is seen to best advantage when the person "walks": so the graces of the saint's manifested character shall appear fully when he *shall serve* the Lord perfectly hereafter (Re 22:3).

they are worthy--with the worthiness (not their own, but that) which Christ has put on them (Re 7:14). Eze 16:14, "perfect through MY comeliness which I had put upon thee." Grace is glory in the bud. "The *worthiness* here denotes a congruity between the saint's *state of grace* on earth, and that of *glory*, which the Lord has appointed for them, about to be estimated by the law itself of grace" [VITRINGA]. Contrast Ac 13:46.

5. white--not a dull white, but glittering, dazzling white [GROTIUS]. Compare Mt 13:43. The body transfigured into the likeness of Christ's body, and emitting beams of light reflected from Him, is probably the "white raiment" promised here.

the same--*Greek*, "THIS man"; he and he alone. So one oldest manuscript reads. But two oldest manuscripts, and most of the ancient versions, "shall **THUS** be clothed," &c.

raiment--*Greek*, "garments." "He that overcometh" shall receive the same reward as they who "have not defiled their garments" (Re 3:4); therefore the two are identical.

I will not--*Greek*, "I will not by any means."

blot out . . . name out of . . . book of life--of the heavenly city. A register was kept in ancient cities of their citizens: the names of the dead were of course erased. So those who have a *name that they live and are dead* (Re 3:1), are blotted out of God's roll of the heavenly citizens and heirs of eternal *life*; not that in God's electing decree they ever were in His book of life. But, according to human conceptions, those who had a high name for piety would be supposed to be in it, and were, in respect to privileges, actually among those in the way of salvation; but these privileges, and the fact that they once might have been saved, shall be of no avail to them. As to the *book of life*, compare Re 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; Ex 32:32; Ps 69:28; Da 12:1. In the sense of the "call," many are enrolled among the *called* to salvation, who shall not be found among *the chosen* at last. The pale of salvation is wider than that of election. Election is fixed. Salvation is open to all and is pending (humanly speaking) in the case of those mentioned here. But Re 20:15; 21:27, exhibit the book of the elect alone in the narrower sense, after the erasure of the others.

before . . . before--*Greek*, "in the presence of." Compare the same promise of Christ's confessing before His Father those who confessed Him, Mt 10:32, 33; Lu 12:8, 9. He omits "in heaven" after "My Father," because there is, now that He is in heaven, no contrast between the Father *in heaven* and the Son *on earth*. He now sets His seal from heaven upon many of His words uttered on earth [TRENCH]. An undesigned coincidence, proving that these epistles are, as they profess, in their words, as well as substance, Christ's own addresses; not even tinged with the color of John's style, such as it appears in his Gospel and Epistles. The coincidence is mainly with the three other Gospels, and not with John's, which makes the coincidence more markedly undesigned. So also the clause, "He that hath an ear, let him hear," is not repeated from John's Gospel, but from the Lord's own words in the three synoptic Gospels (Mt 11:15; 13:9; Mr 4:9, 23; 7:16; Lu 8:8; 14:35).

6. (See on [Re 2:7](#).)

7. Philadelphia--in Lydia, twenty-eight miles southeast of Sardis, built by Attalus Philadelphus, king of Pergamos, who died A.D. 138. It was nearly destroyed by an earthquake in the reign of Tiberius [TACITUS, *Annals*, 2.47]. The connection of this Church with Jews there causes the address to it to have an Old Testament coloring in the images employed. It and Smyrna alone of the seven receive unmixed praise.

he that is holy--as in the Old Testament, "*the Holy One* of Israel." Thus Jesus and the God of the Old Testament are one. None but God is absolutely holy (*Greek*, "*hagios*," separate from evil and perfectly hating it). In contrast to "the synagogue of Satan" (Re 3:9).

true--*Greek*, "*alethinos*": "VERY God," as distinguished from the false gods and from all those who *say that they are* what *they are not* (Re 3:9): real, genuine. Furthermore, He *perfectly* realizes all that is involved in the names, GOD, *Light* (Joh 1:9; 1Jo 2:8), *Bread* (Joh 6:32), the *Vine* (Joh 15:1); as distinguished from all typical, partial, and imperfect realizations of the idea. His nature answers to His name (Joh 17:3; 1Th 1:9). The *Greek*, "*alethes*," on the other hand, is "truth-speaking," "truth-loving" (Joh 3:33; Tit 1:2).

he that hath the key of David--the antitype of Eliakim, to whom the "key," the emblem of authority "over the house of David," was transferred from Shebna, who was removed from the office of chamberlain or treasurer, as unworthy of it. Christ, the Heir of the throne of David, shall supplant all the less worthy stewards who have abused their trust in God's spiritual house, and "shall reign over the house of Jacob," literal and spiritual (Lu 1:32, 33), "for ever," "as a Son over His own house" (Heb 3:2-6). It rests with Christ to open or shut the heavenly palace,

deciding who is, and who is not, to be admitted: as He also opens, or shuts, the prison, *having the keys of hell (the grave) and death* (Re 1:18). The power of the keys was given to Peter and the other apostles, only when, and in so far as, Christ made him and them infallible. Whatever degrees of this power may have been committed to ministers, the supreme power belongs to Christ alone. Thus Peter rightly opened the Gospel door to the Gentiles (Ac 10:1-48; 11:17, 18; especially Ac 14:27, end). But he wrongly tried to shut the door in part again (Ga 2:11-18). Eliakim had "the key of the house of David laid upon his shoulder": Christ, as the antitypical David, Himself has the key of the supreme "government upon His shoulder." His attribute here, as in the former addresses, accords with His promise. Though "the synagogue of Satan," false "Jews" (Re 3:9) try to "shut" the "door" which I "set open before thee"; "no man can shut it" (Re 3:8).

shutteth--So *Vulgate* and *Syriac Versions* read. But the four oldest manuscripts read, "shall shut"; so *Coptic Version* and ORIGEN.

and no man openeth--Two oldest manuscripts, B, *Aleph*, *Coptic Version*, and ORIGEN read, "shall open." Two oldest manuscripts, A, C, and *Vulgate Version* support *English Version* reading.

8. I have set--*Greek*, "given": it is My gracious *gift* to thee.

open door--for evangelization; a door of spiritual usefulness. The *opening of a door* by Him to the Philadelphian Church accords with the previous assignation to Him of "the key of David."

and--The three oldest manuscripts, A, B, C, and ORIGEN read, "*which* no man can shut."
for--"because."

a little--This gives the idea that Christ says, He sets before Philadelphia an open door because she has *some little* strength; whereas the sense rather is, He does so because she has "*but little* strength": being consciously weak herself, she is the fitter object for God's power to rest on [so AQUINAS], that so the Lord Christ may have all the glory.

and hast kept--*and* so, the *littleness of thy strength* becoming the source of Almighty power to thee, as leading thee to rest wholly on My great power, *thou hast kept My word*. GROTIUS makes "little strength" to mean that she had a Church *small in numbers and external resources*: "a little flock poor in worldly goods, and of small account in the eyes of men" [TRENCH]. So ALFORD. I prefer the view given above. The *Greek* verbs are in the aorist tense: "Thou didst keep . . . didst not deny My name": alluding to some particular occasion when her faithfulness was put to the test.

9. I will make--*Greek* present, "I make," literally, "I give" (see on [Re 3:8](#)). The promise to Philadelphia is larger than that to Smyrna. To Smyrna the promise was that "the synagogue of Satan" should not prevail against the faithful in her: to Philadelphia, that she should even win over some of "the synagogue of Satan" to *fall on their faces and confess God is in her of a truth*. Translate, "(some) of the synagogue." For until Christ shall come, and *all* Israel then be saved, there is but "a remnant" being gathered out of the Jews "according to the election of grace." This is an instance of how Christ set before her an "open door," some of her greatest adversaries, the Jews, being brought to the obedience of the faith. Their *worshipping before her feet* expresses the convert's willingness to take the very lowest place in the Church, doing servile honor to those whom once they persecuted, rather than dwell with the ungodly. So the Philippian jailer before Paul.

10. patience--"endurance." "The word of My endurance" is *My Gospel word*, which teaches *patient endurance* in expectation of my coming (Re 1:9). *My endurance* is the endurance which I require, and which I practice. Christ Himself now *endures*, *patiently* waiting until the usurper

be cast out, and all "His enemies be made His footstool." So, too, His Church, for the joy before her of sharing His coming kingdom, *endures patiently*. Hence, in Re 3:11, follows, "Behold, I come quickly."

I also--The reward is in kind: "because thou didst keep," &c. "I also (on My side) will keep thee," &c.

from--*Greek*, "(so as to deliver thee) *out of*," not to exempt *from* temptation.

the hour of temptation--the appointed *season* of affliction and temptation (so in De 4:34 the plagues are called "the temptations of Egypt"), literally, "*the* temptation": the sore temptation which is coming on: the time of great tribulation before Christ's second coming.

to try them that dwell upon the earth--those who are of earth, earthy (Re 8:13). "Dwell" implies that their home is earth, not heaven. *All mankind, except the elect* (Re 13:8, 14). The temptation brings out the fidelity of those *kept* by Christ and hardens the unbelieving reprobates (Re 9:20, 21; 16:11, 21). The particular persecutions which befell Philadelphia shortly after, were the earnest of the great last tribulation before Christ's coming, to which the Church's attention in all ages is directed.

11. Behold--omitted by the three oldest manuscripts and most ancient versions.

I come quickly--the great incentive to persevering faithfulness, and the consolation under present trials.

that . . . which thou hast--"The word of my patience," or "endurance" (Re 3:10), which He had just commended them for keeping, and which involved with it the attaining of the kingdom; this they would lose if they yielded to the temptation of exchanging consistency and suffering for compromise and ease.

that no man take thy crown--which otherwise thou wouldst receive: that no tempter cause thee to lose it: not that the tempter would thus secure it for himself (Col 2:18).

12. pillar in the temple--In one sense there shall be "no temple" in the heavenly city because there shall be no distinction of things into sacred and secular, for all things and persons shall be holy to the Lord. The city shall be all one great temple, in which the saints shall be not merely *stones*, as in the spiritual temple now on earth, but all eminent as *pillars*: immovably firm (unlike Philadelphia, the city which was so often shaken by earthquakes, STRABO [12 and 13]), like the colossal pillars before Solomon's temple, Boaz (that is, "In it is strength") and Jachin ("It shall be established"): only that those pillars were outside, these shall be within the temple.

my God--(See on [Re 2:7](#)).

go no more out--The *Greek* is stronger, *never more at all*. As the elect angels are beyond the possibility of falling, being now under (as the Schoolmen say) "the blessed necessity of goodness," so shall the saints be. The door shall be once for all shut, as well to shut safely in for ever the elect, as to shut out the lost (Mt 25:10; Joh 8:35; compare Isa 22:23, the type, Eliakim). They shall be priests for ever unto God (Re 1:6). "Who would not yearn for that city out of which no friend departs, and into which no enemy enters?" [AUGUSTINE in TRENCH].

write upon him the name of my God--as belonging to God in a peculiar sense (Re 7:3; 9:4; 14:1; and especially Re 22:4), therefore secure. As the name of Jehovah ("Holiness to the Lord") was on the golden plate on the high priest's forehead (Ex 28:36-38); so the saints in their heavenly royal priesthood shall bear His name openly, as consecrated to Him. Compare the caricature of this in the brand on the forehead of the beast's followers (Re 13:16, 17), and on the harlot (Re 17:5; compare Re 20:4).

name of the city of my God--as one of its citizens (Re 21:2, 3, 10, which is briefly alluded to by anticipation here). The full description of the city forms the appropriate close of the book. The saint's citizenship is now hidden, but then it shall be manifested: he shall have *the right to*

enter in through the gates into the city (Re 22:14). This was the city which Abraham looked for.

new--Greek, "kaine." Not the old Jerusalem, once called "the holy city," but having forfeited the name. Greek, "nea," would express that it had *recently come* into existence; but Greek, "kaine," that which is *new and different*, superseding the worn-out old Jerusalem and its polity. "John, in the Gospel, applies to the old city the Greek name *Hierosolyma*. But in the Apocalypse, always, to the heavenly city the Hebrew name, *Hierousalem*. The Hebrew name is the original and holier one: the Greek, the recent and more secular and political one" [BENGE].

my new name--at present incommunicable and only known to God: to be hereafter revealed and made the believer's own in union with God in Christ. Christ's name written on him denotes he shall be *wholly Christ's*. New also relates to Christ, who shall assume a *new* character (answering to His "new name") entering with His saints on a kingdom--not that which He had with the Father before the worlds, but that earned by His humiliation as Son of man. GIBBON, the infidel [*Decline and Fall*, ch. 64], gives an unwilling testimony to the fulfilment of the prophecy as to Philadelphia from a temporal point of view, Among the Greek colonies and churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect,--a *column* in a scene of ruins--a pleasing example that the paths of honor and safety may sometimes be the same."

13. (See on [Re 2:7](#)).

14. Laodiceans--The city was in the southwest of Phrygia, on the river Lycus, not far from Colosse, and lying between it and Philadelphia. It was destroyed by an earthquake, A.D. 62, and rebuilt by its wealthy citizens without the help of the state [TACITUS, *Annals*, 14.27]. This wealth (arising from the excellence of its wools) led to a self-satisfied, lukewarm state in spiritual things, as Re 3:17 describes. See on [Col 4:16](#), on the Epistle which is thought to have been written to the Laodicean Church by Paul. The Church in latter times was apparently flourishing; for one of the councils at which the canon of Scripture was determined was held in Laodicea in A.D. 361. Hardly a Christian is now to be found on or near its site.

the Amen-- (Isa 65:16, *Hebrew*, "Bless Himself in the God of *Amen* . . . swear by the God of *Amen*," 2Co 1:20). He who not only says, but is, *the Truth*. The saints used *Amen* at the end of prayer, or in assenting to the word of God; but none, save the Son of God, ever said, "Amen, I say unto you," for it is the language peculiar to God, who avers *by Himself*. The New Testament formula, "Amen. I say unto you," is equivalent to the Old Testament formula, "*as I live*, saith Jehovah." In John's Gospel alone He uses (in the *Greek*) the double "Amen," Joh 1:51; 3:3, &c.; in *English Version*, "Verily, verily." The title happily harmonizes with the address. His unchanging faithfulness as "the Amen" contrasts with Laodicea's wavering of purpose, "neither hot nor cold" (Re 3:16). The angel of Laodicea has with some probability been conjectured to be Archippus, to whom, thirty years previously, Paul had already given a monition, as needing to be stirred up to diligence in his ministry. So the *Apostolic Constitutions*, [8.46], name him as the first bishop of Laodicea: supposed to be the son of Philemon (Phm 2).

faithful and true witness--As "the Amen" expresses the unchangeable truth of His promises; so "the faithful the true witness," the truth of His revelations as to the heavenly things which He has seen and testifies. "Faithful," that is, trustworthy (2Ti 2:11, 13). "True" is here (*Greek*, "*alethinos*") *not truth-speaking* (*Greek*, "*alethes*"), but "perfectly realizing all that is comprehended in the name *Witness*" (1Ti 6:13). Three things are necessary for this: (1) to have seen with His own eyes what He attests; (2) to be competent to relate it for others; (3) to be willing truthfully to do so. In Christ all these conditions meet [TRENCH].

beginning of the creation of God--not he whom God created first, but as in Col 1:15-18 (see on [Col 1:15-18](#)), the *Beginner* of all creation, its originating instrument. All creation would not be represented adoring Him, if He were but one of themselves. His being the Creator is a

strong guarantee for His *faithfulness* as "the Witness and Amen."

15. neither cold--The antithesis to "hot," literally, "boiling" ("fervent," Ac 18:25; Ro 12:11; compare So 8:6; Lu 24:32), requires that "cold" should here mean more than negatively cold; it is rather, positively *icy cold*: having never yet been warmed. The Laodiceans were in spiritual things *cold* comparatively, but not *cold* as the world outside, and as those who had never belonged to the Church. The lukewarm state, if it be the transitional stage to a warmer, is a desirable state (for a little religion, if real, is better than none); but most fatal when, as here, an abiding condition, for it is mistaken for a safe state (Re 3:17). This accounts for Christ's desiring that they were *cold* rather than *lukewarm*. For then there would not be the same "danger of mixed motive and disregarded principle" [ALFORD]. Also, there is more hope of the "cold," that is, those who are of the world, and not yet warmed by the Gospel call; for, when called, they may become *hot* and fervent Christians: such did the once-*cold* publicans, Zaccheus and Matthew, become. But the *lukewarm* has been brought within reach of the holy fire, without being heated by it into *fervor*: having religion enough to lull the conscience in false security, but not religion enough to save the soul: as Demas, 2Ti 4:10. Such were the *halters between two opinions* in Israel (1Ki 18:21; compare 2Ki 17:41; Mt 6:24).

16. neither cold nor hot--So one oldest manuscript, B, and *Vulgate* read. But two oldest manuscripts, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* transpose thus, "hot nor cold." It is remarkable that the *Greek* adjectives are in the masculine, agreeing with the angel, not feminine, agreeing with the Church. The Lord addresses the angel as the embodiment and representative of the Church. The chief minister is answerable for his flock if he have not faithfully warned the members of it.

I will--*Greek*, "I am about to," "I am ready to": I have it in my mind: implying graciously the possibility of the threat not being executed, if only they repent at once. His dealings towards them will depend on theirs towards Him.

spue thee out of my month--reject with righteous loathing, as Canaan spued out its inhabitants for their abominations. Physicians used *lukewarm* water to cause *vomiting*. *Cold* and *hot* drinks were common at feasts, but never *lukewarm*. There were hot and cold springs near Laodicea.

17. Self-sufficiency is the fatal danger of a lukewarm state (see on [Re 3:15](#)).

thou sayest--virtually and mentally, if not in so many words.

increased with goods--*Greek*, "have become enriched," implying self-praise in self-acquired riches. The Lord alludes to Ho 12:8. The riches on which they prided themselves were spiritual riches; though, doubtless, their spiritual self-sufficiency ("I have need of nothing") was much fostered by their worldly wealth; as, on the other hand, *poverty of spirit* is fostered by *poverty* in respect to worldly riches.

knowest not that thou--in particular above all others. The "THOU" in the *Greek* is emphatic.

art wretched--*Greek*, "art *the* wretched one."

miserable--So one oldest manuscripts reads. But two oldest manuscripts prefix "the." Translate, "*the* pitiable"; "the one especially to be pitied." How different Christ's estimate of men, from their own estimate of themselves, "I have need of nothing!"

blind--whereas Laodicea boasted of a deeper than common *insight* into divine things. They were not absolutely *blind*, else *eye-salve* would have been of no avail to them; but *short-sighted*.

18. Gentle and loving irony. Take *My advice*, thou who fanciest thyself in *need of nothing*. Not only art thou not in need of nothing, but art in need of the commonest necessities of

existence. He graciously stoops to their modes of thought and speech: Thou art a people ready to listen to any *counsel* as to how to *buy* to advantage; then, listen to My *counsel* (for I am "*Counsellor*," Isa 9:6), buy of ME" (*in whom*, according to Paul's Epistle written to the neighboring Colosse and intended for the Laodicean Church also, Col 2:1, 3; 4:16, *are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*). "Buy" does not imply that we can, by any work or merit of ours, *purchase* God's free gift; nay the very purchase money consists in the renunciation of all self-righteousness, such as Laodicea had (Re 3:17). "Buy" at the cost of thine own self-sufficiency (so Paul, Php 3:7, 8); and the giving up of all things, however dear to us, that would prevent our *receiving* Christ's salvation as a *free gift*, for example, self and worldly desires. Compare Isa 55:1, "Buy . . . without money and price."

of me--the source of "unsearchable riches" (Eph 3:8). Laodicea was a city of extensive money transactions [CICERO].

gold tried in, &c.--literally, "*fired* (and fresh) *from* the fire," that is, just fresh *from* the furnace which has proved its purity, and retaining its bright gloss. Sterling spiritual wealth, as contrasted with its counterfeit, in which Laodicea boasted itself. Having bought this *gold* she will be no longer *poor* (Re 3:17).

mayest be rich--*Greek*, "mayest be enriched."

white raiment--"garments." Laodicea's wools were famous. Christ offers infinitely whiter raiment. As "gold tried in the fire" expresses *faith* tested by fiery trials: so "white raiment," *Christ's righteousness* imputed to the believer in justification and imparted in sanctification.

appear--*Greek*, "be manifested," namely, at the last day, when everyone without the wedding garment shall be discovered. To strip one, is in the East the image of putting to open shame. So also to clothe one with fine apparel is the image of doing him honor. Man can discover his shame, God alone can cover it, so that his nakedness shall not be manifested at last (Col 3:10-14). Blessed is he whose sin is so *covered*. The hypocrite's shame may be manifested now; it must be so at last.

anoint . . . with eye-salve--The oldest manuscripts read, "(buy of Me) eye-salve (*collyrium*, a roll of ointment), *to anoint* thine eyes." Christ has for Laodicea an ointment far more precious than all the costly unguents of the East. The *eye* is here the conscience or inner light of the mind. According as it is sound and "single" (*Greek*, "*haplous*," "simple"), or otherwise, the man sees aright spiritually, or does not. The Holy Spirit's unction, like the ancient eye-salve's, first smarts with conviction of sin, then heals. He opens our eyes first to ourselves in our wretchedness, then to the Saviour in His preciousness. TRENCH notices that the most sunken churches of the seven, namely, Sardis and Laodicea, are the ones in which alone are specified no opponents from without, nor heresies from within. The Church owes much to God's overruling Providence which has made so often internal and external foes, in spite of themselves, to promote His cause by calling forth her energies in contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. Peace is dearly bought at the cost of spiritual stagnation, where there is not interest enough felt in religion to contend about it at all.

19. (Job 5:17; Pr 3:11, 12; Heb 12:5, 6.) So in the case of Manasseh (2Ch 33:11-13).

As many--All. "He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. And shalt thou be an exception? If excepted from suffering the scourge, thou art excepted from the number of the sons" [AUGUSTINE]. This is an encouragement to Laodicea not to despair, but to regard the rebuke as a token for good, if she profit by it.

I love--*Greek*, "*philo*," the love of gratuitous *affection*, independent of any grounds for esteem in the object loved. But in the case of Philadelphia (Re 3:9), "I have loved thee" (*Greek*, "*egapesa*") with the love of *esteem*, founded on the judgment. Compare the note in my *English Gnomon* of BENGEL, Joh 21:15-17.

I rebuke--The "I" in the *Greek* stands first in the sentence emphatically. I in My dealings, so

altogether unlike man's, in the case of *all whom I love, rebuke*. The *Greek*, "*elencho*," is the same verb as in Joh 16:8, "(the Holy Ghost) will *convince* (rebuke unto conviction) the world of sin."

chasten--"chastise." The *Greek*, "*paideu*," which in classical *Greek* means to *instruct*, in the New Testament means to *instruct by chastisement* (Heb 12:5, 6). David was *rebuked unto conviction*, when he cried, "I have sinned against the Lord"; the *chastening* followed when his child was taken from him (2Sa 12:13, 14). In the divine *chastening*, the sinner at one and the same time winces under the rod and learns righteousness.

be zealous--habitually. Present tense in the *Greek*, of a *lifelong course of zeal*. The opposite of "lukewarm." The *Greek* by alliteration marks this: Laodicea had not been "hot" (*Greek*, "*zestos*"), she is therefore urged to "be zealous" (*Greek*, "*zeleue*"): both are derived from the same verb, *Greek*, "*zeo*," "to boil."

repent--*Greek* aorist: of an act to be *once for all done*, and *done at once*.

20. stand--waiting in wonderful condescension and long-suffering.

knock-- (So 5:2). This is a further manifestation of His loving desire for the sinner's salvation. He who is Himself "the Door," and who bids us "knock" that it may be "opened unto" us, is first Himself to knock at the door of our hearts. If He did not knock first, we should never come to knock at His door. Compare So 5:4-6, which is plainly alluded to here; the Spirit thus in Revelation sealing the canonicity of that mystical book. The spiritual state of the bride there, between *waking* and *sleeping*, slow to open the door to her divine lover, answers to that of the *lukewarm* Laodicea here. "Love in regard to men emptied (humbled) God; for He does not remain in His place and call to Himself the servant whom He loved, but He comes down Himself to seek him, and He who is all-rich arrives at the lodging of the pauper, and with His own voice intimates His yearning love, and seeks a similar return, and withdraws not when disowned, and is not impatient at insult, and when persecuted still waits at the doors" [NICOLAUS CABASILAS in TRENCH].

my voice--He appeals to the sinner not only with His hand (His providences) *knocking*, but with His *voice* (His word read or heard; or rather, His Spirit inwardly applying to man's spirit the lessons to be drawn from His providence and His word). If we refuse to answer to His knocking at our door now, He will refuse to hear our knocking at His door hereafter. In respect to His second coming also, He is even now *at the door*, and we know not how soon He may *knock*: therefore we should always be ready to *open to Him immediately*.

if any man hear--for man is not compelled by irresistible force: Christ *knocks*, but does not break open the door, though the violent take heaven by the force of prayer (Mt 11:12): whosoever does hear, does so not of himself, but by the *drawings* of God's grace (Joh 6:44): *repentance* is Christ's gift (Ac 5:31). He *draws*, not drags. The Sun of righteousness, like the natural sun, the moment that *the door* is opened, pours in His light, which could not previously find an entrance. Compare HILARY on Psalm 118:19.

I will come in to him--as I did to Zaccheus.

sup with him, and he with me--Delightful reciprocity! Compare "dwelleth in me, and I in Him," Joh 6:56. Whereas, ordinarily, the admitted guest sups with the admitter, here the divine guest becomes Himself the host, for He is the bread of life, and the Giver of the marriage feast. Here again He alludes to the imagery of So 4:16, where the Bride invites Him to *eat pleasant fruits*, even as He had first prepared a feast for her, "His fruit was sweet to my taste." Compare the same interchange, Joh 21:9-13, the feast being made up of the viands that Jesus brought, and those which the disciples brought. The consummation of this blessed intercommunion shall be at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, of which the Lord's Supper is the earnest and foretaste.

21. sit with me in my throne-- (Re 2:26, 27; 20:6; Mt 19:28; 20:23; Joh 17:22, 24; 2Ti

2:12). The same whom Christ had just before threatened to *spue out of His mouth*, is now offered *a seat with Him on His throne!* "The highest place is within reach of the lowest; the faintest spark of grace may be fanned into the mightiest flame of love" [TRENCH].

even as I also--Two thrones are here mentioned: (1) His Father's, upon which He now sits, and has sat since His ascension, after His victory over death, sin, the world; upon this none can sit save God, and the God-man Christ Jesus, for it is the incommunicable prerogative of God alone; (2) the throne which shall be peculiarly *His* as the once humbled and then glorified *Son of man*, to be set up over the whole earth (heretofore usurped by Satan) at His coming again; in this the *victorious* saints shall share (1Co 6:2). The transfigured elect Church shall with Christ judge and reign over the nations in the flesh, and Israel the foremost of them; ministering blessings to them as angels were the Lord's mediators of blessing and administrators of His government in setting up His throne in Israel at Sinai. This privilege of our high calling belongs exclusively to the present time while Satan reigns, when alone there is scope for conflict and for *victory* (2Ti 2:11, 12). When Satan shall be bound (Re 20:4), there shall be no longer scope for it, for all on earth shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest. This, the grandest and crowning promise, is placed at the end of all the seven addresses, to gather all in one. It also forms the link to the next part of the book, where the Lamb is introduced seated *on His Father's throne* (Re 4:2, 3; 5:5, 6). The Eastern throne is broad, admitting others besides him who, as chief, occupies the center. TRENCH notices; The order of the promises in the seven epistles corresponds to that of the unfolding of the kingdom of God its first beginnings on earth to its consummation in heaven. To the faithful at Ephesus: (1) *The tree of life in the Paradise of God* is promised (Re 2:7), answering to Ge 2:9. (2) Sin entered the world and death by sin; but to the faithful at Smyrna it is promised, they *shall not be hurt by the second death* (Re 2:11). (3) The promise of the *hidden manna* (Re 2:17) to Pergamos brings us to the Mosaic period, the Church in the wilderness. (4) That to Thyatira, namely, *triumph over the nations* (Re 2:26, 27), forms the consummation of the kingdom in prophetic type, the period of David and Solomon characterized by this *power of the nations*. Here there is a division, the seven falling into two groups, *four* and three, as often, for example, the Lord's Prayer, three and four. The scenery of the last three passes from earth to heaven, the Church contemplated as triumphant, with its steps from glory to glory. (5) Christ promises to the believer of Sardis not to blot his name out of the book of life but to confess him before His Father and the angels at the judgment-day, and clothe him with a glorified body of dazzling whiteness (Re 3:4, 5). (6) To the faithful at Philadelphia Christ promises they shall be citizens of the new Jerusalem, fixed as immovable pillars there, where city and temple are one (Re 3:12); here not only individual salvation is promised to the believer, as in the case of Sardis, but also privileges in the blessed communion of the Church triumphant. (7) Lastly, to the faithful of Laodicea is given the crowning promise, not only the two former blessings, but a seat with Christ on His throne, even as He has sat with His Father on His Father's throne (Re 3:21).

CHAPTER 4

Re 4:1-11. VISION OF GOD'S THRONE IN HEAVEN; THE FOUR AND TWENTY ELDERS; THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES.

Here begins the Revelation proper; and first, the fourth and fifth chapters set before us the heavenly scenery of the succeeding visions, and God on His throne, as the *covenant God of His Church*, the Revealer of them to His apostle through Jesus Christ. The first great portion comprises the opening of the seals and the sounding of the trumpets (fourth to eleventh chapters). As the communication respecting the seven churches opened with a suitable vision of

the Lord Jesus as Head of the Church, so the second part opens with a vision suitable to the matter to be revealed. The scene is changed from earth to *heaven*.

1. After this--*Greek*, "After these things," marking the opening of the next vision in the succession. Here is the transition from "the things which are" (Re 1:19), the existing state of the seven churches, as a type of the Church in general, in John's time, to "the things which shall be hereafter," namely, in relation to the time when John wrote.

I looked--rather as *Greek*, "I saw" in vision; not as *English Version* means, I directed my *look* that way.

was--Omit, as not being in the *Greek*.

opened--"standing open"; not as though John saw it in the act of being opened. Compare Eze 1:1; Mt 3:16; Ac 7:56; 10:11. But in those visions the heavens opened, disclosing the visions to those below on earth. Whereas here, heaven, the temple of God, remains closed to those on earth, but John is transported in vision through an open door up into heaven, whence he can see things passing on earth or in heaven, according as the scenes of the several visions require.

the first voice which I heard--the voice which I heard at first, namely, in Re 1:10; *the former voice*.

was as it were--Omit *was*, it not being in the *Greek*. "Behold" governs in sense both "a door," &c., and "the first voice," &c.

Come up hither--through the "open door."

be--come to pass.

hereafter--*Greek*, "after these things": after the present time (Re 1:19).

2. And--omitted in the two oldest manuscripts, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*.

I was, &c.--*Greek*, "I became in the Spirit" (see on [Re 1:10](#)): I was completely rapt in vision into the heavenly world.

was set--not *was placed*, but *was situated*, literally, "lay."

one sat on the throne--the Eternal Father: the Creator (Re 4:11): also compare Re 4:8 with Re 1:4, where also the Father is designated, "which is, and was, and is to come." When the Son, "the Lamb," is introduced, Re 5:5-9, a *new* song is sung which distinguishes *the Sitter on the throne* from *the Lamb*, "Thou hast redeemed us to God," and Re 5:13, "Unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." So also in Re 5:7, as in Da 7:13, the *Son of man* brought before *the Ancient of days* is distinguished from Him. The Father in essence is invisible, but in Scripture at times is represented as assuming a visible form.

3. was--omitted in the two oldest manuscripts but supported by *Vulgate* and *Coptic*.

to look upon--*Greek*, "in sight," or "appearance."

jasper--From Re 21:11, where it is called *most precious*, which the *jasper* was not, EBRARD infers it was a diamond. Ordinarily, the *jasper* is a stone of various wavy colors, somewhat transparent: in Re 21:11 it represents watery crystalline brightness. The *sardine*, our cornelian, or else a fiery red. As the watery brightness represents God's holiness, so the fiery red His justice executing fiery wrath. The same union of white or watery brightness and fiery redness appears in Re 1:14; 10:1; Eze 1:4; 8:2; Da 7:9.

rainbow round about the throne--forming a complete circle (type of God's perfection and eternity: not a half circle as the earthly rainbow) surrounding the throne vertically. Its various colors, which combined form one pure solar ray, symbolize the varied aspects of God's providential dealings uniting in one harmonious whole. Here, however, the predominating color among the prismatic colors is green, the most refreshing of colors to look upon, and so

symbolizing God's consolatory promises in Christ to His people amidst judgments on His foes. Moreover, the rainbow was the appointed token of God's covenant with all flesh, and His people in particular. Hereby God in type renewed to man the grant originally made to the first Adam. The antitype will be the "new heavens and the new earth" restored to redeemed man, just as the earth, after the destruction by the flood, was restored to Noah. As the rainbow was first reflected on the waters of the world's ruin, and continues to be seen only when a cloud is brought over the earth, so another deluge, namely, of fire, shall precede the new heavens and earth: the Lord, as here, on His throne, whence (Re 4:5) proceed "lightnings and thunderings," shall issue the commission to rid the earth of its oppressors: but then, amidst judgment, when other men's hearts fail them for fear, the believer shall be reassured by the rainbow, the covenant token, round the throne (compare DE BURGH, *Exposition of Revelation*). The heavenly bow speaks of the shipwreck of the world through sin: it speaks also of calm and sunshine after the storm. The *cloud* is the regular token of God's and Christ's presence, for example, in the tabernacle's holiest place; on Mount Sinai at the giving of the law; at the ascension (Ac 1:9); at His coming again (Re 4:7).

4. seats--rather as the *Greek* is translated in this very verse, "thrones," of course lower and smaller than the grand central *throne*. So Re 16:10, "the seat (rather, *throne*) of the beasts," in hellish parody of God's throne.

four and twenty elders--*Greek*, "the four and twenty (or as one oldest manuscript, 'twenty-four') elders": the well-known elders [ALFORD]. But TREGELLES translates, "Upon the twenty-four thrones (*I saw*: omitted in two oldest manuscripts) elders sitting": which is more probable, as *the twenty-four elders* were not mentioned before, whereas *the twenty-four thrones* were. They are not angels, for they have *white robes* and *crowns* of victory, implying a conflict and endurance, "Thou hast *redeemed us*": they represent the *Heads* of the Old and New Testament churches respectively, the Twelve Patriarchs (compare Re 7:5-8, not in their personal, but in their representative character), and Twelve Apostles. So in Re 15:3, "the song of *Moses*, and of the *Lamb*," the double constituents of the Church are implied, the Old Testament and the New Testament. "Elders" is the very term for *the ministry* both of the Old and New Testament, the Jewish and the catholic Gentile Church. The tabernacle was a "pattern" of the heavenly antitype; the holy place, a figure of HEAVEN ITSELF. Thus Jehovah's throne is represented by the mercy seat in the holiest, the Shekinah-cloud over it. "The seven lamps of fire before the throne" (Re 4:5) are antitypical to the seven-branched candlestick also in the holiest, emblem of the manifold Spirit of God: "the sea of glass" (Re 4:6) corresponds to the molten sea before the sanctuary, wherein the priests washed themselves before entering on their holy service; so introduced here in connection with the redeemed "priests unto God" (compare *Note*, see on [Re 15:2](#)). The "four living creatures" (Re 4:6, 7) answer to the cherubim over the mercy seat. So the twenty-four throned and crowned elders are typified by the twenty-four chiefs of the twenty-four courses of priests, "*Governors* of the sanctuary, and governors of God" (1Ch 24:5; 25:1-31).

5. proceeded--*Greek*, "proceed."

thunderings and voices--The two oldest manuscripts transpose, "voices and thunderings." Compare at the giving of the law on Sinai, Ex 19:16. "The *thunderings* express God's threats against the ungodly: there are voices in the thunders (Re 10:3), that is, not only does He threaten generally, but also predicts *special* judgments" [GROTIUS].

seven lamps . . . seven Spirits--The Holy Spirit in His sevenfold operation, as the light-and-life Giver (compare Re 5:6, *seven eyes* . . . *the seven Spirits of God*; Re 1:4; 21:23; Ps 119:105) and fiery purifier of the godly, and consumer of the ungodly (Mt 3:11).

6. Two oldest manuscripts, A, B, *Vulgate*, *Coptic*, and *Syriac* read, "As it were a sea of glass."

like . . . crystal--not imperfectly transparent as the ancient common glass, but like rock crystal. Contrast the turbid "many waters" on which the harlot "sitteth" (Re 17:1, 15). Compare Job 37:18, "the sky . . . as a molten looking-glass." Thus, primarily, the pure ether which separates God's throne from John, and from all things before it, may be meant, symbolizing the "purity, calmness, and majesty of God's rule" [ALFORD]. But see the analogue in the temple, the molten sea *before* the sanctuary (see on [Re 4:4](#), above). There is in this sea depth and transparency, but not the fluidity and instability of the natural sea (compare Re 21:1). It stands solid, calm, and clear, God's *judgments* are called "a great deep" (Ps 36:6). In Re 15:2 it is a "sea of glass mingled with *fire*." Thus there is symbolized here the purificatory baptism of water and the Spirit of all who are made "kings and priests unto God." In Re 15:2 the baptism with the fire of trial is meant. Through both all the king-priests have to pass in coming to God: His *judgments*, which overwhelm the ungodly, they stand firmly upon, as on a solid sea of glass; able like Christ to walk on the sea, as though it were solid.

round about the throne--one in the midst of each side of the throne.

four beasts--The *Greek* for "beasts," Re 13:1, 11, is different, *therion*, the symbol for the carnal man by opposition to God losing his true glory, as lord, under Him, of the lower creatures, and degraded to the level of the *beast*. Here it is *zoon*, "living creatures"; not *beast*.

7. **calf**--"a steer" [ALFORD]. The *Septuagint* often uses the *Greek* term here for an *ox* (Ex 22:1; 29:10, &c.).

as a man--The oldest manuscripts have "as of a man."

8. **about him**--*Greek*, "round about him." ALFORD connects this with the following sentence: "All round and within (their wings) they are (so two oldest manuscripts, A, B, and *Vulgate* read) full of eyes." John's object is to show that the six wings in each did not interfere with that which he had before declared, namely, that they were "full of eyes before and behind." The eyes were *round* the outside of each wing, and up the *inside* of each when half expanded, and of the part of body in that inward recess.

rest not--literally, "have no rest." How awfully different the reason why the worshippers of the beast "have no rest day nor night," namely, "their torment for ever and ever."

Holy, holy, holy--The "*tris-hagion*" of the *Greek* liturgies. In Isa 6:3, as here, it occurs; also Ps 99:3, 5, 9, where He is praised as "holy," (1) on account of His majesty (Re 4:1) about to display itself; (2) His justice (Re 4:4) already displaying itself; (3) His mercy (Re 4:6-8) which displayed itself in times past. So here "Holy," as He "who was"; "Holy," as He "who is": "Holy," as He "who is to come." He showed Himself an object of holy worship in the past creation of all things: more fully He shows Himself so in governing all things: He will, in the highest degree, show Himself so in the consummation of all things. "Of (from) Him, through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." In Isa 6:3 there is added, "the whole EARTH is full of His glory." But in Revelation this is deferred until the glory of THE LORD fills *the earth*, His enemies having been destroyed [BENGEL].

Almighty--answering to "Lord of hosts" (Sabaoth), Isa 6:3.

The cherubim here have *six* wings, like the seraphim in Isa 6:2; whereas the cherubim in Eze 1:6 had *four* wings each. They are called by the same name, "living creatures." But whereas in Ezekiel each living creature has all four faces, here the four belong severally one to each. See on [Eze 1:6](#). The four *living creatures* answer by contrast to the four world powers represented by four *beasts*. The Fathers identified them with the four Gospels, Matthew the lion, Mark the ox,

Luke the man, John the eagle: these symbols, thus viewed, express not the personal character of the Evangelists, but the manifold aspect of *Christ* in relation to the world (*four* being the number significant of world-wide extension, for example, the four quarters of the world) presented by them severally: the lion expressing *royalty*, as Matthew gives prominence to this feature of Christ; the ox, *laborious endurance*, Christ's prominent characteristic in Mark; man, *brotherly sympathy* with the whole race of man, Christ's prominent feature in Luke; the eagle, *soaring majesty*, prominent in John's description of Christ as the Divine Word. But here the context best suits the view which regards the *four living creatures* as representing the *redeemed election-Church* in its relation of ministering king-priests to God, and ministers of blessing to the redeemed earth, and the nations on it, and the animal creation, in which *man* stands at the head of all, *the lion* at the head of wild beasts, *the ox* at the head of tame beasts, *the eagle* at the head of birds and of the creatures of the waters. Compare Re 5:8-10, "Thou hast *redeemed us* by Thy blood *out of every kindred . . . and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth*"; and Re 20:4, the partakers with Christ of the first resurrection, who conjointly with Him *reign* over the redeemed nations that are in the flesh. Compare as to the happy and willing subjection of the lower animal world, Isa 11:6-8; 65:25; Eze 34:25; Ho 2:18. Jewish tradition says the "four standards" under which Israel encamped in the wilderness, to the east, Judah, to the north, Dan, to the west, Ephraim, to the south, Reuben, were respectively a *lion*, an *eagle*, an *ox*, and a *man*, while in the midst was the tabernacle containing the Shekinah symbol of the Divine Presence. Thus we have "the picture of that blessed period when--the earth having been fitted for being the kingdom of the Father--the court of heaven will be transferred to earth, and the 'tabernacle of God shall be with men' (Re 21:3), and the whole world will be subject to a never-ending theocracy" (compare DE BURGH, *Exposition of Revelation*). The point of union between the two views given above is: Christ is the perfect realization of the ideal of man; Christ is presented in His fourfold aspect in the four Gospels respectively. The redeemed election-Church similarly, when in and through Christ (with whom she shall reign) she realizes the ideal of man, shall combine in herself human perfections having a fourfold aspect: (1) kingly righteousness with hatred of evil and judicial equity, answering to the "lion"; (2) laborious diligence in every duty, the "ox"; (3) human sympathy, the "man"; (4) the contemplation of heavenly truth, the "eagle." As the high-soaring intelligence, the *eagle*, forms the contrasted complement to practical labor, the *ox* bound to the soil; so holy judicial vengeance against evil, the *lion* springing suddenly and terribly on the doomed, forms the contrasted complement to human sympathy, the *man*. In Isa 6:2 we read, "Each had six wings: with twain he covered his face (in *reverence*, as not presuming to lift up his face to God), with twain he covered his feet (in *humility*, as not worthy to stand in God's holy presence), and with twain he did fly [in *obedient* readiness to do instantly God's command]."

9-11. The ground of praise here is God's *eternity*, and God's *power* and *glory* manifested in the creation of all things for His pleasure. Creation is the foundation of all God's other acts of power, wisdom, and love, and therefore forms the first theme of His creatures' thanksgivings. The four living creatures take the lead of the twenty-four elders, both in this anthem, and in that *new song* which follows on the ground of their redemption (Re 5:8-10).

when--that is, whensoever: as often as. A simultaneous giving of glory on the part of the beasts, and on the part of the elders.

give--"shall give" in one oldest manuscript.

for ever and ever--*Greek*, "unto the ages of the ages."

10. fall--immediately. *Greek*, "*shall fall down*": implying that this ascription of praise *shall be repeated* onward to eternity. So also, "*shall worship . . . shall cast their crowns*," namely, in acknowledgment that all the merit of their *crowns* (not kingly *diadems*, but the *crowns* of

conquerors) is due to Him.

11. O Lord--The two oldest manuscripts, A, B, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac* add, "and our God." "Our" by virtue of creation, and especially redemption. One oldest manuscript, B, and *Syriac* insert "the Holy One." But another, A, *Vulgate*, and *Coptic* omit this, as *English Version* does.

glory, &c.--"the glory . . . the honour . . . the power."

thou--emphatic in the *Greek*: "It is THOU who didst create."

all things--*Greek*, "the all things": the universe.

for, &c.--*Greek*, "on account of"; "for the sake of Thy pleasure," or "will." *English Version* is good *Greek*. Though the context better suits, it was *because of Thy will*, that "they were" (so one oldest manuscript, A, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* read, instead of *English Version* "are": another oldest manuscript, B, reads, "They were *not*, and were created," were created out of nothing), that is, *were existing*, as contrasted with their previous non-existence. With God to *will* is to effect: to determine is to perform. So in Ge 1:3, "Let there be light, and there was light": in *Hebrew* an expressive tautology, the same word and tense and letters being used for "let there be," and "there was," marking the simultaneity and identity of the will and the effect. D.

LONGINUS [*On the Sublime*, 9], a heathen, praises this description of God's power by "the lawgiver of the Jews, no ordinary man," as one worthy of the theme.

were created--by Thy definite act of creation at a definite time.

CHAPTER 5

Re 5:1-14. THE BOOK WITH SEVEN SEALS: NONE WORTHY TO OPEN IT BUT THE LAMB: HE TAKES IT AMIDST THE PRAISES OF THE REDEEMED, AND OF THE WHOLE HEAVENLY HOST.

1. in, &c.--*Greek*, "(lying) upon the right hand." His right hand was open and on it lay the book. On God's part there was no withholding of His future purposes as contained in the book: the only obstacle to unsealing it is stated in Re 5:3 [ALFORD].

book--rather, as accords with the ancient form of books, and with the *writing on the backside*, "a roll." The *writing on the back* implies fulness and completeness, so that nothing more needs to be added (Re 22:18). The roll, or book, appears from the context to be "*the title-deed of man's inheritance*" [DE BURGH] redeemed by Christ, and contains the successive steps by which He shall recover it from its usurper and obtain actual possession of the kingdom already "purchased" for Himself and His elect saints. However, no portion of the roll is said to be *unfolded* and *read*; but simply the *seals* are successively *opened*, giving final access to its contents being read as a perfect whole, which shall not be until the events symbolized by the seals shall have been past, when Eph 3:10 shall receive its *complete* accomplishment, and the Lamb shall reveal God's providential plans in redemption in all their manifold beauties. Thus the opening of the seals will mean the successive steps by which God in Christ clears the way for the final opening and reading of the book at the visible setting up of the kingdom of Christ. Compare, at the grand consummation, Re 20:12, "Another book was opened . . . the book of life"; Re 22:19. None is worthy to do so save the Lamb, for He alone as such has redeemed man's forfeited inheritance, of which *the book is the title-deed*. The question (Re 5:2) is not (as commonly supposed), Who should reveal the destinies of the Church (for this any inspired prophet would be competent to do)? but, Who has the WORTH to give man a new title to his lost inheritance? [DE BURGH].

sealed . . . seven seals--*Greek*, "sealed up," or "firmly sealed." The number *seven* (divided into four, the world-wide number, and three, the divine) abounds in Revelation and expresses

completeness. Thus, the *seven seals*, representing all power given to the Lamb; the *seven trumpets*, by which the world kingdoms are shaken and overthrown, and the Lamb's kingdom ushered in; and the *seven vials*, by which the beast's kingdom is destroyed.

2. strong-- (Ps 103:20). His voice penetrated heaven, earth, and Hades (Re 10:1-3).

3. no man--*Greek*, "no one." Not merely *no man*, but also *no one* of any order of beings.

in earth--*Greek*, "upon the earth."

under the earth--namely, in Hades.

look thereon--to look upon the contents, so as to read them.

4. and to read--inserted in *English Version Greek* text without good authority. One oldest manuscript, ORIGEN, CYPRIAN, and HILARY omit the clause. "To read" would be awkward standing between "to open the book" and "to look thereon." John having been promised a revelation of "things which must be hereafter," *weeps* now at his earnest desire being apparently frustrated. He is a pattern to us to imitate, as an eager and teachable learner of the Apocalypse.

5. one of--*Greek*, "one from among." The "elder" meant is, according to some (in LYRA), Matthew. With this accords the description here given of Christ, "the *Lion*, which is (so the *Greek*) of the tribe of Juda, the root of David"; the royal, David-descended, lion-aspect of Christ being that prominent in Matthew, whence the lion among the fourfold cherubim is commonly assigned to him. GERHARD in BENGEL thought Jacob to be meant, being, doubtless, one of those who rose with Christ and ascended to heaven (Mt 27:52, 53). The elders in heaven round God's throne know better than John, still in the flesh, the far-reaching power of Christ.

Root of David-- (Isa 11:1, 10). Not merely "a sucker come up from David's ancient root" (as ALFORD limits it), but also including the idea of His being Himself the root and origin of David: compare these two truths brought together, Mt 22:42-45. Hence He is called not merely *Son of David*, but also *David*. He is at once "the branch" of David, and "the root" of David, David's Son and David's Lord, the *Lamb* slain and therefore the *Lion* of Juda: about to reign over Israel, and thence over the whole earth.

prevailed--*Greek*, "conquered": absolutely, as elsewhere (Re 3:21): *gained the victory*: His past victory over all the powers of darkness entitles Him now to open the book.

to open--that is, *so as to open*. One oldest manuscript, B, reads, "He that openeth," that is, whose office it is to open, but the weight of oldest authorities is with *English Version* reading, namely, A, *Vulgate*, *Coptic*, and ORIGEN.

6. I beheld, and, lo--One oldest manuscript, A, omits "and, lo." Another, B, CYPRIAN, &c., support, "and, lo," but omit, "and I beheld."

in the midst of the throne--that is, not on the throne (compare Re 5:7), but in the midst of the company (Re 4:4) which was "round about the throne."

Lamb--*Greek*, "*arnion*"; always found in Revelation exclusively, except in Joh 21:15 alone: it expresses *endearment*, namely, the endearing relation in which Christ now stands to us, as the consequence of His previous relation as the *sacrificial Lamb*. So also our relation to Him: He the *precious Lamb*, we His *dear lambs*, one with Him. BENGEL thinks there is in *Greek*, "*arnion*," the idea of *taking the lead of the flock*. Another object of the form *Greek*, "*arnion*," the Lamb, is to put Him in the more marked contrast to *Greek*, "*therion*," the Beast. Elsewhere *Greek*, "*amnos*," is found, applying to Him as the *paschal, sacrificial Lamb* (Isa 53:7, *Septuagint*; Joh 1:29, 36; Ac 8:32; 1Pe 1:19).

as it had been slain--bearing marks of His past death wounds. He was standing, though

bearing the marks of one slain. In the midst of heavenly glory Christ crucified is still the prominent object.

seven horns--that is, *perfect might*, "seven" symbolizing *perfection*; "horns," *might*, in contrast to the *horns* of the Antichristian world powers, Re 17:3; &c.; Da 7:7, 20; 8:3.

seven eyes . . . the seven Spirits . . . sent forth--So one oldest manuscript, A. But B reads, "*being sent forth.*" As the *seven lamps* before the throne represent the Spirit of God immanent in the Godhead, so the *seven eyes* of the Lamb represent the same sevenfold Spirit profluent from the incarnate Redeemer in His world-wide energy. The *Greek* for "sent forth," *apostellomena*, or else *apestalmenoi*, is akin to the term "apostle," reminding us of the Spirit-impelled labors of Christ's apostles and minister throughout the world: if the present tense be read, as seems best, the idea will be that of those labors *continually going on* unto the end. "Eyes" symbolize His all-watchful and wise providence for His Church, and against her foes.

7. The book lay on the open hand of Him that sat on the throne for any to take who was found worthy [ALFORD]. The Lamb takes it from the Father in token of formal investiture into His universal and everlasting dominion as Son of man. This introductory vision thus presents before us, in summary, the consummation to which all the events in the seals, trumpets, and vials converge, namely, the setting up of Christ's kingdom visibly. Prophecy ever hurries to the grand crisis or end, and dwells on intermediate events only in their typical relation to, and representation of, the end.

8. had taken--*Greek*, "took."

fell down before the Lamb--who shares worship and the throne with the Father.

harps--Two oldest manuscripts, A, B, *Syriac* and *Coptic* read, "a harp": a kind of guitar, played with the hand or a quill.

vials--"bowls" [TREGELLES]; censers.

odours--*Greek*, "incense."

prayers of saints--as the angel offers their prayers (Re 8:3) with incense (compare Ps 141:2). This gives not the least sanction to Rome's dogma of our praying to saints. Though *they* be employed by God in some way unknown to us to present our prayers (nothing is said of their *interceding* for us), yet *we* are told to pray only to Him (Re 19:10; 22:8, 9). *Their own* employment is praise (whence they all have *harps*): ours is prayer.

9. **sung**--*Greek*, "sing": it is their blessed occupation continually. The theme of *redemption* is ever new, ever suggesting fresh thoughts of praise, embodied in the "new song."

us to God--So manuscript B, *Coptic*, *Vulgate*, and CYPRIAN. But A omits "us": and *Aleph* reads instead, "to *our* God."

out of--the present election-church gathered *out of* the world, as distinguished from the peoples gathered to Christ as the subjects, not of an election, but of a general and world-wide conversion of all nations.

kindred . . . tongue . . . people . . . nation--The number *four* marks world-wide extension: the four quarters of the world. For "kindred," translate as *Greek*, "tribe." This term and "people" are usually restricted to *Israel*: "tongue and nation" to the *Gentiles* (Re 7:9; 11:9; 13:7, the oldest reading; Re 14:6). Thus there is here marked the election-Church gathered from Jews and Gentiles. In Re 10:11, for "tribes," we find among the four terms "kings"; in Re 17:15, "multitudes."

10. **made us**--A, B, *Aleph*, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* read, "them." The *Hebrew* construction of the third person for the first, has a graphic relation to *the redeemed*, and also has

a more modest sound than *us, priests* [BENGEL].

unto our God--So B and *Aleph* read. But A omits the clause.

kings--So B reads. But A, *Aleph*, *Vulgate*, *Coptic*, and CYPRIAN, read, "A kingdom." *Aleph* reads also "a priesthood" for *priests*. They who cast their crowns before the throne, do not call themselves *kings* in the sight of the great *King* (Re 4:10, 11); though their priestly access has such dignity that their reigning on earth cannot exceed it. So in Re 20:6 they are not called "kings" [BENGEL].

we shall reign on the earth--This is a new feature added to Re 1:6. *Aleph*, *Vulgate*, and *Coptic* read, "*They shall reign.*" A and B read, "*They reign.*" ALFORD takes this reading and explains it of the Church EVEN NOW, in Christ her Head, reigning on the earth: "all things are being put under her feet, as under His; her kingly office and rank are asserted, even in the midst of persecution." But even if we read (I think the weightiest authority is against it), "*They reign,*" still it is the prophetic present for the future: the seer being transported into the future when the full number of the redeemed (represented by the *four living creatures*) shall be complete and the visible *kingdom begins*. The saints do spiritually reign now; but certainly not as they shall when the prince of this world shall be bound (see on [Re 20:2-6](#)). So far from *reigning on the earth* now, they are "made as the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things." In Re 11:15, 18, the locality and time of the kingdom are marked. KELLY translates, "reign over the earth" (*Greek*, "*epi tees gees*"), which is justified by the *Greek* (*Septuagint*, Jud 9:8; Mt 2:22). The elders, though ruling *over the earth*, shall not necessarily (according to this passage) remain *on the earth*. But *English Version* is justified by Re 3:10. "The elders were *meek*, but the flock of the meek independently is much larger" [BENGEL].

11. I beheld--the angels: who form the outer circle, while the Church, the object of redemption, forms the inner circle nearest the throne. The heavenly hosts ranged around gaze with intense love and adoration at this crowning manifestation of God's love, wisdom, and power.

ten thousand times ten thousand--*Greek*, "myriads of myriads."

12. to receive power--*Greek*, "*the power.*" The remaining six (the whole being *seven*, the number for *perfection* and *completeness*) are all, as well as "power," ranged under the one *Greek* article, to mark that they form *one* complete aggregate belonging to God and His co-equal, the Lamb. Compare Re 7:12, where each of all seven has the article.

riches--both spiritual and earthly.

blessing--ascribed praise: the *will* on the creature's part, though unaccompanied by the *power*, to return blessing for blessing conferred [ALFORD].

13. The universal chorus of creation, including the outermost circles as well as the inner (of saints and angels), winds up the doxology. The *full* accomplishment of this is to be when Christ takes His great power and reigns visibly.

every creature--"all His works in all places of His dominion" (Ps 103:22).

under the earth--the departed spirits in Hades.

such as are--So B and *Vulgate*. But A omits this.

in the sea--*Greek*, "*upon the sea*": the sea animals which are regarded as being on the surface [ALFORD].

all that are in them--So *Vulgate* reads. A omits "all (things)" here (*Greek*, "*panta*"), and reads, "I heard all (*Greek*, "*pantas*") saying": implying the harmonious concert of all in the four quarters of the universe.

Blessing, &c.--*Greek*, "*the blessing, the honor, and the glory, and the might to the ages of*

the ages." The *fourfold* ascription indicates *world-wide* universality.

14. said--So A, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac* read. But B and *Coptic* read, "(I heard) *saying*."

Amen--So A reads. But B reads, "*the* (accustomed) Amen." As in Re 4:11, the four and twenty elders asserted God's worthiness to receive the glory, as having *created all things*, so here the four living creatures ratify by their "Amen" the whole *creation's* ascription of the glory to Him.

four and twenty--omitted in the oldest manuscripts: *Vulgate* supports it.

him that liveth for ever and ever--omitted in all the manuscripts: inserted by commentators from Re 4:9. But there, where the thanksgiving is *expressed*, the words are appropriate; but here less so, as their worship is that of silent prostration. "Worshipped" (namely, God and the Lamb). So in Re 11:1, "worship" is used absolutely.

CHAPTER 6

Re 6:1-17. THE OPENING OF THE FIRST SIX OF THE SEVEN SEALS.

Compare *Note*, see on [Re 5:1](#). Many (MEDE, FLEMING, NEWTON, &c.) hold that all these seals have been fulfilled, the sixth having been so by the overthrow of paganism and establishment of Christianity under Constantine's edict, A.D. 312. There can, however, be no doubt that at least the sixth seal is future, and is to be at the coming again of Christ. The great objection to supposing the seals to be finally and exhaustively fulfilled (though, probably, particular events may be partial fulfilments typical of the final and fullest one), is that, if so, they ought to furnish (as the destruction of Jerusalem, according to Christ's prophecy, does) a strong external evidence of Revelation. But it is clear they cannot be used for this, as hardly any two interpreters of this school are agreed on what events constitute the fulfilment of each seal. Probably not isolated facts, but *classes* of events preparing the way for Christ's coming kingdom, are intended by the opening of the seals. The four living creatures severally cry at the opening of the first four seals, "Come," which fact marks the division of the *seven*, as often occurs in this sacred number, into *four* and *three*.

1. one of the seals--The oldest manuscripts, A, B, C, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac* read, "one of the *seven* seals."

noise--The three oldest manuscripts read this in the nominative or dative, not the genitive, as *English Version*, "I heard one from among the four living creatures saying, as (it were) *the voice* (or, '*as with the voice*') of thunder." The first living creature was like a *lion* (Re 4:7): his voice is in consonance. Implying the lion-like boldness with which, in the successive great revivals, the faithful have *testified for Christ*, and especially a little before His coming shall testify. Or, rather, their earnestness in praying for *Christ's coming*.

Come and see--One oldest manuscript, B, has "And see." But A, C, and *Vulgate* reject it. ALFORD rightly objects to *English Version* reading: "Whither was John to come? Separated as he was by the glassy sea from the throne, was he to cross it?" Contrast the form of expression, Re 10:8. It is much more likely to be the cry of the redeemed to the Redeemer, "Come" and deliver the groaning creature from the bondage of corruption. Thus, Re 6:2 is an answer to the cry, *went* (literally, "came") forth corresponding to "Come." "Come," says GROTIUS, is the living creature's address to John, *calling his earnest attention*. But it seems hard to see how "Come" by itself can mean this. Compare the only other places in Revelation where it is used, Re 4:1; 22:17. If the four living creatures represent the four Gospels, the "Come" will be their invitation to everyone (for it is not written that they addressed *John*) to *accept* Christ's salvation

while there is time, as the opening of the seals marks a progressive step towards the end (compare Re 22:17). Judgments are foretold as accompanying the *preaching of the Gospel as a witness to all nations* (Re 14:6-11; Mt 24:6-14). Thus the invitation, "Come," here, is aptly parallel to Mt 24:14. The opening of the first four seals is followed by judgments preparatory for His coming. At the opening of the fifth seal, the martyrs above express the same (Re 6:9, 10; compare Zec 1:10). At the opening of the sixth seal, the Lord's coming is ushered in with terrors to the ungodly. At the seventh, the consummation is fully attained (Re 11:15).

2. Evidently Christ, whether in person, or by His angel, preparatory to His coming again, as appears from Re 19:11, 12.

bow-- (Ps 45:4, 5).

crown--*Greek*, "*stephanos*," the garland or wreath of a *conqueror*, which is also implied by His *white horse*, white being the emblem of victory. In Re 19:11, 12 the last step in His victorious progress is represented; accordingly there He wears *many diadems* (*Greek*, "*diademata*"; not merely *Greek*, "*stephanoi*," "crowns" or "wreaths"), and is personally attended by the hosts of heaven. Compare Zec 1:7-17; 6:1-8; especially Re 6:10 below, with Zec 1:12; also compare the colors of the four horses.

and to conquer--that is, so as to gain a lasting victory. All four seals usher in *judgments* on the earth, as the power which opposes the reign of Himself and His Church. This, rather than the work of conversion and conviction, is primarily meant, though doubtless, secondarily, the elect will be gathered out through His word and His judgments.

3. **and see**--omitted in the three oldest manuscripts, A, B, C, and *Vulgate*.

4. **red**--the color of *blood*. The color of the horse in each case answers to the mission of the rider. Compare Mt 10:24-36, "Think not I am come to send *peace* on earth; I came not to send *peace*, but a *sword*." The *white* horse of Christ's bloodless victories is soon followed, through man's perversion of the Gospel, by the *red* horse of bloodshed; but this is overruled to the clearing away of the obstacles to Christ's coming kingdom. The patient *ox* is the emblem of the second *living creature* who, at the opening of this seal, saith, "Come." The saints amidst judgments on the earth in patience "endure to the end."

that they should kill--The *Greek* is indicative future, "that they may, as they also shall, kill one another."

5. **Come and see**--The two oldest manuscripts, A, C, and *Vulgate* omit "and see." B retains the words.

black--implying *sadness* and *want*.

had--*Greek*, "having."

a pair of balances--the symbol of scarcity of provisions, the bread being doled out by weight.

6. **a voice**--Two oldest manuscripts, A, C, read, "*as it were* a voice." B reads as *English Version*. The voice is heard "in the midst of the four living creatures" (as Jehovah in the Shekinah-cloud manifested His presence between the cherubim); because it is only for the sake of, and in connection with, His redeemed, that God mitigates His judgments on the earth.

A measure--"A chœnix." While making food scarce, do not make it so much so that a chœnix (about a day's provision of wheat, variously estimated at two or three pints) shall not be obtainable "for a penny" (*denarius*, eight and a half pence of our money, probably the day's wages of a laborer). *Famine* generally follows the *sword*. Ordinarily, from sixteen to twenty

measures were given for a denarius. The *sword, famine, noisome beasts*, and the *pestilence*, are God's four judgments on the earth. A spiritual famine, too, may be included in the judgment. The "Come," in the case of this third seal, is said by the third of the four living creatures, whose likeness is *a man* indicative of sympathy and human compassion for the sufferers. God in it tempers judgment with mercy. Compare Mt 24:7, which indicates the very calamities foretold in these seals, *nation rising against nation* (the sword), *famines, pestilences* (Re 6:8), and *earthquakes* (Re 6:12).

three measures of barley for a penny--the cheaper and less nutritious grain, bought by the laborer who could not buy enough wheat for his family with his day's wages, a denarius, and, therefore, buys barley.

see thou hurt not the oil, and the wine--the luxuries of life, rather than necessities; the oil and wine were to be spared for the refreshment of the sufferers.

7. and see--supported by B; omitted by A, C, and *Vulgate*. The *fourth living creature*, who was "like a flying eagle," introduces this seal; implying high-soaring intelligence, and judgment descending from on high fatally on the ungodly, as the king of birds on his prey.

8. pale--"livid" [ALFORD].

Death--personified.

Hell--*Hades* personified.

unto them--*Death* and *Hades*. So A, C read. But B and *Vulgate* read, "to him."

fourth part of the earth--answering to the first four seals; his portion as one of the four, being a *fourth part*.

death--pestilence; compare Eze 14:21 with the four judgments here, the *sword, famine, pestilence*, and *wild beasts*; the *famine* the consequence of the *sword*; *pestilence*, that of *famine*; and *beasts* multiplying by the consequent depopulation.

with the beasts--*Greek*, "by"; more direct agency. These four seals are marked off from the three last, by the four living creatures introducing them with "Come." The calamities indicated are not restricted to one time, but extend through the whole period of Church history to the coming of Christ, before which last great and terrible day of the Lord they shall reach highest aggravation. The first seal is the summary, Christ going forth *conquering* till all enemies are subdued under Him, with a view to which the judgments subsequently specified accompany the *preaching of the Gospel for a witness to all nations*.

9. The three last seals relate to the invisible, as the first four to the visible world; the fifth, to the martyrs who have died as believers; the sixth, to those who have died, or who shall be found at Christ's coming, unbelievers, namely, "the kings . . . great men . . . bondman . . . freeman"; the seventh, to the silence in heaven. The scene changes from earth to heaven; so that interpretations which make these three last consecutive to the first four seals, are very doubtful.

I saw--in spirit. For souls are not naturally visible.

under the altar--As the blood of sacrificial victims slain on the altar was poured *at the bottom of the altar*, so the souls of those sacrificed for Christ's testimony are symbolically represented as *under the altar*, in heaven; for the life or animal *soul* is in the *blood*, and blood is often represented as crying for vengeance (Ge 4:10). The altar in heaven, antitypical to the altar of sacrifice, is Christ crucified. As it is the altar that sanctifies the gift, so it is Christ alone who makes our obedience, and even our sacrifice of life for the truth, acceptable to God. The sacrificial altar was not in the sanctuary, but outside; so Christ's literal sacrifice and the figurative sacrifice of the martyrs took place, not in the heavenly sanctuary, but outside, here on earth. The only altar in heaven is that antitypical to the temple altar of incense. The blood of the

martyrs cries from the earth under Christ's cross, whereon they may be considered virtually to have been sacrificed; their souls cry from under the altar of incense, which is Christ in heaven, by whom alone the incense of praise is accepted before God. They are *under* Christ, in His immediate presence, shut up unto Him in joyful eager expectancy until He shall come to raise the sleeping dead. Compare the language of 2 Maccabees 7:36 as indicating Jewish opinion on the subject. Our brethren who have now suffered a short pain are dead *under* (*Greek*) *God's covenant* of everlasting life.

testimony which they held--that is, which they bore, as committed to them to bear. Compare Re 12:17, "*Have* (same *Greek* as here) the testimony of Jesus."

10. How long--*Greek*, "Until when?" As in the parable the woman (symbol of the Church) *cries day and night* to the unjust judge for justice against her adversary who is always oppressing her (compare below, Re 12:10); so the elect (not only on earth, but *under Christ's covering*, and in His presence in Paradise) *cry day and night* to God, who will assuredly, in His own time, avenge His and their cause, "though He bear *long* with them." These passages need not be *restricted* to some particular martyrdoms, but have been, and are receiving, and shall receive partial fulfilments, until their last exhaustive fulfilment before Christ's coming. So as to the other events foretold here. The glory even of those in Paradise will only be complete when Christ's and the Church's foes are cast out, and the earth will become Christ's kingdom at His coming to raise the sleeping saints.

Lord--*Greek*, "Master"; implying that He has them and their foes and all His creatures as absolutely at His disposal, as a master has his *slaves*; hence, in Re 6:11, "*fellow servants*," or *fellow slaves* follows.

holy--*Greek*, "the Holy one."

avenge--"exact vengeance for our blood."

on--*Greek*, "*from* them."

that dwell on the earth--the ungodly, of earth, earthly, as distinguished from the Church, whose home and heart are even now in heavenly places.

11. white robes--The three oldest manuscripts, A, B, C, read, "A white robe was given."

every one of--One oldest manuscript, B, omits this. A and C read, "unto them, unto each," that is, unto them severally. Though their joint cry for the riddance of the earth from the ungodly is not yet granted, it is intimated that it will be so in due time; meanwhile, *individually* they receive the white robe, indicative of light, joy, and triumphant victory over their foes; even as the Captain of their salvation goes forth on a *white* horse *conquering and to conquer*; also of purity and sanctity through Christ. MAIMONIDES says that the Jews used to array priests, when approved of, *in white robes*; thus the sense is, they are admitted among the blessed ones, who, as spotless priests, minister unto God and the Lamb.

should--So C reads. But A and B, "*shall* rest."

a little season--One oldest manuscript, B, omits "little." A and C support it. Even if it be omitted, is it to be inferred that the "season" is short as compared with eternity? BENGEL fancifully made a *season* (*Greek*, "*chronus*," the word here used) to be one thousand one hundred and eleven one-ninth years, and a *time* (Re 12:12, 14, *Greek*, "*kairos*") to be a fifth of a *season*, that is, two hundred and twenty-two two-ninths years. The only distinction in the *Greek* is, a *season* (*Greek*, "*chronus*") is a sort of aggregate of *times*. *Greek*, "*kairos*," a specific time, and so of short duration. As to their *rest*, compare Re 14:13 (the same *Greek*, "*anapauomai*"); Isa 57:2; Da 12:13.

until their . . . brethren . . . be fulfilled--in number. Until their full number shall have been completed. The number of the elect is definitely fixed: perhaps to fill up that of the fallen angels. But this is mere conjecture. The *full* blessedness and glory of all the saints shall be

simultaneous. The earlier shall not anticipate the later saints. A and C read, "shall have been accomplished"; B and *Aleph* read, "shall have accomplished (their course)."

12. As Re 6:4, 6-8, the sword, famine, and pestilence, answer to Mt 24:6, 7; Re 6:9, 10, as to martyrdoms, answer to Mt 24:9, 10; so this passage, Re 6:12, 17, answers to Mt 24:29, 30, "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven; . . . then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming"; imagery describing *the portents* of the immediate coming of the day of the Lord; but *not the coming itself* until the elect are sealed, and the judgments invoked by the martyrs descend on the earth, the sea, and the trees (Re 7:1-3).

and, lo--So A reads. But B and C omit "lo."

earthquake--*Greek*, "shaking" of *the heavens*, the sea, and the dry land; the shaking of these mutable things being the necessary preliminary to the setting up of those *things which cannot be shaken*. This is one of the *catchwords* [WORDSWORTH] connecting the sixth seal with the sixth trumpet (Re 11:13) and the seventh vial (Re 16:17-21); also the seventh seal (Re 8:5).

sackcloth--One kind, made of the "hair" of Cilician goats, was called "cilicium," or Cilician cloth, and was used for tents, &c. Paul, a Cilician, made such tents (Ac 18:3).

moon--A, B, C, and oldest versions read, "the whole moon"; the full moon; not merely the crescent moon.

as blood-- (Joe 2:31).

13. stars . . . fell . . . as a fig tree casteth her . . . figs-- (Isa 34:4; Na 3:12). The Church shall be then ripe for glorification, the Antichristian world for destruction, which shall be accompanied with mighty phenomena in nature. As to the stars falling to the earth, Scripture describes natural phenomena as they would appear to the spectator, not in the language of scientific accuracy; and yet, while thus adapting itself to ordinary men, it drops hints which show that it anticipates the discoveries of modern science.

14. departed--*Greek*, "*was separated from*" its place; "was made to depart." Not as ALFORD, "parted *asunder*"; for, on the contrary, it was rolled *together* as a scroll which had been open is rolled up and laid aside. There is no "asunder one from another" here in the *Greek*, as in Ac 15:39, which ALFORD copies.

mountain . . . moved out of . . . places-- (Ps 121:1, *Margin*; Jer 3:23; 4:24; Na 1:5). This total disruption shall be the precursor of the new earth, just as the pre-Adamic convulsions prepared it for its present occupants.

15. kings . . . hid themselves--Where was now the spirit of those whom the world has so greatly feared? [BENGEL].

great men--statesmen and high civil officers.

rich men . . . chief captains--The three oldest manuscripts, A, B, C, transpose thus, "chief captains . . . rich men."

mighty--The three oldest manuscripts, A, B, and C read, "strong" physically (Ps 33:16).

in--literally "into"; ran *into*, so as to *hide themselves* in.

dens--"caves."

16. from the face-- (Ps 34:16). On the whole verse, compare Ho 10:8; Lu 23:30.

17. Literally, "the day, the great (day)," which can only mean the last great day. After the

Lord has exhausted all His ordinary judgments, the sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts, and still sinners are impenitent, the great day of the Lord itself' shall come. Mt 24:6-29 plainly forms a perfect parallelism to the six seals, not only in the events, but also in the order of their occurrence: Mt 24:3, the first seal; Mt 24:6, the second seal; Mt 24:7, the third seal; Mt 24:7, end, the fourth seal; Mt 24:9, the fifth seal, the persecutions and abounding iniquity under which, as well as consequent judgments accompanied with gospel preaching to all nations as a witness, are particularly detailed, Mt 24:9-28; Mt 24:29, the sixth seal.

to stand--to stand justified, and not condemned before the Judge. Thus the sixth seal brings us to the verge of the Lord's coming. The ungodly "tribes of the earth" tremble at the signs of His immediate approach. But before He actually inflicts the blow in person, "the elect" must be "gathered "out.

CHAPTER 7

Re 7:1-17. SEALING OF THE ELECT OF ISRAEL. THE COUNTLESS MULTITUDE OF THE GENTILE ELECT.

1. And--so B and *Syriac*. But A, C, *Vulgate*, and *Coptic* omit "and."

after these things--A, B, C, and *Coptic* read, "after this." The two visions in this chapter come in as an episode *after* the sixth seal, and before the seventh seal. It is clear that, though "Israel" may elsewhere designate the spiritual Israel, "the elect (Church) on earth" [ALFORD], here, where the names of the tribes one by one are specified, these names cannot have any but the literal meaning. The second advent will be the time of *the restoration of the kingdom to Israel*, when *the times of the Gentiles shall have been fulfilled*, and the Jews shall at last say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." The period of the Lord's absence has been a blank in the history of the Jews as a nation. As then Revelation is the Book of the Second Advent [DE BURGH], naturally mention of God's restored favor to Israel occurs among the events that usher in Christ's advent.

earth . . . sea . . . tree--The judgments to descend on these are in answer to the martyrs' prayer under the *fifth* seal. Compare the same judgments under the *fifth* trumpet, the sealed being exempt (Re 9:4).

on any tree--*Greek*, "against any tree" (*Greek*, "*epi ti dendron*": but "on the earth," *Greek*, "*epi tees gees*").

2. from the east--*Greek*, "the rising of the sun." The quarter from which God's glory oftenest manifests itself.

3. Hurt not--by letting loose the destructive winds.

till we have sealed the servants of our God--parallel to Mt 24:31, "His angels . . . shall gather together His elect from the four winds." God's love is such, that He *cannot do anything* in the way of judgment, till His people are secured from hurt (Ge 19:22). Israel, at the eve of the Lord's coming, shall be found re-embodied as a nation; for its tribes are distinctly specified (Joseph, however, being substituted for Dan; whether because Antichrist is to come from Dan, or because Dan is to be Antichrist's especial tool [ARETAS, tenth century], compare Ge 49:17; Jer 8:16; Am 8:14; just as there was a Judas among the Twelve). Out of these tribes *a believing remnant* will be preserved from the judgments which shall destroy all the Antichristian confederacy (Re 6:12-17), and *shall be transfigured with the elect Church of all nations*, namely, 144,000 (or whatever number is meant by this symbolical number), who shall faithfully resist the seductions of Antichrist, while the rest of the nation, restored to Palestine in unbelief,

are his dupes, and at last his victims. Previously to the Lord's judgments on Antichrist and his hosts, these latter shall destroy *two-thirds* of the nation, *one-third* escaping, and, by the Spirit's operation through affliction, turning to the Lord, which remnant shall form the nucleus on earth of the Israelite nation that is from this time to stand at the head of the millennial nations of the world. Israel's spiritual resurrection shall be "as life from the dead" to all the nations. As now a regeneration goes on here and there of individuals, so there shall then be a regeneration of nations universally, and this in connection with Christ's coming. Mt 24:34; "this generation (the Jewish nation) shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled," which implies that Israel can no more *pass away* before Christ's advent, than Christ's own *words* can *pass away* (the same *Greek*), Mt 24:35. So exactly Zec 13:8, 9; 14:2-4, 9-21; compare Zec 12:2-14; 13:1, 2. So also Eze 8:17, 18; 9:1-7, especially Eze 9:4. Compare also Eze 10:2 with Re 8:5, where the final judgments actually fall on the earth, with the same accompaniment, *the fire of the altar cast into the earth*, including the *fire scattered over the city*. So again, Re 14:1, the same 144,000 appear on Zion with the Father's name in their forehead, at the close of the section, the twelfth through fourteenth chapters, concerning the Church and her foes. Not that the saints are exempt from trial: Re 7:14 proves the contrary; but their trials are distinct from the *destroying* judgments that fall on the world; from these they are exempted, as Israel was from the plagues of Egypt, especially from the last, the Israelite doors having the protecting seal of the blood-mark.

foreheads--the most conspicuous and noblest part of man's body; on which the helmet, "the hope of salvation," is worn.

4. *Twelve* is the number of the tribes, and appropriate to *the Church*: three by four: three, the *divine* number, multiplied by four, the number for *world-wide extension*. Twelve by twelve implies *fixity and completeness*, which is taken a thousandfold in 144,000. A *thousand* implies *the world perfectly pervaded by the divine*; for it is *ten*, the world number, raised to the power of *three*, the number of God.

of all the tribes--literally, "out of every tribe"; not 144,000 of each tribe, but the aggregate of the twelve thousand *from every tribe*.

children--*Greek*, "sons of Israel." Re 3:12; 21:12, are no objection, as ALFORD thinks, to the literal Israel being meant; for, in consummated glory, still the Church will be that "built on the foundation of the (*Twelve*) apostles (Israelites), Jesus Christ (an Israelite) being the chief corner-stone." Gentile believers shall have *the name of Jerusalem written on them*, in that they shall share the citizenship antitypical to that of the literal Jerusalem.

5-8. Judah (meaning *praise*) stands first, as Jesus' tribe. Benjamin, the youngest, is last; and with him is associated second last, Joseph. Reuben, as originally first-born, comes next after Judah, to whom it gave place, having by sin lost its primogeniture right. Besides the reason given above (see on [Re 7:2](#)), another akin for the omission of Dan, is, its having been the first to lapse into idolatry (Jud 18:1-31); for which same reason the name Ephraim, also (compare Jud 17:1-3; Ho 4:17), is omitted, and Joseph substituted. Also, it had been now for long almost extinct. Long before, the Hebrews say [GROTIUS], it was reduced to the one family of Hussim, which perished subsequently in the wars before Ezra's time. Hence it is omitted in the fourth through eighth chapters of First Chronicles. Dan's small numbers are joined here to Naphtali's, whose brother he was by the same mother [BENGEL]. The twelve times twelve thousand sealed ones of Israel are the nucleus of transfigured humanity [AUBERLEN], to which the elect Gentiles are joined, "a multitude which no man could number," Re 7:9 (that is, the Church of Jews and Gentiles indiscriminately, in which the Gentiles are the predominant element, Lu 21:24. The word "tribes," *Greek*, implies that *believing Israelites* are in this *countless multitude*). Both are in heaven, yet ruling over the earth, as ministers of blessing to its inhabitants: while upon earth the world of nations is added to the kingdom of Israel. The twelve apostles stand at

the head of the whole. The upper and the lower congregation, though distinct, are intimately associated.

9. no man--*Greek*, "no one."

of all nations--*Greek*, "OUT OF every nation." The human race is "*one nation*" by origin, but afterwards separated itself into *tribes, peoples, and tongues*; hence, the one singular stands first, followed by the three plurals.

kindreds--*Greek*, "tribes."

people--*Greek*, "peoples." The "first-fruits unto the Lamb," the 144,000 (Re 14:1-4) of Israel, are followed by a copious harvest of all nations, an election *out of* the Gentiles, as the 144,000 are an election out of Israel (see on [Re 7:3](#)).

white robes--(See on [Re 6:11](#); also Re 3:5, 18; 4:4).

palms in . . . hands--the antitype to Christ's entry into Jerusalem amidst the palm-bearing multitude. This shall be just when He is about to come visibly and take possession of His kingdom. The *palm branch* is the symbol of joy and triumph. It was used at the feast of tabernacles, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when they kept feast to God in thanksgiving for the ingathered fruits. The antitype shall be the completed gathering in of the harvest of the elect redeemed here described. Compare Zec 14:16, whence it appears that the *earthly* feast of tabernacles will be renewed, in commemoration of Israel's preservation in her long wilderness-like sojourn among the nations from which she shall now be delivered, just as the original typical feast was to commemorate her dwelling for forty years in booths or tabernacles in the literal wilderness.

10. cried--*Greek*, "cry," in the three oldest manuscripts, A, B, C, *Vulgate, Syriac, and Coptic*. It is their continuing, ceaseless employment.

Salvation--literally, "THE salvation"; all the praise of our salvation be ascribed to our God. At the Lord's entry into Jerusalem, the type, similarly "salvation" is the cry of the palm-bearing multitudes. *Hosanna* means "save us now"; taken from Ps 118:25, in which Psalm (Ps 118:14, 15, 21, 26) the same connection occurs between *salvation, the tabernacles* of the righteous, and the Jews' cry to be repeated by the whole nation at Christ's coming, "Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

11. The angels, as in Re 5:11, in their turn take up the anthem of praise. There it was "*many angels*," here it is "*all the angels*."

stood--"were standing" [ALFORD].

12. *Greek*, "*The blessing, the glory, the wisdom, the thanksgiving, the honor, the power, the might* [the doxology is *sevenfold*, implying its totality and completeness], *unto the ages of the ages*."

13. answered--namely, to my thoughts; spoke, asking the question which might have been expected to arise in John's mind from what has gone before. One of the twenty-four elders, representing the Old and New Testament ministry, appropriately acts as interpreter of this vision of the glorified Church.

What, &c.--*Greek* order, "These which are arrayed in white robes, WHO are they?"

14. Sir--*Greek*, "Lord." B, C, *Vulgate, Syriac, Coptic* versions, and CYPRIAN read, "My Lord." A omits "My," as *English Version*.

thou knowest--taken from Eze 37:3. Comparatively ignorant ourselves of divine things, it is well for us to look upward for divinely communicated knowledge.

came--rather as *Greek*, "come"; implying that they are *just come*.

great tribulation--*Greek*, "THE great tribulation"; "the tribulation, the great one," namely, *the* tribulation to which the martyrs were exposed under the fifth seal, the same which Christ foretells as about to precede His coming (Mt 24:21, *great tribulation*), and followed by the same signs as the sixth seal (Mt 24:29, 30), compare Da 12:1; including also retrospectively all *the tribulation* which the saints of all ages have had to pass through. Thus this seventh chapter is a recapitulation of the vision of the six seals, Re 6:1-17, to fill up the outline there given in that part of it which affects the faithful of that day. There, however, their number was waiting to be completed, but here it is completed, and they are seen taken out of the earth before the judgments on the Antichristian apostasy; with their Lord, they, and all His faithful witnesses and disciples of past ages, wait for His coming and their coming to be glorified and reign together with Him. Meanwhile, in contrast with their previous sufferings, they are exempt from the hunger, thirst, and scorching heats of their life on earth (Re 7:16), and are fed and refreshed by the Lamb of God Himself (Re 7:17; 14:1-4, 13); an earnest of their future perfect blessedness in both body and soul united (Re 21:4-6; 22:1-5).

washed . . . robes . . . white in the blood of . . . Lamb-- (Re 1:5; Isa 1:18; Heb 9:14; 1Jo 1:7; compare Isa 61:10; Zec 3:3-5). Faith applies to the heart the purifying blood; once for all for justification, continually throughout the life for sanctification.

15. Therefore--because they are so washed white; for without it they could never have entered God's holy heaven; Re 22:14, "Blessed are those who *wash their robes* (the oldest manuscripts reading), that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city"; Re 21:27; Eph 5:26, 27.

before--*Greek*, "in the presence of." Mt 5:8; 1Co 13:12, "face to face."

throne . . . temple--These are connected because we can approach the heavenly King only through priestly mediation; therefore, Christ is at once King and Priest on His throne.

day and night--that is, perpetually; as those approved of as priests by the Sanhedrim were clothed in white, and kept by turns a perpetual watch in the temple at Jerusalem; compare as to the singers, 1Ch 9:33, "day and night"; Ps 134:1. Strictly "there is no night" in the heavenly sanctuary (Re 22:5).

in his temple--in what is the heavenly analogue to His temple on earth, for strictly there is "no temple therein" (Re 21:22), "God and the Lamb are the temple" filling the whole, so that there is no distinction of sacred and secular places; the city is the temple, and the temple the city. Compare Re 4:8, "the four living creatures rest not *day and night*, saying, Holy," &c.

shall dwell among them--rather (*Greek*, "*scenosei ep' autous*"), "shall be the tabernacle over them" (compare Re 21:3; Le 26:11, especially Isa 4:5, 6; 8:14; 25:4; Eze 37:27). His *dwelling among them* is to be understood as a secondary truth, besides what is expressed, namely, His being their covert. When once He *tabernacled among us as the Word made flesh*, He was in great lowliness; then He shall be in great glory.

16. (Isa 49:10).

hunger no more--as they did here.

thirst any more-- (Joh 4:13).

the sun--literally, scorching in the East. Also, symbolically, the sun of persecution.

neither . . . light--*Greek*, "by no means at all . . . light" (fall).

heat--as the sirocco.

17. in the midst of the throne--that is, in the middle point in front of the throne (Re 5:6).
feed--*Greek*, "tend as a shepherd."

living fountains of water--A, B, *Vulgate*, and CYPRIAN read, (eternal) "*life's* fountains of waters." "Living" is not supported by the old authorities.

CHAPTER 8

Re 8:1-13. SEVENTH SEAL. PREPARATION FOR THE SEVEN TRUMPETS. THE FIRST FOUR AND THE CONSEQUENT PLAGUES.

1. was--*Greek*, "came to pass"; "began to be."

silence in heaven about . . . half an hour--The last seal having been broken open, the book of God's eternal plan of redemption is opened for the Lamb to read to the blessed ones in heaven. The *half hour's silence* contrasts with the previous jubilant songs of *the great multitude*, taken up by the *angels* (Re 7:9-11). It is the solemn introduction to the employments and enjoyments of the eternal Sabbath-rest of the people of God, commencing with the Lamb's reading the book heretofore sealed up, and which we cannot know till then. In Re 10:4, similarly at the eve of the sounding of the seventh trumpet, when the seven thunders uttered their voices, John is forbidden to write them. The seventh trumpet (Re 11:15-19) winds up God's vast plan of providence and grace in redemption, just as the seventh seal brings it to the same consummation. So also the seventh vial, Re 16:17. Not that the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven vials, though parallel, are repetitions. They each trace the course of divine action up to the grand consummation in which they all meet, under a different aspect. *Thunders, lightnings, an earthquake*, and *voices* close the seven thunders and the seven seals alike (compare Re 8:5, with Re 11:19). Compare at the seventh vial, the voices, thunders, lightnings, and earthquake, Re 16:18. *The half-hour silence* is the brief pause GIVEN TO JOHN between the preceding vision and the following one, implying, on the one hand, the solemn introduction to the eternal sabbatism which is to follow the seventh seal; and, on the other, the silence which continued during the incense-accompanied prayers which usher in the first of the seven trumpets (Re 8:3-5). In the Jewish temple, musical instruments and singing resounded during the whole time of the offering of the sacrifices, which formed the first part of the service. But at the offering of incense, solemn silence was kept ("My soul *waiteth* upon God," Ps 62:1; "is silent," *Margin*; Ps 65:1, *Margin*), the people praying secretly all the time. The *half-hour* stillness implies, too, the earnest adoring expectation with which the blessed spirits and the angels await the succeeding unfolding of God's judgments. A *short* space is implied; for even an *hour* is so used (Re 17:12; 18:10, 19).

2. the seven angels--Compare the apocryphal Tobit 12:15, "I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One." Compare Lu 1:19, "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God."

stood--*Greek*, "stand."

seven trumpets--These come in during the time while the martyrs *rest until their fellow servants also, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled*; for it is *the inhabitants of the earth* on whom the judgments fall, on whom also the martyrs prayed that they should fall (Re 6:10). *All* the ungodly, and not merely some one portion of them, are meant, all the opponents and obstacles in the way of the kingdom of Christ and His saints, as is proved by Re 11:15, 18, end, at the close of the seven trumpets. The Revelation becomes more special only as it advances farther (Re 13:1-18; 16:10; 17:18). By the seven trumpets the world kingdoms are overturned to make way for Christ's universal kingdom. The first four are connected together;

and the last three, which alone have *Woe, woe, woe* (Re 8:7-13).

3. another angel--not Christ, as many think; for He, in Revelation, is always designated by one of His proper titles; though, doubtless, He is the only true High Priest, the Angel of the Covenant, standing before the golden altar of incense, and there, as Mediator, offering up His people's prayers, rendered acceptable before God through the incense of His merit. Here the angel acts merely as a *ministering spirit* (Heb 1:4), just as the twenty-four elders *have vials full of odors*, or incense, *which are the prayers of saints* (Re 5:8), and which they present before the Lamb. How precisely their ministry, in perfuming the prayers of the saints and offering them on the altar of incense, is exercised, we know not, but we do know they are not to be prayed TO. If we send an offering of tribute to the king, the king's messenger is not allowed to appropriate what is due to the king alone.

there was given unto him--The angel does not provide the incense; it is *given to him* by Christ, whose meritorious obedience and death are the incense, rendering the saints' prayers well pleasing to God. It is not the saints who give the angel the incense; nor are their prayers identified with the incense; nor do they offer their prayers to him. Christ alone is the Mediator through whom, and to whom, prayer is to be offered.

offer it with the prayers--rather as *Greek*, "give it TO the prayers," so rendering them efficacious as a *sweet-smelling savor* to God. Christ's merits alone can thus *incense* our prayers, though the angelic ministry be employed to attach this incense to the prayers. The saints' praying on earth, and the angel's incensing in heaven, are simultaneous.

all saints--The prayers both of the saints in the heavenly rest, and of those militant on earth. The martyrs' cry is the foremost, and brings down the ensuing judgments.

golden altar--antitype to the earthly.

4. the smoke . . . which came with the prayers . . . ascended up--rather, "the smoke of the incense FOR (or 'given TO': 'given' being understood from Re 8:3) the prayers of the saints ascended up, out of the angel's hand, in the presence of Gods" The angel merely burns the incense given him by Christ the High Priest, so that its smoke blends with the ascending prayers of the saints. The saints themselves are priests; and the angels in this priestly ministration are but *their fellow servants* (Re 19:10).

5. cast it into the earth--that is, *unto* the earth: the hot coals off the altar cast on the earth, symbolize God's fiery judgments about to descend on the Church's foes in answer to the saints' incense-perfumed prayers which have just ascended before God, and those of the martyrs. How marvellous the power of the saints' prayers!

there were--"there took place," or "ensued."

voices, and thunderings, and lightnings--B places the "voices" after "thunderings." A places it after "lightnings."

6. sound--blow the trumpets.

7. The common feature of the first four trumpets is, the judgments under them affect *natural objects*, the accessories of life, the earth, trees, grass, the sea, rivers, fountains, the light of the sun, moon, and stars. The last three, the *woe-trumpets* (Re 8:13), affect men's life with pain, death, and hell. The language is evidently drawn from the plagues of Egypt, five or six out of the ten exactly corresponding: the *hail*, the *fire* (Ex 9:24), the *WATER turned to blood* (Ex 7:19), the *darkness* (Ex 10:21), the *locusts* (Ex 10:12), and perhaps the *death* (Re 9:18). Judicial retribution in kind characterizes the inflictions of the first four, those elements which had been

abused punishing their abusers.

mingled with--A, B, and *Vulgate* read, *Greek*, ". . . IN blood." So in the case of the second and third vials (Re 16:3, 4).

upon the earth--*Greek*, "*unto* the earth." A, B, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac* add, "And the third of the earth was burnt up." So under the third trumpet, the *third* of the rivers is affected: also, under the sixth trumpet, the *third* part of men are killed. In Zec 13:8, 9 this tripartite division appears, but the proportions reversed, two parts killed, only a third preserved. Here, vice versa, two-thirds escape, one-third is smitten. The fire was the predominant element.

all green grass--no longer a third, but *all* is *burnt up*.

8. as it were--not literally a mountain: a mountain-like burning mass. There is a plain allusion to Jer 51:25; Am 7:4.

third part of the sea became blood--In the parallel second vial, the *whole* sea (not merely a *third*) becomes *blood*. The overthrow of Jericho, the type of the Antichristian Babylon, after which Israel, under Joshua (the same name as *Jesus*), victoriously took possession of Canaan, the type of Christ's and His people's kingdom, is perhaps alluded to in the SEVEN trumpets, which end in the overthrow of all Christ's foes, and the setting up of His kingdom. On the *seventh* day, at the *seventh* time, when the *seven* priests blew the *seven* ram's horn trumpets, the people shouted, and the walls fell flat: and then ensued the *blood-shedding* of the foe. A mountain-like fiery mass would not naturally change water into blood; nor would the third part of *ships* be thereby destroyed.

9. The symbolical interpreters take *the ships* here to be *churches*. For the *Greek* here for ships is not the common one, but that used in the Gospels of the apostolic vessel in which Christ taught: and the first churches were in the shape of an inverted ship: and the *Greek* for *destroyed* is also used of heretical *corruptings* (1Ti 6:5).

10. a lamp--*a torch*.

11. The symbolizers interpret the *star fallen from heaven* as a chief minister (ARIUS, according to BULLINGER, BENGEL, and others; or some future false teacher, if, as is more likely, the event be still future) falling from his high place in the Church, and instead of shining with heavenly light as a *star*, becoming a torch lit with earthly fire and smouldering with smoke. And "wormwood," though medicinal in some cases, if used as ordinary water would not only be disagreeable to the taste, but also fatal to life: so "heretical wormwood changes the sweet Siloas of Scripture into deadly Marahs" [WORDSWORTH]. Contrast the converse change of bitter Marah water into sweet, Ex 15:23. ALFORD gives as an illustration in a physical point of view, the conversion of water into *firewater* or *ardent* spirits, which may yet go on to destroy even as many as a third of the ungodly in the latter days.

12. third part--not a *total* obscuration as in the sixth seal (Re 6:12, 13). This *partial* obscuration, therefore, comes between the prayers of the martyrs under the fifth seal, and the last overwhelming judgments on the ungodly under the sixth seal, at the eve of Christ's coming.

the night likewise--withdrew a third part of the light which the bright Eastern moon and stars ordinarily afford.

13. an angel--A, B, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* read for "angel," which is supported by none of the oldest manuscripts, "an eagle": the symbol of judgment descending fatally from on

high; the king of birds pouncing on the prey. Compare this fourth trumpet and the flying *eagle* with the fourth seal introduced by the fourth living creature, "like a flying eagle," Re 4:7; 6:7, 8: the aspect of Jesus as presented by the fourth Evangelist. *John* is compared in the cherubim (according to the primitive interpretation) to a flying eagle: *Christ's divine majesty* in this similitude is set forth in the Gospel according to John, His *judicial visitations* in the Revelation of John. Contrast "another angel," or *messenger*, with "the everlasting Gospel," Re 14:6.

through the midst of heaven--*Greek*, "in the mid-heaven," that is, in the part of the sky where the sun reaches the *meridian*: in such a position as that the eagle is an object conspicuous to all.

the inhabitants of the earth--the ungodly, the "men of the world," whose "portion is in this life," upon whom the martyrs had prayed that their blood might be avenged (Re 6:10). Not that they sought personal revenge, but their zeal was for the honor of God against the foes of God and His Church.

the other--*Greek*, "*the remaining* voices."

CHAPTER 9

Re 9:1-21. THE FIFTH TRUMPET: THE FALLEN STAR OPENS THE ABYSS WHENCE ISSUE LOCUSTS. THE SIXTH TRUMPET. FOUR ANGELS AT THE EUPHRATES LOOSED.

1. The last three trumpets of the seven are called, from Re 8:13, *the woe-trumpets*.

fall--rather as *Greek*, "fallen." When John saw it, it was not in the act of *falling*, but had *fallen* already. This is a connecting link of this fifth trumpet with Re 12:8, 9, 12, "*Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, for the devil is come down,*" &c. Compare Isa 14:12, "*How art thou fallen from heaven, Lucifer, son of the morning!*"

the bottomless pit--*Greek*, "the pit of the abyss"; *the orifice of the hell* where Satan and his demons dwell.

3. **upon**--*Greek*, "unto," or "into."

as the scorpions of the earth--as contrasted with the "locusts" which come up *from hell*, and are not "of the earth."

have power--namely, to sting.

4. **not hurt the grass . . . neither . . . green thing . . . neither . . . tree**--the food on which they ordinarily prey. Therefore, not natural and ordinary locusts. Their natural instinct is supernaturally restrained to mark the judgment as altogether divine.

those men which--*Greek*, "*the men whosoever.*"

in, &c.--*Greek*, "*upon* their forehead." Thus this fifth trumpet is proved to follow the *sealing* in Re 7:1-8, under the sixth seal. None of the saints are hurt by these locusts, which is not true of the saints in Mohammed's attack, who is supposed by many to be meant by the locusts; for many true believers fell in the Mohammedan invasions of Christendom.

5. **they . . . they**--The subject changes: the first "they" is *the locusts*; the second is the *unsealed*.

five months--the ordinary time in the year during which locusts continue their ravages.

their torment--the torment of the sufferers. This fifth verse and Re 9:6 cannot refer to an invading army. For an army would *kill*, and not merely *torment*.

6. shall desire--*Greek*, "eagerly desire"; set their mind on.

shall flee--So B, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* read. But A and *Aleph* read, "fleeth," namely continually. In Re 6:16, which is at a later stage of God's judgments, the ungodly seek annihilation, not from the torment of their suffering, but from fear of the face of the Lamb before whom they have to stand.

7. prepared unto battle--*Greek*, "made ready unto war." Compare *Note*, see on [Joe 2:4](#), where the resemblance of locusts to horses is traced: the plates of a horse armed for battle are an image on a larger scale of the outer shell of the locust.

crowns-- (Na 3:17). ELLIOTT explains this of the *turbans* of Mohammedans. But how could turbans be "like gold?" ALFORD understands it of the head of the locusts actually ending in a crown-shaped fillet which resembled gold in its material.

as the faces of men--The "as" seems to imply the locusts here do not mean *men*. At the same time they are not natural locusts, for these do not sting *men* (Re 9:5). They must be supernatural.

8. hair of women--long and flowing. An Arabic proverb compares the antlers of locusts to the hair of girls. EWALD in ALFORD understands the allusion to be to the hair on the legs or bodies of the locusts: compare "rough caterpillars," Jer 51:27.

as the teeth of lions-- (Joe 1:6, as to locusts).

9. as it were breastplates of iron--not such as forms the thorax of the natural locust.

as . . . chariots-- (Joe 2:5-7).

battle--*Greek*, "war."

10. tails like unto scorpions--like unto *the tails of scorpions*.

and there were stings--There is no oldest manuscript for this reading. A, B, *Aleph*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* read, "and (they have) stings: and in their tails (is) their power (literally, 'authority': authorized power) to hurt."

11. And--so *Syriac*. But A, B, and *Aleph*, omit "and."

had--*Greek*, "have."

a king . . . which is the angel--*English Version*, agreeing with A, *Aleph*, reads the (*Greek*) article before "angel," in which reading we must translate, "They have as king over them *the* angel," &c. Satan (compare Re 9:1). Omitting the article with B, we must translate, "They have as king *an* angel," &c.: one of the chief demons under Satan: I prefer from Re 9:1, the former.

bottomless pit--*Greek*, "abyss."

Abaddon--that is, *perdition* or *destruction* (Job 26:6; Pr 27:20). The locusts are supernatural instruments in the hands of Satan to torment, and yet not kill, the ungodly, under this fifth trumpet. Just as in the case of godly Job, Satan was allowed to torment with elephantiasis, but not to touch his *life*. In Re 9:20, these two woe-trumpets are expressly called "plagues." ANDREAS OF CÆSAREA, A.D. 500, held, in his *Commentary on Revelation*, that the locusts mean *evil spirits* again permitted to come forth on earth and afflict men with various plagues.

12. Greek, "*The one woe.*"

hereafter--*Greek*, "after these things." I agree with ALFORD and DE BURGH, that these *locusts from the abyss* refer to judgments about to fall on the ungodly immediately before Christ's second advent. None of the interpretations which regard them as past, are satisfactory.

Joe 1:2-7; 2:1-11, is strictly parallel and expressly refers (Joe 2:11) to THE DAY OF THE LORD GREAT AND VERY TERRIBLE: Joe 2:10 gives the portents accompanying the day of the Lord's coming, *the earth quaking, the heavens trembling, the sun, moon, and stars, withdrawing their shining*: Joe 2:18, 31, 32, also point to the immediately succeeding deliverance of Jerusalem: compare also, the previous last conflict in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and the dwelling of God thenceforth in Zion, blessing Judah. DE BURGH confines the locust judgment to *the Israelite land*, even as the sealed in Re 7:1-8 are Israelites: not that there are not others sealed as elect in *the earth*; but that, the judgment being confined to *Palestine*, the sealed of *Israel alone* needed to be expressly excepted from the visitation. Therefore, he translates throughout, "the land" (that is, of Israel and Judah), instead of "the earth." I incline to agree with him.

13. a voice--literally, "*one voice*."

from--*Greek*, "out of."

the four horns--A, *Vulgate* (*Amiatinus* manuscript), *Coptic*, and *Syriac* omit "four." B and CYPRIAN support it. The *four horns* together gave forth their voice, not diverse, but *one*. God's revelation (for example, the Gospel), though in its aspects fourfold (*four* expressing *world-wide* extension: whence *four* is the number of the Evangelists), still has but one and the same voice. However, from the parallelism of this sixth trumpet to the fifth seal (Re 6:9, 10), the martyrs' cry for the avenging of their blood from the altar reaching its consummation under the sixth seal and sixth trumpet, I prefer understanding this *cry from the four corners of the altar* to refer to the saints' prayerful cry from the four quarters of the world, *incensed* by the angel, and ascending to God from the golden altar of incense, and bringing down in consequence fiery judgments. *Aleph* omits the whole clause, "one from the four horns."

14. in, &c.--*Greek*, "*epi to potamo*"; "on," or "at the great river."

Euphrates--(Compare Re 16:12). The river whereat Babylon, the ancient foe of God's people was situated. Again, whether from the literal region of the Euphrates, or from the spiritual Babylon (*the apostate Church*, especially ROME), four angelic ministers of God's judgments shall go forth, assembling an army of horsemen throughout the four quarters of the earth, to slay a third of men, the brunt of the visitation shall be on Palestine.

15. were--"which had been prepared" [TREGELLES rightly].

for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year--rather as *Greek*, "for (that is, against) THE hour, and day, and month, and year," namely, appointed by God. The *Greek* article (*teen*), put once only before all the periods, implies that the hour in the day, and the day in the month, and the month in the year, and the year itself, had been definitely fixed by God. The article would have been omitted had a sum-total of periods been specified, namely, three hundred ninety-one years and one month (the period from A.D. 1281, when the Turks first conquered the Christians, to 1672, their last conquest of them, since which last date their empire has declined).

slay--not merely to "hurt" (Re 9:10), as in the fifth trumpet.

third part--(See on [Re 8:7-12](#)).

of men--namely, of earthy men, Re 8:13, "inhabiters of the earth," as distinguished from God's sealed people (of which the sealed of Israel, Re 7:1-8, form the nucleus).

16. Compare with these two hundred million, Ps 68:17; Da 7:10. The hosts here are evidently, from their numbers and their appearance (Re 9:17), not merely *human* hosts, but probably *infernal*, though constrained to work out God's will (compare Re 9:1, 2).

and I heard--A, B, *Aleph*, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and CYPRIAN omit "and."

17. thus--as follows.

of fire--the *fiery color* of the breastplates answering to the *fire* which *issued* out of their *mouths*.

of jacinth--literally, "of hyacinth color," the hyacinth of the ancients answering to our *dark blue iris*: thus, their *dark, dull-colored* breastplates correspond to the *smoke* out of their mouths.

brimstone--*sulphur-colored*: answering to the *brimstone* or sulphur *out of their mouths*.

18. By these three--A, B, C, and *Aleph* read (*apo* for *kupo*), "From"; implying the *direction* whence the slaughter came; not direct instrumentality as "by" implies. A, B, C, *Aleph* also add "plagues" after "three." *English Version* reading, which omits it, is not well supported.

by the fire--*Greek*, "owing to the fire," literally, "out of."

19. their--A, B, C and *Aleph* read, "the power of the horses."

in their mouth--whence *issued* the *fire, smoke, and brimstone* (Re 9:17). Many interpreters understand the *horsemen* to refer to the myriads of Turkish cavalry arrayed in scarlet, blue, and yellow (*fire, hyacinth, and brimstone*), the *lion-headed horses* denoting their invincible courage, and the *fire and brimstone* out of their mouths, the gunpowder and artillery introduced into Europe about this time, and employed by the Turks; the tails, like serpents, having a venomous sting, the false religion of Mohammed supplanting Christianity, or, as ELLIOTT thinks, the Turkish pachas' horse tails, worn as a symbol of authority. (!) All this is very doubtful. Considering the parallelism of this sixth trumpet to the sixth seal, the likelihood is that events are intended immediately preceding the Lord's coming. "The false prophet" (as Isa 9:15 proves), or second beast, having the horns of a lamb, but speaking as *the dragon*, who supports by lying miracles the final Antichrist, seems to me to be intended. Mohammed, doubtless, is a forerunner of him, but not the exhaustive fulfiller of the prophecy here: Satan will, probably, towards the end, bring out all the powers of hell for the last conflict (see on [Re 9:20](#), on "devils"; compare Re 9:1, 2, 17, 18).

with them--with the serpent heads and their venomous fangs.

20. the rest of the men--that is, the ungodly.

yet--So A, *Vulgate, Syriac, and Coptic*. B and *Aleph* read, "did *not* even repent of," namely, so as to give up "the works," &c. Like Pharaoh hardening his heart against repentance notwithstanding the plagues.

of their hands--(De 31:29). Especially the idols *made by their hands*. Compare Re 13:14, 15, "the image of the beast" Re 19:20.

that they should not--So B reads. But A, C, and *Aleph* read "that they shall not": implying a prophecy of *certainty* that it shall be so.

devils--*Greek*, "demons" which lurk beneath the idols which idolaters worship.

21. sorceries--witchcrafts by means of *drugs* (so the *Greek*). One of the fruits of the unrenewed flesh: the sin of the heathen: about to be repeated by apostate Christians in the last days, Re 22:15, "sorcerers." The heathen who shall have rejected the proffered Gospel and clung to their fleshly lusts, and apostate Christians who shall have relapsed into the same shall share the same terrible judgments. The worship of images was established in the East in A.D. 842.

fornication--singular: whereas the other sins are in the plural. Other sins are perpetrated at intervals: those lacking purity of heart indulge in *one* perpetual fornication [BENGEL].

Re 10:1-11. VISION OF THE LITTLE BOOK.

As an episode was introduced between the sixth and seventh seals, so there is one here (Re 10:1-11:14) after the sixth and introductory to the seventh trumpet (Re 11:15, which forms the grand consummation). The Church and her fortunes are the subject of this episode: as the judgments on the unbelieving *inhabiters of the earth* (Re 8:13) were the exclusive subject of the fifth and sixth woe-trumpets. Re 6:11 is plainly referred to in Re 10:6 below; in Re 6:11 the martyrs crying to be avenged were told they must "rest yet for a little season" or *time*: in Re 10:6 here they are assured, "There shall be no longer (any interval of) time"; their prayer shall have no longer to wait, but (Re 10:7) *at the trumpet sounding of the seventh angel* shall be consummated, and *the mystery of God* (His mighty plan heretofore hidden, but then to be revealed) *shall be finished*. The *little open book* (Re 10:2, 9, 10) is given to John by the angel, with a charge (Re 10:11) that he *must prophesy again concerning* (so the *Greek*) *peoples, nations, tongues, and kings*: which prophecy (as appears from Re 11:15-19) affects those *peoples, nations, tongues, and kings* only in relation to ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH, who form the main object of the prophecy.

1. another mighty angel--as distinguished from the *mighty angel* who asked as to the former and more comprehensive book (Re 5:2), "Who is worthy to open the book?"

clothed with a cloud--the emblem of God coming in judgment.

a--A, B, C, and *Aleph* read "the"; referring to (Re 4:3) *the rainbow* already mentioned.

rainbow upon his head--the emblem of covenant mercy to God's people, amidst judgments on God's foes. Resumed from Re 4:3 (see on [Re 4:3](#)).

face as . . . the sun-- (Re 1:16; 18:1).

feet as pillars of fire-- (Re 1:15; Eze 1:7). The angel, as representative of Christ, reflects His glory and bears the insignia attributed in Re 1:15, 16; 4:3, to Christ Himself. The *pillar of fire* by night led Israel through the wilderness, and was the symbol of God's presence.

2. he had--*Greek*, "Having."

in his hand--in his left hand: as in Re 10:5 (see on [Re 10:5](#)), *he lifts up his right hand to heaven*.

a little book--a roll *little* in comparison with the "book" (Re 5:1) which contained the *whole* vast scheme of God's purposes, not to be fully read till the final consummation. This other, a *less book*, contained only a portion which John was now to make his own (Re 10:9, 11), and then to use in prophesying to others. The New Testament begins with the word "book" (*Greek*, "*biblus*"), of which "the little book" (*Greek*, "*biblaridion*") is the diminutive, "the little bible," the Bible in miniature.

upon the sea . . . earth--Though the beast with seven heads is about to arise out of the *sea* (Re 13:1), and the beast with two horns like a lamb (Re 13:11) out of the *earth*, yet it is but for a time, and that *time shall no longer be* (Re 10:6, 7) when once *the seventh trumpet is about to sound*; the angel with his right foot on the sea, and his left on the earth, claims both as God's, and as about soon to be cleared of the usurper and his followers.

3. as . . . lion--Christ, whom the angel represents, is often so symbolized (Re 5:5, "the Lion of the tribe of Juda").

seven thunders--*Greek*, "*the seven thunders*." They form part of the Apocalyptic symbolism; and so are marked by the article as *well known*. Thus *thunderings* marked the opening of the seventh seal (Re 8:1, 5); so also at the seventh vial (Re 16:17, 18).

WORDSWORTH calls this *the prophetic use of the article*; "the thunders, of which more hereafter." Their full meaning shall be only known at the grand consummation marked by the seventh seal, the seventh trumpet (Re 11:19), and the seventh vial.

uttered their--*Greek*, "*spake their own voices*"; that is, voices peculiarly *their own*, and not now revealed to men.

4. when--*Aleph* reads, "Whatsoever things." But most manuscripts support *English Version*. **uttered their voices--**A, B, C, and *Aleph* omit "their voices." Then translate, "had spoken." **unto me--**omitted by A, B, C, *Aleph*, and *Syriac*.

Seal up--the opposite command to Re 22:20. Even though at *the time of the end* the things sealed in Daniel's time were to be revealed, yet not so the voices of these thunders. Though heard by John, they were not to be imparted by him to others in this book of Revelation; so terrible are they that God in mercy withholds them, since "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." The godly are thus kept from morbid ponderings over the evil to come; and the ungodly are not driven by despair into utter recklessness of life. ALFORD adds another aim in concealing them, namely, "godly fear, seeing that the arrows of God's quiver are not exhausted." Besides the terrors foretold, there are others unutterable and more horrifying lying in the background.

5. lifted up his hand--So A and *Vulgate* read. But B, C, *Aleph*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic*, ". . . his right hand." It was customary to lift up the hand towards heaven, appealing to the God of truth, in taking a solemn oath. There is in this part of the vision an allusion to Da 12:1-13. Compare Re 10:4, with Da 12:4, 9; and Re 10:5, 6, end, with Da 12:7. But there the angel clothed in linen, and standing upon the waters, swore "a time, times, and a half" were to interpose before the consummation; here, on the contrary, the angel standing with his left foot on the earth, and his right upon the sea, swears *there shall be time no longer*. There he lifted up both hands to heaven; here he has *the little book now open* (whereas in Daniel *the book is sealed*) in his left hand (Re 10:2), and he *lifts up only his right hand to heaven*.

6. liveth for ever and ever--*Greek*, "liveth unto the ages of the ages" (compare Da 12:7).

created heaven . . . earth . . . sea, &c.--This detailed designation of God as the Creator, is appropriate to the subject of the angel's oath, namely, the consummating of the mystery of God (Re 10:7), which can surely be brought to pass by the same Almighty power that created all things, and by none else.

that there should be time no longer--*Greek*, "that time (that is, an interval of time) no longer shall be." The martyrs shall have no longer a time to wait for the accomplishment of their prayers for the purgation of the earth by the judgments which shall remove their and God's foes from it (Re 6:11). The appointed *season* or *time* of delay is at an end (the same *Greek* is here as in Re 6:11, *chronos*). Not as *English Version* implies, Time shall end and eternity begin.

7. But--connected with Re 10:6. "There shall be no longer time (that is, delay), *but* in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to (so the *Greek*) sound his trumpet (so the *Greek*), then (literally, 'also'; which conjunction often introduces the consequent member of a sentence) the mystery of God is finished," literally, "has been finished"; the prophet regarding the future as certain as if it were past. A, C, *Aleph*, and *Coptic* read the past tense (*Greek*, "*etelesthee*"). B reads, as *English Version*, the future tense (*Greek*, "*telesthee*"). "should be finished" (compare Re 11:15-18). Sweet consolation to the waiting saints! The seventh trumpet shall be sounded without further delay.

the mystery of God--the theme of the "little book," and so of the remainder of the

Apocalypse. What a grand contrast to the "mystery of iniquity Babylon!" The mystery of God's scheme of redemption, once hidden in God's secret counsel and dimly shadowed forth in types and prophecies, but now more and more clearly revealed according as the Gospel kingdom develops itself, up to its fullest consummation at the end. Then finally His servants shall praise Him most fully, for the glorious consummation of the mystery in having taken to Himself and His saints the kingdom so long usurped by Satan and the ungodly. Thus this verse is an anticipation of Re 11:15-18.

declared to--*Greek*, "declared the glad tidings to." "The mystery of God" is the *Gospel glad tidings*. The office of *the prophets* is to receive *the glad tidings* from God, in order to *declare* them to others. The final consummation is the great theme of the Gospel announced to, and by, the prophets (compare Ga 3:8).

8. spake . . . and said--So *Syriac* and *Coptic* read. But A, B, C, "(I heard) again speaking with me, and saying" (*Greek*, "*lalousan . . . legousan*").

little book--So *Aleph* and B read. But A and C, "the book."

9. I went--*Greek*, "I went *away*." John here leaves heaven, his standing-point of observation heretofore, to be near the angel standing on the earth and sea.

Give--A, B, C, and *Vulgate* read the infinitive, "Telling him *to give*."

eat it up--appropriate its contents so entirely as to be assimilated with (as food), and become part of thyself, so as to impart them the more vividly to others. His finding the roll sweet to the taste at first, is because it was the Lord's will he was doing, and because, divesting himself of carnal feeling, he regarded God's will as always agreeable, however bitter might be the message of judgment to be announced. Compare Ps 40:8, *Margin*, as to Christ's inner complete appropriation of God's word.

thy belly bitter--parallel to Eze 2:10, "There was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe."

as honey--(Ps 19:10; 119:103). Honey, sweet to the mouth, sometimes turns into bile in the stomach. The thought that God would be glorified (Re 11:3-6, 11-18) gave him the sweetest pleasure. Yet, afterwards the *belly*, or carnal natural feeling, was embittered with grief at the prophecy of the coming bitter persecutions of the Church (Re 11:7-10); compare Joh 16:1, 2. The revelation of the secrets of futurity is *sweet* to one at first, but *bitter* and distasteful to our natural man, when we learn the cross which is to be borne before the crown shall be won. John was grieved at the coming apostasy and the sufferings of the Church at the hands of Antichrist.

10. the little book--So A and C, but B, *Aleph*, and *Vulgate*, "the book."

was bitter--*Greek*, "was embittered."

11. he said--A, B, and *Vulgate* read, "*they say* unto me"; an indefinite expression for "it was said unto me."

Thou must--The obligation lies upon thee, as the servant of God, to prophesy at His command.

again--as thou didst already in the previous part of this book of Revelation.

before, &c.--rather as *Greek* (*epilaois*), "*concerning* many peoples," &c., namely, in their relation to the Church. The eating of the book, as in Ezekiel's case, marks John's inauguration to his prophetic office--here to a fresh stage in it, namely, the revealing of the things which befall the holy city and the Church of God--the subject of the rest of the book.

Re 11:1-19. MEASUREMENT OF THE TEMPLE. THE TWO WITNESSES' TESTIMONY: THEIR DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND ASCENSION: THE EARTHQUAKE: THE THIRD WOE: THE SEVENTH TRUMPET USHERS IN CHRIST'S KINGDOM. THANKSGIVING OF THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS.

This eleventh chapter is a compendious summary of, and introduction to, the more detailed prophecies of the same events to come in the twelfth through twentieth chapters. Hence we find *anticipatory* allusions to the subsequent prophecies; compare Re 11:7, "the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit" (not mentioned before), with the detailed accounts, Re 13:1, 11; 17:8; also Re 11:8, "the great city," with Re 14:8; 17:1, 5; 18:10.

1. and the angel stood--omitted in A, *Vulgate*, and *Coptic*. Supported by B and *Syriac*. If it be omitted, the "reed" will, in construction, agree with "saying." So WORDSWORTH takes it. The *reed*, the canon of Scripture, the measuring reed of the Church, our rule of faith, *speaks*. So in Re 16:7 *the altar* is personified as *speaking* (compare *Note*, see on [Re 16:7](#)). The Spirit speaks in the canon of Scripture (the word *canon* is derived from *Hebrew*, "*kaneh*," "a reed," the word here used; and John it was who completed the canon). So VICTORINUS, AQUINAS, and VITRINGA. "Like a rod," namely, straight: like a *rod of iron* (Re 2:27), unbending, destroying all error, and that "cannot be broken." Re 2:27; Heb 1:8, *Greek*, "a rod of straightness," *English Version*, "a scepter of righteousness"; this is added to guard against it being thought that the *reed* was one "shaken by the wind" In the abrupt style of the Apocalypse, "saying" is possibly indefinite, put for "*one said*." Still WORDSWORTH'S view agrees best with *Greek*. So the ancient commentator, ANDREAS OF CÆSAREA, in the end of the fifth century (compare *Notes*, see on [Re 11:3, 4](#)).

the temple--*Greek*, "*naon*" (as distinguished from the *Greek*, "*hieron*," or temple in general), the Holy Place, "*the sanctuary*."

the altar--of incense; for it alone was in "the sanctuary." (*Greek*, "*naos*"). The measurement of the Holy place seems to me to stand parallel to the sealing of the elect of Israel under the sixth seal. God's elect are symbolized by the sanctuary at Jerusalem (1Co 3:16, 17, where the same *Greek* word, "*naos*," occurs for "temple," as here). Literal Israel in Jerusalem, and with the temple restored (Eze 40:3, 5, where also the temple is measured with the measuring reed, the forty-first, forty-second, forty-third, and forty-fourth chapters), shall stand at the head of the elect Church. The measuring implies at once the exactness of the proportions of the temple to be restored, and the definite completeness (not one being wanting) of the numbers of the Israelite and of the Gentile elections. The literal temple at Jerusalem shall be the typical forerunner of the heavenly Jerusalem, in which there shall be all temple, and *no* portion exclusively set apart as *temple*. John's accurately drawing the distinction in subsequent chapters between God's servants and those who bear the mark of the beast, is the way whereby he fulfils the direction here given him *to measure the temple*. The fact that the *temple* is distinguished from *them that worship therein*, favors the view that the spiritual temple, the Jewish and Christian Church, is not exclusively meant, but that the literal temple must also be meant. It shall be rebuilt on the return of the Jews to their land. Antichrist shall there put forward his blasphemous claims. The sealed elect of Israel, the head of the elect Church, alone shall refuse his claims. These shall constitute the true sanctuary which is here measured, that is, accurately marked and kept by God, whereas the rest shall yield to his pretensions. WORDSWORTH objects that, in the twenty-five passages of the Acts, wherein the Jewish temple is mentioned, it is called *hieron*, not *naos*, and so in the apostolic Epistles; but this is simply because no occasion for mentioning *the literal Holy Place* (*Greek*, "*naos*") occurs in Acts and the Epistles; indeed, in Ac 7:48, though not directly, there

does occur the term, *naos*, indirectly referring to the Jerusalem temple *Holy Place*. In addressing Gentile Christians, to whom the literal Jerusalem *temple* was not familiar, it was to be expected the term, *naos*, should not be found in the literal, but in the spiritual sense. In Re 11:19 *naos* is used in a *local* sense; compare also Re 14:15, 17; 15:5, 8.

2. But--Greek, "And."

the court . . . without--all outside *the Holy Place* (Re 11:1).

leave out--of thy measurement, literally, "cast out"; reckon as unhallowed.

it--emphatic. *It* is not to be measured; whereas the Holy Place is.

given--by God's appointment.

unto the Gentiles--In the wider sense, there are meant here "the times of the Gentiles," wherein Jerusalem is "*trodden* down of the Gentiles," as the parallel, Lu 21:24, proves; for the same word is used here [*Greek, "patein"*], "tread under foot." Compare also Ps 79:1; Isa 63:18.

forty . . . two months-- (Re 13:5). The same period as Daniel's "time, times, and half" (Re 12:14); and Re 11:3, and Re 12:6, the woman a fugitive in the wilderness "a thousand two hundred and threescore days." In the wider sense, we may either adopt the year-day theory of 1260 years (on which, and the papal rule of 1260 years, see on [Da 7:25](#); [Da 8:14](#); [Da 12:11](#)), or rather, regard the 2300 days (Da 8:14), 1335 days (Da 12:11, 12). 1290 days, and 1260 days, as symbolical of the long period of the Gentile times, whether dating from the subversion of the Jewish theocracy at the Babylonian captivity (the *kingdom* having been never since restored to Israel), or from the last destruction of Jerusalem under Titus, and extending to the restoration of the theocracy at the coming of Him "whose right it is"; the different epochs marked by the 2300, 1335, 1290, and 1260 days, will not be fully cleared up till the grand consummation; but, meanwhile, our duty and privilege urge us to investigate them. Some one of the epochs assigned by many may be right but as yet it is uncertain. The times of the Gentile monarchies during Israel's *seven times* punishment, will probably, in the narrower sense (Re 11:2), be succeeded by the much more restricted times of the personal Antichrist's tyranny in the Holy Land. The long years of papal misrule may be followed by the short time of the man of sin who shall concentrate in himself all the apostasy, persecution, and evil of the various forerunning Antichrists, Antiochus, Mohammed, Popery, just before Christ's advent. His time shall be THE RECAPITULATION and open consummation of the "mystery of iniquity" so long leavening the world. Witnessing churches may be followed by witnessing individuals, the former occupying the longer, the latter, the shorter period. The *three and a half* (1260 days being three and a half years of three hundred sixty days each, during which the two witnesses prophesy in sackcloth) is the sacred number *seven* halved, implying the Antichristian world-power's time is broken at best; it answers to the *three and a half years'* period in which Christ witnessed for the truth, and the Jews, His own people, disowned Him, and the God-opposed world power crucified Him (compare *Note*, see on [Da 9:27](#)). The three and a half, in a word, marks the time in which the earthly rules over the heavenly kingdom. It was the duration of Antiochus' treading down of the temple and persecution of faithful Israelites. The resurrection of the witnesses after three and a half days, answers to Christ's resurrection after three days. The world power's times never reach the sacred fulness of seven times three hundred sixty, that is, 2520, though they approach to it in 2300 (Da 8:14). The forty-two months answer to Israel's forty-two sojournings (Nu 33:1-50) in the wilderness, as contrasted with the sabbatic rest in Canaan: reminding the Church that here, in the world wilderness, she cannot look for her sabbatic rest. Also, three and a half years was the period of the heaven being shut up, and of consequent famine, in Elias' time. Thus, three and a half represented to the Church the idea of toil, pilgrimage, and persecution.

3. I will give power--There is no "power" in the *Greek*, so that "give" must mean "give

commission," or some such word.

my two witnesses--*Greek*, "*the two witnesses of me.*" The article implies that the two were well known at least to John.

prophesy--preach under the inspiration of the Spirit, denouncing judgments against the apostate. They are described by symbol as "the two olive trees" and "the two candlesticks," or *lamp-stands*, "standing before the God of the earth." The reference is to Zec 4:3, 12, where two *individuals* are meant, Joshua and Zerubbabel, who ministered to the Jewish Church, just as the two olive trees emptied the oil out of themselves into the bowl of the candlestick. So in the final apostasy God will raise up two inspired witnesses to minister encouragement to the afflicted, though sealed, remnant. As *two* candlesticks are mentioned in Re 11:4, but only *one* in Zec 4:2, I think the twofold Church, Jewish and Gentile, may be meant by the two candlesticks represented by the two witnesses: just as in Re 7:1-8 there are described first the sealed of Israel, then those of all nations. But see on [Re 11:4](#). The actions of the two witnesses are just those of Moses when witnessing for God against Pharaoh (the type of Antichrist, the last and greatest foe of Israel), *turning the waters into blood*, and *smiting* with *plagues*; and of Elijah (the witness for God in an almost universal apostasy of Israel, a remnant of seven thousand, however, being left, as the 144,000 sealed, Re 7:1-8) causing *fire* by his word to *devour the enemy*, and *shutting heaven*, so that it rained not for *three years and six months*, the very time (1260 days) during which the two witnesses prophesy. Moreover, the words "witness" and "prophesy" are usually applied to *individuals*, not to abstractions (compare Ps 52:8). DE BURGH thinks Elijah and Moses will again appear, as Mal 4:5, 6 seems to imply (compare Mt 17:11; Ac 3:21). Moses and Elijah appeared with Christ at the Transfiguration, which foreshadowed His coming millennial kingdom. As to Moses, compare De 34:5, 6; Jude 9. Elias' genius and mode of procedure bears the same relation to the "second" coming of Christ, that John the Baptist's did to the first coming [BENGEL]. Many of the early Church thought the two witnesses to be Enoch and Elijah. This would avoid the difficulty of the dying a *second* time, for these have never yet died; but, perhaps, shall be the witnesses slain. Still, the *turning the water to blood*, and the *plagues* (Re 11:6), apply best to "*Moses* (compare Re 15:3, the song of *Moses*"). The transfiguration glory of Moses and Elias was not their permanent resurrection-state, which shall not be till Christ shall come to glorify His saints, for He has precedence before all in rising. An objection to this interpretation is that those blessed departed servants of God would have to submit to death (Re 11:7, 8), and this in Moses' case a *second* time, which Heb 9:27 denies. See on [Zec 4:11, 12](#), on the two witnesses as answering to "the two olive trees." The two olive trees are channels of the oil feeding the Church, and symbols of peace. The Holy Spirit is the oil in them. Christ's witnesses, in remarkable times of the Church's history, have generally appeared in pairs: as Moses and Aaron, the inspired civil and religious authorities; Caleb and Joshua; Ezekiel the priest and Daniel the prophet; Zerubbabel and Joshua.

in sackcloth--the garment of prophets, especially when calling people to mortification of their sins, and to repentance. Their very exterior aspect accorded with their teachings: so Elijah, and John who came in His spirit and power. The *sackcloth* of the witnesses is a catch word linking this episode under the sixth trumpet, with the *sun black as sackcloth* (in righteous retribution on the apostates who rejected God's witnesses) under the sixth seal (Re 6:12).

4. standing before the God of the earth--A, B, C, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS read "Lord" for "God": so Zec 4:14. Ministering to (Lu 1:19), and as in the sight of Him, who, though now so widely disowned on "earth," is its rightful King, and shall at last be openly recognized as such (Re 11:15). The phrase alludes to Zec 4:10, 14, "the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." The article "the" marks this allusion. They are "the two candlesticks," not that they are the Church, the *one* candlestick, but as its representative *light-bearers* (*Greek*, "*phosteres*," Php 2:15), and ministering for its encouragement in a time of

apostasy. WORDSWORTH'S view is worth consideration, whether it may not constitute a secondary sense: *the two witnesses, the olive trees*, are THE TWO TESTAMENTS ministering their *testimony* to the Church of the old dispensation, as well as to that of the new, which explains the two witnesses being called also *the two candlesticks* (the Old and New Testament churches; the candlestick in Zec 4:2 is but *one* as there was then but one Testament, and one Church, the Jewish). The Church in both dispensations has no light in herself, but derives it from the Spirit through the witness of the twofold word, the two olive trees: compare *Note*, see on [Re 11:1](#), which is connected with this, *the reed*, the *Scripture canon*, being the measure of the Church: so PRIMASIUS [X, p. 314]: the two witnesses preach in sackcloth, marking the ignominious treatment which the word, like Christ Himself, receives from the world. So the twenty-four elders represent the ministers of the two dispensations by the double twelve. But Re 11:7 proves that primarily the two Testaments cannot be meant; for these shall never be "killed," and never "shall have finished their testimony" till the world is finished.

5. will hurt--*Greek*, "wishes," or "desires to hurt them."

fire . . . devoureth--(Compare Jer 5:14; 23:29).

out of their mouth--not literally, but God makes their inspired denunciations of judgment to come to pass and *devour* their enemies.

if any man will hurt them--twice repeated, to mark the *immediate certainty* of the accomplishment.

in this manner--so in like manner as he tries to hurt them (compare Re 13:10). Retribution in kind.

6. These . . . power--*Greek*, "authorized power."

it rain not--*Greek*, "*huetos brechee*," "rain shower not," literally, "*moisten*" not (the earth).

smite . . . with all plagues--*Greek*, "with (literally, 'in') every plague."

7. finished their testimony--The same verb is used of Paul's ending his ministry by a violent death.

the beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit--*Greek*, "the wild beast . . . the abyss." This beast was not mentioned before, yet he is introduced as "*the* beast," because he had already been described by Daniel (Da 7:3, 11), and he is fully so in the subsequent part of the Apocalypse, namely, Re 13:1; 17:8. Thus, John at once appropriates the Old Testament prophecies; and also, viewing his whole subject at a glance, mentions as familiar things (though not yet so to the reader) objects to be described hereafter by himself. It is a proof of the unity that pervades all Scripture.

make war against them--alluding to Da 7:21, where the same is said of *the little horn* that sprang up among the ten horns on the fourth beast.

8. dead bodies--So *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and ANDREAS. But A, B, C, the oldest manuscripts, and *Coptic* read the singular, "dead body." The two fallen in one cause are considered as *one*.

the great city--*eight* times in the Revelation elsewhere used of BABYLON (Re 14:8; 16:19; 17:18; 18:10, 16, 18, 19, 21). In Re 21:10 (*English Version* as to *the new Jerusalem*), the oldest manuscripts omit "the great" before *city*, so that it forms no exception. It must, therefore, have an anticipatory reference to the mystical Babylon.

which--*Greek*, "the which," namely, "*the city which*."

spiritually--in a spiritual sense.

Sodom--The very term applied by Isa 1:10 to apostate Jerusalem (compare Eze 16:48).

Egypt--the nation which the Jews' besetting sin was to lean upon.

where . . . Lord was crucified--This identifies the city as Jerusalem, though the Lord was crucified *outside* of the city. EUSEBIUS mentions that the scene of Christ's crucifixion was enclosed within the city by Constantine; so it will be probably at the time of the slaying of the witnesses. "The beast [for example, Napoleon and France's efforts] has been long struggling for a footing in Palestine; after his ascent from the bottomless pit he struggles much more" [BENGEL]. Some one of the Napoleonic dynasty may obtain that footing, and even be regarded as Messiah by the Jews, in virtue of his restoring them to their own land; and so may prove to be the last Antichrist. The difficulty is, how can Jerusalem be called "the great city," that is, Babylon? By her becoming the world's capital of idolatrous apostasy, such as Babylon originally was, and then Rome has been; just as she is here called also "Sodom and Egypt."

also our--A, B, C, ORIGEN, ANDREAS, and others read, "also *their*." Where *their Lord*, *also*, as well as they, was slain. Compare Re 18:24, where *the blood of ALL slain on earth* is said to be found IN BABYLON, just as in Mt 23:35, Jesus saith that, "upon the Jews and JERUSALEM" (Compare Mt 23:37, 38) shall "come ALL the righteous blood shed upon earth"; whence it follows Jerusalem shall be the last capital of the world apostasy, and so receive the last and worst visitation of all the judgments ever inflicted on the apostate world, the earnest of which was given in the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. In the wider sense, in the Church-historical period, the Church being the sanctuary, all outside of it is the world, the great city, wherein all the martyrdoms of saints have taken place. *Babylon* marks its idolatry, *Egypt* its tyranny, *Sodom* its desperate corruption, *Jerusalem* its pretensions to sanctity on the ground of spiritual privileges, while all the while it is the murderer of Christ in the person of His members. All which is true of Rome. So VITRINGA. But in the more definite sense, *Jerusalem* is regarded, even in Hebrews (Heb 13:12-14), as the world city which believers were then to go forth from, in order to "seek one to come."

9. they--rather, "(some) of the peoples."

people--Greek, "peoples."

kindreds--Greek, "tribes"; all save the elect (whence it is not said, *The peoples . . .* but [some] *of the peoples . . .*, or, *some of the peoples . . .* may refer to *those of the nations . . ., who at the time shall hold possession of Palestine and Jerusalem*).

shall see--So *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic*. But A, B, C, and ANDREAS, the present, "see," or rather (Greek, "*blepousin*"), "look upon." The prophetic present.

dead bodies--So *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and ANDREAS. But A, B, C, and *Coptic*, singular, as in Re 11:8, "dead body." Three and a half days answer to the three and a half years (see on [Re 11:2, 3](#)), the half of seven, the full and perfect number.

shall not suffer--so B, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS. But A, C, and *Vulgate* read, "do not suffer."

in graves--so *Vulgate* and PRIMASIUS. But B, C, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS, *singular*; translate, "into a sepulchre," literally, "a monument." Accordingly, in righteous retribution in kind, *the flesh* of the Antichristian hosts is not buried, but given to *all the fowls in mid-heaven* to eat (Re 19:17, 18, 21).

10. they that dwell upon . . . earth--those who belong to the earth, as its citizens, not to heaven (Re 3:10; 8:13; 12:12; 13:8).

shall--so *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic*. But A, B, and C read *the present* tense; compare *Note*, see on [Re 11:9](#), on "shall not suffer."

rejoice over them--The Antichristianity of the last days shall probably be under the name of philosophical enlightenment and civilization, but really man's deification of himself. Fanaticism shall lead Antichrist's followers to exult in having at last seemingly silenced in death their

Christian rebukers. Like her Lord, the Church will have her dark passion week followed by the bright resurrection morn. It is a curious historical coincidence that, at the fifth Lateran Council, May 5, 1514, no witness (not even the Moravians who were summoned) testified for the truth, as HUSS and JEROME did at Constance; an orator ascended the tribunal before the representatives of papal Christendom, and said, "There is no reclaimant, no opponent." LUTHER, on October 31, 1517, exactly three and a half years afterwards, posted up his famous theses on the church at Wittenberg. The objection is, the years are years of three hundred sixty-five, not three hundred sixty, days, and so two and a half days are deficient; but still the coincidence is curious; and if this prophecy be allowed other fulfilments, besides the final and literal one under the last Antichrist, this may reasonably be regarded as one.

send gifts one to another--as was usual at a joyous festival.

tormented them--namely, with the plagues which they had power to inflict (Re 11:5, 6); also, by their testimony against the earthly.

11. Translate as *Greek*, "After *the* three days and an half."

the Spirit of life--the same which breathed *life* into Israel's dry bones, Eze 37:10, 11 (see on [Eze 37:10, 11](#)), "Breath *came into* them." The passage here, as there, is closely connected with *Israel's* restoration as a nation to political and religious life. Compare also concerning the same, Ho 6:2, where Ephraim says, "After two days will He revive us; in the *third day* He will *raise us up*, and we shall *live* in His sight."

into--so B and *Vulgate*. But A reads (*Greek*, "*en autois*"), "(so as to be) IN them."

stood upon their feet--the very words in Eze 37:10, which proves the allusion to be to *Israel's* resurrection, in contrast to "the times of the Gentiles" wherein these "tread under foot the holy city."

great fear--such as fell on the soldiers guarding Christ's tomb at His resurrection (Mt 28:4), when also there was a great earthquake (Re 11:2).

saw--*Greek*, "beheld."

12. they--so A, C, and *Vulgate*. But B, *Coptic*, *Syriac*, and ANDREAS read, "I heard."

a cloud--*Greek*, "the cloud"; which may be merely the generic expression for what we are familiar with, as we say "*the* clouds." But I prefer taking the article as definitely alluding to THE cloud which received Jesus at His ascension, Ac 1:9 (where there is no article, as there is no allusion to a previous cloud, such as there is here). As they resembled Him in their three and a half years' witnessing, their three and a half days lying in death (though not for exactly the same time, nor put in a tomb as He was), so also in their ascension is the translation and transfiguration of the sealed of Israel (Re 7:1-8), and the elect of all nations, caught up out of the reach of the Antichristian foe. In Re 14:14-16, He is represented as sitting on a *white cloud*.

their enemies beheld them--and were thus openly convicted by God for their unbelief and persecution of His servants; unlike Elijah's ascension formerly, in the sight of friends only. The Church caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and transfigured in body, is justified by her Lord before the world, even as the man-child (Jesus) was "caught up unto God and His throne" from before *the dragon standing ready to devour the woman's child as soon as born*.

13. "In that same hour"; literally, "the hour."

great earthquake--answering to the "great earthquake" under the sixth seal, just at the approach of the Lord (Re 6:12). Christ was delivered unto His enemies on the fifth day of the week, and on the *sixth* was crucified, and on the sabbath rested; so it is under the sixth seal and sixth trumpet that the last suffering of the Church, begun under the fifth seal and trumpet, is to be consummated, before she enters on her seventh day of eternal sabbath. *Six* is the number of

the world power's greatest triumph, but at the same time verges on *seven*, the divine number, when its utter destruction takes place. Compare "666" in Re 13:18, "the number of the beast."

tenth part of the city fell--that is, of "the great city" (Re 16:19; Zec 14:2). Ten is the number of the *world kingdoms* (Re 17:10-12), and the *beast's horns* (Re 13:1), and the *dragon's* (Re 12:3). Thus, in the Church-historical view, it is hereby implied that one of the ten apostate world kingdoms fall. But in the narrower view a tenth of Jerusalem under Antichrist falls. The nine-tenths remain and become when purified the center of Christ's earthly kingdom.

of men--*Greek*, "names of men." The men are as accurately enumerated as if their names were given.

seven thousand--ELLIOTT interprets *seven chiliads* or provinces, that is, the seven Dutch United Provinces lost to the papacy; and "names of men," titles of dignity, duchies, lordships, &c. Rather, *seven thousand* combine the two mystical perfect and comprehensive numbers *seven* and *thousand*, implying the *full and complete* destruction of the impenitent.

the remnant--consisting of the Israelite inhabitants not slain. Their conversion forms a blessed contrast to Re 16:9; and above, Re 9:20, 21. These repenting (Zec 12:10-14; 13:1), become in the flesh the loyal *subjects* of Christ reigning over the earth with His transfigured saints.

gave glory to the God of heaven--which while apostates, and worshipping the beast's image, they had not done.

God of heaven--The apostates of the last days, in pretended scientific enlightenment, recognize no *heavenly* power, but only the natural forces in the earth which come under their observation. His receiving up into *heaven* the two witnesses who had *power* during their time on earth *to shut heaven* from raining (Re 11:6), constrained His and their enemies who witnessed it, to acknowledge *the God of heaven*, to be *God of the earth* (Re 11:4). As in Re 11:4 He declared Himself to be *God of the earth* by His two witnesses, so now He proves Himself to be *God of heaven* also.

14. The second woe--that under the sixth trumpet (Re 9:12-21), including also the prophecy, Re 11:1-13: Woe to the world, joy to the faithful, as *their redemption draweth nigh*.

the third woe cometh quickly--It is not mentioned in detail for the present, until first there is given a sketch of the history of the origination, suffering, and faithfulness of the Church in a time of apostasy and persecution. Instead of the third woe being detailed, the grand consummation is summarily noticed, the thanksgiving of the twenty-four elders in heaven for the establishment of *Christ's kingdom on earth*, attended with the *destruction of the destroyers of the earth*.

15. sounded--with his trumpet. Evidently "the LAST trumpet." *Six* is close to *seven*, but does not reach it. The world judgments are complete in *six*, but by the fulfilment of *seven* the world kingdoms become Christ's. Six is the number of the world given over to judgment. It is half of *twelve*, the Church's number, as three and a half is half of seven, the divine number for completeness. BENGEL thinks the angel *here* to have been Gabriel, which name is compounded of *El*, GOD, and *Geber*, MIGHTY MAN (Re 10:1). Gabriel therefore appropriately announced to Mary the advent of the *mighty God-man*: compare the account of the *man-child's* birth which follows (Re 12:1-6), to which this forms the transition though the seventh trumpet in time is subsequent, being the consummation of the historical episode, the twelfth and thirteen chapters. The seventh trumpet, like the seventh seal and seventh vial, being the consummation, is accompanied differently from the preceding six: not the consequences which follow on earth, but those IN HEAVEN, are set before us, the *great voices and thanksgiving of the twenty-four elders in heaven*, as the *half-hour's silence in heaven* at the seventh seal, and the *voice out of the temple in heaven*, "It is done," at the seventh vial. This is parallel to Da 2:44, "The God of

heaven shall set up a *kingdom*, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break to pieces all these *kingdoms*, and it shall stand for ever." It is the setting up of *Heaven's* sovereignty over the earth visibly, which, when invisibly exercised, was rejected by the earthly rulers heretofore. The distinction of worldly and spiritual shall then cease. There will be no beast in opposition to the woman. Poetry, art, science, and social life will be at once worldly and Christian.

kingdoms--A, B, C, and *Vulgate* read the singular, "The *kingdom* (sovereignty) of (over) the world is our Lord's and His Christ's." There is no good authority for *English Version* reading. The *kingdoms* of the world give way to *the kingdom of (over) the world* exercised by Christ. The earth-kingdoms are many: His shall be *one*. The appellation "Christ," *the Anointed*, is here, where His *kingdom* is mentioned appropriately for the first time used in Revelation. For it is equivalent to KING. Though priests and prophets also were *anointed*, yet this term is peculiarly applied to Him as King, insomuch that "the Lord's anointed" is His title as KING, in places where He is distinguished from the priests. The glorified Son of man shall rule mankind by His transfigured Church in heaven, and by His people Israel on earth: Israel shall be the priestly mediator of blessings to the whole world, realizing them first.

he--not emphatic in the *Greek*.

shall reign for ever and ever--*Greek*, "unto the ages of the ages." Here begins the millennial reign, the consummation of "the mystery of God" (Re 10:7).

16. before God--B and *Syriac* read, "before *the throne of God*." But A, C, *Vulgate*, and *Coptic* read as *English Version*.

seats--*Greek*, "thrones."

17. thanks--for the answer to our prayers (Re 6:10, 11) in *destroying them which destroy the earth* (Re 11:18), thereby preparing the way for setting up the kingdom of Thyself and Thy saints.

and art to come--omitted in A, B, C, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, CYPRIAN, and ANDREAS. The consummation having actually come, they do not address Him as they did when it was still future, "Thou that art to come." Compare Re 11:18, "is come." From the sounding of the seventh trumpet He is to His people JAH, the ever present Lord, WHO IS, more peculiarly than JEHOVAH "who is, was, and *is to come*."

taken to thee thy great power--"to Thee" is not in the *Greek*. Christ *takes* to Him the kingdom as His own of *right*.

18. the nations were angry--alluding to Ps 99:1, *Septuagint*, "The Lord is become King: let the peoples become *angry*." Their anger is combined with *alarm* (Ex 15:14; 2Ki 19:28, "thy *rage against Me* is come up into Mine ears, I will put My hook in thy nose," &c.). Translate, as the *Greek* is the same. "The nations were *angered*, and Thy *anger* is come." How petty man's impotent *anger*, standing here side by side with that of the omnipotent God!

dead . . . be judged--proving that this seventh trumpet is at the end of all things, when the judgment on Christ's foes and the reward of His saints, long prayed for by His saints, shall take place.

the prophets--as, for instance, the two *prophesying witnesses* (Re 11:3), and those who have showed them kindness for Christ's sake. Jesus shall come to effect by His presence that which we have looked for long, but vainly, in His absence, and by other means.

destroy them which destroy the earth--Retribution in kind (compare Re 16:6; Lu 19:27). See on [Da 7:14-18](#).

19. A similar solemn conclusion to that of the seventh seal, Re 8:5, and to that of the seventh vial, Re 16:18. Thus, it appears, the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven vials, are not consecutive, but parallel, and ending in the same consummation. They present the unfolding of God's plans for bringing about the grand end under three different aspects, mutually complementing each other.

the temple--the sanctuary or *Holy place* (Greek, "*naos*"), not the whole *temple* (Greek, "*hieron*").

opened in heaven--A and C read the article, "the temple of God "which is" in heaven, was opened."

the ark of his testament--or ". . . His *covenant*." As in the first verse the earthly sanctuary was *measured*, so here its heavenly antitype is laid open, and the antitype above to the *ark of the covenant* in the Holiest Place below is seen, the pledge of God's faithfulness to His covenant in saving His people and punishing their and His enemies. Thus this forms a fit close to the series of trumpet judgments and an introduction to the episode (the twelfth and thirteen chapters) as to His faithfulness to His Church. Here first His secret place, the heavenly sanctuary, is opened for the assurance of His people; and thence proceed His judgments in their behalf (Re 14:15, 17; 15:5; 16:17), which the great company in heaven laud as "true and righteous." This then is parallel to the scene at the heavenly altar, at the close of the seals and opening of the trumpets (Re 8:3), and at the close of the episode (the twelfth through fifteenth chapters) and opening of the vials (Re 15:7, 8). See on [Re 12:1](#), note at the opening of the chapter.

CHAPTER 12

Re 12:1-17. VISION OF THE WOMAN, HER CHILD, AND THE PERSECUTING DRAGON.

1. This episode (Re 12:1-15:8) describes *in detail* the persecution of Israel and the elect Church by the beast, which had been *summarily* noticed, Re 11:7-10, and the triumph of the faithful, and torment of the unfaithful. So also the sixteenth through twentieth chapters are the description in detail of the judgment on the beast, &c., summarily noticed in Re 11:13, 18. The beast in Re 12:3, &c., is shown not to be alone, but to be the instrument in the hand of a greater power of darkness, Satan. That this is so, appears from the time of the eleventh chapter being the period also in which the events of the twelfth and thirteenth chapters take place, namely, 1260 days (Re 12:6, 14; Re 13:5; compare Re 11:2, 3).

great--in size and significance.

wonder--Greek, "sign": significant of momentous truths.

in heaven--not merely the sky, but the *heaven* beyond just mentioned, Re 11:19; compare Re 12:7-9.

woman clothed with the sun . . . moon under her feet--the Church, Israel first, and then the Gentile Church; clothed with Christ, "the Sun of righteousness." "Fair as the moon, clear as the sun." Clothed with the Sun, the Church is the bearer of divine supernatural light in the world. So the seven churches (that is, the Church universal, the woman) are represented as light-bearing *candlesticks* (Re 1:12, 20). On the other hand, the *moon*, though standing above the sea and earth, is altogether connected with them and is an earthly light: *sea*, *earth*, and *moon* represent the worldly element, in opposition to the kingdom of God--heaven, the sun. The moon cannot disperse the darkness and change it into-day: thus she represents the world religion (heathenism) in relation to the supernatural world. The Church has the moon, therefore, under her feet; but the stars, as heavenly lights, on her head. The devil directs his efforts against the stars, the angels of the churches, about hereafter to shine for ever. The twelve stars, the crown around her head, are the twelve tribes of Israel [AUBERLEN]. The allusions to *Israel* before

accord with this: compare Re 11:19, "the temple of God"; "the ark of His testament." The ark lost at the Babylonian captivity, and never since found, is seen in the "temple of God opened in heaven," signifying that God now enters again into covenant with His ancient people. The woman cannot mean, literally, the virgin mother of Jesus, for she did not flee into the wilderness and stay there for 1260 days, while the dragon persecuted the remnant of her seed (Re 12:13-17) [DE BURGH]. The *sun*, *moon*, and *twelve stars*, are emblematical of Jacob, Leah, or else Rachel, and the twelve patriarchs, that is, the Jewish Church: secondarily, the Church universal, having *under her feet*, in due subordination, the ever changing moon, which shines with a borrowed light, emblem of *the Jewish dispensation*, which is now in a position of inferiority, though supporting the woman, and also of the changeful things of this world, and having on her head the crown of twelve stars, the twelve apostles, who, however, are related closely to Israel's twelve tribes. The Church, in passing over into the Gentile world, is (1) persecuted; (2) then seduced, as heathenism begins to react on her. This is the key to the meaning of the symbolic woman, beast, harlot, and false prophet. *Woman* and *beast* form the same contrast as *the Son of man* and the *beasts* in Daniel. As the Son of man comes *from heaven*, so the woman is seen *in heaven* (Re 12:1). The two beasts arise respectively *out of the sea* (compare Da 7:3) and *the earth* (Re 13:1, 11): their origin is not of heaven, but of earth earthy. Daniel beholds the heavenly Bridegroom coming visibly to reign. John sees the woman, the Bride, whose calling is heavenly, in the world, before the Lord's coming again. The characteristic of woman, in contradistinction to man, is her being subject, the surrendering of herself, her being receptive. This similarly is man's relation to God, to be subject to, and receive from, God. All autonomy of the human spirit reverses man's relation to God. Woman-like receptivity towards God constitutes *faith*. By it the *individual* becomes a child of God; the children *collectively* are viewed as "the woman." Humanity, in so far as it belongs to God, is the *woman*. Christ, the Son of the woman, is in Re 12:5 emphatically called "the MAN-child" (*Greek*, "*huios arrheen*," "male-child"). Though born of a woman, and under the law for man's sake, He is also the Son of God, and so the HUSBAND of the Church. As Son of the woman, He is "Son of man"; as *male-child*, He is Son of God, and Husband of the Church. All who imagine to have life in themselves are severed from Him, the Source of life, and, standing in their own strength, sink to the level of senseless *beasts*. Thus, the woman designates universally the kingdom of God; the beast, the kingdom of the world. The woman of whom Jesus was born represents *the Old Testament congregation of God*. The woman's travail-pains (Re 12:2) represent the Old Testament believers' ardent longings for the promised Redeemer. Compare the joy at His birth (Isa 9:6). As new Jerusalem (called also "the woman," or "wife," Re 21:2, 9-12), with its twelve gates, is the exalted and transfigured Church, so the woman with the twelve stars is the Church militant.

2. pained--*Greek*, "tormented" (*basanizomene*). DE BURGH explains this of the bringing in of the first-begotten into the world AGAIN, when Israel shall at last welcome Him, and when "the man-child shall rule all nations with the rod of iron." But there is a plain contrast between the *painful travailing* of the woman here, and Christ's second coming to the Jewish Church, the believing remnant of Israel, "*Before she travailed she brought forth . . . a MAN-CHILD*," that is, almost *without travail-pangs*, she receives (at His second advent), as if born to her, Messiah and a numerous seed.

3. appeared--"was seen."

wonder--*Greek*, "*semeion*," "sign."

red--So A and *Vulgate* read. But B, C, and *Coptic* read, "of fire." In either case, the *color* of the dragon implies his fiery rage as a *murderer from the beginning*. His representative, *the beast*, corresponds, *having seven heads and ten horns* (the number of horns on the fourth beast of Da 7:7; Re 13:1). But there, *ten* crowns are on the *ten horns* (for before the end, the fourth empire is

divided into *ten* kingdoms); here, *seven* crowns (rather, "diadems," *Greek*, "*diademata*," not *stephanoi*, "wreaths") are *upon his seven heads*. In Da 7:4-7 the Antichristian powers up to Christ's second coming are represented by four beasts, which have among them *seven* heads, that is, the first, second, and fourth beasts having *one* head each, the third, *four* heads. His universal dominion as prince of this fallen world is implied by the *seven diadems* (contrast the "many diadems on Christ's head," Re 19:12, when coming to destroy him and his), the caricature of the *seven* Spirits of God. His worldly instruments of power are marked by the *ten horns*, ten being the number of the world. It marks his self-contradictions that he and the beast bear both the number *seven* (the divine number) and *ten* (the world number).

4. drew--*Greek*, present tense, "draweth," "drags down." His *dragging down the stars* with *his tail* (lashed back and forward in his fury) implies his persuading to apostatize, like himself, and to become earthy, those angels and also once eminent human teachers who had formerly been heavenly (compare Re 12:1; 1:20; Isa 14:12).

stood--"stands" [ALFORD]: perfect tense, *Greek*, "*hesteken*."

ready to be delivered--"about to bring forth."

for to devour, &c.--"that when she brought forth, he might devour her child." So the dragon, represented by his agent Pharaoh (a name common to all the Egyptian kings, and meaning, according to some, *crocodile*, a reptile like the dragon, and made an Egyptian idol), was ready to devour Israel's *males* at the birth of the nation. Antotypically the true Israel, Jesus, when born, was sought for destruction by Herod, who slew all the *males* in and around Bethlehem.

5. man-child--*Greek*, "a son, a male." On the deep significance of this term, see on [Re 12:1, 2](#).

rule--*Greek*, "*poimainein*," "tend as a shepherd"; (see on [Re 2:27](#)).

rod of iron--A rod is for long-continued obstinacy until they submit themselves to obedience [BENGEL]: Re 2:27; Ps 2:9, which passages prove the Lord Jesus to be meant. Any interpretation which ignores this must be wrong. The *male son's* birth cannot be the origin of the Christian state (Christianity triumphing over heathenism under Constantine), which was not a divine child of the woman, but had many impure worldly elements. In a secondary sense, *the ascending of the witnesses up to heaven* answers to Christ's own ascension, "caught up unto God, and unto His throne": as also His ruling the nations with a rod of iron is to be shared in by believers (Re 2:27). What took place primarily in the case of the divine Son of the woman, shall take place also in the case of those who are one with Him, the sealed of Israel (Re 7:1-8), and the elect of all nations, about to be translated and to reign with Him over the earth at His appearing.

6. woman fled--Mary's flight with Jesus into Egypt is a type of this.

where she hath--So C reads. But A and B add "there."

a place--that portion of the heathen world which has received Christianity professedly, namely, mainly the fourth kingdom, having its seat in the modern Babylon, Rome, implying that *all* the heathen world would not be Christianized in the present order of things.

prepared of God--literally, "*from* God." Not by human caprice or fear, but by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, the *woman*, the Church, *fled into the wilderness*.

they should feed her--*Greek*, "nourish her." Indefinite for, "she should be fed." The heathen world, *the wilderness*, could not nourish the Church, but only afford her an outward shelter. Here, as in Da 4:26, and elsewhere, the third person plural refers to *the heavenly powers* who minister from God *nourishment* to the Church. As Israel had its time of first bridal love, on its

first going out of Egypt into the wilderness, so the Christian Church's *wilderness*-time of *first love* was the apostolic age, when it was separate from the *Egypt* of this world, having no city here, but seeking one to come; having only a *place in the wilderness prepared of God* (Re 12:6, 14). The harlot takes the world city as her own, even as Cain was the first builder of a *city*, whereas the believing patriarchs lived in *tents*. Then apostate Israel was the harlot and the young Christian Church the woman; but soon spiritual fornication crept in, and the Church in the seventeenth chapter is no longer *the woman*, but *the harlot*, the *great Babylon*, which, however, has in it hidden the true people of God (Re 18:4). The deeper the Church penetrated into heathendom, the more she herself became heathenish. Instead of overcoming, she was overcome by the world [AUBERLEN]. Thus, *the woman* is "the one inseparable Church of the Old and New Testament" [HENGSTENBERG], the stock of the Christian Church being Israel (Christ and His apostles being Jews), on which the Gentile believers have been *grafted*, and into which Israel, on her conversion, shall be grafted, as into *her own olive tree*. During the whole Church-historic period, or "times of the Gentiles," wherein "Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles," there is no believing Jewish Church, and therefore, only the Christian Church can be "the woman." At the same time there is meant, secondarily, the preservation of the Jews during this Church-historic period, in order that Israel, who was once "the woman," and of whom the *man-child* was born, may become so again at the close of the Gentile times, and stand at the head of the two elections, literal Israel, and spiritual Israel, the Church elected from Jews and Gentiles without distinction. Eze 20:35, 36, "I will bring you into *the wilderness of the people* (*Hebrew, 'peoples'*), and there will I plead with you . . . like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of Egypt" (compare *Notes*, see on [Eze 20:35, 36](#)): not a *wilderness* literally and locally, but spiritually a *state of discipline and trial* among the Gentile "*peoples*," during the long Gentile times, and one finally consummated in the last time of unparalleled trouble under Antichrist, in which the sealed remnant (Re 7:1-8) who constitute "the woman," are nevertheless preserved "from the face of the serpent" (Re 12:14).

thousand two hundred and threescore days--anticipatory of Re 12:14, where the persecution which caused her to flee is mentioned in its place: Re 13:11-18 gives the details of the persecution. It is most unlikely that the transition should be made from the birth of Christ to the last Antichrist, without notice of the long intervening Church-historical period. Probably the 1260 days, or periods, representing this long interval, are RECAPITULATED on a shorter scale analogically during the last Antichrist's short reign. They are equivalent to three and a half years, which, as half of the divine number *seven*, symbolize the seeming victory of the world over the Church. As they include the whole *Gentile times of Jerusalem's being trodden of the Gentiles*, they must be much longer than 1260 years; for, above several centuries more than 1260 years have elapsed since Jerusalem fell.

7. In Job 1:6-11; 2:1-6, Satan appears among the sons of God, presenting himself before God in heaven, as the accuser of the saints: again in Zec 3:1, 2. But at Christ's coming as our Redeemer, he *fell from heaven*, especially when Christ suffered, rose again, and ascended to heaven. When Christ appeared before God as our Advocate, Satan, the accusing adversary, could no longer appear before God against us, but was *cast out judicially* (Ro 8:33, 34). He and his angels henceforth range through the air and the earth, after a time (namely, the interval between the ascension and the second advent) about to be cast hence also, and bound in hell. That "heaven" here does not mean merely the air, but the abode of angels, appears from Re 12:9, 10, 12; 1Ki 22:19-22.

there was--*Greek*, "there came to pass," or "arose."

war in heaven--What a seeming contradiction in terms, yet true! Contrast the blessed result of Christ's triumph, Lu 19:38, "peace in heaven." Col 1:20, "made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to *reconcile* all things unto Himself; whether . . . things in earth, or things *in*

heaven."

Michael and his angels . . . the dragon . . . and his angels--It was fittingly ordered that, as the rebellion arose from unfaithful angels and their leader, so they should be encountered and overcome by faithful angels and their archangel, in heaven. On earth they are fittingly encountered, and shall be overcome, as represented by the beast and false prophet, by the Son of man and His armies of human saints (Re 19:14-21). The conflict on earth, as in Da 10:13, has its correspondent conflict of angels in heaven. Michael is peculiarly the prince, or presiding angel, of the Jewish nation. The conflict in heaven, though judicially decided already against Satan from the time of Christ's resurrection and ascension, receives its actual completion in the execution of judgment by the angels who cast out Satan from heaven. From Christ's ascension he has no standing-ground judicially against the believing elect. Lu 10:18, "I beheld (in the earnest of the future full fulfilment given in the subjection of the demons to the disciples) Satan as lightning fall from heaven." As Michael fought before with Satan about the body of the mediator of the old covenant (Jude 9), so now the mediator of the new covenant, by offering His sinless body in sacrifice, arms Michael with power to renew and finish the conflict by a complete victory. That Satan is not yet *actually* and *finally* cast out of heaven, though the *judicial* sentence to that effect received its ratification at Christ's ascension, appears from Eph 6:12, "spiritual wickedness in high (*Greek, 'heavenly'*) places." This is the primary Church-historical sense here. But, through Israel's unbelief, Satan has had ground against that, the elect nation, appearing before God as its accuser. At the eve of its restoration, in the ulterior sense, his standing-ground in heaven against Israel, too, shall be taken from him, "the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem" *rebuking* him, and casting him out from heaven actually and for ever by Michael, the prince, or presiding angel of the Jews. Thus Zec 3:1-9 is strictly parallel, Joshua, the high priest, being representative of his nation Israel, and Satan standing at God's fight hand as adversary to resist Israel's justification. Then, and not till then, fully (Re 12:10, "NOW," &c.) shall ALL *things be reconciled unto Christ* IN HEAVEN (Col 1:20), and there shall be *peace in heaven* (Lu 19:38).

against--A, B, and C read, "with."

8. prevailed not--A and *Coptic* read, "He prevailed not." But B and C read as *English Version*.

neither--A, B, and C read, "not even" (*Greek, "oude"*): a climax. Not only did they not prevail, but *not even their place was found any more in heaven*. There are four gradations in the ever deeper downfall of Satan: (1) He is deprived of his heavenly excellency, though having still access to heaven as man's accuser, up to Christ's first coming. As heaven was not fully yet opened to man (Joh 3:13), so it was not yet shut against Satan and his demons. The Old Testament dispensation could not overcome him. (2) From Christ, down to the millennium, he is judicially cast out of heaven as the accuser of the elect, and shortly before the millennium loses his power against Israel, and has sentence of expulsion fully executed on him and his by Michael. His rage on earth is consequently the greater, his power being concentrated on it, especially towards the end, when "he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Re 12:12). (3) He is bound during the millennium (Re 20:1-3). (4) After having been loosed for a while, he is cast for ever into the lake of fire.

9. that old serpent--alluding to Ge 3:1, 4.

Devil--the *Greek*, for "accuser," or "slanderer."

Satan--the *Hebrew* for "adversary," especially in a court of justice. The twofold designation, *Greek* and *Hebrew*, marks the twofold objects of his accusations and temptations, the elect Gentiles and the elect Jews.

world--*Greek*, "habitable world."

10. Now--*Now* that Satan has been cast out of heaven. Primarily fulfilled in part at Jesus' resurrection and ascension, when He said (Mt 28:18), "All power [*Greek*, '*exousia*,' 'authority,' as here; see below] is given unto Me in heaven and in earth"; connected with Re 12:5, "Her child was *caught up unto God and to His throne*." In the ulterior sense, it refers to the eve of Christ's second coming, when Israel is about to be restored as mother-church of Christendom, Satan, who had resisted her restoration on the ground of her unworthiness, having been cast out by the instrumentality of Michael, Israel's angelic *prince* (see on [Re 12:7](#)). Thus this is parallel, and the necessary preliminary to the glorious event similarly expressed, Re 11:15, "The kingdom of this world is become (the very word here, *Greek*, '*egeneto*,' 'is come,' 'hath come to pass') our Lord's and His Christ's," the result of Israel's resuming her place.

salvation, &c.--*Greek*, "*the salvation* (namely, fully, finally, and victoriously accomplished, Heb 9:28; compare Lu 3:6, yet future; hence, not till *now* do the blessed raise the fullest hallelujah for *salvation* to the Lamb, Re 7:10; 19:1) *the power* (*Greek*, '*dunamis*'), and the authority (*Greek*, '*exousia*'; '*legitimate power*'; see above) of His Christ."

accused them before our God day and night--Hence the need that the oppressed Church, *God's own elect* (like the widow, *continually coming*, so as even to *weary* the unjust judge), should *cry day and night unto Him*.

11. they--emphatic in the *Greek*. "They" in particular. They and they alone. They were the persons who overcame.

overcame-- (Ro 8:33, 34, 37; 16:20).

him-- (1Jo 2:14, 15). It is the same *victory* (a peculiarly Johannean phrase) over Satan and the world which the Gospel of John describes in the life of Jesus, his Epistle in the life of each believer, and his Apocalypse in the life of the Church.

by, &c.--*Greek* (*dia to haima*; accusative, not genitive case, as *English Version* would require, compare Heb 9:12), "*on account of* (on the ground of) the blood of the Lamb"; "because of"; on account of and by virtue of its having been shed. Had that blood not been shed, Satan's accusations would have been unanswerable; as it is, that blood meets every charge.

SCHOTTGEN mentions the Rabbinical tradition that Satan accuses men all days of the year, except the day of atonement. TITTMANN takes the *Greek* "*dia*," as it often means, *out of regard* to the blood of the Lamb; this was the impelling cause which *induced* them to undertake the contest *for the sake of it*; but the view given above is good *Greek*, and more in accordance with the general sense of Scripture.

by the word of their testimony--*Greek*, "on account of the word of their testimony." On the ground of their faithful testimony, even unto death, they are constituted victors. Their testimony evinced their victory over him by virtue of the blood of the Lamb. Hereby they confess themselves worshippers of the slain Lamb and overcome the beast, Satan's representative; an anticipation of Re 15:2, "them that had gotten the victory over the beast" (compare Re 13:15, 16).

unto--*Greek*, "*achri*," "even as far as." They carried their not-love of life *as far as even unto* death.

12. Therefore--because Satan is cast out of heaven (Re 12:9).

dwel--literally, "tabernacle." Not only angels and the souls of the just with God, but also the faithful militant on earth, who already in spirit tabernacle in heaven, having their home and citizenship there, *rejoice* that Satan is cast out of their home. "Tabernacle" for *dwel* is used to mark that, though still on the earth, they in spirit are hidden "in the secret of God's *tabernacle*." They belong not to the world, and, therefore, exult in judgment having been passed on the prince

of this world.

the inhabitants of--So ANDREAS reads. But A, B, and C omit. The words probably, were inserted from Re 8:13.

is come down--rather as *Greek*, "*catebee*," "*is gone down*"; John regarding the heaven as his standing-point of view whence he looks down on the earth.

unto you--*earth and sea*, with their inhabitants; those who lean upon, and essentially belong to, the *earth* (contrast Joh 3:7, *Margin*, with Joh 3:31; 8:23; 1Jo+4:5">Php 3:19, end; 1Jo 4:5) and its *sea*-like troubled politics. Furious at his expulsion from heaven, and knowing that his time on earth is short until he shall be cast down lower, when Christ shall come to set up *His* kingdom (Re 20:1, 2), Satan concentrates all his power to destroy as many souls as he can. Though no longer able to accuse the elect in heaven, he can tempt and persecute on earth. The more light becomes victorious, the greater will be the struggles of the powers of darkness; whence, at the last crisis, Antichrist will manifest himself with an intensity of iniquity greater than ever before.

short time--*Greek*, "*kairon*," "*season*": *opportunity* for his assaults.

13. Resuming from Re 12:6 the thread of the discourse, which had been interrupted by the episode, Re 12:7-12 (giving in the invisible world the ground of the corresponding conflict between light and darkness in the visible world), this verse accounts for her *flight into the wilderness* (Re 12:6).

14. were given--by God's determinate appointment, not by human chances (Ac 9:11).

two--*Greek*, "*the two wings of the great eagle*." Alluding to Ex 19:4: proving that the Old Testament Church, as well as the New Testament Church, is included in "the woman." All believers are included (Isa 40:30, 31). *The great eagle* is the world power; in Eze 17:3, 7, *Babylon* and *Egypt*: in early Church history, *Rome*, whose standard was the *eagle*, turned by God's providence from being hostile into a protector of the Christian Church. As "wings" express remote parts of the earth, the *two* wings may here mean the east and west divisions of the Roman empire.

wilderness--the land of the heathen, the Gentiles: in contrast to Canaan, the *pleasant and glorious land*. God dwells in the glorious land; demons (the rulers of the heathen world, Re 9:20; 1Co 10:20), in the wilderness. Hence Babylon is called *the desert of the sea*, Isa 21:1-10 (referred to also in Re 14:8; 18:2). Heathendom, in its essential nature, being without God, is a desolate *wilderness*. Thus, the woman's flight into the wilderness is the passing of the kingdom of God from the Jews to be among the Gentiles (typified by Mary's flight with her child from Judea into Egypt). The eagle flight is from Egypt into the wilderness. The *Egypt* meant is virtually stated (Re 11:8) to be Jerusalem, which has become spiritually so by *crucifying our Lord*. Out of her the New Testament Church flees, as the Old Testament Church out of the literal Egypt; and as the true Church subsequently is called to flee out of Babylon (the woman become an harlot, that is, the Church become apostate) [AUBERLEN].

her place--the chief seat of the then world empire, Rome. The Acts of the Apostles describe the passing of the Church from Jerusalem to Rome. The Roman protection was the eagle wing which often shielded Paul, the great instrument of this transmigration, and Christianity, from Jewish opponents who stirred up the heathen mobs. By degrees the Church had "her place" more and more secure, until, under Constantine, the empire became Christian. Still, all this Church-historical period is regarded as a wilderness time, wherein the Church is in part protected, in part oppressed, by the world power, until just before the end the enmity of the world power under Satan shall break out against the Church worse than ever. As Israel was in the wilderness forty years, and had forty-two stages in her journey, so the Church for *forty-two* months, three and a half years or *times* [literally, *seasons*, used for *years* in Hellenistic *Greek* (MOERIS, the

Atticist), *Greek*, "*kairous*," Da 7:25; 12:7], or 1260 days (Re 12:6) between the overthrow of Jerusalem and the coming again of Christ, shall be a wilderness sojourner before she reaches her millennial rest (answering to Canaan of old). It is possible that, besides this Church-historical fulfilment, there may be also an ulterior and narrower fulfilment in the restoration of Israel to Palestine, Antichrist for seven times (short periods analogical to the longer ones) having power there, for the former three and a half times keeping covenant with the Jews, then breaking it in the midst of the week, and the mass of the nation fleeing by a second Exodus into the wilderness, while a *remnant* remains in the land exposed to a fearful persecution (the "144,000 sealed of Israel," Re 7:1-8; 14:1, *standing with the Lamb*, after the conflict is over, *on Mount Zion*: "the first-fruits" of a large company to be gathered to Him) [DE BURGH]. These *details* are very conjectural. In Da 7:25; 12:7, the subject, as perhaps here, is the time of Israel's calamity. That seven times do not necessarily mean seven years, in which each day is a year, that is, 2520 years, appears from Nebuchadnezzar's *seven times* (Da 4:23), answering to Antichrist, the beast's duration.

15, 16. flood--*Greek*, "river" (compare Ex 2:3; Mt 2:20; and especially Ex 14:1-31). The *flood*, or river, is the stream of Germanic tribes which, pouring on Rome, threatened to destroy Christianity. But *the earth helped the woman*, by *swallowing up the flood*. The earth, as contradistinguished from water, is the world consolidated and civilized. The German masses were brought under the influence of Roman civilization and Christianity [AUBERLEN]. Perhaps it includes also, generally, the help given by earthly powers (those least likely, yet led by God's overruling providence to give help) to the Church against persecutions and also heresies, by which she has been at various times assailed.

17. wroth with--*Greek*, "*at*."

went--*Greek*, "*went away*."

the remnant of her seed--distinct in some sense from the woman herself. Satan's first effort was to root out the Christian Church, so that there should be no visible profession of Christianity. Foiled in this, he *wars* (Re 11:7; 13:7) against the invisible Church, namely, "those who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus" (A, B, and C omit "Christ"). These are "the remnant," or *rest of her seed*, as distinguished from her seed, "the man-child" (Re 12:5), on one hand, and from mere professors on the other. The Church, in her beauty and unity (Israel at the head of Christendom, the whole forming one perfect Church), is now not manifested, but awaiting the *manifestations of the sons of God* at Christ's coming. Unable to destroy Christianity and the Church as a whole, Satan directs his enmity against true Christians, the elect *remnant*: the others he leaves unmolested.

CHAPTER 13

Re 13:1-18. VISION OF THE BEAST THAT CAME OUT OF THE SEA: THE SECOND BEAST, OUT OF THE EARTH, EXERCISING THE POWER OF THE FIRST BEAST, AND CAUSING THE EARTH TO WORSHIP HIM.

1. I stood--So B, *Aleph*, and *Coptic* read. But A, C, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac*, "*He stood*." Standing on the sand of the *sea*, HE *gave* his power to the beast that rose out of the sea.

upon the sand of the sea--where *the four winds* were to be seen *striving upon the great sea* (Da 7:2).

beast--*Greek*, "wild beast." Man becomes "brutish" when he severs himself from God, the archetype and true ideal, in whose image he was first made, which ideal is realized by the man

Christ Jesus. Hence, the world powers seeking their own glory, and not God's, are represented as *beasts*; and Nebuchadnezzar, when in self-deification he forgot that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men," was driven among the beasts. In Da 7:4-7 there are *four* beasts: here the *one* beast expresses the sum-total of the God-opposed world power viewed in its universal development, not restricted to one manifestation alone, as Rome. This first beast expresses the world power attacking the Church more from without; the second, which is a revival of, and minister to, the first, is the world power as *the false prophet* corrupting and destroying the Church from within.

out of the sea-- (Da 7:3; compare *Note*, see on [Re 8:8](#)); out of the troubled waves of *peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues*. The *earth* (Re 13:11), on the other hand, means the consolidated, ordered world of nations, with its culture and learning.

seven heads and ten horns--A, B, and C transpose, "ten horns and seven heads." The ten horns are now put first (contrast the order, Re 12:3) because they are crowned. They shall not be so till the last stage of the fourth kingdom (the Roman), which shall continue until the fifth kingdom, Christ's, shall supplant it and destroy it utterly; this last stage is marked by the *ten toes* of the two feet of the image in Da 2:33, 41, 42. The *seven* implies the world power setting up itself as God, and caricaturing the *seven* Spirits of God; yet its true character as God-opposed is detected by the number *ten* accompanying the seven. Dragon and beast both wear crowns, but the former on the heads, the latter on the horns (Re 12:3; 13:1). Therefore, both heads and horns refer to kingdoms; compare Re 17:7, 10, 12, "kings" representing the kingdoms whose heads they are. The *seven* kings, as peculiarly powerful--the great powers of the world--are distinguished from the *ten*, represented by the horns (simply called "kings," Re 17:12). In Daniel, *the ten* mean the last phase of the world power, the fourth kingdom divided into *ten parts*. They are connected with the *seventh head* (Re 17:12), and are as yet future [AUBERLEN]. The mistake of those who interpret the beast to be Rome exclusively, and the *ten horns* to mean kingdoms which have taken the place of Rome in Europe already, is, the fourth kingdom in the image has TWO legs, representing the eastern as well as the western empire; the ten toes are not upon the one foot (the west), as these interpretations require, but on the two (east and west) together, so that any theory which makes the ten kingdoms belong to the west alone must err. If the ten kingdoms meant were those which sprung up on the overthrow of Rome, the ten would be accurately known, whereas twenty-eight different lists are given by so many interpreters, making in all sixty-five kingdoms! [TYSO in DE BURGH]. The seven heads are the seven world monarchies, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, the Germanic empire, under the last of which we live [AUBERLEN], and which devolved for a time on Napoleon, after Francis, emperor of Germany and king of Rome, had resigned the title in 1806. FABER explains *the healing of the deadly wound* to be the revival of the Napoleonic dynasty after its overthrow at Waterloo. That secular dynasty, in alliance with the ecclesiastical power, the Papacy (Re 13:11, &c.), being "the eighth head," and yet "of the seven" (Re 17:11), will temporarily triumph over the saints, until destroyed in Armageddon (Re 19:17-21). A Napoleon, in this view, will be the Antichrist, restoring the Jews to Palestine, and accepted as their Messiah at first, and afterwards fearfully oppressing them. Antichrist, the summing up and concentration of all the world evil that preceded, is the eighth, but yet one of the seven (Re 17:11).

crowns--*Greek*, "diadems."

name of blasphemy--So C, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS. A, B, and *Vulgate* read, "names of blasphemy," namely, a name on each of the heads; blasphemously arrogating attributes belonging to God alone (compare *Note*, see on [Re 17:3](#)). A characteristic of the *little horn* in Da 7:8, 20, 21; 2Th 2:4.

2. leopard . . . bear . . . lion--This beast unites in itself the God-opposed characteristics of the three preceding kingdoms, resembling respectively the *leopard*, *bear*, and *lion*. It rises up

out of *the sea*, as Daniel's four beasts, and has *ten horns*, as Daniel's fourth beast, and *seven heads*, as Daniel's four beasts had in all, namely, one on the first, one on the second, four on the third, and one on the fourth. Thus it represents comprehensively in one figure *the world power* (which in Daniel is represented by four) *of all times and places*, not merely of one period and one locality, viewed as opposed to God; just as the *woman* is the Church of all ages. This view is favored also by the fact, that the beast is the vicarious representative of Satan, who similarly has *seven heads* and *ten horns*: a general description of his universal power in all ages and places of the world. Satan appears as a serpent, as being the archetype of the beast nature (Re 12:9). "If the seven heads meant merely seven Roman emperors, one cannot understand why they alone should be mentioned in the original image of Satan, whereas it is perfectly intelligible if we suppose them to represent Satan's power on earth viewed collectively" [AUBERLEN].

3. One of--literally, "from among."

wounded . . . healed--twice again repeated emphatically (Re 13:12, 14); compare Re 17:8, 11, "the beast that *was, and is not, and shall ascend* out of the bottomless pit" (compare Re 13:11); the Germanic empire, the seventh head (revived in *the eighth*), as yet future in John's time (Re 17:10). Contrast the change whereby Nebuchadnezzar, being humbled from his self-deifying pride, was converted from his *beast-like* form and character to MAN'S form and true position towards God; symbolized by his *eagle wings being plucked*, and himself made to stand upon his feet as a *man* (Da 7:4). Here, on the contrary, the *beast's* head is not changed into a *human* head, but receives a deadly wound, that is, the world kingdom which this head represents does not truly turn to God, but for a time its God-opposed character remains paralyzed ("as it were slain"; the very words marking the beast's outward resemblance to the Lamb, "as it were slain," see on [Re 5:6](#). Compare also the second beast's resemblance to the *Lamb*, Re 13:11). Though seemingly *slain* (*Greek* for "wounded"), it remains the beast still, to rise again in another form (Re 13:11). The first six heads were heathenish, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome; the new seventh world power (the pagan German hordes pouring down on Christianized Rome), whereby Satan had hoped to stifle Christianity (Re 11:15, 16), became itself Christianized (answering to the beast's, *as it were, deadly wound: it was slain, and it is not*, Re 17:11). Its *ascent out of the bottomless pit* answers to the *healing of its deadly wound* (Re 17:8). No essential change is noticed in Daniel as effected by Christianity upon the fourth kingdom; it remains essentially God-opposed to the last. The beast, *healed* of its temporary and external *wound*, now returns, not only from the sea, but from the *bottomless pit*, whence it draws new Antichristian strength of hell (Re 13:3, 11, 12, 14; Re 11:7; 17:8). Compare the *seven evil spirits* taken into the temporarily dispossessed, and *the last state worse than the first*, Mt 12:43-45. A new and worse heathenism breaks in upon the Christianized world, more devilish than the old one of the first heads of the beast. The latter was an apostasy only from the general revelation of God in nature and conscience; but this new one is from God's revelation of love in His Son. It culminates in Antichrist, the man of sin, the son of perdition (compare Re 17:11); 2Th 2:3; compare 2Ti 3:1-4, the very characteristics of old heathenism (Ro 1:29-32) [AUBERLEN]. More than one wound seems to me to be meant, for example, that under Constantine (when the pagan worship of the emperor's image gave way to Christianity), followed by the healing, when image worship and the other papal errors were introduced into the Church; again, that at the Reformation, followed by the *lethargic form of godliness without the power*, and about to end in the last great apostasy, which I identify with the second beast (Re 13:11), Antichrist, the same seventh world power in another form.

wondered after--followed with wondering gaze.

4. which gave--A, B, C, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and ANDREAS read, "*because* he gave."
power--*Greek*, "*the authority*" which it had; *its* authority.

Who is like unto the beast?--The very language appropriated to *God*, Ex 15:11 (whence, in the *Hebrew*, the Maccabees took their name; the opponents of the Old Testament Antichrist, Antiochus); Ps 35:10; 71:19; 113:5; Mic 7:18; *blasphemously* (Re 13:1, 5) assigned to the beast. It is a parody of the name "Michael" (compare Re 12:7), meaning, "Who is like unto God?"

5. blasphemies--So ANDREAS reads. B reads "blasphemy." A, "blasphemous things" (compare Da 7:8; 11:25).

power--"authority"; *legitimate power* (*Greek*, "*exousia*").

to continue--*Greek*, "*poiesai*," "to act," or "work." B reads, "to make war" (compare Re 13:4). But A, C, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and ANDREAS omit "war."

forty . . . two month--(See on [Re 11:2, 3](#); [Re 12:6](#)).

6. opened . . . mouth--The usual formula in the case of a set speech, or series of speeches. Re 13:6, 7 expand Re 13:5.

blasphemy--So B and ANDREAS. A and C read "blasphemies."

and them--So *Vulgate*, *Coptic*, ANDREAS, and PRIMASIUS read. A and C omit "and": "them that dwell (literally, 'tabernacle') in heaven," mean not only angels and the departed souls of the righteous, but believers on earth who have their citizenship in heaven, and whose true life is hidden from the Antichristian persecutor in *the secret of God's tabernacle*. See on [Re 12:12](#); [Joh 3:7](#).

7. power--*Greek*, "authority."

all kindreds . . . tongues . . . nations--*Greek*, "every tribe . . . tongue . . . nation." A, B, C, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, ANDREAS, and PRIMASIUS add "and people," after "tribe" or "kindred."

8. all that dwell upon the earth--being of earth earthy; in contrast to "them that dwell in heaven."

whose names are not written--A, B, C, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS read singular, "(every one) whose (*Greek*, '*hou*'; but B, *Greek*, '*hon*,' plural) *name* is not written."

Lamb slain from the foundation of the world--The *Greek* order of words favors this translation. He was *slain* in the Father's eternal counsels: compare 1Pe 1:19, 20, virtually parallel. The other way of connecting the words is, "Written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb slain." So in Re 17:8. The elect. The former is in the *Greek* more obvious and simple. "Whatsoever virtue was in the sacrifices, did operate through Messiah's death alone. As He was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," so all atonements ever made were only effectual by His blood" [BISHOP PEARSON, *Exposition of the Creed*].

9. A general exhortation. Christ's own words of monition calling solemn attention.

10. He that leadeth into captivity--A, B, C, and *Vulgate* read, "if any one (be) for captivity."

shall go into captivity--*Greek* present, "goeth into captivity." Compare Jer 15:2, which is alluded to here. *Aleph*, B, and C read simply, "he goeth away," and omit "into captivity." But A and *Vulgate* support the words.

he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword--So B and C read. But A reads, "if any (is for) being (literally, 'to be') killed with the sword." As of old, so now, those to be persecuted by the beast in various ways, have their trials severally appointed them by God's fixed counsel. *English Version* is quite a different sense, namely, a warning to the persecutors

that they shall be punished with retribution in kind.

Here--"Herein": in bearing their appointed sufferings lies the *patient endurance . . . of the saints*. This is to be the motto and watchword of the elect during the period of the world kingdom. As the first beast is to be met by *patience* and *faith* (Re 13:10), the second beast must be opposed by true *wisdom* (Re 13:18).

11. another beast--"the false prophet."

out of the earth--out of society civilized, consolidated, and ordered, but still, with all its culture, of earth earthy: as distinguished from "the sea," the troubled agitations of various peoples out of which the world power and its several kingdoms have emerged. "*The sacerdotal persecuting power, pagan and Christian; the pagan priesthood making an image of the emperors which they compelled Christians to worship, and working wonders by magic and omens; the Romish priesthood, the inheritors of pagan rites, images, and superstitions, lamb-like in Christian professions, dragon-like in word and act*" [ALFORD, and so the Spanish Jesuit, LACUNZA, writing under the name BEN EZRA]. As the first beast was like the Lamb in being, *as it were, wounded to death*, so the second is like the Lamb in having *two lamb-like horns* (its essential difference from the Lamb is marked by its having TWO, but the Lamb SEVEN horns, Re 5:6). The former paganism of the world power, seeming to be wounded to death by Christianity, revives. In its second beast-form it is Christianized heathendom ministering to the former, and having earthly culture and learning to recommend it. The second beast's, or false prophet's rise, coincides in time with the healing of the beast's deadly wound and its revival (Re 13:12-14). Its *manifold* character is marked by the Lord (Mt 24:11, 24), "*Many false prophets shall rise,*" where He is speaking of the last days. As the former beast corresponds to the first four beasts of Daniel, so the second beast, or the false prophet, to the little horn starting up among the ten horns of the fourth beast. This Antichristian horn has not only the mouth of blasphemy (Re 13:5), but also "the eyes of man" (Da 7:8): the former is also in the first beast (Re 13:1, 5), but the latter not so. "The eyes of man" symbolize cunning and intellectual culture, the very characteristic of "the false prophet" (Re 13:13-15; Re 16:14). The first beast is physical and political; the second a spiritual power, the power of knowledge, ideas (the favorite term in the French school of politics), and scientific cultivation. Both alike are *beasts*, from below, not from above; faithful allies, worldly Antichristian wisdom standing in the service of the worldly Antichristian power: the dragon is both lion and serpent: might and cunning are his armory. The dragon gives his external power to the first beast (Re 13:2), his spirit to the second, so that it *speaks as a dragon* (Re 13:11). The second, arising *out of the earth*, is in Re 11:7; 17:8, said to *ascend out of the bottomless pit*: its very culture and world wisdom only intensify its infernal character, the pretense to superior knowledge and rationalistic philosophy (as in the primeval temptation, Ge 3:5, 7, "their EYES [as here] were opened") veiling the deification of nature, self, and man. Hence spring Idealism, Materialism, Deism, Pantheism, Atheism. Antichrist shall be the culmination. The Papacy's claim to the double power, secular and spiritual, is a sample and type of the twofold beast, that *out of the sea*, and that *out of the earth, or bottomless pit*. Antichrist will be the climax, and final form. PRIMASIUS OF ADRUMENTUM, in the sixth century, says, "He feigns to be a lamb that he may assail the Lamb--the body of Christ."

12. power--*Greek*, "authority."

before him--"in his presence"; as ministering to, and upholding him. "The non-existence of the beast embraces the whole Germanic Christian period. The healing of the wound and return of the beast is represented [in regard to its *final* Antichristian manifestation though including also, meanwhile, its healing and return under Popery, which is baptized heathenism] in that principle which, since 1789, has manifested itself in beast-like outbreaks" [AUBERLEN].

which dwell therein--the earthly-minded. The Church becomes the *harlot*: the world's

political power, the Antichristian *beast*; the world's wisdom and civilization, *the false prophet*. Christ's three offices are thus perverted: the first beast is the false *kingship*; the harlot, the false *priesthood*; the second beast, the false *prophet*. The beast is the *bodily*, the false prophet the *intellectual*, the harlot the *spiritual* power of Antichristianity [AUBERLEN]. The *Old-Testament Church* stood under the power of the beast, the heathen world power: *the Middle-Ages Church* under that of the harlot: *in modern times* the false prophet predominates. But in the last days all these God-opposed powers which have succeeded each other shall *co-operate*, and raise each other to the most terrible and intense power of their nature: *the false prophet causes men to worship the beast, and the beast carries the harlot*. These three forms of apostasy are reducible to two: *the apostate Church* and *the apostate world, pseudo-Christianity and Antichristianity*, the harlot and the beast; for the false prophet is also a beast; and the two beasts, as different manifestations of the same beast-like principle, stand in contradistinction to the harlot, and are finally judged together, whereas separate judgment falls on the harlot [AUBERLEN].

deadly wound--*Greek*, "wound of death."

13. wonders--*Greek*, "signs."

so that--so great that.

maketh fire--*Greek*, "maketh even fire." This is the very miracle which the two witnesses perform, and which Elijah long ago had performed; this the beast from the bottomless pit, or the false prophet, mimics. Not merely tricks, but miracles of a demoniacal kind, and by demon aid, like those of the Egyptian magicians, shall be wrought, most calculated to deceive; wrought "after the working (*Greek*, 'energy') of Satan."

14. deceiveth them that dwell on the earth--the earthly-minded, but not *the elect*. Even a miracle is not enough to warrant belief in a professed revelation unless that revelation be in harmony with God's already revealed will.

by the means of those miracles--rather as *Greek*, "on account of (because of; in consequence of) those miracles."

which he had power to do--*Greek*, "which were given him to do."

in the sight of the beast--"before him" (Re 13:12).

which--A, B, and C read, "who"; marking, perhaps, a personal Antichrist.

had--So B and ANDREAS read. But A, C, and *Vulgate* read, "hath."

15. he had power--*Greek*, "it was given to him."

to give life--*Greek*, "breath," or "spirit."

image--Nebuchadnezzar set up in Dura a golden *image* to be worshipped, probably of himself; for his dream had been interpreted, "Thou art this head of gold"; the three Hebrews who refused to worship the *image* were east into a burning furnace. All this typifies the last apostasy. PLINY, in his letter to Trajan, states that he consigned to punishment those Christians who would not worship the emperor's image with incense and wine. So JULIAN, the apostate, set up his own image with the idols of the heathen gods in the Forum, that the Christians in doing reverence to it, might seem to worship the idols. So Charlemagne's image was set up for homage; and the Pope *adored* the new emperor [DUPIN, vol. 6, p. 126]. Napoleon, the successor of Charlemagne, designed after he had first lowered the Pope by removing him to Fontainebleau, then to "make an idol of him" [*Memorial de Sainte Helene*]; keeping the Pope near him, he would, through the Pope's influence, have directed the religious, as well as the political world. The revived Napoleonic dynasty may, in some one representative, realize the project, becoming the beast supported by the false prophet (perhaps some openly infidel supplanter of the papacy, under a spiritual guise, after the harlot, or apostate Church, who is

distinct from the second beast, has been stripped and judged by the beast, Re 17:16); he then might have an image set up in his honor as a test of secular and spiritual allegiance.

speak--"False doctrine will give a spiritual, philosophical appearance to the foolish apotheosis of the creaturely personified by Antichrist" [AUBERLEN]. JEROME, on Daniel 7, says, Antichrist shall be "one of the human race in whom the whole of Satan shall dwell bodily." Rome's *speaking* images and winking pictures of the Virgin Mary and the saints are an earnest of the future demoniacal miracles of the false prophet in making the beast's or Antichrist's image to speak.

16. to receive a mark--literally, "that they should give them a mark"; such a brand as masters stamp on their slaves, and monarchs on their subjects. Soldiers voluntarily punctured their arms with marks of the general under whom they served. Votaries of idols branded themselves with the idol's cipher or symbol. Thus Antiochus Epiphanes branded the Jews with the ivy leaf, the symbol of Bacchus (2 Maccabees 6:7; 3 Maccabees 2:29). Contrast God's *seal and name in the foreheads of His servants*, Re 7:3; 14:1; 22:4; and Ga 6:17, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus," that is, I am His soldier and servant. The mark in the right hand and forehead implies the prostration of *bodily* and *intellectual* powers to the beast's domination. "In the forehead by way of profession; in the hand with respect to work and service" [AUGUSTINE].

17. And--So A, B, and *Vulgate* read. C, IRENÆUS, 316, *Coptic*, and *Syriac* omit it.

might buy--*Greek*, "may be able to buy."

the mark, or the name--*Greek*, "the mark (namely), the name of the beast." The mark may be, as in the case of the sealing of the saints in the forehead, not a visible mark, but symbolical of allegiance. So the sign of the cross in Popery. The Pope's interdict has often shut out the excommunicate from social and commercial intercourse. Under the final Antichrist this shall come to pass in its most violent form.

number of his name--implying that the name has some numerical meaning.

18. wisdom--the armory against the second beast, as *patience and faith* against the first. Spiritual *wisdom* is needed to solve the *mystery* of iniquity, so as not to be beguiled by it.

count . . . for--The "for" implies the possibility of our calculating or counting the beast's number.

the number of a man--that is, counted as men generally count. So the phrase is used in Re 21:17. The number is the number of a *man*, not of *God*; he shall extol himself above the power of the Godhead, as the MAN *of sin* [AQUINAS]. Though it is an imitation of the divine name, it is only *human*.

six hundred threescore and six--A and *Vulgate* write the numbers in full in the *Greek*. But B writes merely the three *Greek* letters standing for numbers, *Ch, X, St*. "C reads" 616, but IRENÆUS, 328, opposes this and maintains "666." IRENÆUS, in the second century, disciple of POLYCARP, John's disciple, explained this number as contained in the *Greek* letters of *Lateinos* (L being thirty; A, one; T, three hundred; E, five; I, ten; N, fifty; O, seventy; S, two hundred). The *Latin* is peculiarly the language of the Church of Rome in all her official acts; the forced unity of language in ritual being the counterfeit of the true unity; the premature and spurious anticipation of the real unity, only to be realized at Christ's coming, when all the earth shall speak "one language" (Zep 3:9). The last Antichrist may have a close connection with Rome, and so the name *Lateinos* (666) may apply to him. The *Hebrew* letters of *Balaam* amount to 666 [BUNSEN]; a type of the *false prophet*, whose characteristic, like Balaam's, will be high spiritual knowledge perverted to Satanic ends. The number *six* is the world number; in 666 it occurs in

units, tens, and hundreds. It is next neighbor to the sacred *seven*, but is severed from it by an impassable gulf. It is *the number of the world given over to judgment*; hence there is a pause between the sixth and seventh seals, and the sixth and seventh trumpets. The judgments on the world are complete in *six*; by the fulfilment of *seven*, the kingdoms of the world become Christ's. As *twelve* is the number of the Church, so six, its half, symbolizes the world kingdom broken. The raising of the six to tens and hundreds (higher powers) indicates that the beast, notwithstanding his progression to higher powers, can only rise to greater ripeness for judgment. Thus 666, the judged world power, contrasts with the 144,000 sealed and transfigured ones (the Church number, twelve, squared and multiplied by one thousand, the number symbolizing the world pervaded by God; ten, the world number, raised to the power of three the number of God) [AUBERLEN]. The "mark" (*Greek*, "*charagma*") and "name" are one and the same. The first two radical letters of *Christ* (*Greek*, "*Christos*"), *Ch* and *R*, are the same as the first two of *charagma*, and were the imperial monogram of Christian Rome. Antichrist, personating Christ, adopts a symbol like, but not agreeing with, Christ's monogram, *Ch, X, St*; whereas the radicals in "Christ" are *Ch, R, St*. Papal Rome has similarly substituted the standard of *the Keys* for the standard of *the Cross*; so on the papal *coinage* (the image of power, Mt 22:20). The two first letters of "Christ," *Ch, R*, represent *seven* hundred, the perfect number. The *Ch, X, St* represent an imperfect number, a triple *falling away* (apostasy) from *septenary* perfection [WORDSWORTH].

CHAPTER 14

Re 14:1-20. THE LAMB SEEN ON ZION WITH THE 144,000. THEIR SONG. THE GOSPEL PROCLAIMED BEFORE THE END BY ONE ANGEL: THE FALL OF BABYLON, BY ANOTHER: THE DOOM OF THE BEAST WORSHIPPERS, BY A THIRD. THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE DEAD IN THE LORD. THE HARVEST. THE VINTAGE.

In contrast to the beast, false prophet, and apostate Church (Re 13:1-18) and introductory to the announcement of judgments about to descend on them and the world (Re 14:8-11, anticipatory of Re 18:2-6), stand here the redeemed, "the divine kernel of humanity, the positive fruits of the history of the world and the Church" [AUBERLEN]. The fourteenth through sixteenth chapters describe the preparations for the Messianic judgment. As the fourteenth chapter begins with *the 144,000 of Israel* (compare Re 7:4-8, no longer exposed to trial as then, but now triumphant), so the fifteenth chapter begins with those who have *overcome* from among the Gentiles (compare Re 15:1-5 with Re 7:9-17); the two classes of elect forming together the whole company of transfigured saints who shall reign with Christ.

1. **a**--A, B, C, *Coptic*, and ORIGEN read, "*the*."

Lamb . . . on . . . Sion--having left His position "in the midst of the throne," and now taking His stand *on Sion*.

his Father's name--A, B, and C read, "*His name and His Father's name*."

in--*Greek*, "upon." God's and Christ's *name* here answers to the *seal* "upon their foreheads" in Re 7:3. As the 144,000 of Israel are "the first-fruits" (Re 14:4), so "the harvest" (Re 14:15) is the general assembly of Gentile saints to be translated by Christ as His first act in assuming His kingdom, prior to His judgment (Re 16:17-21, the last seven vials) on the Antichristian world, in executing which His saints shall share. As Noah and Lot were taken seasonably out of the *judgment*, but exposed to the *trial* to the last moment [DE BURGH], so those who shall reign with Christ shall first suffer with Him, being delivered out of the *judgments*, but not out of the *trials*. The Jews are meant by "the saints of the Most High": against them Antichrist makes war,

changing their times and laws; for true Israelites cannot join in the idolatry of the beast, any more than true Christians. The common affliction will draw closely together, in opposing the beast's worship, the Old Testament and New Testament people of God. Thus the way is paved for Israel's conversion. This last utter *scattering of the holy people's power* leads them, under the Spirit, to seek Messiah, and to cry at His approach, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

2. from--Greek, "out of."

voice of many waters--as is the voice of Himself, such also is the voice of His people.

I heard the voice of harpers--A, B, C, and ORIGEN read, "the voice which I heard (was) as of harpers."

3. sung--Greek, "sing."

as it were--So A, C, and *Vulgate* read. It is "as it were" a *new song*; for it is, in truth, as old as God's eternal purpose. But B, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, ORIGEN, and ANDREAS omit these words.

new song-- (Re 5:9, 10). The song is that of victory after conflict with the dragon, beast, and false prophet: never sung before, for such a conflict had never been fought before; therefore *new*: till now the kingdom of *Christ* on earth had been usurped; they sing the new song in anticipation of His blood-bought kingdom with His saints.

four beasts--rather, as *Greek*, "four living creatures." The harpers and singers evidently include the 144,000: so the parallel proves (Re 15:2, 3), where the same act is attributed to *the general company of the saints*, the *harvest* (Re 14:15) from all nations. Not as ALFORD, "the harpers and song are in heaven, but the 144,000 are on earth."

redeemed--literally, "purchased." Not even the angels can learn that song, for they know not *experimentally* what it is to have "come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb" (Re 7:14).

4. virgins--spiritually (Mt 25:1); in contrast to the apostate Church, Babylon (Re 14:8), spiritually "a harlot" (Re 17:1-5; Isa 1:21; contrast 2Co 11:2; Eph 5:25-27). Their not being *defiled with women* means they were not led astray from Christian faithfulness by the tempters who jointly constitute the spiritual "harlot."

follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth--in glory, being especially near His person; the fitting reward of their following Him so fully on earth.

redeemed--"purchased."

being the--rather, "as a first-fruit." Not merely a "first-fruit" in the sense in which *all* believers are so, but Israel's 144,000 elect are the *first-fruit*, the Jewish and Gentile elect Church is the *harvest*; in a further sense, the whole of the transfigured and translated Church which reigns with Christ at His coming, is the *first-fruit*, and the consequent general ingathering of Israel and the nations, ending in the last judgment, is the full and final harvest.

5. guile--So ANDREAS in one copy. But A, B, C, ORIGEN, and ANDREAS in other copies read, "falsehood." Compare with *English Version* reading Ps 32:2; Isa 53:9; Joh 1:47.

for--So B, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, ORIGEN, and ANDREAS read. But A and C omit.

without fault--*Greek*, "blameless": in respect to the sincerity of their fidelity to Him. Not absolutely, and in themselves *blameless*; but regarded as such on the ground of His righteousness in whom alone they trusted, and whom they faithfully served by His Spirit in them. The allusion seems to be to Ps 15:1, 2. Compare Re 14:1, "*stood on Mount Sion*."

before the throne of God--A, B, C, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, ORIGEN, and ANDREAS omit these words. The oldest *Vulgate* manuscript supports them.

6. Here begins the portion relating to the Gentile world, as the former portion related to Israel. Before the *end* the Gospel is to be preached for a WITNESS *unto all nations*: not that all nations shall be converted, but all nations shall have had the opportunity given them of deciding whether they will be for, or against, Christ. Those thus *preached* to are "they that dwell (so A, *Coptic*, and *Syriac* read. But B, C, ORIGEN, *Vulgate*, CYPRIAN, 312, read, 'SIT,' compare Mt 4:16; Lu 1:79, having their *settled* home) on the earth," being of earth earthy: this last season of grace is given them, if yet they may repent, before "judgment" (Re 14:7) descends: if not, they will be left without excuse, as the world which resisted the preaching of Noah in the the hundred twenty years "while the long-suffering of God waited." "So also the prophets gave the people a last opportunity of repentance before the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem, and our Lord and His apostles before the Roman destruction of the holy city" [AUBERLEN]. The *Greek* for "unto" (*epi*, in A and C) means literally, "upon," or "over," or "in respect to" (Mr 9:12; Heb 7:13). So also "TO every nation" (*Greek*, "*epi*," in A, B, C, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, ORIGEN, ANDREAS, CYPRIAN, and PRIMASIUS). This, perhaps, implies that the Gospel, though diffused *over* the globe, shall not come savingly *unto* any save the elect. The world is not to be evangelized till Christ shall come: meanwhile, God's purpose is "to take out of the Gentiles a people for His name," to be witnesses of the effectual working of His Spirit during the counter-working of "the mystery of iniquity."

everlasting gospel--the Gospel which announces the *glad tidings* of the *everlasting* kingdom of Christ, about to ensue immediately after the "judgment" on Antichrist, announced as imminent in Re 14:7. As the former angel "flying through the midst of heaven" (Re 8:13) announced "woe," so this angel "flying in the midst of heaven" announced *joy*. The three angels making this last proclamation of the Gospel, the fall of Babylon (Re 14:8), the harlot, and the judgment on the beast worshippers (Re 14:9-11), the voice from heaven respecting the blessed dead (Re 14:13), the vision of the Son of man on the cloud (Re 14:11), the harvest (Re 14:15), and the vintage (Re 14:18), form the compendious summary, amplified in detail in the rest of the book.

7. **Fear God**--the forerunner to embracing the *love* of God manifested in *the Gospel*. Repentance accompanies faith.

give glory to him--and not to the beast (compare Re 13:4; Jer 13:16).

the hour of his judgment--"The hour" implies the *definite time*. "Judgment," not the general judgment, but that up on Babylon, the beast, and his worshippers (Re 14:8-12).

worship him that made heaven--not Antichrist (compare Ac 14:15).

sea . . . fountains--distinguished also in Re 8:8, 10.

8. **another**--So *Vulgate*. But A, B, *Syriac*, and ANDREAS add, "a second"; "another, a second angel."

Babylon--here first mentioned; identical with *the harlot*, the apostate Church; distinct from *the beast*, and judged separately.

is fallen--anticipation of Re 18:2. A, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and ANDREAS support the second "is fallen." But B, C, and *Coptic* omit it.

that great city--A, B, C, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* omit "city." Then translate, "Babylon the great." The ulterior and exhaustive fulfilment of Isa 21:9.

because--So ANDREAS. But A, C, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac* read, "which." B and *Coptic* omit it. Even reading "which," we must understand it as giving the *reason* of her fall.

all nations--A, B and C read, "all *the* nations."

the wine of the wrath of her fornication--*the wine of the wrath* of God, the consequence of *her fornication*. As she made the nations drunk with the wine of her fornication, so she herself

shall be made drunk with the wine of God's wrath.

9. A, B, C, and ANDREAS read, "another, a third angel." Compare with this verse Re 13:15, 16.

10. The same--*Greek*, "he also," as the just and inevitable retribution.
wine of . . . wrath of God-- (Ps 75:8).

without mixture--whereas wine was so commonly *mixed* with water that to *mix* wine is used in *Greek* for to *pour out* wine; *this* wine of God's wrath is *undiluted*; there is no drop of water to cool its heat. Naught of grace or hope is blended with it. This terrible threat may well raise us above the fear of man's threats. This *unmixed* cup is already *mingled* and prepared for Satan and the beast's followers.

indignation--*Greek*, "*orges*," "abiding wrath," But the *Greek* for "wrath" above (*Greek*, "*thumou*") is *boiling indignation*, from (*Greek*, "*thuo*") a root meaning "to boil"; this is temporary ebullition of anger; that is lasting [AMMONIUS], and accompanied with a purpose of vengeance [ORIGEN on Psalm 2:5].

tormented . . . in the presence of . . . angels-- (Ps 49:14; 58:10; 139:21; Isa 66:24). God's enemies are regarded by the saints as their enemies, and when the day of probation is past, their mind shall be so entirely one with God's, that they shall rejoice in witnessing visibly the judicial vindication of God's righteousness in sinners' punishment.

11. for ever and ever--*Greek*, "unto ages of ages."

no rest day nor night--Contrast the very different sense in which the same is said of the four living creatures in heaven, "They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy"; yet they do "rest" in another sense; they rest from sin and sorrow, weariness and weakness, trial and temptation (Re 14:13); the lost have no rest from sin and Satan, terror, torment, and remorse.

12. Here, &c.--resumed from Re 13:10; see on [Re 13:10](#). In the fiery ordeal of persecution which awaits all who will not worship the beast, the *faith* and *patience* of the followers of *God and Jesus* shall be put to the test, and proved.

patience--*Greek*, "*hupomene*," "patient, persevering endurance." The second "here" is omitted in A, B, C, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and PRIMASIUS. Translate, "Here is the endurance of the saints, who keep," &c.

the faith of Jesus--the faith which has Jesus for its object.

13. Encouragement to cheer those persecuted under the beast.

Write--to put it on record for ever.

Blessed--in *resting from their toils*, and, in the case of the saints just before alluded to as persecuted by the beast, in *resting from persecutions*. Their full *blessedness* is now "from henceforth," that is, FROM THIS TIME, when the judgment on the beast and the harvest gatherings of the elect are imminent. The time so earnestly longed for by former martyrs is now all but come; the full number of their fellow servants is on the verge of completion; they have no longer to "rest (the same *Greek* as here, *anapausis*) yet for a little season," their eternal *rest*, or *cessation* from toils (2Th 1:7; *Greek*, "*anesis*," relaxation after hardships. Heb 4:9, 10, *sabbatism of rest*; and *Greek*, "*catapausis*," akin to the *Greek* here) is close at hand now. They are *blessed* in being about to sit down to *the marriage supper of the Lamb* (Re 19:9), and in having part in the *first resurrection* (Re 20:6), and in *having right to the tree of life* (Re 22:14). In Re 14:14-16 follows the explanation of why they are pronounced "blessed" now in particular, namely, *the Son of man on the cloud* is just coming to gather them in as *the harvest* ripe for

garner.

Yea, saith the Spirit--The words of God the Father (the "voice from heaven") are echoed back and confirmed by the Spirit (speaking in the Word, Re 2:7; 22:17; and in the saints, 2Co 5:5; 1Pe 4:14). All "God's promises in Christ are yea" (2Co 1:20).

unto me--omitted in A, B, C, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic*.

that they may--The *Greek* includes also the idea, They are blessed, *in that they SHALL rest from their toils* (so the *Greek*).

and--So B and ANDREAS read. But A, C, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac* read "for." They rest from their toils *because* their time for toil is past; they enter on the *blessed rest because* of their faith evinced by their works which, therefore, "follow WITH (so the *Greek*) them." Their *works* are specified because respect is had to the coming judgment, wherein every man shall be "judged according to his works." His works do not go before the believer, nor even go by his side, but *follow* him at the same time that they go *with* him as a proof that he is Christ's.

14. crown--*Greek*, "*stephanon*," "garland" of victory; not His *diadem* as a king. The victory is described in detail, Re 19:11-21.

one sat--"one sitting," *Greek*, "*cathemenon homoion*," is the reading of A, B, C, *Vulgate*, and *Coptic*.

15. Thrust in--*Greek*, "Send." The angel does not command the "Son of man" (Re 14:14), but is the mere messenger announcing to the Son the will of *God the Father*, in whose hands are kept *the times and the seasons*.

thy sickle--alluding to Mr 4:29, where also it is "*sendeth* the sickle." The Son sends His sickle-bearing angel to reap the righteous when fully ripe.

harvest--the harvest crop. By the *harvest*-reaping the elect righteous are gathered out; by the *vintage* the Antichristian offenders are removed out of the earth, the scene of Christ's coming kingdom. The Son of man Himself, with a golden crown, is introduced in the *harvest*-gathering of the elect, a mere angel in the *vintage* (Re 14:18-20).

is ripe--literally, "is dried." Ripe for glory.

16. thrust in--*Greek*, "cast."

17. out of the temple . . . in heaven-- (Re 11:19).

18. from the altar--upon which were offered the incense-accompanied prayers of all saints, which bring down in answer God's fiery judgment on the Church's foes, the *fire* being *taken from the altar and cast upon the earth*.

fully ripe--*Greek*, "come to their acme"; ripe for punishment.

19. "The vine" is what is the subject of judgment because its grapes are not what God looked for considering its careful culture, but "wild grapes" (Isa 5:1-30). The apostate world of Christendom, not the world of heathendom who have not heard of Christ, is the object of judgment. Compare the emblem, Re 19:15; Isa 63:2, 3; Joe 3:13.

20. without the city--Jerusalem. The scene of the blood-shedding of Christ and His people shall be also the scene of God's vengeance on the Antichristian foe. Compare the "horsemen," Re 9:16, 17.

blood--answering to the red wine. The slaughter of the apostates is what is here spoken of,

not their eternal punishment.

even unto the horse bridles--of the avenging "armies of heaven."

by the space of a thousand . . . six hundred furlongs--literally, "a thousand six hundred furlongs *off*" [W. KELLY]. Sixteen hundred is a square number; four by four by one hundred. The *four* quarters, north, south, east, and west, of the Holy Land, or else of the world (the completeness and universality of the world-wide destruction being hereby indicated). It does not exactly answer to the length of Palestine as given by JEROME, one hundred sixty Roman miles. BENGEL thinks the valley of Kedron, between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, is meant, the torrent in that valley being about to be discolored with blood to the extent of sixteen hundred furlongs. This view accords with Joel's prophecy that the valley of Jehoshaphat is to be the scene of the overthrow of the Antichristian foes.

CHAPTER 15

Re 15:1-8. THE LAST SEVEN VIALS OF PLAGUES: SONG OF THE VICTORS OVER THE BEAST.

1. the seven last plagues--*Greek*, "seven plagues which are the last."

is filled up--literally, "was finished," or "consummated": the prophetic past for the future, the future being to God as though it were past, so sure of accomplishment is His word. This verse is the summary of the vision that follows: the angels do not actually receive the vials till Re 15:7; but here, in Re 15:1, by anticipation they are spoken of as *having* them. There are no more plagues after these until the Lord's coming in judgment. The destruction of Babylon (Re 18:2) is the last: then in Re 19:11-16 He appears.

2. sea of glass--Answering to the molten sea or great brazen laver before the mercy seat of the earthly temple, for the purification of the priests; typifying the baptism of water and the Spirit of all who are made kings and priests unto God.

mingled with fire--answering to the *baptism* on earth *with fire*, that is, fiery trial, as well as with the Holy Ghost, which Christ's people undergo to purify them, as gold is purified of its dross in the furnace.

them that had gotten the victory over--*Greek*, "those (coming) off from (the conflict with) the beast-conquerors."

over the number of his name--A, B, C, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* omit the words in *English Version*, "over his mark." *The mark*, in fact, is the *number of his name* which the faithful refused to receive, and so were victorious over it.

stand on the sea of glass--ALFORD and DE BURGH explain "on (the shore of) the sea": *at* the sea. So the preposition, *Greek*, "*epi*," with the accusative case, is used for *at*, Re 3:20. It has a pregnant sense: "standing" implies *rest*, *Greek* "*epi*" with the accusative case implies motion "towards." Thus the meaning is, Having come TO the sea, and now *standing* AT it. In Mt 14:26, where Christ walks *on* the sea, the *Greek* oldest manuscripts have the genitive, not the accusative as here. Allusion is made to the Israelites standing *on the shore at the Red Sea*, after having passed victoriously through it, and after the Lord had destroyed the Egyptian foe (type of Antichrist) in it. Moses and the Israelites' song of triumph (Ex 15:1) has its antitype in the saints' "song of Moses and the Lamb" (Re 15:3). Still *English Version* is consistent with good *Greek*, and the sense will then be: As the sea typifies the troubled state out of which the beast arose, and which is to be no more in the blessed world to come (Re 21:1), so the victorious saints stand on it, having it *under their feet* (as the *woman* had the *moon*, see on [Re 12:1](#)); but it is now no longer treacherous wherein the feet sink, but solid like glass, as it was under the feet of Christ,

whose triumph and power the saints now share. Firmness of footing amidst apparent instability is thus represented. They can stand, not merely as victorious Israel *at* the Red Sea, and as John *upon* the sand of the shore, but *upon the sea* itself, now firm, and reflecting their glory as glass, their past conflict shedding the brighter luster on their present triumph. Their happiness is heightened by the retrospect of the dangers through which they have passed. Thus this corresponds to Re 7:14, 15.

harps of God--in the hands of these heavenly *virgins*, infinitely surpassing the timbrels of Miriam and the Israelitesses.

3. song of Moses . . . and . . . the Lamb--The New Testament song of the Lamb (that is, the song which the Lamb shall lead, as being "the Captain of our salvation," just as Moses was leader of the Israelites, the song in which those who conquer through Him [Ro 8:37] shall join, Re 12:11) is the antitype to the triumphant Old Testament song of Moses and the Israelites at the Red Sea (Ex 15:1-21). The Churches of the Old and New Testament are essentially one in their conflicts and triumphs. The two appear joined in this phrase, as they are in the twenty-four elders. Similarly, Isa 12:1-6 foretells the song of the redeemed (Israel foremost) after the second antitypical exodus and deliverance *at the Egyptian Sea*. The passage through the Red Sea under the pillar of cloud was Israel's baptism, to which the believer's baptism in trials corresponds. The elect after their trials (especially those arising from the beast) shall be taken up before the vials of wrath be poured on the beast and his kingdom. So Noah and his family were taken out of the doomed world before the deluge; Lot was taken out of Sodom before its destruction; the Christians escaped by a special interposition of Providence to Pella before the destruction of Jerusalem. As the pillar of *cloud* and *fire* interposed between Israel and the Egyptian foe, so that Israel was safely landed on the opposite shore before the Egyptians were destroyed; so the Lord, coming with *clouds* and in flaming *fire*, shall first catch up His elect people "in the clouds to meet Him in the air," and then shall with fire destroy the enemy. The Lamb leads the song in honor of the Father amidst the great congregation. This is the "new song" mentioned in Re 14:3. The singing victors are the 144,000 of Israel, "the first-fruits," and the general "harvest" of the Gentiles.

servant of God-- (Ex 14:31; Nu 12:7; Jos 22:5). The Lamb is more: He is the SON.

Great and marvellous are thy works, &c.--part of Moses' last song (De 32:3, 4). The vindication of the justice of God that so He may be glorified is the grand end of God's dealings. Hence His servants again and again dwell upon this in their praises (Re 16:7; 19:2; Pr 16:4; Jer 10:10; Da 4:37). Especially at the judgment (Ps 50:1-6; 145:17).

saints--There is no manuscript authority for this. A, B, *Coptic*, and CYPRIAN read, "of the NATIONS." C reads "of the ages," and so *Vulgate* and *Syriac*. The point at issue in the Lord's controversy with the earth is, whether He, or Satan's minion, the beast, is "the King of the nations"; here at the eve of the judgments descending on the kingdom of the beast, the transfigured saints hail Him as "the King of the nations" (Eze 21:27).

4. Who shall not--*Greek*, "Who is there but must fear Thee?" Compare Moses' song, Ex 15:14-16, on the fear which God's judgments strike into the foe.

thee--so *Syriac*. But A, B, C, *Vulgate*, and CYPRIAN reject "thee."

all nations shall come--alluding to Ps 22:27-31; compare Isa 66:23; Jer 16:19. The conversion of *all nations*, therefore, shall be when Christ shall come, and not till then; and the first moving cause will be Christ's *manifested judgments* preparing all hearts for receiving Christ's mercy. He shall effect by His presence what we have in vain tried to effect in His absence. The present preaching of the Gospel is gathering out the elect remnant; meanwhile "the mystery of iniquity" is at work, and will at last come to its crisis; then shall judgment descend on the apostates at the *harvest-end of this age* (*Greek*, Mt 13:39, 40) when the tares shall be

cleared out of the earth, which thenceforward becomes Messiah's kingdom. The confederacy of 'the apostates against Christ becomes, when overthrown with fearful judgments, the very means in God's overruling providence of preparing the nations not joined in the Antichristian league to submit themselves to Him.

judgments--*Greek*, "righteousnesses."

are--literally, "were": the prophetic past for the immediate future.

5. So Re 11:19; compare Re 16:17. "The tabernacle of the testimony" appropriately here comes to view, where God's faithfulness in avenging His people with judgments on their foes is about to be set forth. We need to get a glimpse within the Holy place to "understand" the secret spring and the end of God's righteous dealings.

behold--omitted by A, B, C, *Syriac*, and ANDREAS. It is supported only by *Vulgate*, *Coptic*, and PRIMASIUS, but no manuscript.

6. having--So B reads. But A and C, read "who have": not that they had them yet (compare Re 15:7), but they are by anticipation described according to their office.

linen--So B reads. But A, C, and *Vulgate*, "a stone." On the principle that the harder reading is the one least likely to be an interpolation, we should read, "a stone pure ('and' is omitted in A, B, C, and ANDREAS), brilliant" (so the *Greek*): probably the diamond. With *English Version*, compare Ac 1:10; 10:30.

golden girdles--resembling the Lord in this respect (Re 1:13).

7. one of the four beasts--*Greek*, "living creatures." The presentation of the vials to the angels by one of the living creatures implies the ministry of the Church as the medium for manifesting to angels the glories of redemption (Eph 3:10).

vials--"bowls"; a broad shallow cup or bowl. The breadth of the vials in their upper part would tend to cause their contents to pour out *all at once*, implying the overwhelming suddenness of the woes.

full of . . . wrath--How sweetly do the *vials full of odors*, that is, the incense-perfumed prayers of the saints, contrast with these!

8. temple . . . filled-- (Isa 6:4); compare Ex 40:34; 2Ch 5:14, as to the earthly temple, of which this is the antitype.

the glory of God and . . . power--then fully manifested.

no man was able to enter . . . the temple--because of God's presence in His manifested glory and power during the execution of these judgments.

CHAPTER 16

Re 16:1-21. THE SEVEN VIALS AND THE CONSEQUENT PLAGUES.

The trumpets shook the world kingdoms in a longer process; the vials destroy with a swift and sudden overthrow the kingdom of "the beast" in particular who had invested himself with the world kingdom. The Hebrews thought the Egyptian plagues to have been inflicted with but an interval of a month between them severally [BENGEL, referring to SEDER OLAM]. As Moses took ashes from an earthly common furnace, so angels, as priestly ministers in the heavenly temple, take holy fire in sacred vials or bowls, from the heavenly altar to pour down (compare Re 8:5). The same heavenly altar which would have kindled the sweet incense of

prayer bringing down blessing upon earth, by man's sin kindles the fiery descending curse. Just as the river Nile, which ordinarily is the source of Egypt's fertility, became blood and a curse through Egypt's sin.

1. a great voice--namely, God's. These seven vials (the detailed expansion of *the vintage*, Re 14:18-20) being called "the last," must belong to the period just when the term of the beast's power has expired (whence reference is made in them all to the worshippers of the beast as the objects of the judgments), close to the end or coming of the Son of man. The first four are distinguished from the last three, just as in the case of the seven seals and the seven trumpets. The first four are more general, affecting the earth, the sea, springs, and the sun, not merely a portion of these natural bodies, as in the case of the trumpets, but the whole of them; the last three are more particular, affecting the throne of the beast, the Euphrates, and the grand consummation. Some of these particular judgments are set forth in detail in the seventeenth through twentieth chapters.

out of the temple--B and *Syriac* omit. But A, C, *Vulgate*, and ANDREAS support the words.

the vials--so *Syriac* and *Coptic*. But A, B, C, *Vulgate*, and ANDREAS read, "the seven vials."

upon--*Greek*, "into."

2. went--*Greek*, "went away."

poured out--So the angel cast fire into the earth previous to the series of trumpets (Re 8:5).

upon--so *Coptic*. But A, B, C, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac* read, "into."

noisome--literally, "evil" (compare De 28:27, 35). The very same *Greek* word is used in the *Septuagint* as here, *Greek*, "*helkos*." The reason why the sixth Egyptian plague is the *first* here is because it was directed against the Egyptian magicians, Jannes and Jambres, so that they could not stand before Moses; and so here the plague is sent upon those who in the beast worship had practiced sorcery. As they submitted to the mark of the beast, so they must bear the mark of the avenging God. Contrast Re 7:3; Eze 9:4, 6.

grievous--distressing to the sufferers.

sore upon the men--antitype to the sixth Egyptian plague.

which had the mark of the beast--Therefore this first vial is subsequent to the period of the beast's rule.

3. angel--So B and ANDREAS. But A, C, and *Vulgate* omit it.

upon--*Greek*, "into."

became as . . . blood--answering to another Egyptian plague.

of a dead man--putrefying.

living soul--So B and ANDREAS. But A, C, and *Syriac*, "soul of life" (compare Ge 1:30; 7:21, 22).

in the sea--So B and ANDREAS. But A, C, and *Syriac* read, "(as respects) the things in the sea."

4. (Ex 7:20.)

angel--so *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS. But A, B, C, and *Vulgate* omit it.

5. angel of the waters--that is, presiding over the waters.

O Lord--omitted by A, B, C, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS.

and shalt be--A, B, C, *Vulgate*, and ANDREAS for this clause read, "(which art and wast) *holy*." The Lord is now no longer He that *shall* come, for He *is come* in vengeance and therefore

the third of the three clauses found in Re 1:4, 8; 4:8 is here and in Re 11:17 omitted.

judged thus--literally, "these things." "Thou didst inflict this judgment."

6. (Re 11:18, end; Ge 9:6; Isa 49:26.) An anticipation of Re 18:20, 24; compare Re 13:15.
For--A, B, C, and ANDREAS omit.

7. **another out of**--omitted in A, C, *Syriac*, and *Coptic*. Translate then, "I heard the altar [personified] saying." On it the prayers of saints are presented before God: beneath it are the souls of the martyrs crying for vengeance on the foes of God.

8. **angel**--so *Coptic* and ANDREAS. But A, B, C, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac* omit it.

upon--not as in Re 16:2, 3, "into."

sun--Whereas by the fourth trumpet the sun is darkened (Re 8:12) in a third part, here by the fourth vial the sun's bright scorching power is intensified.

power was given unto him--rather, "unto it," the sun.

men--*Greek*, "the men," namely, those who had the mark of the beast (Re 16:2).

9. **men**--*Greek*, "the men."

repented not to give him glory-- (Re 9:20). Affliction, if it does not melt, hardens the sinner. Compare the better result on others, Re 11:13; 14:7; 15:4.

10. **angel**--omitted by A, B, C, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac*. But *Coptic* and ANDREAS support it.

seat--*Greek*, "throne of the beast": set up in arrogant mimicry of God's throne; the dragon gave his throne to the beast (Re 13:2).

darkness--parallel to the Egyptian plague of darkness, Pharaoh being the type of Antichrist (compare *Notes*, see on [Re 15:2, 3](#); compare the fifth trumpet, Re 9:2).

gnawed their tongues for pain--*Greek*, "owing to the pain" occasioned by the previous plagues, rendered more appalling by the darkness. Or, as "gnashing of teeth" is one of the accompaniments of hell, so this "gnawing of their tongues" is through rage at the baffling of their hopes and the overthrow of their kingdom. They meditate revenge and are unable to effect it; hence their frenzy [GROTIUS]. Those in anguish, mental and bodily, bite their lips and tongues.

11. **sores**--This shows that each fresh plague was accompanied with the continuance of the preceding plagues: there was an accumulation, not a mere succession, of plagues.

repented not--(Compare Re 16:9).

12. **angel**--so *Coptic* and ANDREAS. A, B, C, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac* omit.

kings of the east--*Greek*, "the kings who are from the rising of the sun." Reference to *the Euphrates* similarly occurs in the sixth trumpet. The drying up of the *Euphrates*, I think, is to be taken figuratively, as *Babylon* itself, which is situated on it, is undoubtedly so, Re 17:5. The waters of the *Euphrates* (compare Isa 8:7, 8) are spiritual *Babylon's*, that is, the apostate Church's (of which Rome is the chief, though not exclusive representative) spiritual and temporal powers. The drying up of the waters of *Babylon* expresses the same thing as the ten kings stripping, eating, and burning the whore. The phrase, "way may be prepared for," is that applied to *the Lord's coming* (Isa 40:3; Mt 3:3; Lu 1:76). He shall come *from the East* (Mt 24:27; Eze 43:2, "the glory of the God of Israel came *from the way of the East*"): not alone, for His elect transfigured saints of Israel and the Gentiles shall accompany Him, who are "kings and

priests unto God" (Re 1:6). As the Antichristian ten *kings* accompany the beast, so the saints accompany as *kings* the *King of kings* to the last decisive conflict. DE BURGH and others take it of *the Jews*, who also were designed to be *a kingdom of priests to God* on earth. They shall, doubtless, become priest-kings in the flesh to the nations in the flesh at His coming. Abraham from the East (if Isa 41:2, 8, 9, refers to him, and not Cyrus) conquering the Chaldean kings is a type of Israel's victorious restoration to the priest-kingdom. Israel's exodus after the last Egyptian plagues typifies Israel's restoration after the spiritual Babylon, the apostate Church, has been smitten. Israel's promotion to the priest-kingdom after Pharaoh's downfall, and at the Lord's descent at Sinai to establish the theocracy, typifies the restored kingdom of Israel at the Lord's more glorious descent, when Antichrist shall be destroyed utterly. Thus, besides the transfigured saints, Israel secondarily may be meant by "the kings from the East" who shall accompany the "King of kings" returning "from the way of the East" to reign over His ancient people. As to the *drying up* again of the *waters* opposing His people's assuming the kingdom, compare Isa 10:26; 11:11, 15; Zec 10:9-11. The name Israel (Ge 32:28) implies *a prince with God*. Compare Mic 4:8 as to the return of the kingdom to Jerusalem. DURHAM, several centuries ago, interpreted the drying up of the Euphrates to mean the wasting away of the Turkish power, which has heretofore held Palestine, and so the way being prepared for Israel's restoration. But as *Babylon* refers to the apostate Church, not to Mohammedanism, the drying up of the Euphrates (answering to Cyrus' overthrow of literal Babylon by marching into it through the dry channel of the Euphrates) must answer to the draining off of the apostate Church's resources, the Roman and Greek corrupt Church having been heretofore one of the greatest barriers by its idolatries and persecutions in the way of Israel's restoration and conversion. The *kings of the earth* who are earthly (Re 16:14), stand in contrast to the *kings from the East* who are heavenly.

13. unclean spirits like frogs--the antitype to the plague of frogs sent on Egypt. The presence of the "unclean spirit" in the land (Palestine) is foretold, Zec 13:2, in connection with idolatrous *prophets*. Beginning with infidelity as to Jesus Christ's coming in the flesh, men shall end in the grossest idolatry of the beast, the incarnation of all that is self-deifying and God-opposed in the world powers of all ages; having rejected Him that came in the Father's name, they shall worship one that comes in his own, though really the devil's representative; as frogs croak by night in marshes and quagmires, so these unclean spirits in the darkness of error teach lies amidst the mire of filthy lusts. They talk of *liberty*, but it is not Gospel liberty, but license for lust. There being *three*, as also *seven*, in the description of the last and worst state of the Jewish nation, implies a parody of the two divine numbers, *three* of the Trinity, and *seven* of the Holy Spirit (Re 1:4). Some observe that *three frogs* were the original arms of France, a country which has been the center of infidelity, socialism, and false spiritualism. A and B read, "*as it were* frogs," instead of "*like* frogs," which is not supported by manuscripts. The unclean spirit out of the mouth of *the dragon* symbolizes the proud infidelity which opposes God and Christ. That out of the *beast's* mouth is the spirit of the world, which in the politics of men, whether lawless democracy or despotism, sets man above God. That out of the mouth of the *false prophet* is lying spiritualism and religious delusion, which shall take the place of the harlot when she shall have been destroyed.

the dragon--Satan, who *gives his power and throne* (Re 13:2) *to the beast*.

false prophet--distinct from the harlot, the apostate Church (of which Rome is the chief, though not sole, representative), Re 17:1-3, 16; and identical with *the second beast*, Re 13:11-15, as appears by comparing Re 19:20 with Re 13:13; ultimately consigned to the lake of fire with the first beast; as is also the dragon a little later (Re 20:10). The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, "the mystery of iniquity," form a blasphemous Antitrinity, the counterfeit of "the mystery of godliness" God manifests in Christ, witnessed to by the Spirit. The dragon acts the

part of God the Father, assigning his authority to his representative the beast, as the Father assigns His to the Son. They are accordingly jointly worshipped; compare as to the Father and Son, Joh 5:23; as the ten-horned beast has its ten horns crowned with *diadems* (*Greek*, Re 13:1), so Christ has on His head *many diadems*. While the false prophet, like the Holy Ghost, speaks not of himself, but tells all men to worship the beast, and confirms his testimony to the beast by *miracles*, as the Holy Ghost attested similarly to Christ's divine mission.

14. devils--*Greek*, "demons."

working miracles--*Greek*, "signs."

go forth unto--or "for," that is, to tempt them to the battle with Christ.

the kings of the earth and, &c.--A, B, *Syriac*, and ANDREAS omit "of the earth and," which clause is not in any manuscript. Translate, "kings of the whole habitable world," who are "of this world," in contrast to "the kings of (from) the East" (the sun-rising), Re 16:12, namely, the saints to whom Christ *has appointed a kingdom*, and who are "children of light." God, in permitting Satan's *miracles*, as in the case of the Egyptian magicians who were His instruments in hardening Pharaoh's heart, gives the reprobate up to judicial delusion preparatory to their destruction. As Aaron's rod was changed into a serpent, so were those of the Egyptian magicians. Aaron turned the water into blood; so did the magicians. Aaron brought up frogs; so did the magicians. With the *frogs* their power ceased. So this, or whatever is antitypical to it, will be the last effort of the dragon, beast, and false prophet.

battle--*Greek*, "war"; the final conflict for the kingship of the world described in Re 19:17-21.

15. The gathering of the world kings with the beast against the Lamb is the signal for Christ's coming; therefore He here gives the charge to be watching for His coming and clothed in the garments of justification and sanctification, so as to be accepted.

thief-- (Mt 24:43; 2Pe 3:10).

they--saints and angels.

shame--literally, "unseemliness" (*Greek*, "*aschemosunee*"); *Greek*, 1Co 13:5: a different word from the *Greek* in Re 3:18 (*Greek*, "*aischunee*").

16. he--rather, "they (the three unclean spirits) gathered them together." If *English Version* be retained, "He" will refer to *God* who gives them over to the delusion of the three unclean spirits; or else *the sixth angel* (Re 16:12).

Armageddon--*Hebrew*, "*Har*," a mountain, and "*Megiddo*" in Manasseh in Galilee, the scene of the overthrow of the Canaanite kings by God's miraculous interposition under Deborah and Barak; the same as the great plain of Esdraelon. Josiah, too, as the ally of Babylon, was defeated and slain at Megiddo; and the mourning of the Jews at the time just before God shall interpose for them against all the nations confederate against Jerusalem, is compared to the mourning for Josiah at Megiddo. *Megiddo* comes from a root, *gadad*, "cut off," and means *slaughter*. Compare Joe 3:2, 12, 14, where "the valley of Jehoshaphat" (meaning in *Hebrew*, "judgment of God") is mentioned as the scene of God's final vengeance on the God-opposing foe. Probably some great plain, antitypical to the valleys of Megiddo and Jehoshaphat, will be the scene.

17. angel--so ANDREAS. But A, B, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac* omit it.

into--so ANDREAS (*Greek*, "*eis*"). But A and B, "upon" (*Greek*, "*epi*").

great--so B, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS. But A omits.

of heaven--so B and ANDREAS But A, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* omit.

It is done--"It is come to pass." God's voice as to the final consummation, as Jesus' voice on the cross when the work of expiation was completed, "It is finished."

18. voice . . . thunders . . . lightnings--A has the order, "lightnings . . . voices . . . thunders." This is the same close as that of the seven seals and the seven thunders; but with the difference that they do not merely form the conclusion, but introduce the consequence, of the last vial, namely, the utter destruction of Babylon and then of the Antichristian armies.

earthquake--which is often preceded by a lurid state of air, such as would result from the vial poured upon it.

men were--so B, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and ANDREAS. But A and *Coptic* read, "A man was."
so mighty--*Greek*, "such."

19. the great city--the capital and seat of the apostate Church, spiritual Babylon (of which Rome is the representative, if one literal city be meant). The city in Re 11:8 (see on [Re 11:8](#)), is probably distinct, namely, Jerusalem under Antichrist (*the beast*, who is distinct from *the harlot* or apostate Church). In Re 11:13 only a *tenth* of Jerusalem falls whereas here the city (Babylon) "became (*Greek*) into three parts" by the earthquake.

cities of the nations--other great cities in league with spiritual Babylon.

great . . . came in remembrance--*Greek*, "Babylon the great was remembered" (Re 18:5). It is now that the last call to escape from Babylon is given to God's people in her (Re 18:4).

fierceness--the *boiling over* outburst of His wrath (*Greek*, "*thumou orgees*"), compare *Note*, see on [Re 14:10](#).

20. Plainly parallel to Re 6:14-17, and by anticipation descriptive of the last judgment.

the mountains--rather as *Greek*, "there were found no mountains."

21. fell--*Greek*, "descends."

upon men--*Greek*, "*the men*."

and men blasphemed God--not those struck who died, but the rest. Unlike the result in the case of Jerusalem (Re 11:13), where "the remnant . . . affrighted . . . gave glory to the God of heaven."

was--*Greek*, "is."

CHAPTER 17

Re 17:1-18. THE HARLOT BABYLON'S GAUD: THE BEAST ON WHICH SHE RIDES, HAVING SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS, SHALL BE THE INSTRUMENT OF JUDGMENT ON HER.

As Re 16:12 stated generally the vial judgment about to be poured on *the harlot*, Babylon's power, as the seventeenth and eighteen chapters give the same in detail, so the nineteenth chapter gives in detail the judgment on the *beast* and the *false prophet*, summarily alluded to in Re 16:13-15, in connection with the Lord's *coming*.

1. unto me--A, B, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* omit.

many--So A. But B, "*the many waters*" (Jer 51:13); Re 17:15, below, explains the sense. The whore is the apostate Church, just as "the woman" (Re 12:1-6) is *the Church while faithful*. Satan having failed by violence, tries too successfully to seduce her by the allurements of the

world; unlike her Lord, she was overcome by this temptation; hence she is seen *sitting on the scarlet-colored beast*, no longer the wife, but the harlot; no longer Jerusalem, but spiritually Sodom (Re 11:8).

2. drunk with--*Greek*, "owing to." It cannot be pagan Rome, but papal Rome, if a particular seat of error be meant, but I incline to think that the judgment (Re 18:2) and the spiritual fornication (Re 18:3), though finding their culmination in Rome, are not restricted to it, but comprise the whole apostate Church, Roman, Greek, and even Protestant, so far as it has been seduced from its "first love" (Re 2:4) to Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom, and given its affections to worldly pomps and idols. The *woman* (Re 12:1) is the congregation of God in its purity under the Old and New Testament, and appears again as the Bride of the Lamb, the transfigured Church prepared for the marriage feast. The woman, the invisible Church, is latent in the apostate Church, and is the Church militant; the Bride is the Church triumphant.

3. the wilderness--Contrast her in Re 12:6, 14, having *a place in the wilderness*-world, but not a home; a sojourner here, looking for the city to come. Now, on the contrary, she is contented to have her portion in this moral wilderness.

upon a scarlet . . . beast--The same as in Re 13:1, who there is described as here, "having seven heads and ten horns (therein betraying that he is representative of the dragon, Re 12:3), and upon his heads names (so the oldest manuscripts read) of blasphemy"; compare also Re 17:12-14, below, with Re 19:19, 20, and Re 17:13, 14, 16. Rome, resting on the world power and ruling it by the claim of supremacy, is the chief, though not the exclusive, representative of this symbol. As the dragon is fiery-*red*, so the beast is blood-red in color; implying its *blood-guiltiness*, and also deep-dyed sin. The *scarlet* is also the symbol of kingly authority.

full--all over; not merely "on his heads," as in Re 13:1, for its opposition to God is now about to develop itself in all its intensity. Under the harlot's superintendence, the world power puts forth blasphemous pretensions worse than in pagan days. So the Pope is placed by the cardinals *in God's temple on the altar to sit there*, and the cardinals *kiss the feet* of the Pope. This ceremony is called in Romish writers "the adoration." [*Historie de Clerge*, Amsterd., 1716; and LETTENBURGH'S *Notitia Curiae Romanae*, 1683, p. 125; HEIDEGGER, *Myst. Bab.*, 1, 511, 514, 537]; a papal coin [*Numismata Pontificum*, Paris, 1679, p. 5] has the *blasphemous* legend, "*Quem creant, adorant.*" *Kneeling* and *kissing* are the worship meant by John's word nine times used in respect to the rival of God (*Greek*, "*proskunein*"). *Abomination*, too, is the scriptural term for an idol, or any creature worshipped with the homage due to the Creator. Still, there is some check on the God-opposed world power while ridden by the harlot; the consummated Antichrist will be when, having destroyed her, the beast shall be revealed as the concentration and incarnation of all the self-deifying God-opposed principles which have appeared in various forms and degrees heretofore. "The Church has gained outward recognition by leaning on the world power which in its turn uses the Church for its own objects; such is the picture here of Christendom ripe for judgment" [AUBERLEN]. The seven heads in the view of many are the seven successive forms of government of Rome: kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, military tribunes, emperors, the German emperors [WORDSWORTH], of whom Napoleon is the successor (Re 17:11). But see the view given, see on [Re 17:9, 10](#), which I prefer. The crowns formerly on the ten horns (Re 13:1) have now disappeared, perhaps an indication that the ten kingdoms into which the Germanic-Slavonic world [*the old Roman empire*, including the East as well as the West, the two legs of the image with five toes on each, that is, ten in all] is to be divided, will lose their monarchical form in the end [AUBERLEN]; but see Re 17:12, which seems to imply crowned *kings*.

4. The color scarlet, it is remarkable, is that reserved for popes and cardinals. Paul II made it penal for anyone but cardinals to wear hats of scarlet; compare *Roman Ceremonial* [3.5.5]. This book was compiled several centuries ago by MARCELLUS, a Romish archbishop, and dedicated to Leo X. In it are enumerated five different articles of dress of *scarlet* color. A vest is mentioned studded with *pearls*. The Pope's miter is of *gold* and *precious stones*. These are the very characteristics outwardly which Revelation thrice assigns to the harlot or Babylon. So Joachim an abbot from Calabria, about A.D. 1200, when asked by Richard of England, who had summoned him to Palestine, concerning Antichrist, replied that "he was born long ago at Rome, and is now exalting himself above all that is called God." ROGER HOVEDEN [*Annals*, 1.2], and elsewhere, wrote, "The harlot arrayed in gold is the Church of Rome." Whenever and wherever (not in Rome alone) the Church, instead of being "clothed (as at first, Re 12:1) with the sun" of heaven, is arrayed in earthly meretricious gauds, compromising the truth of God through fear, or flattery, of the world's power, science, or wealth, she becomes the harlot seated on the beast, and doomed in righteous retribution to be judged by the beast (Re 17:16). Soon, like Rome, and like the Jews of Christ's and the apostles' time leagued with the heathen Rome, she will then become the persecutor of the saints (Re 17:6). Instead of drinking her Lord's "cup" of suffering, she has "a cup full of abominations and filthinesses." Rome, in her medals, represents herself holding a cup with the self-condemning inscription, "*Sedet super universum*." Meanwhile the world power gives up its hostility and accepts Christianity externally; the beast gives up its God-opposed character, the woman gives up her divine one. They meet halfway by mutual concessions; Christianity becomes worldly, the world becomes Christianized. The gainer is the world; the loser is the Church. The beast for a time receives a *deadly wound* (Re 13:3), but is not really transfigured; he will return worse than ever (Re 17:11-14). The Lord alone by His coming can make the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ. The "purple" is the badge of empire; even as in mockery it was put on our Lord.

decked--literally, "gilded."

stones--*Greek*, "stone."

filthiness--A, B, and ANDREAS read, "the filthy (impure) things."

5. **upon . . . forehead . . . name**--as harlots usually had. What a contrast to "HOLINESS TO THE LORD," inscribed on the miter *on* the high priest's *forehead*!

mystery--implying a spiritual fact heretofore hidden, and incapable of discovery by mere reason, but now revealed. As the union of Christ and the Church is a "great mystery" (a spiritual truth of momentous interest, once hidden, now revealed, Eph 5:31, 32), so the Church conforming to the world and thereby becoming a harlot is a counter "mystery" (or spiritual truth, symbolically now revealed). As iniquity in the harlot is a leaven working in "*mystery*," and therefore called "the *mystery* of iniquity," so when she is destroyed, the iniquity heretofore working (comparatively) latently in her, shall be *revealed in the man of iniquity*, the open embodiment of all previous evil. Contrast the "mystery of God" and "godliness," Re 10:7; 1Ti 3:16. It was Rome that crucified Christ; that destroyed Jerusalem and scattered the Jews; that persecuted the early Christians in pagan times, and Protestant Christians in papal times; and probably shall be again restored to its pristine grandeur, such as it had under the Cæsars, just before the burning of the harlot and of itself with her. So HIPPOLYTUS [*On Antichrist*] (who lived in the second century), thought. Popery cannot be at one and the same time the "*mystery* of iniquity," and the *manifested* or *revealed* Antichrist. Probably it will compromise for political power (Re 17:3) the portion of Christianity still in its creed, and thus shall prepare the way for Antichrist's manifestation. The name Babylon, which in the image, Da 2:32, 38, is given to the *head*, is here given to the harlot, which marks her as being connected with the fourth kingdom, Rome, the last part of the image. Benedict XIII, in his indiction for a jubilee, A.D. 1725, called Rome "the *mother* of all believers, and the mistress of all churches" (harlots like herself). The

correspondence of syllables and accents in *Greek* is striking; "*He porne kai to therion; He numphe kai to arnion.*" "The whore and the beast; the Bride and the Lamb."

of harlots--*Greek*, "of *the* harlots and of *the* abominations." Not merely Rome, but Christendom as a whole, even as formerly Israel as a whole, has become a harlot. The invisible Church of true believers is hidden and dispersed in the visible Church. The boundary lines which separate harlot and woman are not denominational nor drawn externally, but can only be spiritually discerned. If Rome were the *only* seat of Babylon, much of the spiritual profit of Revelation would be lost to us; but the harlot "sitteth upon many waters" (Re 17:1), and "ALL nations have drunk of the wine of her fornication" (Re 17:2; Re 18:3; "the earth," Re 19:2). External extensiveness over the whole world and internal conformity to the world--worldliness in extent and contents--is symbolized by the name of the world city, "Babylon." As the sun shines on all the earth, thus the woman clothed with the sun is to let her light penetrate to the uttermost parts of the earth. But she, in externally Christianizing the world, permits herself to be seduced by the world; thus her universality or catholicity is not that of the *Jerusalem* which we look for ("the MOTHER of us all," Re 21:2; Isa 2:2-4; Ga 4:26), but that of *Babylon*, the world-wide but harlot city! (As Babylon was destroyed, and the Jews restored to Jerusalem by Cyrus, so our Cyrus--a Persian name meaning the *sun*--the Sun of righteousness, shall bring Israel, literal and spiritual, to the holy Jerusalem at His coming. Babylon and Jerusalem are the two opposite poles of the spiritual world). Still, the Romish Church is not only accidentally and as a matter of fact, but in virtue of its very PRINCIPLE, a harlot, the metropolis of whoredom, "the mother of harlots"; whereas the evangelical Protestant Church is, according to her principle and fundamental creed, a chaste woman; the Reformation was a protest of the woman against the harlot. The spirit of the heathen world kingdom Rome had, before the Reformation, changed the Church in the West into a *Church-State*, Rome; and in the East, into a *State-Church*, fettered by the world power, having its center in Byzantium; the Roman and Greek churches have thus fallen from the invisible spiritual essence of the Gospel into the elements of the world [AUBERLEN]. Compare with the "woman" called "Babylon" here, the woman named "wickedness," or "lawlessness," "iniquity" (Zec 5:7, 8, 11), carried to *Babylon*: compare "the mystery of iniquity" and "the man of sin," "that *wicked one*," literally, "*the lawless one*" (2Th 2:7, 8; also Mt 24:12).

6. martyrs--witnesses.

I wondered with great admiration--As the *Greek* is the same in the verb and the noun, translate the latter "wonder." John certainly did not *admire* her in the modern English sense. Elsewhere (Re 17:8; 13:3), all the earthly-minded ("they that dwell on the earth") *wonder* in admiration of the beast. Here only is John's *wonder* called forth; not the *beast*, but the woman sunken into the harlot, the Church become a world-loving apostate, moves his sorrowful astonishment at so awful a change. That the world should be beastly is natural, but that the faithful bride should become the whore is monstrous, and excites the same amazement in him as the same awful change in Israel excited in Isaiah and Jeremiah. "Horrible thing" in them answers to "abominations" here. "*Corruptio optimi pessima*"; when the Church falls, she sinks lower than the godless world, in proportion as her right place is higher than the world. It is striking that in Re 17:3, "woman" has not the article, "*the* woman," as if she had been before mentioned: for though identical in one sense with the *woman*, Re 12:1-6, in another sense she is not. The elect are never perverted into apostates, and still remain as *the* true *woman* invisibly contained in the *harlot*; yet Christendom regarded as *the woman* has apostatized from its first *faith*.

8. beast . . . was, and is not--(Compare Re 17:11). The time when the beast "is not" is the time during which it has "the deadly wound"; the time of *the seventh head* becoming Christian

externally, when its beast-like character was put into suspension temporarily. The *healing of its wound* answers to its *ascending out of the bottomless pit*. The beast, or Antichristian world power, returns worse than ever, with satanic powers from hell (Re 11:7), not merely from *the sea* of convulsed nations (Re 13:1). Christian civilization gives the beast only a temporary wound, whence *the deadly wound* is always mentioned in connection with its being *healed up* the non-existence of the beast in connection with its reappearance; and Daniel does not even notice any change in the world power effected by Christianity. We are endangered on one side by the spurious Christianity of the harlot, on the other by the open Antichristianity of the beast; the third class is Christ's little flock."

go--So B, *Vulgate*, and ANDREAS read the future tense. But A and IRENÆUS, "goeth."

into perdition--The continuance of this revived seventh (that is, the eighth) head is short: it is therefore called "the son of perdition," who is essentially doomed to it almost immediately after his appearance.

names were--so *Vulgate* and ANDREAS. But A, B, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* read the singular, "name is."

written in--*Greek*, "upon."

which--rather, "when they behold the beast *that* it was," &c. So *Vulgate*.

was, and is not, and yet is--A, B, and ANDREAS read, "and shall come" (literally, "be present," namely, again: *Greek*, "*kai parestai*"). The *Hebrew*, "*tetragrammaton*," or sacred four letters in *Jehovah*, "who is, who was, and who is to come," the believer's object of worship, has its contrasted counterpart in the beast "who was, and is not, and shall be present," the object of the earth's worship [BENGEL]. They exult with *wonder* in seeing that the beast which had seemed to have received its death blow from Christianity, *is on the eve of reviving* with greater power than ever on the ruins of that religion which tormented them (Re 11:10).

9. Compare Re 13:18; Da 12:10, where similarly spiritual discernment is put forward as needed in order to understand the symbolical prophecy.

seven heads and seven mountains--The connection between *mountains and kings* must be deeper than the mere outward fact to which incidental allusion is made, that Rome (the then world city) is on seven hills (whence heathen Rome had a national festival called *Septimontium*, the feast of the seven-hilled city [PLUTARCH]; and on the imperial coins, just as here, she is represented as a *woman seated on seven hills*. Coin of Vespasian, described by CAPTAIN SMYTH [*Roman Coins*, p. 310; ACKERMAN, 1, p. 87]). The seven heads can hardly be at once seven *kings* or *kingdoms* (Re 17:10), and seven geographical *mountains*. The true connection is, as the *head* is the prominent part of the body, so the *mountain* is prominent in the land. Like "sea" and "earth" and "waters . . . peoples" (Re 17:15), so "mountains" have a symbolical meaning, namely, prominent seats of power. Especially such as are prominent hindrances to the cause of God (Ps 68:16, 17; Isa 40:4; 41:15; 49:11; Eze 35:2); especially Babylon (which geographically was in a *plain*, but spiritually is called a destroying *mountain*, Jer 51:25), in majestic contrast to which stands Mount Zion, "the mountain of the Lord's house" (Isa 2:2), and the heavenly mount; Re 21:10, "a great and high mountain . . . and that great city, the holy Jerusalem." So in Da 2:35, the *stone* becomes a *mountain*--Messiah's universal kingdom supplanting the previous world kingdoms. As nature shadows forth the great realities of the spiritual world, so seven-hilled Rome is a representative of the seven-headed world power of which the dragon has been, and is the prince. The "seven kings" are hereby distinguished from the "ten kings" (Re 17:12): the former are what the latter are not, "mountains," great seats of the world power. The seven universal God-opposed monarchies are Egypt (the first world power which came into collision with God's people,) Assyria, Babylon, Greece, Medo-Persia, Rome, the Germanic-Slavonic empire (the *clay* of the fourth kingdom mixed with its iron in Nebuchadnezzar's image, a *fifth* material, Da 2:33, 34, 42, 43, symbolizing this last head). These

seven might seem not to accord with the seven heads in Da 7:4-7, *one* head on the first beast (Babylon), *one* on the second (Medo-Persia), *four* on the third (Greece; namely, Egypt, Syria, Thrace with Bithynia, and Greece with Macedon): but Egypt and Greece are in both lists. Syria answers to Assyria (from which the name Syria is abbreviated), and Thrace with Bithynia answers to the Gothic-Germanic-Slavonic hordes which, pouring down on Rome from the North, founded the Germanic-Slavonic empire. *The woman sitting on the seven hills* implies the Old and New Testament Church conforming to, and resting on, the world power, that is, on all the seven world kingdoms. Abraham and Isaac dissembling as to their wives through fear of the kings of Egypt foreshadowed this. Compare Eze 16:1-63; 23:1-49, on Israel's whoredoms with Egypt, Assyria, Babylon; and Mt 7:24; 24:10-12, 23-26, on the characteristics of the New Testament Church's harlotry, namely, distrust, suspicion, hatred, treachery, divisions into parties, false doctrine.

10. there are--Translate, "they (the seven heads) are seven kings."

five . . . one--*Greek*, "the five . . . the one"; the first five of the seven are *fallen* (a word applicable not to *forms of government passing away*, but to the *fall* of once powerful empires: Egypt, Eze 29:1-30:26; Assyria and Nineveh, Na 3:1-19; Babylon, Re 18:2; Jer 50:1-51:64; Medo-Persia, Da 8:3-7, 20-22; 10:13; 11:2; Greece, Da 11:4). *Rome* was "the one" existing in John's days. "Kings" is the Scripture phrase for *kingdoms*, because these kingdoms are generally represented in character by some one prominent head, as Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, Medo-Persia by Cyrus, Greece by Alexander, &c.

the other is not yet come--not as ALFORD, inaccurately representing AUBERLEN, *the Christian empire beginning with Constantine*; but, the *Germanic-Slavonic* empire *beginning* and continuing in its beast-like, that is, HEATHEN Antichristian character for only "a short space." The time when it is said of it, "it is not" (Re 17:11), is the *time* during which it is "wounded to death," and has the "deadly wound" (Re 13:3). The external Christianization of the migrating hordes from the North which descended on Rome, is the *wound* to the beast answering to the *earth swallowing up the flood* (heathen tribes) sent by the dragon, Satan, to drown the woman, the Church. The emphasis palpably is on "a *short* space," which therefore comes first in the *Greek*, not on "he must continue," as if his *continuance for some* [considerable] *time* were implied, as ALFORD wrongly thinks. The time of external Christianization (while the beast's wound continues) has lasted for centuries, ever since Constantine. Rome and the Greek Church have partially healed the wound by image worship.

11. beast that . . . is not--his beastly character being kept down by outward Christianization of the state until he starts up to life again as "the eighth" king, his "wound being healed" (Re 13:3), Antichrist manifested in fullest and most intense opposition to God. The "he" is emphatic in the *Greek*. *He*, peculiarly and pre-eminently: answering to "the little horn" with eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things, before whom *three of the ten horns were plucked up by the roots*, and to whom the whole ten "give their power and strength" (Re 17:12, 13, 17). That a *personal* Antichrist will stand at the head of the Antichristian kingdom, is likely from the analogy of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Old Testament Antichrist, "the little horn" in Da 8:9-12; also, "the man of sin, son of perdition" (2Th 2:3-8), answers here to "goeth into perdition," and is applied to an individual, namely, Judas, in the only other passage where the phrase occurs (Joh 17:12). He is essentially a child of destruction, and hence he has but a little time ascended out of the bottomless pit, when he "goes into perdition" (Re 17:8, 11). "While the Church passes through death of the flesh to glory of the Spirit, the beast passes through the glory of the flesh to death" [AUBERLEN].

is of the seven--rather "springs *out of* the seven." The eighth is not merely one of the seven restored, but a new power or person proceeding *out of* the seven, and at the same time

embodying all the God-opposed features of the previous seven concentrated and consummated; for which reason there are said to be not *eight*, but only *seven* heads, for the eighth is the embodiment of all the seven. In the birth-pangs which prepare the "regeneration" there are *wars*, *earthquakes*, and *disturbances* [AUBERLEN], wherein Antichrist takes his rise ("sea," Re 13:1; Mr 13:8; Lu 21:9-11). He does not *fall* like the other seven (Re 17:10), but is *destroyed*, *going* to his own *perdition*, by the Lord in person.

12. ten kings . . . received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings . . . with the beast--Hence and from Re 17:14, 16, it seems that these ten kings or kingdoms, are to be contemporaries with the beast in its last or eighth form, namely, Antichrist. Compare Da 2:34, 44, "the stone smote the image upon *his feet*," that is, upon the *ten* toes, which are, in Da 2:41-44, interpreted to be "*kings*." The ten kingdoms are not, therefore, ten which arose in the overthrow of Rome (heathen), but are to rise out of the last state of the fourth kingdom under the eighth head. I agree with ALFORD that the phrase "*as kings*," implies that they reserve their kingly rights in their alliance with the beast, wherein "they give their power and strength unto" him (Re 17:13). They have the *name* of kings, but not with undivided kingly power [WORDSWORTH]. See AUBERLEN'S not so probable view, see on [Re 17:3](#).

one hour--a definite *time* of *short* duration, during which "the devil is come down to the inhabitant of the earth and of the sea, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a *short time*." Probably the three and a half years (Re 11:2, 3; 13:5). Antichrist is in existence long before the fall of Babylon; but it is only at its fall he obtains the vassalage of the ten kings. He in the first instance imposes on the Jews as the Messiah, coming in his own name; then persecutes those of them who refuse his blasphemous pretensions. Not until the sixth vial, in the latter part of his reign, does he associate the ten kings with him in war with the Lamb, having gained them over by the aid of the spirits of devils working miracles. His connection with Israel appears from his sitting "in the temple of God" (2Th 2:4), and as the antitypical "abomination of desolation standing in the Holy place" (Da 9:27; 12:11; Mt 24:15), and "in the city where our Lord was crucified" (Re 11:8). It is remarkable that IRENÆUS [*Against Heresies*, 5:25] and CYRIL OF JERUSALEM [RUFINUS, *Historia Monachorum*, 10.37] prophesied that Antichrist would have his seat at Jerusalem and would restore the kingdom of the Jews. JULIAN the apostate, long after, took part with the Jews, and aided in building their temple, herein being Antichrist's forerunner.

13. one mind--one *sentiment*.

shall give--So *Coptic*. But A, B, and *Syriac*, "give."

strength--*Greek*, "authority." They become his dependent allies (Re 17:14). Thus Antichrist sets up to be *King of kings*, but scarcely has he put forth his claim when the true KING OF KINGS appears and dashes him down in a moment to destruction.

14. These shall . . . war with the Lamb--in league with the beast. This is a summary anticipation of Re 19:19. This shall not be till *after* they have first executed judgment on the harlot (Re 17:15, 16).

Lord of lords, &c.--anticipating Re 19:16.

are--not in the *Greek*. Therefore translate, "And they that are with Him, called chosen, and faithful (shall overcome them, namely, the beast and his allied kings)." These have been with Christ in heaven unseen, but now appear with Him.

15. (Re 17:1; Isa 8:7.) An impious parody of Jehovah who "sitteth upon the flood" [ALFORD]. Also, contrast the "many waters" Re 19:6, "Alleluia."

peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues--The "peoples," &c., here mark the universality of the spiritual fornication of the Church. The "tongues" remind us of the original Babel, the confusion of *tongues*, the beginning of Babylon, and the first commencement of idolatrous apostasy after the flood, as the tower was doubtless dedicated to the deified heavens. Thus, Babylon is the appropriate name of the harlot. The Pope, as the chief representative of the harlot, claims a double supremacy over all *peoples*, typified by the "two swords" according to the interpretation of Boniface VIII in the Bull, "*Unam Sanctam*," and represented by the two keys: spiritual as the universal bishop, whence he is crowned with the miter; and temporal, whence he is also crowned with the tiara in token of his imperial supremacy. Contrast with the Pope's *diadems* the "many diadems" of Him who alone has claim to, and shall exercise when He shall come, the twofold dominion (Re 19:12).

16. upon the beast--But A, B, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac* read, "*and the beast*."

shall make her desolate--having first dismounted her from her seat on the beast (Re 17:3).

naked--stripped of all her gaud (Re 17:4). As Jerusalem used the world power to crucify her Saviour, and then was destroyed by that very power, Rome; so the Church, having apostatized to the world, shall have judgment executed on her first by the world power, the beast and his allies; and these afterwards shall have judgment executed on them by Christ Himself in person. So Israel leaning on Egypt, a broken reed, is pierced by it; and then Egypt itself is punished. So Israel's whoredom with Assyria and Babylon was punished by the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. So the Church when it goes a-whoring after the word as if *it* were the reality, instead of witnessing against its apostasy from God, is false to its profession. Being no longer a reality itself, but a sham, the Church is rightly judged by that world which for a time had used the Church to further its own ends, while all the while "hating" Christ's unworldly religion, but which now no longer wants the Church's aid.

eat her flesh--*Greek* plural, "masses of flesh," that is, "carnal possessions"; implying the fulness of carnality into which the Church is sunk. The judgment on the harlot is again and again described (Re 18:1; 19:5); first by an "angel having great power" (Re 18:1), then by "another voice from heaven" (Re 18:4-20), then by "a mighty angel" (Re 18:21-24). Compare Eze 16:37-44, originally said of Israel, but further applicable to the New Testament Church when fallen into spiritual fornication. On the phrase, "eat . . . flesh" for prey upon one's property, and injure the character and person, compare Ps 14:4; 27:2; Jer 10:25; Mic 3:3. The First Napoleon's Edict published at Rome in 1809, confiscating the papal dominions and joining them to France, and later the severance of large portions of the Pope's territory from his sway and the union of them to the dominions of the king of Italy, virtually through Louis Napoleon, are a first instalment of the full realization of this prophecy of the whore's destruction. "Her flesh" seems to point to her temporal dignities and resources, as distinguished from "herself" (*Greek*). How striking a retribution, that having obtained her first temporal dominions, the exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of the LOMBARDS, and the state of Rome, by recognizing the *usurper* Pepin as lawful king of France, she should be stripped of her dominions by another usurper of France, the Napoleonic dynasty!

burn . . . with fire--the legal punishment of an abominable fornication.

17. hath put--the prophetic past tense for the future.

fulfil--*Greek*, "do," or "accomplish." The *Greek*, "*poiesai*," is distinct from that which is translated, "fulfilled," *Greek*, "*telesthesontai*," below.

his will--*Greek*, "his mind," or *purpose*; while they think only of doing their own purpose.

to agree--literally, "to do" (or *accomplish*) one mind" or "purpose." A and *Vulgate* omit this clause, but B supports it.

the words of God--foretelling the rise and downfall of the beast; *Greek*, "*hoi logoi*," in A,

B, and ANDREAS. *English Version* reading is *Greek*, "*ta rhemata*," which is not well supported. No mere articulate utterances, but the efficient *words* of Him who is *the Word*: *Greek*, "*logos*."
fulfilled-- (Re 10:7).

18. reigneth--literally, "*hath kingship* over the kings." The harlot cannot be a mere *city* literally, but is called so in a spiritual sense (Re 11:8). Also the beast cannot represent a spiritual power, but a world power. In this verse the harlot is presented before us ripe for judgment. The eighteenth chapter details that judgment.

CHAPTER 18

Re 18:1-24. BABYLON'S FALL: GOD'S PEOPLE CALLED OUT OF HER: THE KINGS AND MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH MOURN, WHILE THE SAINTS REJOICE AT HER FALL.

1. And--so *Vulgate* and ANDREAS. But A, B, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* omit "And."
power--*Greek*, "authority."
lightened--"illuminated."
with--*Greek*, "owing to."

2. mightily . . . strong--not supported by manuscripts. But A, B, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* read, "with (literally, 'in') a mighty voice."

is fallen, is fallen--so A, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and ANDREAS. But B and *Coptic* omit the second "is fallen" (Isa 21:9; Jer 51:8). This phrase is here prophetic of her fall, still future, as Re 18:4 proves.

devils--*Greek*, "demons."
the hold--a keep or prison.

3. drunk-- Re 14:8, from which perhaps "the wine" may have been interpolated. They have *drunk of her fornication*, the consequence of which will be *wrath* to themselves. But A, B, and C read, "(owing to the wrath of her fornication all nations) have *fallen*." *Vulgate* and most versions read as *English Version*, which may be the right reading though not supported by the oldest manuscripts. Babylon, the whore, is destroyed before the beast slays the two witnesses (Re 11:7), and then the beast himself is destroyed.

the wine--so B, *Syriac*, and *Coptic*. But A, C, and *Vulgate* omit.
abundance--literally, "power."

delicacies--*Greek*, "luxury." See on [1Ti 5:11](#), where the *Greek* verb "wax wanton" is akin to the noun here. Translate, "wanton luxury." The reference is not to earthly merchandise, but to spiritual wares, indulgences, idolatries, superstitions, worldly compromises, wherewith the harlot, that is, the apostate Church, has made *merchandise* of men. This applies especially to Rome; but the *Greek*, and even in a less degree Protestant churches, are not guiltless. However, the *principle* of evangelical Protestantism is pure, but the *principle* of Rome and the *Greek* church is not so.

4. Come out of her, my people--quoted from Jer 50:8; 51:6, 45. Even in the Romish Church God has a people: but they are in great danger; their only safety is in coming out of her at once. So also in every apostate or world-conforming church there are some of God's invisible and true Church, who, if they would be safe, must come out. Especially at the eve of God's judgment on apostate Christendom: as Lot was warned to come out of Sodom just before its destruction, and

Israel to come from about the tents of Dathan and Abiram. So the first Christians came out of Jerusalem when the apostate Jewish Church was judged. "State and Church are precious gifts of God. But the State being desecrated to a different end from what God designed it, namely. to govern for, and as under, God, becomes beast-like; the Church apostatizing becomes the harlot. The true woman is the kernel: beast and harlot are the shell: whenever the kernel is mature, the shell is thrown away" [AUBERLEN]. "The harlot is not Rome alone (though she is pre-eminently so), but every Church that has not Christ's mind and spirit. False Christendom, divided into very many sects, is truly Babylon, that is, confusion. However, in all Christendom the true Jesus-congregation, the woman clothed with the sun, lives and is hidden. Corrupt, lifeless Christendom is the harlot, whose great aim is the pleasure of the flesh, and which is governed by the spirit of nature and the world" [HAHN in AUBERLEN]. The first justification of the woman is in her being called out of Babylon the harlot, as the culminating stage of the latter's sin, when judgment is about to fall: for apostate Christendom, Babylon, is not to be converted, but to be destroyed. Secondly, she has to pass through an ordeal of persecution from the beast, which purifies and prepares her for the transfiguration glory at Christ's coming (Re 20:4; Lu 21:28).

be not partakers--*Greek*, "have no fellowship with her sins."

that ye receive not of her plagues--as Lot's wife, by lingering too near the polluted and doomed city.

5. her sins--as a great heap.

reached--*Greek*, "reached so far as to come into close contact with, and to *cleave* unto."

6. Addressed to the executioners of God's wrath.

Reward--*Greek*, "repay."

she rewarded--*English Version* reading adds "you" with none of the oldest manuscripts. But A, B, C, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* omit it. She had not *rewarded* or *repaid* the world power for some injury which the world power had inflicted on her; but she had *given* the world power that which was its *due*, namely, spiritual delusions, because it did not like to retain God in its knowledge; the unfaithful Church's principle was, "*Populus vult decipi, et decipiatur*." "The people like to be deceived, and let them be deceived."

double--of sorrow. Contrast with this the *double* of joy which Jerusalem shall receive for her past suffering (Isa 61:7; Zec 9:12); even as she has received *double* punishment for her sins (Isa 40:2).

unto her--So *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS. A, B, and C omit it.

in the cup-- (Re 18:3; Re 14:8; 17:4).

filled--literally "mixed."

fill to her double--of the Lord's cup of wrath.

7. How much--that is in proportion as.

lived deliciously--luxuriously: see on [Re 18:3](#), where the *Greek* is akin.

sorrow--*Greek*, "mourning," as for a dead husband.

I sit--so *Vulgate*. But A, B, and C prefix "that."

I . . . am no widow--for the world power is my husband and my supporter.

shall see no sorrow--*Greek*, "mourning." "I am seated (*this long time*) . . . I am no widow . . . I shall see no sorrow," marks her complete unconcerned security as to the past, present, and future [BENGEL]. I shall never have to mourn as one bereft of her husband. As Babylon was queen of the East, so Rome has been queen of the West, and is called on Imperial coins "the *eternal* city." So Papal Rome is called by AMMIAN MARCELLIN [15.7]. "Babylon is

a former Rome, and Rome a latter Babylon. Rome is a daughter of Babylon, and by her, as by her mother, God has been pleased to subdue the world under one sway" [AUGUSTINE]. As the Jew's restoration did not take place till Babylon's fall, so R. KIMCHI on Obadiah, writes, "When Rome (Edom) shall be devastated, there shall be redemption to Israel." Romish idolatries have been the great stumbling-blocks to the Jews' acceptance of Christianity.

8. death--on herself, though she thought herself secure even from the death of her husband.
mourning--instead of her feasting.

famine--instead of her *luxurious delicacies* (Re 18:3, 7).

fire--(See on [Re 17:16](#)). Literal fire may burn the literal city of Rome, which is situated in the midst of volcanic agencies. As the ground was cursed for Adam's sin, and the earth under Noah was sunk beneath the flood, and Sodom was burnt with fire, so may Rome be. But as the harlot is mystical (the whole faithless Church), the *burning* may be mainly mystical, symbolizing utter destruction and removal. BENGEL is probably right in thinking Rome will once more rise to power. The carnal, faithless, and worldly elements in all churches, Roman, Greek, and Protestant, tend towards one common center, and prepare the way for the last form of the beast, namely, Antichrist. The Pharisees were in the main sound in creed, yet judgment fell on them as on the unsound Sadducees and half-heathenish Samaritans. So faithless and adulterous, carnal, worldly Protestant churches, will not escape for their soundness of creed.

the Lord--so B, C, *Syriac*, and ANDREAS. But A and *Vulgate* omit. "Strong" is the meaning of God's *Hebrew* name, "EL."

judgeth--But A, B, and C read the *past* tense (*Greek*, "*krinas*"), "who *hath judged* her": the prophetic past for the future: the charge in Re 18:4 to God's people to *come out of her* implies that the judgment was not yet actually executed.

9. lived deliciously--*Greek*, "luxuriated." The faithless Church, instead of reproving, connived at the self-indulgent luxury of the great men of this world, and sanctioned it by her own practice. Contrast the world's *rejoicing* over the dead bodies of the two witnesses (Re 11:10) who had tormented it by their faithfulness, with its *lamentations* over the harlot who had made the way to heaven smooth, and had been found a useful tool in keeping subjects in abject tyranny. Men's carnal mind relishes a religion like that of the apostate Church, which gives an opiate to conscience, while leaving the sinner license to indulge his lusts.

bewail her--A, B, C, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and CYPRIAN omit "her."

10. God's judgments inspire fear even in the worldly, but it is of short duration, for the kings and great men soon attach themselves to the beast in its last and worst shape, as open Antichrist, claiming all that the harlot had claimed in blasphemous pretensions and more, and so making up to them for the loss of the harlot.

mighty--*Rome* in *Greek* means *strength*; though that derivation is doubtful.

11. shall--So. B. But A and C read the present, "weep and mourn."

merchandise--*Greek*, "cargo": wares carried in *ships*: ship-lading (compare Re 18:17). Rome was not a commercial city, and is not likely from her position to be so. The *merchandise* must therefore be spiritual, even as the harlot is not literal, but spiritual. She did not witness against carnal luxury and pleasure-seeking, the source of the *merchants'* gains, but conformed to them (Re 18:7). She cared not for the sheep, but for the wool. Professing Christian merchants in her lived as if this world not heaven, were the reality, and were unscrupulous as to the means of getting gain. Compare *Notes*, see on [Zec 5:4-11](#), on the same subject, the judgment on mystical *Babylon's* merchants for unjust gain. All the merchandise here mentioned occurs repeatedly in

the *Roman Ceremonial*.

12. (See on [Re 17:4](#)).

stones . . . pearls--*Greek*, "stone . . . pearl."

fine linen--A, B, and C read *Greek*, "*bussinou*" for "*bussou*," that is, "fine linen manufacture" [ALFORD]. The manufacture for which *Egypt* (the type of the apostate Church, Re 11:8) was famed. Contrast "the fine linen" (Eze 16:10) put on Israel, and on the New Testament Church (Re 19:8), the Bride, by God (Ps 132:9).

thyine wood--the *citrus* of the Romans: probably the *cypressus thyoides*, or the *thuia articulata*. "Citron wood" [ALFORD]. A sweet-smelling tree of Cyrene in Lybia, used for incense.

all manner vessels--*Greek*, "every vessel," or "furniture."

13. cinnamon--designed by God for better purposes: being an ingredient in the holy anointing oil, and a plant in the garden of the Beloved (So 4:14); but desecrated to vile uses by the adulteress (Pr 7:17).

odours--of incense. A, C, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac* prefix "and amomium" (a precious hair ointment made from an Asiatic shrub). *English Version* reading is supported by *Coptic* and ANDREAS, but not oldest manuscripts.

ointments--*Greek*, "ointment."

frankincense--Contrast the true "incense" which God loves (Ps 141:2; Mal 1:11).

fine flour--the *similago* of the Latins [ALFORD].

beasts--of burden: cattle.

slaves--*Greek*, "bodies."

souls of men-- (Eze 27:13). Said of *slaves*. Appropriate to the spiritual harlot, apostate Christendom, especially Rome, which has so often *enslaved* both *bodies* and *souls* of men. Though the New Testament does not directly forbid slavery, which would, in the then state of the world, have incited a slave revolt, it virtually condemns it, as here. Popery has derived its greatest gains from the sale of masses for *the souls of men* after death, and of indulgences purchased from the Papal chancery by rich merchants in various countries, to be retailed at a profit [MOSHEIM, III, 95, 96].

14. Direct address to Babylon.

the fruits that thy soul lusted after--*Greek*, "thy autumn-ripe fruits of the lust (eager desire) of the soul."

dainty--*Greek*, "fat": "sumptuous" in food.

goodly--"splendid," "bright," in dress and equipage.

departed--supported by none of our manuscripts. But A, B, C, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* read, "perished."

thou shalt--A, C, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac* read, "*They* (men) *shall* no more find them at all."

15. of these things--of the things mentioned, Re 18:12, 13.

which--"*who*."

made rich by--*Greek*, "derived riches *from* her."

stand afar off for the fear--(Compare Re 18:10).

wailing--*Greek*, "mourning."

16. And--so *Vulgate* and ANDREAS. But A, B, and C omit.

decked--literally, "glided."

stones . . . pearls--*Greek*, "stone . . . pearl." B and ANDREAS read "pearls." But A and C, "pearl."

17. is come to naught--*Greek*, "is desolated."

shipmaster--*Greek*, "steersman," or "pilot."

all the company in ships--A, C, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac* read, "Every one who saileth to a place" (B has ". . . to *the* place"), *every voyager*. *Vessels* were freighted with pilgrims to various shrines, so that in one month (A.D. 1300) two hundred thousand pilgrims were counted in Rome [D'AAUBIGNE, *Histoire de la Reformation*]: a source of gain, not only to the Papal see, but to *shipmasters, merchants, pilots, &c.* These latter, however, are not restricted to those literally "shipmasters," &c., but mainly refer, in the mystical sense, to all who share in the spiritual traffic of apostate Christendom.

18. when they saw--*Greek*, "*horontes*." But A, B, C, and ANDREAS read, *Greek*, "*blepontes*," "looking at." *Greek*, "*blepo*," is to *use the eyes*, to *look*: the act of seeing without thought of the object seen. *Greek*, "*horao*," refers to the thing *seen* or presented to the eyes [TITTMANN].

smoke--so B, C. But A reads "place."

What city is like--Compare the similar beast as to *the beast*, Re 13:4: so closely do the harlot and beast approximate one another. Contrast the attribution of this praise to God, to whom alone it is due, by *His* servants (Ex 15:11). MARTIAL says of Rome, "Nothing is equal to her;" and ATHENÆUS, "She is the epitome of the world."

19. wailing--"mourning."

that had ships--A, B, and C read, "that had *their* ships": literally, "*the* ships."

costliness--her costly treasures: abstract for concrete.

20. holy apostles--So C reads. But A, B, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS read, "Ye *saints and ye apostles*."

avenged you on her--*Greek*, "judged your judgment on (literally, exacting it *from*) her."

"There is more joy in heaven at the harlot's downfall than at that of the two beasts. For the most heinous of all sin is the sin of those who know God's word of grace, and keep it not. The worldliness of the Church is the most worldly of all worldliness. Hence, Babylon, in Revelation, has not only Israel's sins, but also the sins of the heathen; and John dwells longer on the abominations and judgments of the harlot than on those of the beast. The term 'harlot' describes the false Church's essential character. She retains her human shape as the *woman*, does not become a *beast*: she has the form of godliness, but denies its power. Her rightful lord and husband, Jehovah-Christ, and the joys and goods of His house, are no longer her all in all, but she runs after the visible and vain things of the world, in its manifold forms. The fullest form of her whoredom is, where the Church wishes to be itself a worldly power, uses politics and diplomacy, makes flesh her arm, uses unholy means for holy ends, spreads her dominion by sword or money, fascinates men by sensual ritualism, becomes 'mistress of ceremonies' to the dignitaries of the world, flatters prince or people, and like Israel, seeks the help of one world power against the danger threatening from another" [AUBERLEN]. *Judgment*, therefore, *begins with* the harlot, as in privileges *the house of God*.

21. a--*Greek*, "one."

millstone--Compare the judgment on the Egyptian hosts at the Red Sea, Ex 15:5, 10; Ne 9:11, and the foretold doom of Babylon, the world power, Jer 51:63, 64.

with violence--*Greek*, "with impetus." This verse shows that this prophecy is regarded as still to be fulfilled.

22. pipers--flute players. "Musicians," painters and sculptors, have desecrated their art to lend fascination to the sensuous worship of corrupt Christendom.

craftsman--artisan.

23. What a blessed contrast is Re 22:5, respecting the city of God: "They need *no candle* (just as Babylon shall *no more* have *the light of a candle*, but for a widely different reason), for the Lord God giveth them light."

candle--Translate as *Greek*, "lamp."

bridegroom . . . bride . . . no more . . . in thee--Contrast the heavenly city, with its *Bridegroom*, *Bride*, and blessed *marriage supper* (Re 19:7, 9; 21:2, 9; Isa 62:4, 5).

thy merchants were--So most of the best authorities read. But A omits the *Greek* article before "merchants," and then translates, "The great men of . . . were thy merchants."

sorceries--*Greek*, "sorcery."

24. Applied by Christ (Mt 23:35) to apostate Jerusalem, which proves that not merely the literal city Rome, and the Church of Rome (though the *chief* representative of the apostasy), but the WHOLE of the faithless Church of both the Old and New Testament is meant by Babylon the harlot; just as the whole Church (Old and New Testament) is meant by "the woman" (Re 12:1). As to literal *city*, ARINGHUS in BENGEL says, Pagan Rome was the "general shambles" for slaying the sheep of Jesus. FRED. SEYLER in BENGEL calculates that papal Rome, between A. D. 1540 and 1580, slew more than nine hundred thousand Protestants. Three reasons for the harlot's downfall are given: (1) The *worldly greatness* of her *merchants*, which was due to unholy traffic in spiritual things. (2) Her *sorceries*, or juggling tricks, in which the false prophet that ministers to the beast in its last form shall exceed her; compare "sorcerers" (Re 21:8; 22:15), specially mentioned among those doomed to the lake of fire. (3) Her persecution of (Old Testament) "prophets" and (New Testament) "saints."

CHAPTER 19

Re 19:1-21. THE CHURCH'S THANKSGIVING IN HEAVEN FOR THE JUDGMENT ON THE HARLOT. THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB: THE SUPPER: THE BRIDE'S PREPARATION: JOHN IS FORBIDDEN TO WORSHIP THE ANGEL: THE LORD AND HIS HOSTS COME FORTH FOR WAR: THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE: THE KINGS AND THEIR FOLLOWERS SLAIN BY THE SWORD OUT OF CHRIST'S MOUTH.

1. As in the case of the opening of the prophecy, Re 4:8; 5:9, &c.; so now, at one of the great closing events seen in vision, the judgment on the harlot (described in Re 18:1-24), there is a song of praise in heaven to God: compare Re 7:10, &c., toward the close of the seals, and Re 11:15-18, at the close of the trumpets: Re 15:3, at the saints' victory over the beast.

And--so ANDREAS. But A, B, C, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* omit.

a great voice--A, B, C, *Vulgate*, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS read, "*as it were* a great voice." What a contrast to the lamentations Re 18:1-24! Compare Jer 51:48. The *great* manifestation of God's power in destroying Babylon calls forth a *great voice* of praise *in heaven*.

people--*Greek*, "multitude."

Alleluia--*Hebrew*, "Praise ye JAH," or JEHOVAH: here first used in Revelation, whence ELLICOTT infers the *Jews* bear a prominent part in this thanksgiving. JAH is not a contraction of "JEHOVAH," as it sometimes occurs jointly with the latter. It means "He who Is": whereas Jehovah is "He who will be, is, and was." It implies God experienced as a PRESENT help; so that "Hallelujah," says KIMCHI in BENDEL, is found first in the Psalms *on the destruction of the ungodly*. "Hallelu-Jah" occurs four times in this passage. Compare Ps 149:4-9, which is plainly parallel, and indeed identical in many of the phrases, as well as the general idea. Israel, especially, will join in the Hallelujah, when "her warfare is accomplished" and her foe destroyed.

Salvation, &c.--*Greek*, "The salvation . . . the glory . . . the power."

and honour--so *Coptic*. But A, B, C, and *Syriac* omit.

unto the Lord our God--so ANDREAS. But A, B, C, and *Coptic* read, "(Is) of our God," that is, belongs to Him.

2. which did corrupt the earth--*Greek*, "used to corrupt" continually. "Instead of opposing and lessening, she promoted the sinful life and decay of the world by her own earthliness, allowing the salt to lose its savor" [AUBERLEN].

avenged--*Greek*, "exactd in retribution." A particular application of the principle (Ge 9:5).

blood of his servants--literally shed by the Old Testament adulterous Church, and by the New Testament apostate Church; also virtually, though not literally, by all who, though called Christians, hate their brother, or love not the brethren of Christ, but shrink from the reproach of the cross, and show unkindness towards those who bear it.

3. again--*Greek*, "a second time."

rose up--*Greek*, "goeth up."

for ever and ever--*Greek*, "to the ages of the ages."

4. beasts--rather, "living creatures."

sat--*Greek*, "sitteth."

5. out of--*Greek*, "out from the throne" in A, B, C.

Praise our God--Compare the solemn act of praise performed by the Levites, 1Ch 16:36; 23:5, especially when the house of God was filled with the divine glory (2Ch 5:13).

both--omitted in A, B, C, *Vulgate*, *Coptic*, and *Syriac*. Translate as *Greek*, "the small and the great."

6. many waters--Contrast the "many waters" on which the whore sitteth (Re 17:1). This verse is the hearty response to the stirring call, "Alleluia! Praise our God" (Re 19:4, 5).

the Lord God omnipotent--*Greek*, "the Omnipotent."

reigneth--literally, "reigned": hence *reigneth once for all*. His reign is a fact already established. Babylon, the harlot, was one great hindrance to His reign being recognized. Her overthrow now clears the way for His advent to reign; therefore, not merely Rome, but the whole of Christendom in so far as it is carnal and compromised Christ for the world, is comprehended in the term "harlot." The beast hardly arises when he at once "goeth into perdition": so that Christ is prophetically considered as already reigning, so soon does His advent follow the judgment on the harlot.

7. glad . . . rejoice--*Greek*, "rejoice . . . exult."

give--so B and ANDREAS. But A reads, "we *will* give."

glory--Greek, "*the* glory."

the marriage of the Lamb is come--The *full* and *final* consummation is at Re 21:2-9, &c. Previously there must be the overthrow of the beast, &c., at the Lord's coming, the binding of Satan, the millennial reign, the loosing of Satan and his last overthrow, and the general judgment. The elect-Church, the heavenly Bride, soon after the destruction of the harlot, is transfigured at the Lord's coming, and joins with Him in His triumph over the beast. On the emblem of the heavenly Bridegroom and Bride, compare Mt 22:2; 25:6, 10; 2Co 11:2. Perfect union with Him personally, and participation in His holiness; joy, glory, and kingdom, are included in this symbol of "marriage"; compare Song of Solomon everywhere. Besides the *heavenly* Bride, the transfigured, translated, and risen Church, reigning *over* the earth with Christ, there is also the *earthly* bride, Israel, in the flesh, never yet *divorced*, though for a time separated, from her divine husband, who shall then be reunited to the Lord, and be the mother Church of the millennial earth, Christianized through her. Note, we ought, as Scripture does, restrict the language drawn from marriage-love to *the Bride*, the Church *as a whole*; not use it as individuals in our relation to Christ, which Rome does in the case of her nuns. Individually, believers are effectually-*called guests*; collectively, they constitute *the bride*. The harlot divides her affections among many lovers: the bride gives hers exclusively to Christ.

8. granted--Though in one sense *she* "made herself ready," having by the Spirit's work in her put on "the wedding garment," yet in the fullest sense it is not she, but her Lord, who makes her ready by "*granting* to her that she be arrayed in fine linen." It is He who, by *giving Himself* for her, *presents her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, but holy and without blemish*. It is He also who sanctifies her, naturally vile and without beauty, *with the washing of water by the word, and puts His own comeliness on her*, which thus becomes hers.

clean and white--so ANDREAS. But A and B transpose. Translate, "bright and pure"; at once brilliantly *splendid* and *spotless* as in the bride herself.

righteousness--Greek, "righteousnesses"; distributively used. *Each* saint must have this righteousness: not merely be justified, as if the righteousness belonged to the Church *in the aggregate*; the saints together have *righteousnesses*; namely, He is *accounted as* "the Lord our righteousness" to each saint on his believing, their robes being made *white in the blood of the Lamb*. The righteousness of the saint is not, as ALFORD erroneously states, *inherent*, but is *imputed*: if it were otherwise, Christ would be merely enabling the sinner to justify himself. Ro 5:18 is decisive on this. Compare Article XI, Church of England. The justification already given to the saints in title and unseen possession, is now GIVEN them *in manifestation: they openly walk with Christ in white*. To this, rather than to their primary justification on earth, the reference is here. Their justification before the apostate world, which had persecuted them, contrasts with the judgment and condemnation of the harlot. "Now that the harlot has fallen, the woman triumphs" [AUBERLEN]. Contrast with the *pure fine linen* (indicating the simplicity and purity) of the bride, the tawdry ornamentation of the harlot. Babylon, the apostate Church, is the antithesis to new Jerusalem, the transfigured Church of God. The woman (Re 12:1-6), the harlot (Re 17:1-7), the bride (Re 19:1-10), are the three leading aspects of the Church.

9. He--God by His angel *saith unto me*.

called--effectually, not merely externally. The "unto," or into," seems to express this: not merely invited *to* (Greek, "*epi*"), but called INTO, so as to be *partakers of* (Greek, "*eis*"); compare 1Co 1:9.

marriage supper--Greek, "the supper of the marriage." Typified by the Lord's Supper.

true--Greek, "genuine"; veritable sayings which shall surely be fulfilled, namely, all the previous revelations.

10. at--Greek, "before." John's intending to worship the angel here, as in Re 22:8, on having revealed to him the glory of the new Jerusalem, is the involuntary impulse of adoring joy at so blessed a prospect. It forms a marked contrast to the sorrowful *wonder* with which he had looked on the Church in her apostasy as the harlot (Re 17:6). It exemplifies the corrupt tendencies of our fallen nature that even John, an apostle, should have all but fallen into "voluntary humility and worshipping of angels," which Paul warns us against.

and of thy brethren--that is, a *fellow servant* of thy brethren.

have the testimony of Jesus--(See on [Re 12:17](#)).

the testimony of--that is, *respecting* Jesus.

is the spirit of prophecy--is the result of the same spirit of prophecy in you as in myself.

We angels, and you apostles, all alike have the testimony of (bear testimony concerning) Jesus by the operation of one and the same Spirit, who enables me to show you these revelations and enables you to record them: wherefore we are *fellow servants*, not I your lord to be worshipped by you. Compare Re 22:9, "I am fellow servant of thee and of thy brethren *the prophets*"; whence the "FOR the testimony," &c., here, may be explained as giving the reason for his adding "and (fellow servant) of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus." I mean, *of the prophets*; "for it is of *Jesus* that thy brethren, *the prophets*, testify by the Spirit in them." A clear condemnation of Romish invocation of saints as if they were our superiors to be adored.

11. behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him--identical with Re 6:2. Here as there he comes forth "conquering and to conquer." Compare the *ass*-colt on which He rode into Jerusalem (Mt 21:1-7). The *horse* was used for war: and here He is going forth to war with the beast. The *ass* is for peace. His riding on it into Jerusalem is an earnest of His reign in Jerusalem over the earth, as the *Prince of peace*, after all hostile powers have been overthrown. When the security of the world power, and the distress of the people of God, have reached the highest point, the Lord Jesus shall appear visibly from heaven to put an end to the whole course of the world, and establish His kingdom of glory. He comes to judge with vengeance the world power, and to bring to the Church redemption, transfiguration, and power over the world. Distinguish between this *coming* (Mt 24:27, 29, 37, 39; *Greek*, "*parousia*") and *the end*, or final judgment (Mt 25:31; 1Co 15:23). Powerful natural phenomena shall accompany His advent [AUBERLEN].

12. Identifying Him with the Son of man similarly described, Re 1:14.

many crowns--*Greek*, "diadems": not merely (*Greek*, "*stephanoi*") garlands of victory, but royal crowns, as KING OF KINGS. Christ's diadem comprises all the diadems of the earth and of heavenly powers too. Contrast the papal tiara composed of three *diadems*. Compare also the little horn (Antichrist) that overcomes the *three* horns or kingdoms, Da 7:8, 24 (*Quære, the Papacy?* or some *three* kingdoms that succeed the papacy, which itself, as a temporal kingdom, was made up at first of *three* kingdoms, the exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of the Lombards, and the state of Rome, obtained by Pope Zachary and Stephen II from Pepin, the usurper of the French dominion). Also, the *seven crowns* (diadems) *on the seven heads of the dragon* (Re 12:3), and *ten diadems on the ten heads of the beast*. These usurpers claim the diadems which belong to Christ alone.

he had a name written--B and *Syriac* insert, "He had *names written*, and a name written," &c., meaning that *the names* of the dominion which each diadem indicated were *written* on them severally. But A, *Vulgate*, ORIGEN, and CYPRIAN omits the words, as *English Version*.

name . . . that no man knew but . . . himself-- (Jud 13:18; 1Co 2:9, 11; 1Jo 3:2). The same is said of the "new name" of believers. In this, as in all other respects, the disciple is made like his Lord. The Lord's own "new name" is to be theirs, and to be "in their foreheads"; whence we

may infer that His as yet *unknown* name also is written on His forehead; as the high priest had "Holiness to the Lord" inscribed on the miter on his brow. John saw it as "written," but *knew not* its meaning. It is, therefore, a name which in all its glorious significancy can be only understood when the union of His saints with Him, and His and their joint triumph and reign, shall be perfectly manifested at the final consummation.

13. vesture dipped in blood-- Isa 63:2 is alluded to here, and in Re 19:15, end. There the *blood* is not His own, but that of His foes. So here the blood on His "vesture," reminding us of *His own blood* shed for even the ungodly who trample on it, is a premonition of the shedding of *their blood* in righteous retribution. He sheds the blood, not of the godly, as the harlot and beast did, but of the blood-stained ungodly, including them both.

The Word of God--who made the world, is He also who under the same character and attributes shall make it anew. His title, *Son of God*, is applicable in a lower sense, also to His people; but "the Word of God" indicates His incommunicable Godhead, joined to His manhood, which He shall then manifest in glory. "The Bride does not fear the Bridegroom; her love casteth out fear. She welcomes Him; she cannot be happy but at His side. The Lamb [Re 19:9, the aspect of Christ to His people at His coming] is the symbol of Christ in His gentleness. Who would be afraid of a lamb? Even a little child, instead of being scared, desires to caress it. There is nothing to make us afraid of God but sin, and Jesus is the *Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world*. What a fearful contrast is the aspect which He will wear towards His enemies! Not as the Bridegroom and the Lamb, but as the [avenging] judge and warrior stained in the blood of His enemies."

14. the armies . . . in heaven--Compare "the horse bridles," Re 14:20. The glorified saints whom God "will bring with" Christ at His advent; compare Re 17:14, "they that are with Him, called, chosen, faithful"; as also "His mighty angels."

white and clean--*Greek*, "pure." A, B, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and CYPRIAN omit "and," which ORIGEN and ANDREAS retain, as *English Version*.

15. out of his mouth . . . sword-- (Re 1:16; 2:12, 16). Here in its *avenging* power, 2Th 2:8, "consume with the Spirit of *His mouth*" (Isa 11:4, to which there is allusion here); not in its convicting and converting efficacy (Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12, 13, where also the judicial keenness of the sword-like word is included). The Father commits the judgment to the Son.

he shall rule--The HE is emphatic, He and none other, in contrast to the usurpers who have misruled on earth. "Rule," literally, "tend as a shepherd"; but here in a punitive sense. He, who would have *shepherded* them with pastoral rod and with the golden scepter of His love, shall dash them in pieces, as refractory rebels, with "a rod of iron."

treadeth . . . wine-press-- (Isa 63:3).

of the fierceness and wrath--So ANDREAS reads. But A, B, *Vulgate*, *Coptic*, and ORIGEN read, "of the fierceness (or *boiling indignation*) of the wrath," omitting "and."

Almighty--The fierceness of Christ's wrath against His foes will be executed with the resources of omnipotence.

16. "His name written on His vesture and on His thigh," was written partly on the vesture, partly on the thigh itself, at the part where in an equestrian figure the robe drops from the thigh. The *thigh* symbolizes Christ's humanity as having come, after the flesh, from the *loins* of David, and now appearing as the glorified "Son of man." On the other hand, His incommunicable divine name, "which no man knew," is on His head (Re 19:12), [MENOCHIUS].

KING OF KINGS--Compare Re 17:14, in contrast with Re 19:17, the beast being in

attempted usurpation a *king of kings*, the ten kings delivering their kingdom to him.

17. an--Greek, "one."

in the sun--so as to be conspicuous in sight of the whole world.

to all the fowls-- (Eze 39:17-20).

and gather yourselves--A, B, *Vulgate, Syriac, Coptic*, and ANDREAS read, "be gathered," omitting "and."

of the great God--A, B, *Vulgate, Syriac, Coptic*, and ANDREAS read, "the great supper (that is, banquet) of God."

18. Contrast with this "supper," Re 19:17, 18, *the marriage supper of the Lamb*, Re 19:9.

captains--*Greek*, "captains of thousands," that is, *chief captains*. The "kings" are "the ten" who "give their power unto the beast."

free and bond--specified in Re 13:16, as "receiving the mark of the beast." The repetition of *flesh* (in the *Greek* it is plural: *masses of flesh*) five times in this verse, marks the gross *carnality* of the followers of the beast. Again, the giving of their flesh to the fowls to eat, is a righteous retribution for their not suffering *the dead bodies* of Christ's *witnesses to be put in graves*.

19. gathered together--at Armageddon, under the sixth vial. For "*their armies*" in B and ANDREAS, there is found "*His armies*" in A.

war--so ANDREAS. But A and B read, "*the war*," namely, that foretold, Re 16:14; 17:4.

20. and with him the false prophet--A reads, "and those with him." B reads, "and he who was with him, the false prophet."

miracles--*Greek*, "*the miracles*" (literally, "signs") recorded already (Re 13:14) as wrought by *the second beast before* (literally, 'in sight of') *the first beast*. Hence it follows the *second beast* is identical with *the false prophet*. Many expositors represent the first beast to be the secular, the second beast to be the ecclesiastical power of Rome; and account for the change of title for the latter from the "other beast" to the "false prophet," is because by the judgment on the harlot, the ecclesiastical power will then retain nothing of its former character save the power to deceive. I think it not unlikely that the false prophet will be the successor of the spiritual pretensions of the papacy; while the beast in its last form as the fully revealed Antichrist will be the secular representative and embodiment of the fourth world kingdom, Rome, in its last form of intensified opposition to God. Compare with this prophecy, Eze 38:1-39:29; Da 2:34, 35, 44; 11:44, 45; 12:1; Joe 3:9-17; Zec 12:1-14:21. Daniel (Da 7:8) makes no mention of the second beast, or false prophet, but mentions that "the little horn" has "the eyes of a man," that is, cunning and intellectual culture; this is not a feature of the first beast in the thirteenth chapter, but is expressed by the Apocalyptic "false prophet," the embodiment of man's unsanctified knowledge, and the subtlety of the old serpent. The first beast is a political power; the second is a spiritual power--the power of ideas. But both are *beasts*, the worldly Antichristian wisdom serving the worldly Antichristian power. The dragon is both lion and serpent. As the first law in God's moral government is that "judgment should begin at the house of God," and be executed on the harlot, the faithless Church, by the world power with which she had committed spiritual adultery, so it is a second law that the world power, after having served as God's instrument of punishment, is itself punished. As the harlot is judged by the beast and the ten kings, so these are destroyed by the Lord Himself coming in person. So Zep 1:1-18 compared with Zep 2:1-15. And Jeremiah, after denouncing Jerusalem's judgment by Babylon, ends with denouncing Babylon's own doom. Between the judgment on the harlot and the Lord's destruction of the beast, will intervene that season in which earthly-mindedness will reach its culmination, and

Antichristianity triumph for its short three and a half days during which the two witnesses lie dead. Then shall the Church be ripe for her glorification, the Antichristian world for destruction. The world at the highest development of its material and spiritual power is but a decorated carcass round which the eagles gather. It is characteristic that Antichrist and his kings, in their blindness, imagine that they can wage war against the King of heaven with earthly hosts; herein is shown the extreme folly of Babylonian confusion. The Lord's mere appearance, without any actual encounter, shows Antichrist his nothingness; compare the effect of Jesus' appearance even in His humiliation, Joh 18:6 [AUBERLEN].

had received--rather as *Greek*, "received," *once for all*.

them; that worshipped--literally, "them worshipping" not an act *once for all done*, as the "received" implies, but those *in the habit of "worshipping."*

These both were cast . . . into a lake--*Greek*, ". . . the lake of fire," Gehenna. Satan is subsequently cast into it, at the close of the outbreak which succeeds the millennium (Re 20:10). Then Death and Hell, as well those not found at the general judgment "written in the book of life"; this constitutes "the second death."

alive--a living death; not mere annihilation. "Their worm dieth not, their fire is not quenched."

21. the remnant--*Greek*, "the rest," that is, "the kings and their armies" (Re 19:19) classed together in one indiscriminate mass. A solemn confirmation of the warning in Ps 2:10.

CHAPTER 20

Re 20:1-15. SATAN BOUND, AND THE FIRST-RISEN SAINTS REIGN WITH CHRIST, A THOUSAND YEARS; SATAN LOOSED, GATHERS THE NATIONS, GOG AND MAGOG, ROUND THE CAMP OF THE SAINTS, AND IS FINALLY CONSIGNED TO THE LAKE OF FIRE; THE GENERAL RESURRECTION AND LAST JUDGMENT.

1. The destruction of his representatives, the beast and the false prophet, to whom he had given his *power, throne, and authority*, is followed by the binding of Satan himself for a thousand years.

the key of the bottomless pit--now transferred from Satan's hands, who had heretofore been permitted by God to use it in letting loose plagues on the earth; he is now to be made to feel himself the torment which he had inflicted on men, but his full torment is not until he is cast into "the lake of fire" (Re 20:10).

2. that old--ancient serpent (Re 12:9).

thousand years--As *seven* mystically implies universality, so a *thousand* implies *perfection*, whether in good or evil [AQUINAS on ch. 11]. *Thousand* symbolizes that the world is perfectly leavened and pervaded by the divine; since *thousand* is *ten*, the number of the world, raised to the *third* power, *three* being the number of God [AUBERLEN]. It may denote *literally* also a *thousand years*.

3. shut him--A, B, *Vulgate, Syriac*, and ANDREAS omit "him."

set a seal upon him--*Greek*, "over him," that is, sealed up the door of the abyss over his head. A surer seal to keep him from getting out than his seal over Jesus in the tomb of Joseph, which was burst on the resurrection morn. Satan's binding at this juncture is not arbitrary, but is the necessary consequence of the events (Re 19:20); just as Satan's being cast out of heaven,

where he had previously been the accuser of the brethren, was the legitimate judgment which passed on him through the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ (Re 12:7-10). Satan imagined that he had overcome Christ on Golgotha, and that his power was secure for ever, but the Lord in death overcame him, and by His ascension as our righteous Advocate cast out Satan, the accuser from heaven. Time was given on earth to make the beast and harlot powerful, and then to concentrate all his power in Antichrist. The Antichristian kingdom, his last effort, being utterly destroyed by Christ's mere appearing, his power on earth is at an end. He had thought to destroy God's people on earth by Antichristian persecutions (just as he had thought previously to destroy Christ); but the Church is not destroyed from the earth but is raised to rule over it, and Satan himself is shut up for a thousand years in the "abyss" (*Greek* for "bottomless pit"), the preparatory prison to the "lake of fire," his final doom. As before he ceased by Christ's ascension to be an accuser in heaven, so during the millennium he ceases to be the seducer and the persecutor on earth. As long as the devil rules in the darkness of the world, we live in an atmosphere impregnated with deadly elements. A mighty purification of the air will be effected by Christ's coming. Though sin will not be absolutely abolished--for men will still be in the flesh (Isa 65:20)--sin will no longer be a universal power, for the flesh is not any longer seduced by Satan. He will not be, as now, "the god and prince of the world"--nor will the world "lie in the wicked one"--the flesh will become ever more isolated and be overcome. Christ will reign with His transfigured saints over men in the flesh [AUBERLEN]. This will be the manifestation of "the world to come," which has been already set up invisibly in the saints, amidst "this world" (2Co 4:4; Heb 2:5; 5:5). The Jewish Rabbis thought, as the world was created in six days and on the *seventh* God rested, so there would be six millenary periods, followed by a sabbatical millennium. Out of seven years every seventh is the year of remission, so out of the seven thousand years of the world the seventh millenary shall be the millenary of remission. A tradition in the house of Elias, A.D. 200, states that the world is to endure six thousand years; two thousand before the law, two thousand under the law, and two thousand under Messiah. Compare *Note*, see on [Heb 4:9](#) and Heb 4:9, *Margin*; see on [Re 14:13](#). PAPIAS, JUSTIN MARTYR, IRENÆUS, and CYPRIAN, among the earliest Fathers, all held the doctrine of a millennial kingdom on earth; not till millennial views degenerated into gross carnalism was this doctrine abandoned.

that he should deceive--so A. But B reads, "that he deceive" (*Greek*, "*plana*," for "*planeese*").

and--so *Coptic* and ANDREAS. But A, B, and *Vulgate* omit "and."

4, 5. they sat--the twelve apostles, and the saints in general.

judgment was given unto there--(See on [Da 7:22](#)). The office of judging was given to them. Though in one sense having to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, yet in another sense they "do not come into judgment" (*Greek*), but have already passed from death unto life."

souls--This term is made a plea for denying the literality of the first resurrection, as if the resurrection were the spiritual one of the *souls* of believers in this life; the life and reign being that of the soul raised in this life from the death of sin by vivifying faith. But "souls" expresses their disembodied state (compare Re 6:9) as John saw them at first; "and they lived" implies their *coming to life in the body again*, so as to be visible, as the phrase, Re 20:5, "this is the first resurrection," proves; for as surely as "the rest of the dead lived not (again) until," &c., refers to the *bodily* general resurrection, so must *the first resurrection* refer to the body. This also accords with 1Co 15:23, "They that are Christ's at His coming." Compare Ps 49:11-15. From Re 6:9, I infer that "souls" is here used in the strict sense of *spirits disembodied* when first seen by John; though doubtless "souls" is often used in general for *persons*, and even for *dead bodies*.

beheaded--literally, "smitten with an axe"; a *Roman* punishment, though crucifixion, casting to beasts, and burning, were the more common modes of execution. The guillotine in

revolutionary France was a revival of the mode of capital punishment of pagan imperial Rome. Paul was *beheaded*, and no doubt shall share *the first resurrection*, in accordance with his prayer that he "might attain unto the resurrection from out of the rest of the dead" (*Greek, "exanastasis"*). The above facts may account for the specification of this particular kind of punishment.

for . . . for--*Greek*, "for the sake of"; "on account of"; "because of."

and which--*Greek*, "and the *which*." And prominent among this class (the beheaded), such as did not worship the beast. So Re 1:7, *Greek*, "and the which," or "and such as," particularizes prominently among the general class those that follow in the description [TREGELLES]. The *extent* of the first resurrection is not spoken of here. In 1Co 15:23, 51; 1Th 4:14 we find that all "in Christ" shall share in it. John himself was not "beheaded," yet who doubts but that he shall share in the first resurrection? The martyrs are put first, because most like Jesus in their sufferings and death, therefore nearest Him in their life and reign; for Christ indirectly affirms there are relative degrees and places of honor in His kingdom, the highest being for those who drink his cup of suffering. Next shall be those who have not bowed to the world power, but have looked to the things unseen and eternal.

neither--"not yet."

foreheads . . . hands--*Greek*, "forehead . . . hand."

reigned with Christ--over the earth.

5. But--B, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS read, "and." A and *Vulgate* omit it.

again--A, B, *Vulgate*, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS omit it. "Lived" is used for *lived again*, as in Re 2:8. John saw them not only when restored to life, but when in the act of reviving [BENGEL].

first resurrection--"the resurrection of the just." Earth is not yet transfigured, and cannot therefore be the meet locality for the transfigured Church; but from heaven the transfigured saints with Christ rule the earth, there being a much freer communion of the heavenly and earthly churches (a type of which state may be seen in the forty days of the risen Saviour during which He appeared to His disciples), and they know no higher joy than to lead their brethren on earth to the same salvation and glory as they share themselves. The millennial reign on earth does not rest on an isolated passage of the Apocalypse, but all Old Testament prophecy goes on the same view (compare Isa 4:3; 11:9; 35:8). Jesus, while opposing the carnal views of the kingdom of God prevalent among the Jews in His day, does not contradict, but confirms, the Old Testament view of a coming, earthly, Jewish kingdom of glory: beginning from within, and spreading itself now spiritually, the kingdom of God shall manifest itself outwardly at Christ's coming again. The papacy is a false anticipation of the kingdom during the Church-historical period. "When Christianity became a worldly power under Constantine, the hope of the future was weakened by the joy over present success" [BENGEL]. Becoming a harlot, the Church ceased to be a bride going to meet her Bridegroom; thus millennial hopes disappeared. The rights which Rome as a harlot usurped, shall be exercised in holiness by the Bride. They are "kings" because they are "priests" (Re 20:6; Re 1:6; 5:10); their priesthood unto God and Christ (Re 7:15) is the ground of their kingship in relation to man. Men will be willing subjects of the transfigured priest-kings, in the day of the Lord's power. Their power is that of attraction, winning the heart, and not counteracted by devil or beast. Church and State shall then be co-extensive. Man created "to have dominion over earth" is to rejoice over *his* world with unmixed, holy joy. John tells us that, instead of the devil, the transfigured Church of Christ; Daniel, that instead of the heathen beast, the holy Israel, shall rule the world [AUBERLEN].

6. Blessed--(Compare Re 14:13; 19:9).

on such the second death hath no power--even as it has none on Christ now that He is

risen.

priests of God--Apostate Christendom being destroyed, and the believing Church translated at Christ's coming, there will remain Israel and the heathen world, constituting the majority of men then alive, which, from not having come into close contact with the Gospel, have not incurred the guilt of rejecting it. These will be the subjects of a general conversion (Re 11:15). "The veil" shall be taken off Israel first, then from off "all people." The glorious events attending Christ's appearing, the destruction of Antichrist, the transfiguration of the Church, and the binding of Satan, will prepare the nations for embracing the Gospel. As *individual* regeneration goes on now, so there shall be a "regeneration" of *nations* then. Israel, as a nation, shall be "born at once--in one day." As *the Church* began at Christ's ascension, so the *kingdom* shall begin at His second advent. This is the humiliation of the modern civilized nations, that nations which they despise most, Jews and uncivilized barbarians, the negro descendants of Ham who from the curse of Noah have been so backward, Cush and Sheba, shall supplant and surpass them as centers of the world's history (compare De 32:21; Ro 10:19; 11:20, &c.). The Jews are our teachers even in New Testament times. Since their rejection revelation has been silent. The whole Bible, even the New Testament, is written by Jews. If revelation is to recommence in the millennial kingdom, converted Israel must stand at the head of humanity. In a religious point of view, Jews and Gentiles stand on an equal footing as both alike needing mercy; but as regards God's instrumentalities for bringing about His kingdom on earth, Israel is His chosen people for executing His plans. The Israelite priest-kings on earth are what the transfigured priest-kings are in heaven. There shall be a blessed chain of giving and receiving--God, Christ, the transfigured Bride the Church, Israel, the world of nations. A new time of revelation will begin by the outpouring of the fulness of the Spirit. Ezekiel (the fortieth through forty-eighth chapters), himself son of a priest, sets forth the priestly character of Israel; Daniel the statesman, its kingly character; Jeremiah (Jer 33:17-21), both its priestly and kingly character. In the Old Testament the whole Jewish national life was religious only in an external legal manner. The New Testament Church insists on inward renewal, but leaves its outward manifestations free. But in the millennial kingdom, all spheres of life shall be truly Christianized from within outwardly. The Mosaic ceremonial law corresponds to Israel's priestly office; the civil law to its kingly office: the Gentile Church adopts the moral law, and exercises the prophetic office by the word working inwardly. But when the royal and the priestly office shall be revived, then--the principles of the Epistle to the Hebrews remaining the same--also the ceremonial and civil law of Moses will develop its spiritual depths in the divine worship (compare Mt 5:17-19). At present is the time of preaching; but then the time of the *Liturgy* of converted souls forming "the great congregation" shall come. Then shall our present defective governments give place to perfect governments in both Church and State. Whereas under the Old Testament the Jews exclusively, and in the New Testament the Gentiles exclusively, enjoy the revelation of salvation (in both cases humanity being divided and separated), in the millennium both Jews and Gentiles are united, and the whole organism of mankind under the first-born brother, Israel, walks in the light of God, and the full life of humanity is at last realized. Scripture does not view the human race as an aggregate of individuals and nationalities, but as an organic whole, laid down once for all in the first pages of revelation. (Ge 9:25-27; 10:1, 5, 18, 25, 32; De 32:8 recognizes the fact that from the first the division of the nations was made with a relation to Israel). Hence arises the importance of the Old Testament to the Church now as ever. Three grand groups of nations, Hamites, Japhetites, and Shemites, correspond respectively to the three fundamental elements in man--body, soul, and spirit. The flower of Shem, the representative of *spiritual* life, is Israel, even as the flower of Israel is He in whom all mankind is summed up, the second Adam (Ge 12:1-3). Thus Israel is the mediator of divine revelations for all times. Even nature and the animal world will share in the millennial blessedness. As sin loses its power, decay and death will decrease [AUBERLEN]. Earthly and

heavenly glories shall be united in the twofold election. Elect Israel in the flesh shall stand at the head of the earthly, the elect spiritual Church, the Bride, in the heavenly. These twofold elections are not merely for the good of the elect themselves, but for the good of those to whom they minister. The heavenly Church is elected not merely to salvation, but to rule in love, and minister blessings over the whole earth, as king-priests. The glory of the transfigured saints shall be felt by men in the flesh with the same consciousness of blessing as on the Mount of Transfiguration the three disciples experienced in witnessing the glory of Jesus, and of Moses and Elias, when Peter exclaimed, "It is good for us to be here"; in 2Pe 1:16-18, the Transfiguration is regarded as the earnest of Christ's coming in glory. The privilege of "our high calling in Christ" is limited to the present time of Satan's reign; when he is bound, there will be no scope for suffering for, and so afterwards *reigning* with, Him (Re 3:21; compare *Note*, see on [1Co 6:2](#)). Moreover, none can be saved in the present age and in the pale of the Christian Church who does not also reign with Christ hereafter, the necessary preliminary to which is suffering with Christ now. If we fail to lay hold of the crown, we lose all, "*the gift of grace* as well as the *reward of service*" [DE BURGH].

7. expired--Greek, "finished."

8. Gog and Magog-- (Eze 38:1-39:29; see on [Eze 38:2](#)). Magog is a general name for northern nations of Japheth's posterity, whose ideal head is Gog (Ge 10:2). A has but one *Greek* article to "Gog and Magog," whereby the two, namely, the prince and the people, are marked as having the closest connection. B reads the second article before Magog wrongly. HILLER [*Onomasticon*] explains both words as signifying "lofty," "elevated." For "quarters" the *Greek* is "corners."

to battle--Greek, "to the war," in A and B. But ANDREAS omits "the."

9. on the breadth of the earth--so as completely to overspread it. Perhaps we ought to translate, ". . . of the [holy] *land*."

the camp of the saints and the beloved city--the camp of the saints encircling *the beloved city*, Jerusalem (Ecclesiasticus 24:11). Contrast "hateful" in Babylon (Re 18:2; De 32:15, *Septuagint*). Ezekiel's prophecy of Gog and Magog (Eze 38:1-39:29) refers to the attack made by Antichrist on Israel *before* the millennium: but this attack is made *after* the millennium, so that "Gog and Magog" are mystical names representing the final adversaries led by Satan in person. Ezekiel's Gog and Magog come from *the north*, but those here come "from the four corners of the earth." *Gog* is by some connected with a *Hebrew* root, "covered."

from God--so B, *Vulgate, Syriac, Coptic*, and ANDREAS. But A omits the words. Even during the millennium there is a separation between heaven and earth, transfigured humanity and humanity in the flesh. Hence it is possible that an apostasy should take place at its close. In the judgment on this apostasy the world of nature is destroyed and renewed, as the world of history was before the millennial kingdom; it is only then that the new heaven and new earth are realized in final perfection. The *millennial* new heaven and earth are but a foretaste of this everlasting state when the upper and lower congregations shall be no longer separate, though connected as in the millennium, and when new Jerusalem shall descend from God out of heaven. The inherited sinfulness of our nature shall be the only influence during the millennium to prevent the power of the transfigured Church saving all souls. When this time of grace shall end, no other shall succeed. For what can move him in whom the visible glory of the Church, while the influence of evil is restrained, evokes no longing for communion with the Church's King? As the history of the world of nations ended with the manifestation of the Church in visible glory, so that of mankind in general shall end with the great separation of the just from the wicked (Re

10. that deceived--*Greek*, "that deceiveth."

lake of fire--his final doom: as "the bottomless pit" (Re 20:1) was his temporary prison.

where--so *Coptic*. But A, B, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac* read, "where *also*."

the beast and the false prophet are-- (Re 19:20).

day and night--figurative for *without intermission* (Re 22:5), such as now is caused by night interposing between day and day. The same phrase is used of the *external* state of the blessed (Re 4:8). As the bliss of these is eternal, so the woe of Satan and the lost must be. As the beast and the false prophet led the former conspiracy against Christ and His people, so Satan in person heads the last conspiracy. Satan shall not be permitted to enter this Paradise regained, to show the perfect security of believers, unlike the first Adam whom Satan succeeded in robbing of Paradise; and shall, like Pharaoh at the Red Sea, receive in this last attempt his final doom.

for ever and ever--*Greek*, "to the ages of the ages."

11. great--in contrast to the "thrones," Re 20:4.

white--the emblem of purity and justice.

him that sat on it--the Father [ALFORD]. Rather, the Son, to whom "the Father hath committed all judgment." God in Christ, that is, the Father represented by the Son, is He before whose judgment-seat we must all stand. The Son's mediatorial reign is with a view to prepare the kingdom for the Father's acceptance. When He has done that, He shall give it up to the Father, "that God may be all in all," coming into direct communion with His creatures, without intervention of a Mediator, for the first time since the fall. Heretofore Christ's *Prophetical* mediation had been prominent in His earthly ministry, His *Priestly* mediation is prominent now in heaven between His first and second advents, and His *Kingly* shall be so during the millennium and at the general judgment.

earth and heaven fled away--The final conflagration, therefore, precedes the general judgment. This is followed by the new heaven and earth (Re 21:1-27).

12. the dead--"the rest of the dead" who did not share the first resurrection, and those who died during the millennium.

small and great--B has "*the small and the great*." A, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and ANDREAS have "the great and the small." The wicked who had died from the time of Adam to Christ's second advent, and all the righteous and wicked who had died during and after the millennium, shall then have their eternal portion assigned to them. The godly who were transfigured and reigned with Christ during it, shall also be present, not indeed to have their portion assigned as if for the first time (for that shall have been fixed long before, Joh 5:24), but to have it *confirmed* for ever, and that God's righteousness may be vindicated in the case of both the saved and the lost, in the presence of an assembled universe. Compare "*We must ALL appear*," &c. Ro 14:10; 2Co 5:10. The saints having been first pronounced just themselves by Christ out of "the book of life," shall sit as assessors of the Judge. Compare Mt 25:31, 32, 40, "*these My brethren*." God's omniscience will not allow the most insignificant to escape unobserved, and His omnipotence will cause the mightiest to obey the summons. The *living* are not specially mentioned: as these all shall probably first (before the destruction of the ungodly, Re 20:9) be transfigured, and caught up with the saints long previously transfigured; and though present for the confirmation of their justification by the Judge, shall not then first have their eternal state assigned to them, but shall sit as assessors with the Judge.

the books . . . opened-- (Da 7:10). The books of God's remembrance, alike of the evil and the good (Ps 56:8; 139:4; Mal 3:16): conscience (Ro 2:15, 16), the word of Christ (Joh 12:48),

the law (Ga 3:10), God's eternal counsel (Ps 139:16).

book of life-- (Re 3:5; 13:8; 21:27; Ex 32:32, 33; Ps 69:28; Da 12:1; Php 4:3). Besides the general book recording the works of all, there is a special book for believers in which their names are written, not for their works, but for the work of Christ *for*, and *in*, them. Therefore it is called, "*the Lamb's book of life.*" Electing grace has singled them out from the general mass.

according to their works--We are justified *by* faith, but judged *according to* (not *by*) our works. For the general judgment is primarily designed for the final vindication of *God's righteousness before* the whole world, which in this checkered dispensation of good and evil, though really ruling the world, has been for the time less manifest. *Faith* is appreciable by God and the believer alone (Re 2:17). But *works* are appreciable by all. These, then, are made the evidential test to decide men's eternal state, thus showing that God's administration of judgment is altogether righteous.

13. death and hell--*Greek, "Hades."* The essential identity of the dying and risen body is hereby shown; for the *sea* and *grave* give up *their dead*. The body that sinned or served God shall, in righteous retribution, be the body also that shall suffer or be rewarded. The "sea" may have a symbolical [CLUVER from AUGUSTINE], besides the literal meaning, as, in Re 8:8; 12:12; 13:1; 18:17, 19; so "death" and "hell" are personifications (compare Re 21:1). But the literal sense need hardly be departed from: all the different regions wherein the bodies and souls of men had been, gave them up.

14. Death and Hades, as personified representatives of the enemies of Christ' and His Church, are said to be cast into the lake of fire to express the truth that Christ and His people shall never more die, or be in the state of disembodied spirits.

This is the second death--"the lake of fire" is added in A, B, and ANDREAS. *English Version*, which omits the clause, rests on inferior manuscripts. In hell the ancient form of death, which was one of the enemies destroyed by Christ, shall not continue, but a death of a far different kind reigns there, "*everlasting* destruction from the presence of the Lord": an abiding testimony of the victory of Christ.

15. The blissful lot of the righteous is not here specially mentioned as their bliss had commenced *before* the final judgment. Compare, however, Mt 25:34, 41, 46.

CHAPTER 21

Re 21:1-27. THE NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH: NEW JERUSALEM OUT OF HEAVEN.

The remaining two chapters describe the eternal and consummated kingdom of God and the saints on the new earth. As the world of nations is to be pervaded by divine influence in the millennium, so the world of nature shall be, not annihilated, but transfigured universally in the eternal state which follows it. The earth was cursed for man's sake; but is redeemed by the second Adam. *Now* is the Church; in the millennium shall be the kingdom; and after that shall be the new world wherein God shall be all in all. The "day of the Lord" and the conflagration of the earth are in 2Pe 3:10, 11 spoken of as if connected together, from which many argue against a millennial interval between His coming and the general conflagration of the old earth, preparatory to the new; but "day" is used often of a whole period comprising events intimately connected together, as are the Lord's second advent, the millennium, and the general conflagration and judgment. Compare Ge 2:4 as to the wide use of "day." Man's *soul* is

redeemed by regeneration through the Holy Spirit now; man's *body* shall be redeemed at the resurrection; man's *dwelling-place*, His inheritance, the earth, shall be redeemed perfectly at the creation of the new heaven and earth, which shall exceed in glory the first Paradise, as much as the second Adam exceeds in glory the first Adam before the fall, and as man regenerated in body and soul shall exceed man as he was at creation.

1. the first--that is the former.

passed away--*Greek*, in A and B is "were departed" (*Greek*, "*apeelthon*," not as in *English Version*, "*pareelthe*").

was--*Greek*, "is," which graphically sets the thing before our eyes as present.

no more sea--The sea is the type of perpetual unrest. Hence our Lord rebukes it as an unruly hostile troubler of His people. It symbolized the political tumults out of which "the beast" arose, Re 13:1. As the physical corresponds to the spiritual and moral world, so the absence of *sea*, after the metamorphosis of the earth by *fire*, answers to the unruffled state of solid peace which shall then prevail. The *sea*, though severing lands from one another, is now, by God's eliciting of good from evil, made the medium of communication between countries through navigation. Then man shall possess inherent powers which shall make the sea no longer necessary, but an element which would detract from a perfect state. A "river" and "water" are spoken of in Re 22:1, 2, probably literal (that is, with such changes of the natural properties of water, as correspond analogically to man's own transfigured body), as well as symbolical. The sea was once the element of the world's destruction, and is still the source of death to thousands, whence after the millennium, at the general judgment, it is specially said, "The *sea* gave up the dead . . . in it." Then it shall cease to destroy, or disturb, being removed altogether on account of its past destructions.

2. And I John--"John" is omitted in A, B, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS; also the "I" in the *Greek* of these authorities is not emphatic. The insertion of "I John" in the *Greek* would somewhat interfere with the close connection which subsists between "the new heaven and earth," Re 21:1, and the "new Jerusalem" in this verse.

Jerusalem . . . out of heaven--(Re 3:12; Ga 4:26, "Jerusalem which is above"; Heb 11:10; 12:22; 13:14). The *descent* of the new Jerusalem *out of heaven* is plainly distinct from the *earthly* Jerusalem in which Israel in the flesh shall dwell during the millennium, and follows on the creation of the new heaven and earth. John in his Gospel always writes [*Greek*] *Hierosoluma* of the old city; in the Apocalypse always *Hierousaleem* of the heavenly city (Re 3:12). *Hierousaleem* is a *Hebrew* name, the original and holy appellation. *Hierosoluma* is the common *Greek* term, used in a political sense. Paul observes the same distinction when refuting Judaism (Ga 4:26; compare Ga 1:17, 18; 2:1; Heb 12:22), though not so in the Epistles to Romans and Corinthians [BENGEL].

bride--made up of the blessed citizens of "the holy city." There is no longer merely a Paradise as in Eden (though there is that also, Re 2:7), no longer a mere garden, but now *the city of God* on earth, costlier, statelier, and more glorious, but at the same time the result of labor and pains such as had not to be expended by man in dressing the primitive garden of Eden. "The lively stones" were severally in time laboriously chiselled into shape, after the pattern of "the Chief corner-stone," to prepare them for the place which they shall everlastingly fill in the heavenly Jerusalem.

3. out of heaven--so ANDREAS. But A and *Vulgate* read, "out of the throne."

the tabernacle--alluding to the tabernacle of God in the wilderness (wherein many signs of His presence were given): of which this is the antitype, having previously been in heaven: Re

11:19; 15:5, "the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven"; also Re 13:6. Compare the contrast in Heb 9:23, 14, between "the patterns" and "the heavenly things themselves," between "the figures" and "the true." The earnest of the true and heavenly tabernacle was afforded in the Jerusalem temple described in Eze 40:1-42:20, as about to be, namely, during the millennium.

dwell with them--literally, "*tabernacle* with them"; the same *Greek* word as is used of the divine Son "*tabernacling* among us." Then He was in the weakness of the *flesh*: but at the new creation of heaven and earth He shall tabernacle among us in the glory of His manifested Godhead (Re 22:4).

they--in *Greek* emphatic, "*they*" (in particular).

his people--*Greek*, "His *peoples*": "the nations of the saved" being all peculiarly His, as Israel was designed to be. So A reads. But B, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* read, "His *people*": singular.

God himself . . . with them--realizing fully His name Immanuel.

4. all tears--*Greek*, "every tear."

no more death--*Greek*, "death shall be no more." Therefore it is not the millennium, for in the latter there is *death* (Isa 65:20; 1Co 15:26, 54, "the *last* enemy . . . destroyed is *death*," Re 20:14, *after* the millennium).

sorrow--*Greek*, "mourning."

passed away--*Greek*, "departed," as in Re 21:1.

5. sat--*Greek*, "sitteth."

all things new--not recent, but *changed from the old* (*Greek*, "*kaina*," not "*nea*"). An earnest of this regeneration and transfiguration of nature is given already in the regenerate soul.

unto me--so *Coptic* and ANDREAS. But A, B, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac* omit.

true and faithful--so ANDREAS. But A, B, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* transpose, "faithful and true" (literally, "genuine").

6. It is done--the same *Greek* as in Re 16:17. "It is come to pass." So *Vulgate* reads with *English Version*. But A reads, "They ('*these words*,' Re 21:5) are come to pass." All is as sure as if it actually had been fulfilled for it rests on the word of the unchanging God. When the consummation shall be, God shall rejoice over the work of His own hands, as at the completion of the first creation God *saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good* (Ge 1:31).

Alpha . . . Omega--*Greek* in A and B, "*the Alpha . . . the Omega*" (Re 1:18).

give unto . . . athirst . . . water of life-- (Re 22:17; Isa 12:3; 55:1; Joh 4:13, 14; 7:37, 38). This is added lest any should despair of attaining to this exceeding weight of glory. In our present state we may drink of the stream, then we shall drink at the *Fountain*.

freely--*Greek*, "gratuitously": the same *Greek* as is translated, "(They hated Me) without a cause," Joh 15:25. As *gratuitous* as was man's hatred of God, so *gratuitous* is God's love to man: there was every cause in Christ why man should love Him, yet man hated Him; there was every cause in man why (humanly speaking) God should have hated man, yet God loved man: the very reverse of what might be expected took place in both cases. Even in heaven our drinking at the Fountain shall be God's *gratuitous* gift.

7. He that overcometh--another aspect of the believer's life: a conflict with sin, Satan, and the world is needed. *Thirsting* for salvation is the first beginning of, and continues for ever (in the sense of an appetite and relish for divine joys) a characteristic of the believer. In a different

sense, the believer "shall never thirst."

inherit all things--A, B, *Vulgate*, and CYPRIAN read, "*these things*," namely, the blessings described in this whole passage. With "all things," compare 1Co 3:21-23.

I will be his God--*Greek*, "I will be to him a God," that is, all that is implied of blessing in the name "God."

he shall be my son--"He" is emphatic: *He* in particular and in a peculiar sense, above others: *Greek*, "shall be to me a son," in fullest realization of the promise made in type to Solomon, son of David, and antitypically to the divine Son of David.

8. the fearful--*Greek*, "the cowardly," who do not *quit themselves like men* so as to "overcome" in the good fight; who have the spirit of slavish "fear," not love, towards God; and who through fear of man are not bold for God, or "draw back." Compare Re 21:27; 22:15.

unbelieving--*Greek*, "faithless."

abominable--who have drank of the harlot's "cup of abominations."

sorcerers--one of the characteristics of Antichrist's time.

all liars--*Greek*, "all *the* liars": or else "all *who are* liars"; compare 1Ti 4:1, 2, where similarly *lying* and dealings with *spirits* and *demons*, are joined together as features of "the latter times."

second death-- Re 20:14: "*everlasting* destruction," 2Th 1:9; Mr 9:44, 46, 48, "Where THEIR worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

9. The same angel who had shown John *Babylon the harlot*, is appropriately employed to show him in contrast *new Jerusalem, the Bride* (Re 17:1-5). The angel so employed is the one that had the last seven plagues, to show that the ultimate blessedness of the Church is one end of the divine judgments on her foes.

unto me--A, B, and *Vulgate* omit.

the Lamb's wife--in contrast to her *who sat on many waters* (Re 17:1), (that is, intrigued with many peoples and nations of the world, instead of giving her undivided affections, as the Bride does, to the Lamb.

10. The words correspond to Re 17:3, to heighten the contrast of the bride and harlot.

mountain--Compare Eze 40:2, where a similar vision is given from a *high mountain*.

that great--omitted in A, B, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and CYPRIAN. Translate then, "the holy city Jerusalem."

descending--Even in the millennium the earth will not be a suitable abode for transfigured saints, who therefore shall then reign in heaven over the earth. But after the renewal of the earth at the close of the millennium and judgment, they shall *descend* from heaven to dwell on an earth assimilated to heaven itself. "From God" implies that "we (the city) are God's workmanship."

11. Having the glory of God--not merely the Shekinah-cloud, but God Himself as her glory dwelling in the midst of her. Compare the type, the earthly Jerusalem in the millennium (Zec 2:5; compare Re 21:23, below).

her light--*Greek*, "light-giver": properly applied to the heavenly *luminaries* which diffuse light. Compare *Note*, see on [Php 2:15](#), the only other passage where it occurs. The "and" before "her light" is omitted in A, B, and *Vulgate*.

even like--*Greek*, "as it were."

jasper--representing *watery crystalline brightness*.

12. And--A and B omit. Eze 48:30-35, has a similar description, which implies that the millennial Jerusalem shall have its exact antitype in the heavenly Jerusalem which shall descend on the finally regenerated earth.

wall great and high--setting forth the security of the Church. Also, the exclusion of the ungodly.

twelve angels--guards of the twelve gates: an additional emblem of perfect security, while the gates being never shut (Re 21:25) imply perfect liberty and peace. Also, angels shall be the brethren of the heavenly citizens.

names of . . . twelve tribes--The inscription of the names on the gates implies that none but the spiritual Israel, God's elect, shall enter the heavenly city. As the millennium wherein *literal* Israel *in the flesh* shall be the mother Church, is the antitype to the Old Testament *earthly* theocracy in the Holy Land, so the *heavenly* new *Jerusalem* is the consummation antitypical to the *spiritual* Israel, the elect Church of Jews and Gentiles being now gathered out: as the spiritual Israel now is an advance upon the previous literal and carnal Israel, so the heavenly Jerusalem shall be much in advance of the millennial Jerusalem.

13. On the north . . . on the south--A, B, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* read, "And on the north *and* on the *south*." In Ezekiel, Joseph, Benjamin, Dan (for which Manasseh is substituted in Re 7:6), are on the east (Eze 48:32); Reuben, Judah, Levi, are on the *north* (Eze 48:31); Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, on the *south* (Eze 48:33); Gad, Asher, Naphtali, on the *west* (Eze 48:34). In Numbers, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun are on the east (Nu 2:3, 5, 7). Reuben, Simeon, Gad, on the south (Nu 2:10, 12, 14). Ephraim, Manasseh, Benjamin, on the *west* (Nu 2:18, 20, 22). Dan, Asher, Naphtali, on the *north* (Nu 2:25, 27, 29).

14. twelve foundations--Joshua, the type of Jesus, chose twelve men out of the people, to carry twelve stones over the Jordan with them, as Jesus chose twelve apostles to be the twelve foundations of the heavenly city, of which He is Himself the Chief corner-stone. Peter is not the only apostolic rock on whose preaching Christ builds His Church. Christ Himself is the true foundation: the twelve are foundations only in regard to their apostolic testimony concerning Him. Though Paul was an apostle besides the twelve, yet the mystical number is retained, twelve representing the Church, namely thirty the divine number, multiplied by four, the world number.

in them the names, &c.--As architects often have their names inscribed on their great works, so the names of the apostles shall be held in everlasting remembrance. *Vulgate* reads, "*in* them." But A, B, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS read, "*upon* them." These authorities also insert "twelve" before "names."

15. had a golden reed--so *Coptic*. But A, B, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac* read, "had (as) *a measure*, a golden reed." In Re 11:2 the non-measuring of the outer courts of the temple implied its being given up to secular and heathen desecration. So here, on the contrary, the city being measured implies the entire consecration of every part, all things being brought up to the most exact standard of God's holy requirements, and also God's accurate guardianship henceforth of even the most minute parts of His holy city from all evil.

16. twelve thousand furlongs--literally, "*to twelve thousand stadii*": one thousand furlongs being the space between the several twelve gates. BENGEL makes the length of *each side* of the city to be twelve thousand stadii. The stupendous height, length, and breadth being exactly alike, imply its faultless symmetry, transcending in glory all our most glowing conceptions.

17. hundred . . . forty . . . four cubits--twelve times twelve: the Church-number squared. The wall is far beneath the height of the city.

measure of a man, that is, of the angel--The ordinary measure used by *men* is the measure here used by the *angel*, distinct from "the measure of the sanctuary." Men shall then be *equal to the angels*.

18. the building--"the structure" [TREGELLES], *Greek*, "*endomeesis*."

gold, like . . . clear glass--Ideal gold, transparent as no gold here is [ALFORD]. Excellencies will be combined in the heavenly city which now seem incompatible.

19. And--so *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS. But A, B, and *Vulgate* omit. Compare Re 21:14 with this verse; also Isa 54:11.

all manner of precious stones--Contrast Re 18:12 as to the harlot, Babylon. These precious stones constituted the "foundations."

chalcedony--agate from Chalcedon: semi-opaque, sky-blue, with stripes of other colors [ALFORD].

20. sardonyx--a gem having the redness of the cornelian, and the whiteness of the onyx.

sardius--(See on [Re 4:3](#)).

chrysolite--described by PLINY as transparent and of a golden brightness, like our topaz: different from our pale green crystallized *chrysolite*.

beryl--of a sea-green color.

topaz--PLINY [37.32], makes it *green* and transparent, like our chrysolite.

chrysoprasus--somewhat pale, and having the purple color of the amethyst [PLINY, 37, 20, 21].

jacinth--The flashing violet brightness in the amethyst is diluted in the jacinth [PLINY, 37.41].

21. every several--*Greek*, "each one severally."

22. no temple . . . God . . . the temple--As God now dwells in the spiritual Church, His "temple" (*Greek*, "*naos*," "shrine"; 1Co 3:17; 6:19), so the Church when perfected shall dwell in Him as her "temple" (*naos*: the same *Greek*). As the Church was "His sanctuary," so He is to be their sanctuary. Means of grace shall cease when the end of grace is come. Church ordinances shall give place to the God of ordinances. Uninterrupted, immediate, direct, communion with Him and the Lamb (compare Joh 4:23), shall supersede intervening ordinances.

23. in it--so *Vulgate*. But A, B, and ANDREAS read, "(shine) *on* it," or literally, "*for* her."

the light--*Greek*, "the lamp" (Isa 60:19, 20). The direct light of God and the Lamb shall make the saints independent of God's creatures, the sun and moon, for light.

24. of them which are saved . . . in--A, B, *Vulgate*, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS read "(the nations shall walk) *by means* of her light": omitting "of them which are saved." Her brightness shall supply them with light.

the kings of the earth--who once had regard only to their glory, having been converted, now in the new Jerusalem do bring their glory into it, to lay it down at the feet of their God and Lord.

and honour--so B, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac*. But A omits the clause.

25. not be shut . . . by day--therefore shall never be shut: for it shall *always* be day. Gates are usually shut by night: but in it shall be no night. There shall be continual free ingress into it, so as that all which is blessed and glorious may continually be brought into it. So in the millennial type.

26. All that was truly glorious and excellent in the earth and its converted *nations* shall be gathered into it; and while all shall form *one* Bride, there shall be various orders among the redeemed, analogous to the divisions of *nations* on earth constituting the one great human family, and to the various orders of angels.

27. anything that defileth--*Greek, "koinoun."* A and B read [*koinon,*] "anything *unclean.*" **in the Lamb's book of life**--(See on [Re 20:12](#); [Re 20:15](#)). As all the filth of the old Jerusalem was carried outside the walls and burnt there, so nothing defiled shall enter the heavenly city, but be burnt *outside* (compare Re 22:15). It is striking that the apostle of love, who shows us the glories of the heavenly city, is he also who speaks most plainly of the terrors of hell. On Re 21:26, 27, ALFORD writes a Note, rash in speculation, about the heathen *nations*, above what is written, and not at all required by the sacred text: compare *Note*, see on [Re 21:26](#).

CHAPTER 22

Re 22:1-21. THE RIVER OF LIFE: THE TREE OF LIFE: THE OTHER BLESSEDNESSES OF THE REDEEMED. JOHN FORBIDDEN TO WORSHIP THE ANGEL. NEARNESS OF CHRIST'S COMING TO FIX MAN'S ETERNAL STATE. TESTIMONY OF JESUS, HIS SPIRIT, AND THE BRIDE, ANY ADDITION TO WHICH, OR SUBTRACTION FROM WHICH, SHALL BE ETERNALLY PUNISHED. CLOSING BENEDICTION.

1. pure--A, B, *Vulgate*, and HILARY 22, omit.

water of life--infinitely superior to the typical waters in the first Paradise (Ge 2:10-14); and even superior to those figurative ones in the millennial Jerusalem (Eze 47:1, 12; Zec 14:8), as the matured fruit is superior to the flower. The millennial waters represent full Gospel grace; these waters of new Jerusalem represent Gospel glory perfected. Their continuous flow from God, the Fountain of life, symbolizes the uninterrupted continuance of life derived by the saints, ever fresh, from Him: life in fulness of joy, as well as perpetual vitality. Like pure crystal, it is free from every taint: compare Re 4:6, "before the throne a sea of glass, like crystal."

clear--*Greek, "bright."*

2. The harmonious unity of Scripture is herein exhibited. The Fathers compared it to a ring, an unbroken circle, returning into itself. Between the events of Genesis and those at the close of the Apocalypse, at least six thousand or seven thousand years intervene; and between Moses the first writer and John the last about one thousand five hundred years. How striking it is that, as in the beginning we found Adam and Eve, his bride, in innocence in Paradise, then tempted by the serpent, and driven from the tree of life, and from the pleasant waters of Eden, yet not without a promise of a Redeemer who should crush the serpent; so at the close, the old serpent cast out for ever by the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, who appears with His Bride, the Church, in a better Paradise, and amidst better waters (Re 22:1): the tree of life also is there with all its *healing* properties, not guarded with a flaming sword, but open to all who overcome (Re 2:7), and there is no more curse.

street of it--that is, of the city.

on either side of the river--ALFORD translates, "In the midst of the street of it (the city) and of the river, on one side and on the other" (for the second *Greek*, "*enteuthen*," A, B, and *Syriac* read, *ekeithen*: the sense is the same; compare *Greek*, Joh 19:18); thus the trees were on each side in the middle of the space between the street and the river. But from Eze 47:7, I prefer *English Version*. The antitype exceeds the type: in the first Paradise was only *one* tree of life; now there are "*very many trees at the bank of the river, on the one side and on the other.*" To make good sense, supposing there to be but *one* tree, we should either, as MEDE, suppose that the *Greek* for *street* is a *plain* washed on both sides by the river (as the first Paradise was washed on one side by the Tigris, on the other by the Euphrates), and that in the midst of the plain, which itself is in the midst of the river's branches, stood the tree: in which case we may translate, "In the midst of the street (plain) *itself*, and of the river (having two branches flowing) on this and on that side, was there the tree of life." Or else with DURHAM suppose, *the tree* was in the midst of the river, and extending its branches to both banks. But compare Eze 47:12, the millennial type of the final Paradise; which shows that there are several trees of the one kind, all termed "the tree of life." Death reigns now because of sin; even in the millennial earth sin, and therefore death, though much limited, shall not altogether cease. But in the final and heavenly city on earth, sin and death shall utterly cease.

yielded her fruit every month--*Greek*, "according to each month"; each month had its own proper fruit, just as different seasons are now marked by their own productions; only that then, unlike now, there shall be *no season without its fruit*, and there shall be an endless variety, answering to *twelve*, the number symbolical of the world-wide Church (compare *Note*, see on [Re 12:1](#); [Re 21:14](#)). ARCHBISHOP WHATLEY thinks that the tree of life was among the trees of which Adam *freely ate* (Ge 2:9, 16, 17), and that his continuance in immortality was dependent on his *continuing* to eat of this tree; having forfeited it, he became liable to death; but still the effects of having eaten of it for a time showed themselves in the longevity of the patriarchs. God could undoubtedly endue a tree with special medicinal powers. But Ge 3:22 seems to imply, *man had not yet taken of the tree*, and that if he had, he would have lived for ever, which in his then fallen state would have been the greatest curse.

leaves . . . for . . . healing-- (Eze 47:9, 12). The *leaves* shall be the *health-giving* preventive securing the redeemed against, not healing them of, sicknesses, while "the fruit shall be for meat." In the millennium described in Eze 47:1-23 and Re 20:1-15, the Church shall give the Gospel-tree to the nations outside Israel and the Church, and so shall heal their spiritual malady; but in the *final* and *perfect* new Jerusalem here described, the state of all is eternally fixed, and no saving process goes on any longer (compare Re 22:11). ALFORD utterly mistakes in speaking of "nations outside," and "dwelling on the renewed earth, organized under kings, and saved by the influences of the heavenly city" (!) Compare Re 21:2, 10-27; the "nations" mentioned (Re 21:24) are those which have long before, namely, in the millennium (Re 11:15), become the Lord's and His Christ's.

3. no more curse--of which the earnest shall be given in the millennium (Zec 14:11). God can only dwell where the curse and its cause, the cursed thing sin (Jos 7:12), are removed. So there follows rightly, "But the throne of God and of the Lamb (who redeemed us from the curse, Ga 3:10, 13) shall be in it." Compare in the millennium, Eze 48:35.

serve him--with *worship* (Re 7:15).

4. see his face--revealed in divine glory, *in Christ Jesus*. They shall see and know Him with intuitive knowledge of Him, *even as they are known by Him* (1Co 13:9-12), and face to face. Compare 1Ti 6:16, with Joh 14:9. God the Father can only be seen in Christ.

in--*Greek*, "*on their foreheads.*" Not only shall they personally and in secret (Re 3:17) know

their sonship, but they shall be known as sons of God to all the citizens of the new Jerusalem, so that the free flow of mutual love among the members of Christ's family will not be checked by suspicion as here.

5. there--so ANDREAS. But A, B, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac* read, "(there shall be no night) any longer"; *Greek*, "*eti*," for "*ekei*."

they need--A, *Vulgate*, and *Coptic* read the future, "they *shall* not have need." B reads, "(and there shall be) no need."

candle--*Greek*, "lamp." A, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* insert "light (*of a candle, or lamp*)."
B Omits it.

of the sun--so A. But B omits it.

giveth . . . light--"illuminates." So *Vulgate* and *Syriac*. But A reads, "*shall* give light."

them--so B and ANDREAS. But A reads, "*upon* them."

reign--with a glory probably transcending that of their reign in heaven with Christ over the millennial nations in the flesh described in Re 20:4, 6; that reign was but for a limited time, "a thousand years"; this final reign is "unto the ages of the ages."

6. These sayings are true--thrice repeated (Re 19:9; 21:5). For we are slow to believe that God is as good as He is. The news seems to us, habituated as we are to the misery of this fallen world, too good to be true [NANGLE]. They are no dreams of a visionary, but the realities of God's sure word.

holy--so ANDREAS. But A, B, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* read, "(the Lord God of the) *spirits* (of the prophets)." The Lord God who with His Spirit inspired their spirits so as to be able to prophesy. There is but one Spirit, but individual prophets, according to the measure given them (1Co 12:4-11), had their own spirits [BENGEL] (1Pe 1:11; 2Pe 1:21).

be done--*Greek*, "come to pass."

7. "And" is omitted in *Coptic* and ANDREAS with *English Version*, but is inserted by A, B, *Vulgate* and *Syriac*.

blessed-- (Re 1:3).

8. Both here and in Re 19:9, 10, the apostle's falling at the feet of the angel is preceded by a glorious promise to the Church, accompanied with the assurance, that "These are the true sayings of God," and that those are "blessed" who keep them. Rapturous emotion, gratitude, and adoration, at the prospect of the Church's future glory transport him out of himself, so as all but to fall into an unjustifiable act; contrast his opposite feeling at the prospect of the Church's deep fall [AUBERLEN], see on [Re 17:6](#); [Re 19:9, 10](#).

saw . . . and heard--A, B, *Vulgate*, and *Syriac* transpose these verbs. Translate literally, "I John (was he) who heard and saw these things." It is observable that in Re 19:10, the language is, "I fell before his feet to worship him"; but here, "I fell down to worship (God?) *before the feet* of the angel." It seems unlikely that John, when once reproved, would fall into the very same error again. BENGEL'S view, therefore, is probable; John had first intended to worship *the angel* (Re 19:10), but now only *at his feet* intends to worship (God). The angel does not even permit this.

9. Literally, "See not"; the abruptness of the phrase marking the angel's abhorrence of the thought of *his* being worshipped however indirectly. Contrast the fallen angel's temptation to Jesus, "Fall down and worship me" (Mt 4:9).

for--A, B, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, ANDREAS, and CYPRIAN omit "for"; which accords

with the abrupt earnestness of the angel's prohibition of an act derogatory to God.

and of--"and (the fellow servant) of thy brethren."

10. Seal not--But in Da 12:4, 9 (compare Da 8:26), the command is, "Seal the book," for the vision shall be "for many days." The fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy was distant, that of John's prophecy is near. The New Testament is the time of the end and fulfilment. The Gentile Church, for which John wrote his Revelation, needs more to be impressed with the shortness of the period, as it is inclined, owing to its Gentile origin, to conform to the world and forget the coming of the Lord. The Revelation points, on the one hand, to Christ's coming as distant, for it shows the succession of the seven seals, trumpets, and vials; on the other hand, it proclaims, "Behold, I come quickly." So Christ marked many events as about to intervene before His coming, and yet He also says "Behold, I come quickly," because our right attitude is that of continual prayerful watching for His coming (Mt 25:6, 13, 19; Mr 13:32-37 [AUBERLEN]; compare Re 1:3).

11. unjust--"unrighteous"; in relation to one's fellow men; opposed to "righteous," or "just" (as the *Greek* may be translated) below. More literally, "he that *doeth unjustly*, let him *do unjustly* still."

filthy--in relation to one's own soul as unclean before God; opposed to holy, "consecrated to God as pure. A omits the clause, "He which is filthy let him be filthy still." But B supports it. In the letter of the Vienne and Lyons Martyrs (in EUSEBIUS) in the second century, the reading is, "He that is *lawless* (*Greek*, '*anomos*') let him be lawless; and he that is righteous let him be righteous (literally, 'be justified') still." No manuscript is so old. A, B, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, ANDREAS, and CYPRIAN read, "let him do righteousness" (1Jo 2:29; 3:7). The punishment of sin is sin, the reward of holiness is holiness. Eternal punishment is not so much an arbitrary law, as a result necessarily following in the very nature of things, as the fruit results from the bud. No worse punishment can God lay on ungodly men than to give them up to themselves. The solemn lesson derivable from this verse is, Be converted now in the short time left (Re 22:10, end) before "I come" (Re 22:7, 12), or else you must remain unconverted for ever; sin in the eternal world will be left to its own natural consequences; holiness in germ will there develop itself into perfect holiness, which is happiness.

12. And--in none of our manuscripts. But A, B, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and CYPRIAN omit it.

behold, I come quickly--(Compare Re 22:7).

my reward is with me-- (Isa 40:10; 62:11).

to give--*Greek*, "to render."

every man--*Greek*, "to each."

shall be--so B in MAI. But B in TISCHENDORF, and A, *Syriac*, read, "is."

13. I am Alpha--*Greek*, ". . . the Alpha and the Omega." A, B, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, ORIGEN, and CYPRIAN transpose thus, "the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." ANDREAS supports *English Version*. Compare with these divine titles assumed here by the Lord Jesus, Re 1:8, 17; 21:6. At the winding up of the whole scheme of revelation He announces Himself as the One before whom and after whom there is no God.

14. do his commandments--so B, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and CYPRIAN. But A, *Aleph*, and *Vulgate* read, "(Blessed are they that) *wash their robes*," namely, *in the blood of the Lamb* (compare Re 7:14). This reading takes away the pretext for the notion of salvation by works. But even

English Version reading is quite compatible with salvation by grace; for God's first and grand Gospel "commandment" is to believe on Jesus. Thus our "right" to (*Greek*, "privilege" or "lawful authority over") the tree of life is due not to our doings, but to what He has done for us. The *right*, or *privilege*, is founded, not on our merits, but on God's grace.

through--*Greek*, "by the gates."

15. But--so *Coptic*. But A, B, HIPPOLYTUS, ANDREAS, and CYPRIAN omit.

dogs--*Greek*, "the dogs"; the impure, filthy (Re 22:11; compare Php 3:2).

maketh--including also "whosoever *practiceth* a lie" [W. KELLY].

16. mine angel--for Jesus is Lord of the angels.

unto you--ministers and people in the seven representative churches, and, through you, to testify to Christians of all times and places.

root . . . offspring of David--appropriate title here where assuring His Church of "the sure mercies of David," secured to Israel first, and through Israel to the Gentiles. *Root* of David, as being Jehovah; the offspring of David as man. David's Lord, yet David's son (Mt 22:42-45).

the morning star--that ushered in the day of grace in the beginning of this dispensation and that shall usher in the everlasting day of glory at its close.

17. Reply of the spiritual Church and John to Christ's words (Re 22:7, 12, 16).

the Spirit--in the churches and in the prophets.

the bride--not here called "wife," as that title applies to her only when the full number constituting the Church shall have been completed. The invitation, "Come," only holds good while the Church is still but an affianced *Bride*, and not the actually wedded *wife*. However, "Come" may rather be the prayer of the Spirit in the Church and in believers in reply to Christ's "I come quickly," crying, Even so, "Come" (Re 22:7, 12); Re 22:20 confirms this view. The whole question of your salvation hinges on this, that you be able to hear with joy Christ's announcement, "I come," and to reply, "Come" [BENGEL]. Come to fully glorify Thy Bride.

let him that heareth--that is, let him that heareth the Spirit and Bride saying to the Lord Jesus, "Come," join the Bride as a true believer, become part of her, and so say with her to Jesus, "Come." On "heareth" means "obeyeth"; for until one has *obeyed* the Gospel call, he cannot pray to Jesus "Come"; so "hear" is used, Re 1:3; Joh 10:16. Let him that hears and obeys Jesus' voice (Re 22:16; Re 1:3) join in praying "Come." Compare Re 6:1, 10; see on [Re 6:1](#). In the other view, which makes "Come" an invitation to sinners, this clause urges those who themselves hear savingly the invitation to address the same to others, as did Andrew and Philip after they themselves had heard and obeyed Jesus' invitation, "Come."

let him that is athirst come--As the Bride, the Church, prays to Jesus, "Come," so she urges all whosoever *thirst* for participation in the full manifestation of redemption-glory at *His coming to us*, to COME in the meantime and drink of the living waters, which are the earnest of "the water of life pure as crystal . . . out of the throne of God of the Lamb" (Re 22:1) in the regenerated heaven and earth.

And--so *Syriac*. But A, B, *Vulgate*, and *Coptic* omit "and."

whosoever will--that is, is willing and desirous. There is a descending climax; Let him that *heareth* effectually and savingly Christ's voice, pray individually, as the Bride, the Church, does collectively, "Come, Lord Jesus" (Re 22:20). Let him who, though not yet having actually *heard* unto salvation, and so not yet able to join in the prayer, "Lord Jesus, come," still *thirsts* for it, *come* to Christ. Whosoever is even *willing*, though his desires do not yet amount to positive *thirsting*, let him take the water of life freely, that is, gratuitously.

18. For I testify--None of our manuscripts have this. A, B, *Vulgate*, and ANDREAS read, "I" emphatic in the *Greek*. "I testify."

unto these things--A, B, and ANDREAS read, "unto them."

add . . . add--just retribution in kind.

19. book--None of our manuscripts read this. A, B, *Aleph*, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic* read, "(take away his part, that is, portion) from the *tree* of life," that is, shall deprive him of participation in the tree of life.

and from the things--so *Vulgate*. But A, B, *Aleph*, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS omit "and"; then "which are written in this book" will refer to "the holy city and the tree of life." As in the beginning of this book (Re 1:3) a blessing was promised to the devout, obedient student of it, so now at its close a curse is denounced against those who add to, or take from, it.

20. Amen. Even so, come--The Song of Solomon (So 8:14) closes with the same yearning prayer for Christ's coming. A, B, and *Aleph* omit "Even so," *Greek*, "*nai*": then translate for *Amen*, "*So be it, come, Lord Jesus*"; joining the "Amen," or "So be it," not with Christ's saying (for He calls Himself the "Amen" at the beginning of sentences, rather than puts it as a confirmation at the end), but with John's reply. Christ's "I come," and John's "Come," are almost coincident in time; so truly does the believer reflect the mind of his Lord.

21. our--so *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, and *Coptic*. But A, B, and *Aleph* omit.

Christ--so B, *Vulgate*, *Syriac*, *Coptic*, and ANDREAS. But A and *Aleph* omit.

with you all--so none of our manuscripts. B has, "with all the saints." A and *Vulgate* have, "with all." *Aleph* has, "with the saints." This closing benediction, Paul's mark in his Epistles, was after Paul's death taken up by John. The Old Testament ended with a "curse" in connection with the *law*; the New Testament ends with a blessing in union with the Lord Jesus.

Amen--so B, *Aleph*, and ANDREAS. A and *Vulgate Fuldensis* omit it.

May the Blessed Lord who has caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, bless this humble effort to make Scripture expound itself, and make it an instrument towards the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints, to the glory of His great name and the hastening of His kingdom! Amen.
