

The Seventh Vial Chapter XXIX. Harpers By The Sea Of Glass



Continued from [Chapter XXVIII. The Expedition of Gog; Or Irruption Of Nations From The North And East.](#)

WE are unwilling to drop the curtain on this dark scene, and, therefore, before leaving this grand Apocalyptic history, we turn to another of its visions. While the scenes of destruction we have described are going forward, another company is seen, occupying a place of safety, and singing songs of victory.

“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.” -Revelation 15:2

This vision synchronizes with that of the seven vials: for these white-robed harpers on the shores of the glassy sea appeared to John at the same moment that he beheld the seven angels of the seven last plagues issue from the temple. When the angels began to pour out their vials, the harpers began their song, and they continued to sing during the whole period of the vials, filling up the pauses of the storm with their melody, which might be heard at times mingling with its thunders. They are described as they who had gotten the victory, or, more literally, are getting the victory, over the beast, which marks them out as the Protestant remnant, who, having escaped the pollutions of Popery, are now preserved by God from its plagues.

They stand on, or by, a sea of glass, having the harps of God. This brings vividly before us those glorious transactions of which the Red Sea was once the scene. Guided by the pillar of fire, the tribes had passed safely through its depths; and, standing on its further brink, the vast assembly joined their voices in a triumphal hymn, which swelled along the shores of the gulf, and rose loud above the thunder of the surge that was now rolling over Pharaoh and his host. It is from this scene that the symbol before us is borrowed; and it tells us that it is another such deliverance that awaits the Church, and another such catastrophe that shall overwhelm her foes.

If, as some believe, there was spread out before John a miniature of the Roman earth all the time these visions were going forward, then it is

possible that the apostle may have seen that particular locality in Western Europe which the harpers were to occupy. Taking this vision in connection with the fall of the tenth part of the city at the Reformation, Mr. Elliot points pretty distinctly to Britain as the spot in question. But though British Protestants doubtless form the main division in this army of harpers, we must not exclude others. In all the Popish countries are little companies of Protestants, whom we are disposed, we think, on good ground, to rank among these harpers. The calmness of the sea—for its surface is of glassy smoothness—is a general figure denoting their safety and tranquility. They feel without alarm the shocks of the earthquake, they see without terror the bursts of the tempest, and while others are blaspheming God by reason of their “sores and their pains,” they are praising Him, “for true and righteous are His judgments.” But the sea is mingled with fire, the symbol of judgment; implying that, though protected wonderfully by the providence of God, awful calamities would prevail around them.

When we contrast our own tranquility with the alarm, turmoil, and convulsion, into which the Popish earth has been thrown, whose inhabitants have literally no rest day nor night, the majestic repose of Britain has all the moral effect of a noble hymn sung to God, who is thus separating “between the precious and the vile,” and bearing testimony before the world to the value of His Truth. But when we think of the guilt which we have contracted of late years in the national support given to Popery, have we not reason to fear that we shall be made to share in its final plagues, and that our country, though still a “sea of glass,” as compared with the Popish Continent, will be “a sea of glass mingled with fire?”

“And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.” – Revelation 15:3

As the tribes halted on the shore of the Red Sea, and sang the song of Moses, so the New Testament tribes, when mystic Egypt shall be destroyed, will gather on the shore of that sea from whose depths they have come up, and will sing the song of the new dispensation, celebrating the power and faithfulness of the Moses, even the Lamb, who has led them through the sea. In this deliverance the Church of both Testaments, the Old and the New, will share; both Churches, therefore, will unite in this song, and so the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb will form one song. The leading note of their song is given:

“Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty.” -Revelation 15:3

Such is the first note of ascription. When the mystery of Providence shall be finished in the destruction of antichrist, and the Church has come to view the beginning in the light of the end, the obscurity and apparent confusion and contradiction that now appear to mar the scheme will be rolled away, and she will be left in amazement at the unity and grandeur of the work, and the power of the Workman. “Great and marvellous” she shall see the work to be, and He by whom it has been done she will acknowledge to have shown Himself the “Lord God Almighty.”

“Just and true,” continues these harpers, “are thy ways, thou King of

saints." A grand discovery of moral principles awaits the world in this catastrophe. It is to form the last and crowning step in the long demonstration of the eternal rectitude of God's procedure. And when this step shall have been accomplished, the completeness of the whole proof will be clearly seen, and its irresistible force will be universally felt.

"Just and true," shall the Church say with one voice, "are thy ways, thou King of saints." Not the Church only, but the nations generally, shall be deeply impressed with a sense of the justice and truth of God. Accordingly the song of the harpers concludes with an anticipation of the immediate approach of a better dispensation.

"Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest." -Revelation 15:4

The moral character of God, the laws on which His government of the world is based, and the grand principles which enter into the right constitution of human society, being publicly demonstrated in these awful scenes, taken in connection with all that has been before them since the rise of the Papacy; and the world being now put fully in possession of them, we have reason to think they will never again be lost. We cannot conceive of the knowledge of the six primary mechanical powers being lost. The mechanic and the artisan will proceed on these principles till the end of time. The law of gravitation, and other fundamental laws of science, being now fully established, will continue, through all time, to form the base of all the reasonings and discoveries of philosophy. Why should not moral truth, once fully discovered and clearly demonstrated, be retained, by the help of the Divine Spirit, with equal permanency?

The grand fundamental laws of moral and religious truth, though the first in importance, have been the last to be discovered: nor till the awful scenes of the seventh vial have been completed, will these great principles be fully evolved, and the world attain to the clear and full knowledge of them. Mankind having come by painful experience into possession of them, once for all, they will never again be lost, but will continue henceforward to mold the character and regulate the actings of society, in both its corporate capacity and its individual members. The reign of these principles will constitute the MILLENNIUM.

THE END.

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- [Chapter VI. The Little Book](#)
- [Chapter VII. The Oath Of The Angel](#)
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- [Chapter IX. The Two Witnesses](#)
- [Chapter X. The Western Witnesses, or The Waldenses](#)
- [Chapter XI. Avenging Power of the Witnesses](#)
- [Chapter XII. War With The Witnesses](#)
- [Chapter XIII. Death Of The Witnesses](#)
- [Chapter XIV. Resurrection Of The Witnesses](#)
- [Chapter XV. The Ten-Horned And Seven-Headed Beast Of The Sea](#)
- [Chapter XVI. The Two-Horned Beast Of The Earth](#)
- [Chapter XVII. The Commencement And Termination Of The 1260 Days](#)
- [Chapter XVIII. The Harpers On Mount Zion](#)
- [Chapter XIX. The Seventh Trumpet](#)
- [Chapter XX. The First Three Vials](#)
- [Chapter XXI. The Fourth Vial–The Sun Of Fire](#)
- [Chapter XXII. The Fifth Vial–Darkness In The Kingdom Of The Beast](#)
- [Chapter XXIII. The Sixth Vial–Drying Up Of the Euphrates](#)
- [Chapter XXIV. The Kings Of The East–The Three Frogs](#)
- [Chapter XXV. The Harvest Of The Earth](#)
- [Chapter XXVI. The Seventh Vial – Part 1. Poured Into The Air](#)

- [Chapter XXVI. The Seventh Vial – Part 2. Voices, Thunders, and Lightnings](#)
- [Chapter XXVII. The Tripartition And Burning Of The Great City](#)
- [Chapter XXVIII. The Expedition of Gog; Or Irruption Of Nations From The North And East](#)
- [Chapter XXIX. Harpers By The Sea Of Glass](#)