

The Seventh Vial

OR

The Past and Present of Papal Europe

AS SHOWN IN THE APOCALYPSE

BY THE

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Introduction by the editor

My name is James A. Arendt. I am the webmaster of "James Japan" www.jamesjpn.net which contains a resource of old books by Protestant authors who teach that the "man of sin" of II Thessalonians 2:3-4 is none other than the office of the papacy, the popes of Rome, and that the "great whore that sitteth upon many waters" of Revelation 17:1 is none other than the Roman Catholic Church! I was raised Catholic and left that Church after I heard the Gospel when I was 20 years old and understood for the first time that Jesus came to save sinners like me and that salvation is based on grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone based on the Word of God, the Bible alone.

I first got the text of The Seventh Vial – By J.A. Wylie from archive.org. I wanted to make a nicer looking PDF edition and also post this book in sections on the [James Japan website](#) in HTML text format in order to make Pastor Wylie's keen insights on the book of Revelation easier to read and study, not only from a PC screen but by also from a small phone screen. From my Android phone, I can also listen to the text of Pastor Wylie's book by using a text-to-voice app. PCs are getting less and less used by the public because phones have become so good, they can do nearly everything most people need to do on it. I use my PC mostly when I want to do some real work such as work on my website.

Things that are different from the original PDF file are:

- Long paragraphs are divided into shorter ones.
- Many Bible verses are indented.
- The Greek words in the text were not readable and replaced with (Greek word).
- Uncommon words followed by definitions added next to them in parenthesis.
- Roman numerals used for Bible references changed to regular numbers.
- I included the emphasis on some words the author put in italics, but I sometimes added my own emphasis in either italics or bold.

PREFACE.

IT is somewhat of an experiment to wake up a book which has slept for twenty years. The Author may not have done wisely in making this experiment in the present instance. The "Seventh Vial" was first given to the Public in 1848. It quickly ran through several editions, and was then permitted to drop out of view. All the while there have been occasional inquiries for it; and, of late, these have grown so numerous as to induce the Author to issue a new, a revised, and a very much enlarged edition.

Since the first appearance of this work, great events have taken place. The Popish nations, emerging from revolution, have had to endure a ten years' infliction of military tyranny, technically known as "a state of siege." The Pope has been stript of the fairest portions of his territory, and has seen his affairs, as well as those of Europe generally, brought into great confusion and entanglement. Austria, the firmest prop of the Papacy, worsted on the battle-field, has fallen as a great military power; casting, for the first time in history, the political balance on the side of Protestantism. In these events, the Author has seen a manifest progression of the Apocalyptic drama, and an obvious preparation, in the weakening of the Ecclesiastico-political despotisms, for the final doom of the Antichristian system.

Events have modified the Author's interpretation of the Apocalypse in some of its details; but they have only deepened and strengthened his conviction that the line which he has followed, and which makes Providence the one and only interpreter of prophecy, is the only sound one. It is the true Baconian method; and is wide asunder from the imaginative, theoretic, and unscientific expositions which of late have issued from both Germany and America, and which have their imitators in this country. It is, moreover, the method which has been, followed by the Church of God from the beginning.

May the Author's humble labors help to confirm the faith of men in the inspiration of that Book which is being fulfilled before their eyes; and dispose the Church to welcome with reverence and joy a CRISIS, which the intimations (declarations) alike of Providence and of prophecy lead us to believe will be more stupendous than any which has passed over the world since the era of the crucifixion.

THE SEVENTH VIAL. CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION.

IN magnificence and terror the judgment of the Seventh VIAL stands alone. It rises grandly pre-eminent among the other awful scenes of the Prophetic Volume, showing, Etna-like, its summit of flame. Its vengeance will surpass all that has been before it since the world was destroyed by water, and all that will come after it till the world be again destroyed by fire. It ranks as one of the three mighty dispensations, standing midway between the antediluvian Deluge and the post-diluvian Conflagration.

Viewed in all its comprehensiveness, as the closing act of a great drama, which began so early as the days of Daniel, and has ever since been advancing step by step to its consummation, this culminating judgment will form the most finished demonstration of God's power and justice of which earth has been the scene, or guilty man the object. The glory of this event will reflect its rays far into the Past, and dart its splendor forward into the Future. In the light of the Seventh Vial the scheme of prophecy will stand revealed.

The veil will be lifted alike from what is dark in the Bible and from what is mysterious in Providence. The admirable wisdom and beautiful order of past dispensations will be clearly seen; fresh light will be shed upon the character of God; and the great principles of truth and righteousness will be settled on a stable foundation for all time to come. It is the finishing of the mystery of God, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets. How great shall that event be! The great empires which the doom of heaven righteously overwhelmed of old—Babylon, Egypt, Jerusalem—were but types of that CITY on whom this Vial is to be poured out; and in her consummated ruin shall all these types find their complete fulfillment. Who can conceive the terrors of a judgment comprehending in itself the combined vengeance and accumulated horrors under which the great empires we have named were overthrown and utterly broken?

And is it not meet that this judgment should be one of unexampled terror? Let us think of the consolidated strength of that kingdom which this judgment is to break in pieces, and the enormous guilt which it is to avenge. By this stroke, an enemy greater than Babylon, greater than Edom, greater even than imperial Rome, is to be brought down—an enemy whose rage and craft, whose malignity and strength, have never been surpassed, never equaled—an enemy which has committed more crimes, and violated more oaths—which has shed more blood, and crushed more victims—which has brought more woes upon the earth—seduced and destroyed more souls—and defied God with more effrontery, and for a longer time— than any other enemy that ever arose. It is this enemy whom the Seventh Vial is to sweep away. The prayers and hopes of the Church have looked forward to this event during past ages; and when it shall have been accomplished, her songs and thanksgivings will look back upon it throughout all succeeding eras.

That was a majestic hymn which was sung of old at the Red Sea. The tribes, just come up out of the depths, and marshaled on the shore; awed by the destruction of their foes, and thrilled by the magnitude of their own deliverance, vented their feelings in a shout of joy, which woke up the echoes of the wilderness, and drowned the thunder of the surge, which was now rolling above Pharaoh and his

chariots. This scene is to be repeated on a greater scale. Before those Apocalyptic visions, which are to pass before us, shall close, we shall behold another flight from the house of bondage, another passage through the abyss, another tremendous overthrow, and shall hear another peal of triumph, louder and mightier than the first, even the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. Yes, when a greater enemy shall fall than he whose destruction the timbrel of Miriam celebrated, a shout of joy will publish it to the ends of the earth; and the melody of that shout, rolling in triumphant numbers over the world, will meet its re-echo from the heavens, in the hallelujahs of angels, and the songs of prophets, and apostles, and martyrs. "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever."

Chapter II. Apocalyptic symbols

THE key of the Apocalypse is to be sought for in the Old Testament Scriptures. This is the briefest, and perhaps the best, rule that can be laid down for the interpretation of this book. We do not know that there is a really new symbol made use of in it from beginning to end. There is not a single figure or character admitted whose use had not been already sanctioned, and its meaning determined, in the law, the Psalms, and the prophets. The Apocalypse differs from them only in being symbolical throughout. It resembles those monuments and temples of Egypt which, wholly written over with hieroglyphics, were illegible till the accidental discovery of the Rosetta stone. This furnished the key; and instantly the graven monuments of that ancient land stood forth, fraught with the secrets of past ages.

In some one chapter of Isaiah, or in a Psalm, we find the Rosetta stone of the Apocalypse: we mean that we there find this or the other symbol used in such a way that it is impossible to miss its meaning. Thus we make out an alphabet, by the aid of which we come to read the whole of this symbolic writing. In the prophets the heavenly bodies uniformly symbolize the rulers of kingdoms. We find this symbol employed particularly in the denunciations against Egypt and Babylon. Of Egypt, Ezekiel 5 chap. xxxii. 7, 8, says:—"I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee."

From the Psalms we learn that a vine is the symbol of the true Church—"Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt."

In Ezekiel and other books of Scripture we find the false Church exhibited under the symbol of an harlot.

In Daniel we are told that a wild beast is the symbol of a conquering and despotic power, and that a horn denotes a kingdom.

Thus, by diligent search in the Scriptures, we discover the symbols here employed in such connection that their meaning is obvious; and when we meet the same symbol in the Apocalypse, we have only to transfer its ascertained meaning to the prediction under review; and, without more ado, we translate it into plain language. Thus we come to read of the Apocalyptic prophecies much as we would any ordinary writing.

As an example of the way in which an alphabet of the Apocalypse might be made out, we may instance a few of its more prominent symbols:—Earth symbolizes society in a settled state. Sea, society in a state of convulsion. Rivers, nations. A flood, nations in motion. Mountains and islands, great and small kingdoms. Air, the political atmosphere. Heaven, the civil or ecclesiastical firmament. Sun, the monarch. Stars, inferior rulers. Hail and thunder, wars. Earthquake, revolution. Head, form of government. Horn, king or kingdom. Bow, war. Crown, victory. Altar, martyrdom. Coals, severe judgments. Vine, a church. Wilderness, a state of affliction. Rainbow, a covenant. Key, ecclesiastical authority. Angel, a minister of God's purposes. This may suffice as a sample.

Having determined the import of the individual symbols, it becomes easy to interpret them when found in combination. Thus, when we are shown in the Apocalyptic drama, *coals* of fire taken from the *altar* and cast upon the *earth*, we understand that the action indicated is the infliction of terrible *judgments*, on account of the *martyrdom of the saints*, on the inhabitants of the *Roman world*. Again, when we read,

“And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy,” - Revelation 13:1

All that is necessary to the right interpretation of the prophecy is to give to each of its component symbols its appropriate meaning. Dealt with on this principle, the passage reads as follows:—

I was shown (sea) society in a state of convulsion, and out of these convulsions emerged a (*beast*) powerful despotic monarchy, having, i.e. having had, seven (*heads*) distinct forms of government, but broken up at the time of its emergence into ten (*horns*) separate kingdoms, with their (*crowns upon the horns*) kings; each of its seven forms of government possessing an impious and idolatrous character, as intimated by the name of blasphemy upon its seven heads.

Amid the closing scenes of the Apocalypse there occurs the following —

“And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.” - Revelation 14:17-18)

What a picture of the final doom of the Papacy! No description could convey, in ten times the space, what these few symbols disclose respecting the manner and severity of Babylon’s destruction. A vine is before us—the symbol of a Church; but it is the vine of the earth—a false Church. The vine is ripe, and is to be cut down. The idolatrous faith of Rome has landed her adherents in downright infidelity and atheism—the natural fruit of superstition. Men who believe in no God can be governed by no law; and so an end is now come.

Accordingly, an angel—an executioner of God’s vengeance— appears upon the scene, having the instrument of destruction —a sickle, emphatically said to be sharp. The command to thrust in the sickle and begin the work of reaping comes from the altar, and is given by the angel who has power over fire, and to whose ministry, consequently, appertained the work of destruction. To Rome, at such an hour, the altar was a symbol of terrific import; it reminded her of the blood she had shed. From the altar ascended the cry, “How long, O Lord?” And now from the altar comes the command, “Thrust in thy sharp sickle;” and from the altar, too, is taken the fire in which Rome is burned.

The symbols of the Apocalypse are not arbitrary signs, as are the letters of the alphabet and the hieroglyphics of the Egyptian tablets. There must be a law that governs symbolic representation; and the knowledge of that law is essential to the right interpretation of the Apocalypse. That law, we are persuaded, is founded on the analogy existing between the symbol and the thing symbolized— constituting a natural fitness in the one to represent the other. Numerous opportunities of expounding

this law will present themselves as we proceed; but it may not be unnecessary here to adduce an instance.

Expositors generally hold that the seven heads of the beast from the abyss symbolize the seven forms of government of the Roman empire. Now, if this interpretation is correct, there ought to be an analogy which may be traced, *first*, between a wild animal and a despotic empire; *second*, between the beast from the abyss and the empire that emerged from the Gothic flood; and, *third*, between the heads of the beast and the successive forms of the Roman government—that is, we must be able to show that the *place* and *functions* of the head in an organic body are analogous to the *place* and *functions* of a government in the body politic. So with regard to every symbol in the Apocalypse. The symbol, in its *nature* and *uses*, must be *analogous* to the thing symbolized. It follows that *agents* must always be held as symbolizing an analogous body of *agents*, and *agencies* as symbolizing an analogous class of *agencies*. The reverse of this can never be true. We ought never to make an agent the symbol of an agency. An angel, for instance, ought never to be viewed as the symbol of an event or epoch, for there is no analogy between the two; there is no natural fitness in the one to represent the other; and the interpretation that would link them together would violate the very first law of symbolization.

There are two additional rules which must be rigidly adhered to, otherwise our interpretations of the Apocalypse can possess neither certainty nor consistency. First, we must always treat its symbols as such. We must not regard them as figures in one place, and literal descriptions in another. The earth can never mean literally the earth, but some other thing—society in a particular state. Second, we must always give the same interpretation of the same symbol. Just as we attribute the same power to the same alphabetic character, and as we attach one meaning to the same hieroglyphic, wherever we find it on the Egyptian monuments, so we must preserve uniformity in our interpretations of the Apocalyptic symbols. A slight variety of interpretation may be admitted; but that variety must never be inconsistent with, but always embody, the *radical* meaning of the symbol. If we find that the meaning which we have given to a certain symbol does not carry us from beginning to end of the Apocalypse, and that it is not in all places perfectly natural and easy, and that its interpretation does not piece in with that of the other symbols with which it stands in combination, we may be sure that we have not yet discovered its true import.

There are some who decry the study of the Apocalypse. And why? Because it is symbolical, and so many various readings have been given of its symbols. Do such persons depreciate the value and reject the authenticity of other symbolical writings? Would they not account the labours of a lifetime well spent in successfully deciphering the Egyptian tablets, and in bringing to light the secrets which lie hid under the mysterious characters which cover the Sinaitic Mountains? Why, then, should such take offense at this book, because it is written in symbolic characters which it is not easy to read? And why should that which stimulates ingenuity and excites to labor in other cases, be held as a sufficient reason for declining all inquiry and investigation in this? If the graven pillar that rises amid the sands of the Nile awakens within us so engrossing an interest, and is regarded with awe, because it still holds forth, to those who can read its record, those great transactions of the past which gave to Egypt her glory and renown, would it not be strange if we should regard without either awe or interest this venerable monument, which God himself has set up in the field of revelation?

The Apocalypse presents us with a magnificent train of prophecies, which, as time goes on, are being converted into providences; and which, when completed, will remain through all the ages of the future, the chief monument of God's being, the grandest vindication of His government, and the clearest proof of His Word,- and which, forming the grand EXODUS of the Church, of which the ancient EXODUS was but the type, will constitute the "new song" which the Church will sing through all coming time.

The Apocalypse, moreover, meets one important class of our instincts and cravings. We wish to know the future: here it is already come. We wish to know how the world's drama shall end: here it is already wound up. The past, the present, and the future, here meet. Let us turn aside, then, and see this great sight. By the help of these heaven-engraven hieroglyphics, we can survey the whole history of the Christian Church at a single glance. We can trace her path from the Mount of Olives to the gates of that holy city, New Jerusalem, which John saw coming down from God out of heaven. She is seen in all the variety of her earthly condition. We behold her in the wilderness, where for twelve hundred and sixty years she was clothed in sackcloth—engaged in war with the beast, while her blood flows like water; —on Mount Zion, with the Lamb in white, ascribing salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto God, as the smoke of Babylon's torment ascends into the sky; living and reigning with Christ a thousand years; delivered from a dreadful combination of foes formed against her at the close of time; redeemed at last from the grave itself; and, after all her toils, entering in, and made to dwell through ages that have no end, amid the living waters of the paradise of God.

Brought thus into one view, we are the better able to trace the admirable order and progression that reign among these events, and especially among those more immediately under our review, and which fill up the long and momentous period extending from the white horse of the First Seal, to the lightnings, and thunders, and earthquake of the Seventh Vial.

Chapter III. Structure of the Apocalypse

IN taking a rapid survey of the whole of that grand drama, of which the Seventh Vial is the closing act, we shall make the tenth chapter of the Apocalypse our starting-point. This is a position better adapted than any other for looking around and surveying the whole plan and structure of this wonderful book.

The Apocalypse is, in brief, a history of the Church, written in grand symbolical characters, extending from the year when John saw it, which we take to have been A.D. 96, till the second and glorious return of Christ to Judgment. On the little stage of Patmos, a rehearsal of Providence, so to speak, took place. Those mighty acts which were to fill up the history of ages, and of which the ample territory of the Roman earth was more especially to be the scene, were made to pass in figure before the Apostle John, who was permitted to behold them in the character of the representative of the Church. By the same apostle, under the inspiration of the Spirit, were these things committed to writing, and communicated to the Church, as a help to her faith and patience during the protracted period when both should be so severely tried. The various histories, civil and ecclesiastical, of Europe, since the reign of Domitian, are but developments of the Apocalypse.

In one most important point does the Apocalypse excel them all: it keeps perpetually before the view of the reader, what other histories are but too apt to overlook, the First Cause and the Final End of all affairs. He who would understand the true philosophy of the history of Europe—he who would see the deep order that underlies all its apparent disorder—must study it in this Book.

The Apocalypse opens with a representation of the exaltation of Christ, and His installation on the right hand of God. This is the grand subject of the vision of the fourth and fifth chapters. Having rested a while after the first vision which he saw (that of the first chapter), John again lifted up his eyes, “and, behold, a door was opened in heaven”—denoting the free access now given to John, and to the Church through John, to know the secrets of futurity—the grand events of the new dispensation.

A great voice, which in strength and melody the apostle could compare only to a trumpet, spake to him, and said, “Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.” No sooner had the voice spoken to him, than John seemed to ascend; and, entering at the open door, a new world burst upon his view. The august vision which he saw he now proceeds to narrate:—In the foreground was a pavement or floor, spacious as the sea, and resplendent as the crystal. This served as a basement to the cloud which encircled the foundations of that throne of glory whereon sat the Divine Majesty. Ever and anon, fiery flashes, loud thunderings, and solemn voices, issued from the cloud; while the Form that occupied the throne that rose out of it was still more fitted to strike the beholder with awe. “He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone”—of a burning red colour.—“Our God is a consuming fire.”—Spanning the throne was a glorious arch or rainbow, “like unto an emerald,” the soft green of which, mingling with the fiery ray of the sardine, tempered the central glory.

In presence of the throne burned seven lamps of fire, indicating the “baptism with fire” which all must receive who would approach the throne, or worship before it. The heaven of the vision, where the throne stood, is not that heaven which is the abode of the blessed. By this heaven we are to understand

the Church; and the scene is intended to represent the majesty and grace with which God there reigns. “And there was a rainbow round about the throne”—the symbol of the covenant of perpetuity which God has established with the Church.

Seven lamps of fire burned before the throne—— the symbol of that Spirit which is the blessed source of the Church’s light, and of the efficacy of all her ordinances. “And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices ”—the Apocalyptic symbols of the dispensations of Providence, chosen so as strikingly to represent the terror and sublimity which sometimes accompany these acts, and intimating that they all proceed out of the throne of God.

Ministering day and night around that throne are all created agencies. These, in number, are infinite, but here they are grouped into four classes, and are symbolically depicted by the “four living creatures” which are seen “in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne.” The ministries which God has called into existence, and by which He carries on His government, are the ANGELIC, the HUMAN, the ANIMAL, and the PHYSICAL. These, with infinite celerity (swiftness of action or motion), convey His messages, and, with unerring precision, execute His behests in every region of the universe. Thus they praise Him.

The Church of the redeemed is represented by the twenty-four elders clothed in white, and having crowns of gold upon their head; and their worship, by that ascription of “glory, honour, and power,” which, begun by the four living creatures, is taken up by those that occupy the twenty-four thrones, and being passed on to the outer circles, and swelled by the voices of the whole august assembly, rises in a united peal, melodious as many waters, loud as mighty thunderings around the eternal throne. The vision has admitted us to a symbolic sight of God as Creator, throned upon the glories, and ministered to by the powers of the universe.

The same vision is continued in the fifth chapter, only a new object is produced upon the scene. “Lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain”— the symbol of Christ as mediator; His priestly office being prefigured in His appearing as if He had been slain, and His kingly, in that He stood in the midst of the throne.

John was next shown, in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne, a BOOK or roll, sealed with seven seals; and whilst he contemplated this awful book, a mighty angel came forward, and proclaimed in the hearing of all creatures, that it was the will of Him who sat upon the throne that this book should be opened, and the writing it contained made known. He asks with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” A profound silence follows the angel’s challenge, for “no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.” And John wept much, “because no man was found worthy to open the book.” Its seals were likely to remain for ever unbroken, and all within buried in impenetrable and eternal mystery. At this crisis, when heaven and earth were mute with expectation and fear, the Lamb came forward, and, taking the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne, proceeded to open the seals, and unroll the volume.

What is the truth that lies hid under the veil of this symbolical transaction? Plainly this, even the delegation of authority to Christ to carry on the work of Providence, and his assumption of that great task, signified by the act of taking the sealed book from the hand of Him that sat on the throne. “He

raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body.” Similar were His own words to His disciples just before He ascended: Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

This supreme dominion and universal empire—for every “principality” in heaven, and every throne on earth, was put under Him—were conferred on the Son as mediator, and for the purpose of enabling Him to accomplish the great ends of his mediation. It was necessary that He should be able to wield every instrument, and have authority to summon to His help, and engage in His service, every agent, in order that He might break in pieces the kingdom of His great rival, and set up His own in its room. When the task of governing a universe was committed to Him, the resources of a universe were placed at His disposal. It would neither have been *just on the part of the Father to have exacted the duty without conferring the means of fulfilling it, nor wise on the part of the Son to have entered on the work lacking the powers which its successful execution demanded.

As mediator, we say, was this great commission —the administration of Providence—given to the Son; for it was the Lamb that had been slain that received the sealed book. And the special and paramount object for which He undertook this commission, and which He continues to keep in eye in its execution, is the preservation of the Church meanwhile, and her complete triumph at last.

He that presides over all events, arranging, directing, overruling all, stands not only in the midst of the throne, but in the midst of the living creatures, or of all created agencies, and in the midst of the elders; that is, in the midst of the Church. This act gave unbounded joy to the Church, which hailed with a shout of praise her Saviour’s entrance on His difficult but glorious work. She knew that His power and wisdom were adequate to its triumphant execution. Though the end was yet afar off, and though many a gloomy dispensation was to intervene, and though many a hard struggle had to be endured, and many a powerful enemy had to be struck down, yet the Church confidently anticipated, now that she saw the sealed roll in the hands of the Lamb, the advent of victory, because, though distant, it was certain. She knew that the administration of her Head could have only one issue, and that an issue unspeakably glorious and blessed. Accordingly she shouted for joy. And that shout was a prelude of that yet more ecstatic song which shall be heard on that day when Christ’s administration shall terminate in the total discomfiture and final overthrow of the Church’s foes, and in her complete triumph and everlasting reign with her Lord.

“I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beast, and the elders—and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands—saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and in the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” – Rev. 5:11-14

Having exhibited in symbol Christ's installation on the right hand of God, and His investiture with His high office, the Apocalypse goes on to detail the various acts of His administration, and this it does by making to pass before us a grand series of graphic visions. It is here necessary to call to mind the grand end contemplated in the whole of Christ's administration, namely, the universal establishment of His kingdom, the Church, which was to grow, from small beginnings, to the unity, purity, and splendour of the Millennium. Then only shall we see how each successive act paved the way for the full attainment, in due time, of that glorious object.

First of all, the stage had to be cleared. When Christ ascended, and sat down on the right hand of God, the ground on which He purposed to plant His Church was occupied by the pagan empire of Rome. A most degrading polytheism, deeply founded in the passions and lusts of men, attired in the garb of a most fascinating poetry, enjoying the venerable prestige of a high antiquity, sanctioned by the laws, and protected and upheld by the military power of the State, was so interwoven with the fabric of the empire, that it was necessary, in order to eradicate this idolatrous system, and strip it of its props and defenses, to shake and rend in pieces the framework of that empire with which it was incorporated. This was accomplished in the opening of the seals.

Each seal (see chap. vi.) ushered in a new dispensation to the Roman empire; and by these successive acts of judgment—by the passage across its stage of the red horse, and the black horse, and the pale horse—symbolizing respectively war, scarcity, and death, with its four terrible agencies, the sword, famine, pestilence, and the beasts of the earth—that powerful State was so exhausted and broken, that at last, in the opening of the sixth seal—whose terrors typify those of the Seventh Vial—that great revolution was accomplished, in which the powers of the pagan firmament were shaken, and Christianity, in the person of Constantine, was elevated to the throne of the empire.

There is here a stop in the Apocalyptic history. The progression of the symbolical drama now passing before John is arrested. With a professedly Christian emperor on the throne, and with all the helps and facilities naturally springing therefrom for the diffusion of Christianity, we expect to be instantly told of its universal reign. With the winds of persecution and political contention all hushed, with serene skies over the Church, and nothing to impede the labors of the spiritual husbandman, we expect to see him scattering the seed far and wide, and, with zeal worthy of his cause, adding field to field, till at last he had included the whole earth within the vineyard of his Lord. Alas! our anticipations are sadly disappointed. A ranker idolatry springs up than that which had been well-nigh extirpated. A murkier night settles down on the world than any that had ever heretofore darkened its firmament. Fiercer persecutors are seen moving on the scene than any that had defended the cause of Paganism with fire and knife.

We are now but a little way off from the commencement of that noted period—obscurely hinted to Daniel, plainly announced to John—the twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days or years, for which preparations of a very unusual kind, but requisite, doubtless, are made. This period was to form the gloomiest, without exception, in the annals of the world—the period of Satan's highest success, and of the Church's deepest depression; and lest she should become during it utterly extinct, her members, never so few as then, were all specially sealed. Thus secured by a Divine precaution against perishing, whether by craft or by violence, they enter the cloud. The long night passes on, darkening as it advances; but the sealed company are not visible. They disappear from the Apocalyptic stage just as

they then disappeared from the observation of the world. That they might escape the dungeons and the fires of their persecutors, they fled away, to hide in the hoary caves of earth, or to inhabit the untrodden regions of the wilderness, or to dwell beneath the shadow of the Alps, or to enjoy fellowship with God, unsuspected and unknown, in the deep seclusion and gloom of some convent.

But at last the clouds break away, and the sealed company, having trod this valley of the shadow of death unhurt, one and all of them come forth—the hundred forty and four thousand sealed ones—in white raiment and carrying palms, not to hunger and to thirst as aforetime, when the bread and water of life were scantily supplied, nor to be scorched by the hot sun of persecution, but to be fed by the Lamb, and to be led to fountains of living waters, and to have all tears wiped away from their eyes—denoting the happy and prosperous state of the Church which shall succeed the twelve hundred and sixty years, and the exemption she shall then enjoy from all the perils, enemies, and sufferings that have hitherto attended her path.

This is the vision of the seventh chapter. The vision affords us a glimpse of the Church, protected against no ordinary danger by the seal of the angel, just before she entered on the fated twelve hundred and sixty days, and another glimpse of her as she appeared after she had come through the “great tribulation” of those days; but it leaves the events of that disastrous period—the fury with which Antichrist had warred against her, and the noble constancy with which she had withstood his assault—untold, because these were to form the subject of future Apocalyptic narration.

After this vision the symbolic scene again progresses. The eighth chapter takes up the history exactly at the point where the sixth had dropped it. The seventh and last seal is opened, and the seven trumpets begin to be sounded.

The first four trumpets include those irruptions of the barbarous nations of the north by which the western Roman empire was completely destroyed, and the let or hindrance to the appearance of the Man of Sin, of which the apostle Paul had spoken, taken out of the way. Thus the stage was left empty for the rise of Antichrist. Rome had ceased to be pagan, and had become Christian; but its Christianity was already radically vitiated (corrupted) by the old idolatry; and its imperial government, still subsisting, obstructed the rise of the Papacy; for how could the Pope become lord of the world, while Caesar continued to be so? It behooved this empire, therefore, though professedly Christian, to give place, that the predestined enemy of Christ might appear.

Accordingly each trumpet announced the descent of a new calamity upon the unhappy empire. First a tempest of hail and fire, mingled with blood, swept across it—the symbol of savage war waged by barbarous arms. The hordes of the North had long been collecting on the frontier of the empire; but at last, on the death of Theodosius, A.D. 395, the “dark cloud,” says Gibbon, “which was collected along the coast of the Baltic, burst in thunder upon the banks of the Upper Danube.” Alaric, with his Goths, issuing through the now open barriers of that river, invaded Greece, and, encountering but a feeble resistance from its degenerate inhabitants, ravaged its fertile provinces with mingled conflagration and slaughter. Next, crossing the Alps, he ravaged Italy, and reduced part of the Eternal City to ashes. But this did not fulfill the woes of the trumpet. During the intervals of Alaric’s ravages, Rhadagaisus, with his mighty host of Vandals, Suevi, and Burgundians, appeared upon the scene, and greatly increased the miseries inflicted by the Goths. This army of confederates, being repulsed with great difficulty in the

North of Italy, took a westward course, and fell with incredible fury upon the provinces of Gaul and Spain; where, in the language of Gibbon, “smoking ruins could alone distinguish the solitude of nature from the desolation of man.” This trumpet came to an end at the death of Alaric, in A.D. 410.

When the second angel sounded, “a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea”—the symbol of the Vandals under the terrible Genseric—“a name which,” remarks Gibbon, “in the destruction of the Roman empire, has deserved an equal rank with the names of Alaric and Attila.” He began, A.D. 429, to desolate Africa; and having burned many of its towns, and subjugated its provinces, he collected to his standard a multitude of Moors and Africans. This host he embarked, and precipitated like a burning mountain upon Italy, ravaging its sea-coast, pillaging Rome, and carrying away the wealth of its citizens in his ships.

On the sounding of the third trumpet, a star shot down from the firmament, burning as a lamp, and, falling upon the rivers and fountains, turned them into wormwood. In this star we behold the scourge of God, Attila, the king of the Huns, who, returning from his eastern wars, in A.D. 450, crossed the Rhine as high as Basle, and, descending its course, made the entire valley through which it rolls a scene of slaughter, burning its towns and massacring the inhabitants. Turning then to the south, he inflicted similar calamities on the towns of Mantua, Milan, Venice, and other cities of Lombardy, many of which he converted into heaps of stones and ashes.

But at the sounding of the fourth trumpet, the empire which these successive and terrible shocks had brought to the verge of ruin, was utterly dissolved. Its dissolution, under this trumpet, is symbolically exhibited, after the manner of Scripture when the fall of empires is the theme, by the darkening of the sun and stars—imagery highly appropriate, and imparting a gloomy grandeur to the subject.

The mandate of Odoacer, chief of the Heruli, in 476, abolished the title and office of Emperor of the West. The anarchy of the barbarians was succeeded by the short reign of Theodoric the Ostrogoth; after which the Senate, and, in short, the entire framework of the Roman Government were removed; and that proud city, which for so many ages had held the rank of mistress of the world, was reduced to the miserable condition of a tributary dukedom. Thus the stage on which Antichrist was to appear was now cleared. The colossal empire which had occupied it so long had been shivered, and its very fragments swept away. There was now no throne at Rome, and the lot no longer existed to the appearance of the Man of Sin. John, however, defers entering on the history of the Papacy. He withdraws our attention to the eastern world, and exhibits, under the fifth and sixth trumpets, the infliction of the woes by which the eastern empire was destroyed.

The lights of the imperial firmament had been obscured, and amid the gloom that prevailed—symbolizing the confusion into which all things had been brought by the destruction of established order and government—John heard the voice of an angel flying in mid-heaven. Three times did that awful voice denounce woe against the inhabitants of the earth. After what had already taken place, this is an unexpected as well as awful announcement. One would have thought that the angel of woe had already emptied his worst vial—that nothing more fearful could he inflict than that which he had already inflicted. But no. The calamities that were yet to fall on the world would obliterate the recollection of those that had already overtaken it. Three awful judgments were approaching. The history of the world from the beginning, what is it but a succession of woes? but in the dark retrospect

of the past eighteen centuries we can discern three calamities of surpassing magnitude, so fearfully dismal, that others lose their blackness when placed by their side—three woes towering above all others, which during that period have overtaken the miserable race of man.

These were the burden of the angel which John now saw flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe—woe—woe! The first woe was to happen under the fifth trumpet, the second woe under the sixth trumpet, and the third and last under the seventh trumpet, which comprehends the judgment of the seven vials.

Leaving, then, the western world, which Providence, by a series of tremendous dispensations, had made empty and void, in order that a more terrible enemy than the one who had just been struck down might be suffered to lift up himself, to be destroyed in his turn, the scene changes to the east. Immediately the scenery becomes eastern. So long as the west was the stage of the Apocalyptic drama, the scenery was of an occidental character—storms of hail, and burning mountains. But now the symbols become oriental.

The fifth angel sounds. The bottomless pit is opened, and forthwith there issues from it a smoke so dense that, as it rolls its murky folds onward, it darkens the air, and inflicts blight upon the earth—the symbol of that system of imposture which, arising in Arabia, overspread so large a portion of the world. In the Bible, error is darkness, truth is light. Along with the smoke there came locusts from the pit, which, for the space of five months, tormented men with their stings—the Saracens, by whose arms the religion of Mahomet was propagated, and the Saracenic dominion extended from the banks of the Indus to the base of the Pyrenees. Their career of conquest lasted five symbolical months—an hundred and fifty years.

The scene of the sixth trumpet, or second woe trumpet, is the banks of the Euphrates. On its sounding, the four angels which were bound in that river were loosed. The term for which they had been prepared was an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year. Their numbers were almost incredible—two hundred thousand thousand. Their equipments and appearance were of a truly martial order.

“I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone; and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions, and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone. Their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.” – Revelation 9:17,19

Their commission was to slay the third part of men. Of the correctness of the interpretation which applies this symbol to the Turks, it is scarce possible to entertain a doubt. Did our space allow, we could show that the event fulfilled the prediction in all its particulars.

At the time referred to in the prophecy, this people, who had come originally from Scythia, were divided into four clans or sultanies, all of whom were located in the neighborhood of the Euphrates. They were at length let loose, to desolate Asia with their arms, and that part of it particularly which was the seat of the eastern empire. Their troops consisted mainly of cavalry, and their mode of warfare was new, artillery being now for the first time employed; both of which particulars are not obscurely hinted at in the prophecy.

They continued a conquering power for three hundred and ninety-one years, which, putting a day for a year, gives the predicted term of “an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year.” Their peculiar vocation or mission was “to slay the third part of men.” It was against the corrupt and idolatrous Christians of the eastern empire that the Turks were sent; and they were charged to inflict a fuller measure of vengeance than their predecessors, the Saracens, had done. The latter were sent to inflict chastisement, if so be those on whom it fell would repent; but not repenting, the Turks were commissioned to destroy them.

To the one it was commanded that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; and accordingly the conquests of the Saracens were comparatively bloodless. The fields were as green, the palm-trees as flourishing, behind their army, as in advance of it. But the longer the judgments of God are continued, if they prove ineffectual, they grow the more severe. Accordingly, the commission given to the Euphratean horsemen was, to slay those whom the locusts had power only to sting; and the work assigned them they executed. During their career of conquest, they committed an incredible number of slaughters, and inflicted hitherto unheard of miseries. All the provinces of the eastern empire they subjugated and occupied—Egypt, Greece, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor. At last they crossed the Hellespont, drew their armies around Constantinople, besieged and took it; and the gleam of the Crescent on those towers where the Cross had aforesaid been displayed, told that now the empire of the Caesars had come to an utter end.

We have now come to that point in the Apocalyptic history where we design to begin our fuller exposition. But in order that we may include in one view the whole order and plan of the Apocalypse, we shall continue to its close our brief narrative of its events. A short space will suffice. So far the administration of Christ had been successful. Not in vain had He sat down on the right hand of God. In the exercise of His great power, one enemy had been overthrown after another—Rome pagan in the opening of the seals, and Rome Christian in the sounding of the trumpets. Was the stage then clear? and had the hour now come when the kingdom of Christ, in all its universality and glory, should be set up? The time was not yet.

Another chance, so to speak, was to be given to Satan. All his attempts hitherto had been abortive. He had seen the labors of long ages swept away by the seals and the trumpets: another cycle of centuries was to be given him, that he might do his very utmost to render frustrate the grand design of Christ’s mediation. The western world was to be allotted to him as a field of operation, and twelve hundred years were to be allowed him to mature his plans—time enough, and room enough, surely. Accordingly, putting his ingenuity and malignity to the stretch, he now brings forth his masterpiece—even Popery, the most finished system of imposture, the most complete embodiment of Satanic malice and cunning, and the most skilfully organized plan of opposition to the cause of God, which the world has ever seen. This is the grand subject which is now introduced on the Apocalyptic scene.

The progress of the grand symbolic drama is arrested, till, in a subsidiary vision—the little book—John has a history given him of the rise, the character, and the reign of Antichrist, and the sufferings endured by the Church during the period of his domination. The lesser is marked off from the greater vision by its symbols, which are of a completely different sort—by its subject, which is not the administrative acts of Christ, but the crimes and successes of His enemy—and by its retrogression in point of time. The great Apocalyptic vision had advanced to the end of the fifteenth century, when, at the sounding of

the sixth trumpet, the Greek empire was destroyed; but the vision now exhibited to John recedes to the middle of the sixth century, at which time the Roman empire of the west had been overthrown by the judgment of the fourth trumpet. The events which occurred in the west during this interval—that is, from the middle of the sixth to the beginning of the sixteenth century—form the subject of this vision. The fourth trumpet had taken out of the way the “let” which for so long a time had prevented the rise of “THE MAN OF SIN.” The obstruction being removed, he arose.

He was really risen, as we shall afterwards show, at the middle of the sixth century; but many centuries were required for the full development of his character, and the consolidation of his empire. Accordingly, he did not reach the zenith of his power till about the time that the sixth trumpet had consummated the ruin of the eastern empire. This was the last enemy who was to arise to oppose the erection of Christ’s kingdom, and whom Christ, in the exercise of His great power, was to destroy, as He had done others.

Accordingly, on the passing away of the second woe, the seventh trumpet is sounded, and seven angels, having the seven last plagues, appear upon the scene. Vial after vial is poured out upon the Papacy, and each successive shock helps onward the consummation of its awful doom. The seventh and last is poured out; and every part of the Papal universe is smitten. Its air is convulsed by terrific tempests; its earth is shaken by awful earthquakes; its cities are overthrown; its mountains are removed; its islands are submerged; and “a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done,” announces the complete accomplishment of the grand object of Christ’s administration. The utter and irretrievable ruin of mystic Babylon is brought vividly before us, by the symbol of the company who stand afar off weeping and wailing,

“And saying, Alas! alas! that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off; and cried, when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas! alas! that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea, by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.” – Revelation 18:16-19

The immediate erection of Christ’s kingdom is no less vividly presented to us by the symbol of that other company, who hail with shouts of joy and praise the near advent of some long-expected and thrice-blessed event.

And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.” – Revelation 19:6-7

Chapter IV. The Rider on the White Horse

THE Apocalypse is the record of a great war. We may truly call this war great, for its rise, progress, and issues fill not the records of Time only, they constitute the annals of Eternity. At the rising of the curtain, on the opening of the first seal, we see the hosts mustering for the battle. Clad in the panoply of light the Leader of the armies of God rides forth upon the field, bearing his weapons of war, and displaying the insignia of his royal rank. Surely it was in anticipation of this event that the Church of old sang, "Gird thy sword on thy thigh, O most Mighty." "In thy majesty ride prosperously." "Thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things." From the days of David this prophecy had sent its echoes down the ages, and this day it begins to be fulfilled. The "Rider on the white horse," and none other, is the mighty conqueror and glorious king, whose advent the Church had hailed, while as yet the first seal was unopened.

There is given Him a crown, but why does He not put it on? He must first fight His battle and win the victory, and then He will put on His crown. His inheritance, meanwhile, is in the actual possession of his enemy, Satan. He must redeem it from the power of the usurper, and then He will reign over it. It is already His. It is His by purchase, for He has bought it with His blood, and it is His by the gift of the Father, for to the "Lamb slain" has the Father given the sealed roll, the charter of this inheritance; but though His by right, He must make it His in actual possession, by the redemption of it with his bow and sword. For this end, even the redemption of the purchased possession, for Himself and for His people is He now come forth.

But let us turn to the train by which the Rider on the white horse is followed. How ghastly and spectral and dismal! The Red horse, the Black horse, the Pale horse, follow each other in terrible procession! These are strange attendants to be found in the rear of one so noble of mien (bearing or manner), and encompassed by the halo of such resplendent majesty and grace. But let us not be startled at this. All the agencies of nature, the most terrible and destructive, all the elements of the political world, the most tempestuous and devastating, have been put in subjection to Christ, and are all wielded by Him for the overthrow of the empire of His great rival and adversary. War, famine, pestilence, earthquake, and death, are all at His command, and are all employed by Him in breaking in pieces the power of His opponent, and rescuing His and His people's inheritance from his ruinous usurpation.

The red horse, and the black horse, and the pale horse are the Apocalyptic figurations of those dire and exterminating agencies. "Christ comes riding upon the whirlwinds. He comes shooting His lightnings, and discovering by the blast of His nostrils the foundations of the world?"

Having thus symbolically shown the champion's entrance on the field, in radiant armor and divine strength, the drama proceeds. The conflict was to know no pause till one or other of the combatants should be finally routed and overthrown. The pages that follow onward to the end of the Apocalypse are just the record of that great strife.

Fearfully the contest rages, and the issue for sometime seems doubtful. We watch, with intense anxiety, the ebb and flow of the battle for the fate of a universe hangs suspended on its issue. First, Satan's pagan empire sinks in ruin, crushed under the weight of terrible calamities. He is not at all dismayed,

nor does his daring or his cunning forsake him, even in this terrible hour. He rises equal to the crisis. Suddenly he reconstructs his front, and anew urges the assault with even more envenomed malignity and rage, and backed by more numerous adherents. His pagan he has replaced by his papal kingdom: and the battle commences a second time. It is only now that the war reaches its terrible sublimity, and only now is it seen what the combatants can do when urged to their utmost strength. The day seems to be going in favour of Satan. The armies of the Lamb fall back. Their numbers are thinned. Seduction and terror, the dungeon and the stake seem to devour them. The whole world wonders after the beast. It is an hour of terrible uncertainty. Clouds and night descend upon the field, and all becomes shadowy and indistinct, and we feel as if summoned to assist at the entombment of Truth, and the inauguration of that eternal night of which the ancients dreamed.

But anon, seven thunders are heard uttering their voices. A great earthquake shakes the world: and, when the clouds clear away, there again is seen the glorious form of the Rider upon the white horse, while the hosts of darkness, smitten with confusion and terror, are fleeing from His presence.

As the sun, emerging from the clouds of storm, so once more, emerging from the thick of the fight, gloriously comes forth the Rider on the white horse. Rev. 19:11—16. He had appeared at the opening of the drama, and we had seen Him begin the battle: now again He appears at its close, and we see Him deal the final blow. What a grand unity does this give the drama. Let us mark Him as He comes up from the field, where He had fought and conquered. Arduous had the contest been, but His strength is unabated, and His glory undimmed; and although He bears upon His raiment the marks of the fight, for He is “clothed with a vesture dipped in blood,” His appearance, more majestic than ever, lights up the scene, and fills it with splendour. Now He has put on His crown—nay “on His head are many crowns.” We need no other assurance that the victory is His. And what a victory! For let us draw near, and read this inscription. “And he hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.” He who died with the writing over His cross, “This is the King of the Jews,” now, in glorious contrast, wears this title of universal sovereignty, “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

These few words open a vista of far extending empire, of dominion limitless and endless, and show us tribes and nations, princes and great monarchs, bowing down and doing homage to this Almighty King. We survey the Conqueror, and we exclaim with the ancient Church, “Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength?” We hear Him reply, “I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” Again we ask, “Why art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat?” “I have trodden the winepress alone ” is the response, “For the day of vengeance, is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.”

Let us mark how altered is now the guise of His followers. This mighty warrior is no longer attended by the spectral and ghastly train of the red horse, the black horse, and the pale horse; these have been dismissed, and behind Him come a shining band, who wear garlands of victory, and display symbols of gladness. “And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.” The ministry of destructive agents is no longer needed. Tempest and famine; war and political revolution have done their work; the empire of the devil has become as the chaff of the summer threshing floor, and the wind has carried it away; and now the ministers of peace, the

missionaries of the Cross, go forth to proclaim to the ends of the earth the reign of the “Righteous King,” and to summon all nations to gather themselves beneath His scepter.

Such is the war, whose eventful progress and transcendently glorious issue stand symbolically recorded in the closing pages of the Bible. When the battles of earth shall be forgotten, and the empires which they helped to found, or to overthrow, shall be as if they never had existed, the story of this war will be read and the exploits done on this field will be had in everlasting remembrance. The victory won by Him who sat upon the White Horse, and whose name is the Word of God, the songs of eternity will scarce suffice adequately to celebrate.

Let us here pause. Read in the light of the Apocalypse, what a sublime scheme is Providence! How vast, yet simple, its plan! How complicated, yet harmonious, its movements! What an infinite variety of parts, yet what unity of action! How great the apparent risk of missing the end, yet with what completeness and certainty is the end attained! How amazing the regularity and exactness with which its great cycles are performed, so that no enemy is ever permitted to rise higher, or exist a moment longer, than infinite wisdom has ordained. And then, how surpassingly grand are its results! Let us lift up our eyes, and contemplate a scheme on which the power, wisdom, and goodness of God are so gloriously inscribed; and let us, with the Church, ascribe blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto the Lamb by whom it is administered.

It is but a troubled and gloomy light which history sheds upon the course of this world’s affairs. If we look back upon the time which has elapsed since the ascension of Christ with this help only, we are altogether unable to discover anything like order or progression among the events which fill up the period. One war has been ended only that another might be commenced. One empire has been overthrown, for no end, apparently, but that another, not less hostile to the liberties and the religion of the world, might take the place of its predecessor.

In vain we question history, what advantage or profit has the world reaped from the calamities it has endured, and the revolutions and changes it has undergone? It can tell us of nothing worthy of being set off against so great an amount of suffering. It exhibits the world moving on through ages of barbarism and bloodshed, yet never approximating an era of repose; and, for anything it can confidently affirm to the contrary, the world may have another eighteen hundred years of wars and convulsions, of secular and spiritual thralldom (slavery; bondage; state of servitude), before it, and even then be no better than it is at this hour. We begin to lose hope, and allow our despair to drive us to the conclusion, that its present most miserable state can be ended no otherwise than by its annihilation.

But when we avail ourselves of the aid of the Apocalypse, instantly a great light is shed upon the scene. We can discover the beautiful order and rapid progression of events. We can assign to every act in the long series its place, and can tell the special end it was designed to accomplish; and can measure the degree in which it contributed to the success of the whole. We can plainly see that, vast and complicated as is the scheme, there is not an act, from beginning to end, which has been in vain, or which could have been left out; and that, long as the time is since the first seal was opened—and to the Church, which has been a sufferer throughout the entire period almost, it has seemed long indeed; yet not a day, nay, not an hour, has been lost. Constant, rapid, irresistible, has been the march of events—onward, and ever onward. There has been no delay, no retrogression. There have been no mistakes to

rectify— no unforeseen occurrences to provide against—no useless expenditure of power—no useless expenditure even of suffering. The heavens themselves do not present a spectacle of more perfect order or more harmonious movements. The cycles of the Apocalypse are performed with a regularity as exact as the cycles of the firmament; and the results of the one combine, in as high a degree as do those of the other, variety and unity, simplicity and grandeur.

Chapter V. Vision Of The Mighty Angel

VISIONS of terror, symbolizing events yet more terrible, which were to desolate a wretched world, had passed before the eyes of John;—tempests of hail mingled with blood— burning mountains forcibly projected into the sea—baleful (portending evil; ominous) meteors, whose course might be tracked in ashes—the obscuration and fall of the heavenly luminaries—the smoke from the pit, by which the sun and the air were darkened; and the terrible ranks of the Euphratean horsemen, which overran the eastern world, ravaging its fair fields, and leaving them strewn with the corpses of their inhabitants. But now, like the dawn breaking upon a night of thick darkness, there comes, after these symbols of woe, a vision of transcendent glory.

“And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon His head, and His face as it were the sun, and His feet as pillars of fire.” – Revelation 10:1

“I saw another mighty angel.” He is contrasted with others whom John had seen, but whom He far excelled— even the angels of the trumpets. The point in which the contrast is here made to lie is His power—a “mighty angel.” The angels of the trumpets had great power over the earth: they had broken in pieces the iron kingdom of Rome, both in the west and in the east; but that power was not their own; it was derived from the “mighty angel” who now stood before John. Who this mighty angel was does not admit of doubt. He was plainly the Church’s King and the world’s King, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mr. Elliot (Edward Bishop Elliott, the author of [Horae Apocalypticae](#)), who has brought to the exposition of the Apocalypse a rare erudition, great candor of mind, and an admirable sobriety and sagacity of judgment, gives it as his opinion, that Christ here appears in a symbolic character, as the Angel of the REFORMATION. To this opinion we demur (voice opposition). It appears to us that it is liable to the objection of confounding the Administrator with His acts of administration. We further submit that it is in plain violation of the first law of Apocalyptic interpretation to make a person symbolize an event, as is done when Christ’s appearance is made the symbolization of the Reformation.

This opinion, moreover, appears untenable on the ground of time. The vision is seen by John, it is true, after the sounding of the sixth trumpet; but there is here an undoubted retrogression, inasmuch as the events included under this vision date their commencement from the sounding of the fourth trumpet, and, starting with the rise of Antichrist, run on in symbolic narrative till the sounding of the seventh trumpet, when Antichrist, having reached the summit of his power, begins to be brought down.

Now, seeing the vision of the “mighty angel” occupies the foreground in that symbolic representation which was made to John of the troubles of the twelve hundred and sixty days, what more natural than to conceive that this vision was meant to prefigure the manifestation which Christ would make to the Church, of His power and faithfulness as her King, both before the commencement of these sad events, and during their continuance? Antichrist was to lay claim to the sovereignty of the world; he was to exact the homage of all who dwelt upon it, and deny to every one who should refuse to fall down and worship him a spot where to dwell while living, or rest when dead. How consolatory to the Church, in

these circumstances, to reflect that her Saviour had set His right foot on the sea, and His left on the earth, in token of His being Lord of all, and that He should yet assuredly wrest the dominion that was His own, out of the hand of the usurper! She knew that while Antichrist was laying both sea and land under tribute, and while both were groaning under his oppressions and his crimes, the “mighty angel” was standing over him, ready, at the proper time, to deal the blow which would utterly destroy him.

The Apocalypse contains two great subjects, and divides itself, in fact, into two great histories. The subject of the first history is the destruction of Imperial Rome. It begins with the sixth chapter, and ends with the ninth, and comprehends the Seven Seals and the first Six Trumpets. The subject of the second history is the destruction of Papal Rome. It begins with the Vision of the “Mighty Angel,” Revelation X., and runs on to the end of the book, or rather to the twentieth chapter. The tenth chapter is the preface to the grand subject of the second history—the Papacy. It is further remarkable that all the grand epochs in the Apocalypse are introduced by a personal appearance of Christ.

That which relates to the Seven Churches is introduced by His appearance in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, Revelation i. that which relates to Imperial Rome, by His appearance as the Lamb, Revelation v. 5 and that which relates to the Papacy, by His appearance as a mighty angel, Revelation x. These appearances do not symbolize events, they teach doctrines. They form, taken together, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ,” in His threefold character—*first*, as the Prophet of His Church, walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; *second*, as the Priest of His Church—the Lamb slain, and, by His death, obtaining power to assume the administration of Providence; and, *third*, as the King of His Church, standing on the sea and the dry land, possessing universal dominion, and exercising it in the Church’s behalf, first, by defending her from her enemies during the twelve hundred and sixty days; second, by destroying those enemies at the end of these days; and, third, by conferring upon her at last the kingdom.

Mr. Elliot would not hold that the first two appearances symbolize *primitive Christianity*. Why, then, should he hold that the third appearance symbolizes *revived Christianity*? Does it not strongly contravene all our ideas of regularity of plan, to find the symbolization of the Reformation from the apostasy coming before the apostasy itself—the cleansing of the Church before her defilement, and the Papal bulls before the Papacy?

All the appearances of Christ are suitable to the dispensations He comes to usher in; and how suitable His present appearance to the dispensation about to commence, we shall see when we explain—which we now proceed to do briefly—the particulars of the vision.

Power is the attribute by which this Angel is mainly characterized. He is the Mighty One. As God, He laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the workmanship of His hands. As Mediator, on “one that is mighty,” even on Him, was laid the burden of a world’s redemption; and, now resting from that work, in which He traveled in “the greatness of His strength,” he sits on the right hand of power in the heavens, and has all power in earth and heaven committed to Him. There is not a being in the world of mind, nor an element in the world of matter, over which He does not exercise control. The angels that excel in strength do His commandments throughout His vast dominions. Equally supreme is His sovereignty over our lower world. The lights of the sky shine at His command, the tempests of the air gather and burst at His bidding, the waves of the sea rise or are stilled at His voice, the armies of earth

are His, and, even when acting against Him, are in reality acting for Him. It is His to give stability and glory to thrones, or to overturn them; to crown hosts with victory, or to break them in pieces; and He wills their success or defeat, according as He sees it will subserve (serve to promote) the great ends of His reign and government. Greater still is His power, and wider still is His dominion. Even the spirits of the pit are not exempt from that tribute of service under which He lays the whole of creation. He displays His power over them, by restraining, directing, and overruling them, so that, with intentions the most opposite to His, they assist in the accomplishment of His everlasting and holy purposes. How many displays has He given of His great power in “the ancient days ”— in “the generations of old.” These the Church has commemorated in her songs. He it was, when she dwelt in the house of bondage, who “cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon.” He it was, when she was in captivity, who “sent to Babylon,” and “brought down all their nobles.” But among all the great acts which have marked the course of His administration, there is not one equal to that which He has reserved for its close. This shall eclipse all that went before it.

Egypt and Babylon were great oppressors; Rome, pagan in her latter days, was a greater oppressor than either; and the deliverance of the Church from their yoke was a signal mercy; but when did there arise an enemy like Antichrist? When before had the universe beheld such a fearful combination of policy and power, of hypocrisy and craft, of impiety and blasphemy?—an enemy who spake great words against the Most High, and did wear out the saints of the Most High, and thought to change times and laws; who waxed great even to the host of heaven, and did cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. And as the world never before beheld so formidable an enemy, so never before has it witnessed so tremendous an overthrow— an overthrow so signal, so unexpected, and so terrible, that the whole earth shall hear of it, and glorify the power and the holiness of Him who will inflict it.

“Clothed with a cloud.” This forms a beautiful connection between His appearances to the Church of the Old Testament, and the appearance He now symbolically made to the Church of the New Dispensation. Veiled in a cloud, He marched before His people through the wilderness. When He descended on Sinai, to receive the homage of that nation whose Sovereign He condescended to become, He said, “Lo! I come unto thee in a thick cloud.” When He signified that He would be present in His Church, He said that He would dwell in the “thick darkness.” Was that “darkness” symbolic? There can be little question that it was. It shadowed forth the nature of that dispensation which was one of type and shadow; revealing yet obscurely the work of Christ and the way of salvation. So the clouds that veiled the form of the “mighty angel” may be held as symbolising the character of the dispensation now to commence—a period of judgment to the world, and of trial to the Church.

As at a former period of judgment, so now, “He made darkness His secret place; His pavilion round about Him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.” How often should the Church, during this part of Christ’s administration—of all others the most mysterious, —have occasion to say, “Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.” “Clouds and darkness are round about Thee.”

“And a rainbow was upon His head.” With regard to this symbol, since the era of the Flood it has been used as the sign of a covenant. After the waters were assuaged, and the mountains and valleys had again looked forth, God said, “I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant

between me and the earth,” that “the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy the earth.” In the dark cloud now gathering above the Church, God had set His bow—the token of the covenant between Him and the Church, that the waters of wrath which were to roll over the world should not become a flood to destroy the Church. Under the shadow of that cloud, and in sight of those desolating torrents that were to fall from it, and to grow into a deluge that should sweep away empires and dynasties, the Church, undismayed, fixing her eye upon the Sign of the covenant, might sing, “God is our refuge and strength—a very pleasant help in trouble: therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” This sign, displayed on the bosom of the cloud, was as if God had said to her, “Fear not, little flock. In awful judgment am I come forth against the world; but the arm now stretched forth against it to destroy it is around thee, to protect thee. Though I should make a full end of all nations, I will not make a full end of thee.”

“His face was as it were the sun.” Throughout the whole of that dark night, whose twilight shadows were already falling, His face was to be hidden to the world, but His own should see it, and be refreshed and cheered thereby. The Church was to dwell in light, while the world should be shrouded in darkness. When the Church passed through the Red Sea, the pillar of cloud that followed her was a pillar of light to her, but of darkness to the Egyptians. That pillar was to take its stand once more between the sealed Church and the anti-christian world, and to perform its functions, as of old, in shedding light upon the one and darkness upon the other. The glory of Christ was seen, and His love enjoyed, even during the night of the Papacy, by His chosen witnesses. Though hidden from the world, yet not from Christ, some dwelt in the inaccessible cliffs, or in the deep valleys of Piedmont, covered by the friendly shadows of the overhanging mountains; others retired to the remote and uninhabitable wilds of the Hebrides; others found shelter in the convents of England and Germany; others lay hid in the caverns of Bohemia. But wherever their retreat, the Word of God lay open before them; and through its instrumentality they held communion with Christ. Thus the promise was fulfilled, as it has often been in days of darkness to the world—“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing in His wings.”

“And His feet as pillars of fire.” The “steps” of God are uniformly employed in the Old Testament to denote His dispensations of providence. Such is the undoubted meaning of the symbol here. It implies that the providential procedure of Christ, during the period now commencing, should combine, in no ordinary degree, power, glory, and terror. His feet were as pillars of fire—strong to carry forward His work, maugre (in spite of) all opposition, and to fulfill His own purposes amid the ruin of the plans and purposes of all others.

In the government of the world, as in its creation, He fainteth not, neither is weary. On He goes, conquering and treading into the dust all His enemies. His feet were as pillars of *fire*. Fire scorches and burns up: so would the judgments now to be introduced. They were in due time to scorch and burn up the Papacy, and to refine and purify the Church. She should be unmoved while the earth was trembling and its pillars giving way beneath the feet of this mighty angel. She should be built up by the same events which would break in pieces the world and its inhabitants.

Chapter VI. The Little Book

Revelation 10:2 And he had in his hand a **little book** open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

Revelation 10:8-10 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the **little book** which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the **little book**. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the **little book** out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

IN the hand of this mighty and glorious angel was a little book open. In the Old Testament we often find a book employed as the symbol of a *prophetic communication*. Such is its plain meaning in Ezekiel (chap. ii. and iii.); and here, we are persuaded, it denotes a *revelation additional or supplementary* to that of the regular Apocalyptic visions.

This idea accords well with the sequel. John was commanded to take the book out of the angel's hand, and eat it; and when he had done so, he found it sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly. No sooner had John digested the book, than he received a commission to prophesy again. This seems to connect the little book with the predictions that follow, and to lay a ground for the supposition that these predictions form the contents of the little book. It was pleasant to know these events, but painful to announce them to the Church, seeing to her they were tidings of sackcloth, and summoned her to conflict with a dual foe, the most terrible she had yet encountered—the Beast from the abyss, whose animating soul was the old Dragon.

The little book naturally suggests a larger book, with which it is contrasted. Had it symbolized the Bible, as some have thought, it would have been described simply as a *book*. But the little book (Greek word) in the angel's hand is obviously contrasted with the Lamb's book (Greek word). It is represented with great propriety as a little book, because the space of time comprehended in it is much shorter than that included in the other.

The Lamb's book comprehends the whole period from the opening of the first seal till the coming of Christ. The little book comprehends only twelve hundred and sixty years; or, to come nearer the truth, it comprehends only that part of these years which includes the rise and reign of Antichrist; for it leaves off his history when his overthrow commences—the point where the sealed roll takes it up, to carry it on under the symbol of the vials. Without this little book the sequel of the Apocalypse would scarce have been intelligible; for then we should have seen the third woe inflicted, without having had the object on whom that woe fell described.

During the infliction of the woes of the Fifth and Sixth Trumpets in the East, Popery was gradually rising in the West. On it the third woe was now to be inflicted; therefore it was necessary to retrograde

in the symbolic narrative, in order to bring up the history of affairs in the West from the time the western empire had been overthrown. This the little book does. It exhibits the rise of Antichrist, and his gradual ascent to a dominion till then unexampled, and which, over-topping all other authority and power, laid the earth, with its nations, prostrate at the foot of his throne.

Once, again, and a third time, are we told the story of that eventful period: first, in the witnesses who prophesy in sackcloth, are slain, and rise again; next, in the woman clothed with the sun, persecuted by a dragon, and obliged to flee into the wilderness; and yet again, in the history of the beast of the sea and the beast of the earth; which last grew to such a height of power, and waxed so self-willed and imperious, that he would permit no one to buy or sell who did not wear his mark in his forehead or in his right hand. Thus the prophecy is thrice given, and each time under different imagery; because God had established the thing, and would surely bring it to pass; and also, that opportunity might be given minutely to paint Antichrist in his character and actings, in order that the Church might know him when he appeared.

Such, then, is the subject of the little book. It supplies the history of some most important events which took place during the sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpets—that is, from the close of the fifth to the beginning of the sixteenth century—and the knowledge of which is essential to the right understanding of the closing acts in the great Apocalyptic drama. The little book extends from the beginning of the eleventh chapter to the close of the fourteenth, exclusive of those verses in the end of chapter eleven which pertain to the sounding of the seventh angel.

“He set His right foot upon the sea, and His left foot on the earth.” A striking representation this of His universal dominion as Mediator. The sea is the symbol of nations, particularly in a state of convulsion, and therefore may be here taken to denote secular society. The earth is society in its more settled state; but being that out of which the Papacy arose, it is sometimes put elliptically to denote the Papacy, and may be here taken to mean ecclesiastical society. As the world is composed of sea and dry land, so society is made up of secular and ecclesiastical. Christ is here seen standing on both—on the sea and the earth of the antichristian system—denoting His power over both civil and ecclesiastical society. He had His foot on the nations, and He had it planted, too, on Antichrist; and notwithstanding that for a long period he appeared to practice and prosper against God, Christ was all the while subserving His own purposes by him; and when these were accomplished, He trod him into the dust.

“And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth.” By the voice of Christ is meant the dispensations of His providence. By these He speaks to the world. His voice was loud, majestic, terrible, as when a lion roareth. The world resounded and shook, as does the wilderness when the lion roars; and its tribes became mute with terror. This denotes the awful character of those events He was now to introduce, and by which He was to rebuke the nations for their sin, and proclaim His power and justice. “And when He had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices”—(three Greek words) *the* seven thunders, and not simply seven thunders.

Various, and in some cases very extraordinary interpretations have been given of this symbol. The “seven thunders,” says Vitranga, mean the “seven crusades.” The explanation of Mr. Elliot is scarcely more satisfactory. These seven thunders symbolize, according to him, the excommunications which the Pope launched against the Reformers; and he rests not a little stress upon the fact that the Papal bulls, in

common phrase, are denominated *thunders*. But the rise of the beast had not yet been shown; and it is contrary to all propriety to introduce his thunders or roarings before he himself had received existence.

What, then, are we to understand by the seven thunders, and the command given to John to seal up what they uttered? Let us follow the leadings of the figure. The angel speaks with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth; and the seven thunders are the re-echo of the angel's voice. Similar in character to the original sound must be the reverberations. The voice of the angel announced the awful events of the coming dispensation, especially "the consummation;" and so, too, the seven thunders which were the echoes of that voice. They relate, we are strongly persuaded, to the seven last judgments by which the ruin of the Papacy was to be accomplished. They are the same as the plagues of the seven vials, and the words of the angel that follow give ground to conclude that as they correspond with the vials in number, so do they also in time; that, in fact, both relate to the same events. In short, they are the thunders of the third woe; and we are thus noways obscurely informed that the vengeance of that woe would be SEVENFOLD.

Why, then, was it said to John, "Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not?" Obviously because the events they announced were to be afterwards revealed to him in symbol under the seventh trumpet. They were sealed up now, because John had first to be shown the rise and reign of that terrible power on which the plagues which the thunders announced were to be inflicted. It would have violated the proprieties of the Apocalyptic drama to write the DOOM before the OBJECT of that doom had arisen. These disclosures were to be introduced at their proper place in the Apocalypse, with this difference, that whereas the thunders described—most probably without any figure or metaphor—the judgments by which Antichrist was to be overthrown, the revelation afterwards made of these things was given in symbolical language. If this be the right interpretation—which we are persuaded it is—then, although the things that were uttered by the seven thunders were sealed up at the time, they are now in course of being revealed.

The days in which we live are the days of the voice of the seventh angel; and the events of Providence are now publishing to all men what it was unlawful then for the pen of the apostle to write; and when the hour of Antichrist's overthrow shall have arrived, we shall know more fully still what these seven thunders uttered.

Chapter VII. The Oath Of The Angel

THE grandeur of the vision is heightened by the awfully solemn act which the august being, who stood with one foot planted on the sea, and the other on the earth, now proceeded with great impressiveness to perform.

“And the angel which I saw stand upon the earth and upon the sea lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.” (Revelation 10:6.)

Our translation does not give the precise import of the angel's oath -(three Greek words)- literally, “The time shall not be yet.” The angel refers plainly to the time when some event important in itself, and anxiously desired and expected by John, as representative of the Church, would happen, and of which the angel had just spoken, and been answered by the thunders which had disclosed the particulars of that great event. When, then, shall it be? “Not yet,” answers the angel; “but,” he continues, “in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets.” That it was some joyful event, to the Church at least, whatever its aspect to the world, is undoubted, from the terms which the angel employs when speaking about it—(the Greek word translated as gospel)—the same word which is employed to denote the preaching of the gospel. It had been declared as *good news*.

We learn further from the angel's oath, that the event had ere now been foretold. It had been declared—preached as good news—to the prophets. To which of the prophets? Is there any of them to whom we find a revelation made—a revelation on oath —of the consummation or the finishing of some grand epoch in God's government of the world? We find such a revelation made to Daniel, conveyed in terms and accompanied with imagery so very nearly identical with those of the vision before us, that we can have no doubt the allusion is to that prophet.

In the last chapter of Daniel's prophecy we find a time of trouble spoken of, “such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time.” (Dan. 12) But Michael should stand up, and Daniel's people should be delivered—“every one that should be found written in the book.”

In the hearing of Daniel, one made inquiry at

“the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and a half; and when He shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.” – Daniel 12:6-7

The epoch, which was to bear a complex character, inasmuch as it was to be a period of unexampled trouble, and of deliverance equally unexampled, was then far distant: accordingly Daniel is told, “The words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.” – Dan. 12:9

The vision of Daniel helps us to interpret that of John. In the words we have quoted, there is a reference made to a noted period in the Apocalypse—“ a time, times, and an half,” (Dan. 12:7) i.e. a year, two years, and half a year; i.e. twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days, or years. The period, we say, is a strongly marked one in the Apocalypse, seeing it embraces the reign of Antichrist. The angel affirms in his oath, that at the end of that period all these wonders of judgment and deliverance shall be accomplished. This enables us to determine what is here meant by the mystery of God, which shall be finished in the days of the voice of the seventh angel.

It also goes a great way to determine with certainty what the things were which the seven thunders uttered, but which John was forbidden to write. Seeing we are informed in Daniel that they were to take place at the close of the twelve hundred and sixty days, we infer that they were the seven last plagues, by which Antichrist was to be slowly consumed, and at length suddenly and fearfully destroyed.

The history of the “little book ” begins after the sounding of the fourth trumpet; from which period, speaking generally, we date the rise of Antichrist. The oath of the angel, touching the finishing of the mystery of God in His destruction, bore that it should not be yet. A full millennium had to intervene—from the fifth to the sixteenth century: not sooner should Antichrist reach his meridian. But having attained the height of his power, the seventh angel would sound,- and then, as sure as God possessed almighty power and eternal being, Antichrist should be destroyed.

There was a high propriety in the angel’s appeal to these two attributes of the Divine character. No power less than that which made the heavens and the earth could suffice to destroy so consolidated a system as the Papacy; and He only that liveth for ever could carry on through successive ages that series of events by which Antichrist should eventually be brought down. Nor was the propriety less of terming this great event the finishing of the mystery of God.

We know not how long God’s providence over the world, in its present state, shall last; but we know this—that the mystery of providence—that part of providence which, from the intricacies and perplexities with which it has abounded, has been a mystery to the wisest—shall come to a close when Antichrist falls. It is long since it was revealed to Daniel that there should be four grand epochs in the history of the world, marked off by the rise and fall of four great monarchies; that these should be preparatory to the kingdom of Christ; and that as soon as the fourth and last of these monarchies had fallen, that kingdom should be set up. The fall of the last monarchy was to form the completion of the scheme—the winding-up of the drama; and when finished, the admirable wisdom with which its plan had been arranged would be seen, and all the mystery in which, to human penetration, it had been shrouded during its progress, would be removed.

This long-predicted and much-desired event would happen, John was assured by the angel on oath, during the days of the voice of the seventh angel. Not longer was the patience of the Church to be tried, and not longer should Satan be permitted, by the instrumentality of his agents, to deceive and destroy the nations.

The seventh trumpet should sound the world's jubilee—the day of vengeance and the year of the redeemed. The idea that it is the day of judgment that is here announced is inadmissible; but in respect that the scenes by which the close of this part of God's providence shall be signalized will be second in importance and terror only to those scenes amid which time itself shall close, they are depicted by imagery taken from the last judgment. This period will be a harbinger of the day of judgment—in reality a judgment-day to the world. Accordingly, it is predicted, both in Daniel and elsewhere in the Apocalypse, that then the dead shall be raised; that is those whom Antichrist has slain shall stand up—not in their persons, but in their cause—that *their* innocence may be published, and *his* iniquity proclaimed, before he is cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

The vision ends with an intimation (announcement) to John to receive the book from the angel, and eat it. He did so; “And it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I had een it, my belly was bitter.” (Revelation 10:10b) To eat the book denoted the exercise of his mind respecting it. To understand a matter at once important and profound is pleasant—sweet as honey; but, alas! the book contained heavy tidings to the Church: it announced a period of twelve hundred and sixty years of sorrow to her, and of triumph to her foes: “And as soon as I had eaten (understood) it, my belly was bitter.”

Once more was the voice of prophecy to be heard in the world before it should become silent for ever. “Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.” (Revelation 10:11) John was the last of the prophets, and this was the last prophecy. It respected the Church's last enemy; and as soon as this prediction should be published, the volume of prophecy would be closed. John was not in person to publish these sayings to the world. He was a prisoner in Patmos, kept there by the tyrant who now governed the world. But though he had been permitted that very day to leave the shores of the lonely isle, he was too full of years and sufferings to journey through the countries, and proclaim what was now made known to him. He was soon by death to rejoin in glory that Lord whose chosen and best beloved companion he had been during his humiliation on earth. But, inspired as he was, to write the visions of Patmos, he is to this hour prophesying before peoples and nations. By the Church John has ever been held to be one of the greatest of those prophets which, though dead, yet speak unto her.

How infallibly certain is it that Popery shall be brought down! God has not only promised, not only prophesied, He has sworn to overthrow it. At the commencement of that grand scheme of Providence which embraces the four monarchies, the angel who stands upon the sea and the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that after a time, times, and an half, the mighty fabric of commingled tyranny and idolatry, symbolized by the Image, should be broken in pieces. And again, during the existence of the last monarchy, when the eighth and last head of the Beast was on the point of making his appearance, the same oath was repeated in the same solemn manner. The oath of the angel must be fulfilled, oppose it whoso list. (archaic word for wish, choose) Nor is God slack concerning His oath. Our impatience often provokes us to think that the vision tarries—that events pass slowly over the stage of time. We measure the duration they occupy by our own little span. We are like one who views the motions of the great bodies of the firmament at the distance of the earth, and to whom they seem to creep slowly across the sky, whilst, were he nearer, he would be dazzled by the rapidity and irresistible force with which they move onward. So would we judge of the events of

Providence, were we to measure their progress by the standard here set up by the angel—God's eternity.

Twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days have been allotted to Antichrist. Climbing higher than mortal ever climbed before, he will remain, for that period, the wonder and the terror of earth. But to that term not a day, not an hour, shall be added. When it expires his knell will be rung, and a universe shall shout over his fall.

Chapter VIII. The Measuring Of The Temple

WHEN we open the eleventh chapter of the-Apocalypse we find ourselves in presence of a new and striking symbolization. Before us rises the temple on Mount Moriah. We are shown the court of burnt-offering within the sacred edifice, and the spacious outer court which runs round it on the outside. At the altar is a little company who offer sacrifice to Jehovah. But while this peaceful scene is proceeding within, a frightful tumult rages in the outer court. A promiscuous crowd have burst into it; and although they profess to have a relation to the temple, for they are here in its courts, they neither show reverence for it, nor do they offer worship to God. On the contrary, they proclaim their essential paganism, by profaning with their noise, and defiling with their impieties the sacred precincts within which they are assembled.

And now comes the Apocalyptic seer, with a measuring-rod in his hand, and he proceeds to measure the temple, and them that worship therein. In other words, he draws a line of separation and protection between the worshipers, and the profane and disorderly crowd in the outer court. "Henceforth," as if John had said, passing on with his measuring-rod all round the edifice, "henceforth these shall be the limits of what is holy." The scene is manifestly symbolic. It is a picture of times that were approaching. Let us investigate its import.

We here behold John entering on the execution of the task assigned to him. "Thou shalt prophesy again," said the angel to him. Having digested the contents of the little book he begins to prophesy; but like Ezekiel, who, having eaten the roll, and been commanded to prophesy to the house of Israel, began to do so by signs, so John opens his new prophetic mission by the exhibition of signs.

The first and most prominent sign before us is the temple. It cannot be the literal temple which John is commanded to measure: for the "holy and beautiful house" in which his fathers had praised God was now razed to the ground, and the Roman plowshare had been drawn across its site.

In the Old Testament, to which we must go for the key of the symbol, the temple and Mount Zion are used as types of the gospel and the gospel dispensation. The coming of the gospel dispensation, and the privileges and blessings to be enjoyed under it, are all shadowed forth in the prophets by imagery borrowed from the temple. The symbolization then carries us into gospel times, and puts us down in presence of the gospel Church. Whatever we see John do in the case of the type we are to regard as prophetic of an analogous event to happen in the case of the antitype—the gospel Church.

The instrument which John wields is a "reed like unto a rod." "There was given me a reed" (Greek word) – Revelation 11:1. The (Greek word) or reed was put to three uses among the Jews—a walking-staff, a measuring-rod, and a pen. Its size varied according to its use. To show in which of these senses the (Greek word) or reed is here to be taken, it is added, that it was "like unto a rod." It was a measuring-reed, then, that was now given to John.

As there is so obvious a reference here to the plan and arrangements of the ancient Jewish temple, it becomes necessary, in order to the clear apprehension of what John now did, and the precise

significancy of the act, to describe briefly the arrangements of the ancient temple. The sacred buildings occupied the summit of the hill. In the center was a noble and spacious edifice, divided into two chambers—the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies—with a court in front, in which stood the altar of burnt-offering. This formed strictly the temple. Running round it, in an oblong form, was the court of the Israelites; and, running round it again, was the spacious court of the proselytes to the Jewish religion. John was commanded to measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. It is not said whether the court of the Israelites was included or left out in the measurements of John. We are disposed to think that it was left out, and that nothing was included by the measuring-reed of John but the sacred buildings, with their three-fold division of holy of holies, holy place, and altar-court where the priests and such of the people as had sacrifices and offerings to present were assembled.

But it is of more importance to inquire what the action symbolized. Sometimes the measuring-rod is employed to denote construction, as in the case of Ezekiel (chap. 40:3, *et seq.*), where the angel uses his measuring-reed to mete out the proportions of a new temple to be erected. Sometimes it is the symbol of destruction. In 2 Kings 21:13, and elsewhere, it is so used: a part was to be preserved, and a part was to be destroyed. It is plain that here the measuring-reed is used in a sense somewhat analogous to its last mentioned meaning. That it was not used for the purpose of construction, is very evident; for the temple measured was represented as already built. It was used for the purpose of dividing between what of that temple was to be kept holy, and what was to be accounted profane. That this was the design of the measuring is certain, from the reason assigned: “For it” (the outer court) “is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.” The action gave warning that a great apostasy was to take place, and that the limits of the true Church were, from this time forward, to be greatly curtailed.

John now predicts in symbol what Paul had already foretold in plain language. “Let no man deceive you by any means,” says he, in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, *et seq.*; “for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

This passage, is the key to the right interpretation of the measuring of the temple. The vision is evidently placed at the commencement of the forty-two months; for why was the temple measured, but that its inviolability might be secured during the time—the forty-two months—that the outer court would be trodden under foot of the Gentiles? If from the page of the Apocalypse we lift our eyes to the page of history, and survey Christendom at the beginning of the fifth century, what a sad verification of the symbolic foreshadowings of John! We behold the great predicted apostasy, or “falling away” begun. It sets in with the steadiness and irresistible strength of an overflowing tide. The professors of the gospel are divided into two classes, and the distinction between them is marked and deep, and destined every century to become more so. The vast majority retain nothing of Christianity but the name; in heart, in life, and in creed they are manifestly pagan. The disproportion between the two in point of numbers, as in point of character, is steadily progressive. The one company, the evangelical, grow smaller every age, and at last drop well-nigh altogether out of view: the other prodigiously augment (larger); and by and by appear to cover the whole face of Christendom. The area once occupied by the

gospel, “the Holy City,” they tread under foot by their persecutions, and defile, by their idolatrous fanes (church buildings) and ceremonies. Paganism, in the guise of Christianity, has a second time triumphed.

During the fifth century the Church underwent a great change for the worse in her doctrine and worship, and, of course, also in her practice. The great body of her members were grossly ignorant, and her clergy wallowed in wealth and luxury. Magnificent churches were erected, in which ministers officiated attired in richly decorated vestments. True piety lay buried under a load of pompous rituals, and burdensome and superstitious ceremonies. Pilgrimages began to be made to the tombs of martyrs, where tapers (candles) were kept burning at mid-day. Miracles were wrought by the efficacy of relics; the saints and the Virgin were invoked; and, amongst other pernicious inventions, fatal to morality as well as to religion, the confessional was introduced; and the pagan doctrine of the purification of departed souls by fire was more amply explained and confirmed in this century than it had previously been. The grand doctrines of Christianity were lost, especially those pertaining to the great atonement and the one Mediator.

The true temple, which God had pitched, and not man, was abandoned: the true altar was forsaken—not, indeed, entirely—a few there were whom the growing corruptions and superstitions had not carried away. These now formed the true Church—they were the altar worshipers; but they formed no greater a proportion to the multitudes which filled the courts without—Christians in name, heathens in reality—than did the priests at the altar of old to the assembled congregation of Israel that thronged the courts without. Thus the great apostasy rose, whose swelling tide lifted the “Son of Perdition” to his lofty seat in the temple of God, where through successive ages he showed himself as God, by arrogating the powers and assuming the names and attributes of God.

In Vitringa’s exposition of the passage we, on the whole, thoroughly concur. “The interior temple,” says he, “means true Christians; the exterior, false Christians, heretics, &c.; the altar means Christ; measuring the temple and worshipers is scrutinizing the character of Christians, real or professed; the casting out of the outer court is excommunicating false professors; the heathen who are to tread down the temple and city are Christians in name only (and therefore called heathen), who are to form an external Church, and have dominion over it, suppressing at the same time the true worshipers of God, until at last God shall exclude them from even the external pale (area they are allowed in) of His Church.”

The Gentiles were not merely to possess the court which was without the temple;—they were to tread under foot the holy city. Jerusalem is here used as the symbol of the Christian Church. The term “treading under foot” denotes the subjection in which the Church would be held, and the indignities with which she would be treated. Like Jerusalem when taken by the Chaldeans, or when sacked by the Romans, its wall broken down, its stately palaces demolished, and the foe walking in triumph over its ruins, the Church of God was to exhibit during this long and calamitous period a spectacle of desolation.—Her rights and privileges were to be taken from her; her ordinances were to be profaned; her members were to be persecuted and slain; and her adorable Head was to be affronted by having His office arrogated by His pretended Vicar. These oppressions she should suffer forty-two months, which is the precise length of time that the Witnesses were to prophesy in sackcloth; the only difference being, that the period of the witnesses is given in *days*, and that of the treading under foot of the outer court by the Gentiles, in *months*. This to our mind is completely satisfactory that the profanation of the outer

court and the prophesying of the witnesses were to be contemporaneous; and that it is the same event that is prefigured by both symbols—the apostasy of the heathenish and persecuting Church of Rome, and the indignities and oppressions to be endured by the true Church during the continuance of that apostasy.

We cannot but admire the appropriateness of the symbols, and the exact and lively picture which they exhibit of the leading events of the grand apostasy. John receives a measuring-reed; the angel commands him to rise and measure the temple. He does so. On the authority of his Divine commission, and in the application of a Divine rule, he draws a line of separation between the pure and holy worshippers at the altar, and the unclean and idolatrous multitude in the outer court. We behold Christendom divided into two ecclesiastical confederacies, vastly dissimilar in point of numbers, as well as in point of character. During one period of the forty-two prophetic months we behold the one company grown so small, that the inaccessible cliffs and caves of the Piedmontese Alps sufficed for their dwelling; and though driven by the rage of men to dwell there, yet they were beloved of God, and enjoyed access to Him through the one Intercessor— kings and priests unto God; while the other company were so numerous, that the wide plains and populous cities of the rest of Europe could scarce contain them. John, in measuring the temple, acted, we have said, on a Divine commission, and by the application of a Divine rule; plainly though symbolically teaching us, that everything about the Church—her government, her worship, the admission of her members—is to be regulated by the Word of God.

Civil rulers have sometimes arrogated the power of making laws for her, and of saying who were to be admitted and who excluded from her offices and privileges. The self-righteous pride and the superstition of men have led them to invent pompous rites and burdensome ceremonies; but when brought to the test of Scripture—the rule which Christ has put into the hands of His servants, for the purpose of regulating the affairs of His house on earth—they are discovered to be unwarranted and superstitious; they must be discarded; and such as persist in the observance of them must be cast out of the Church as profane.

The measuring of the temple forms a grand epoch in the Apocalypse, as it did in the history of the world; for now the Man of Sin was to be revealed. A dark night was at hand—darker than any that had overtaken the world hitherto, and bringing with it to the Church sorer trials and more protracted sufferings than any she had ever passed through. At this crisis of the drama the great Administrator of it appears before John. He is seen encompassed with all the glorious symbols of universal dominion, almighty power, absolute unchangeableness, and covenant faithfulness. How opportune this revelation of Himself. He comes to comfort His Church, by giving her assurance of His presence during the trials of her protracted night. He comes to bid her be of good cheer; that, this last trial over, all would be over; and, to show that the mystery of Providence was now drawing to a close, and that it should assuredly be finished in the destruction of that enemy who was now on the eve of being revealed, he renews the oath which had been sworn in the hearing of Daniel, at the beginning of that course of mystery, so long before, and which bore upon the certain overthrow of that great foe. He comes to deliver his last prophecy to the Church, and to commission his last prophet to the nations.

What a seasonable appearance! How like to His last interview with His disciples before His first departure! The language of this manifestation was in effect the same as that which fell from His blessed

lips on that memorable occasion: “A little while, and ye shall not see me. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. (John 16:20) I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.” (John 16:22) The cloud was again to receive Him out of their sight. It was expedient that He should go away. He had not yet brought to a close that wonderful series of glorious dispensations which was to introduce the final triumph and universal establishment of His Church. But the end was nigh.

One other dispensation, more full of terror to His enemies, of mercy to His friends, and of mystery to both, than any that had preceded it; and then, oh what a blessed realization of what Daniel had seen in the night-visions!—

“One like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” – Daniel 7:13,14

Chapter IX. The Two Witnesses

PLANTED by apostles, and watered by the labours of evangelists and pastors, Christianity grew and spread widely in the Gentile world. The legions from the banks of the Tiber gained victories less illustrious than the conquests achieved by the fishermen from the shores of Gennesareth, and the empire of Caesar was less extensive than the dominion of Christ. The nations inhabiting from India on the east, to Britain on the west, owned the truth, and submitted to the sway of the gospel. There were few places throughout this extensive tract where Christian congregations were not formed. The name of Jesus was known even on the frontier of China. Scattered throughout the continent of India, as well as in the islands of its Archipelago, were numerous companies of disciples.

The gospel had been planted, too, in those lands which were the birthplace of the human family; and it flourished upon the ruins of the Babylonian and Medo-Persian monarchies. The deserts of the sons of Ishmael, from the boundary of which the arms of Greece and Rome had recoiled, were subjugated by the cross. Amid the moldering (crumbling) temples of Egyptian mythology arose Christian sanctuaries. The gospel spread throughout Asia Minor, and the superstition and licentiousness of the region were restrained; it entered Greece, and its philosophy grew into disrepute; it was carried to Rome, and its idols were dethroned.

From Rome it spread northward, taming the fierceness and enlightening the darkness of barbarous nations; so goodly were the limits of the Church, so vast the territory she occupied. During these ages innumerable souls were converted, and passed to glory. The righteousness of Zion had gone forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles had seen her righteousness, and all kings her glory, and she was called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord had named.

But the faith which had been spread over so many lands, and received the homage of so numerous nations, was now to recede from its ancient limits, leaving the space it had filled covered once more with heathenism, under the name of Christianity. What a fearful fulfillment of the Apocalyptic prophecy given in the measuring of the temple, and the altar-worshipers, and the casting out of the outer court, that it might be trodden under foot of the Gentiles! The inquiry which must have immediately suggested itself to the mind of John, when the fate of the outer court was disclosed to him, could be only this: Will the apostasy be universal? Shall none be spared to offer true worship and bear faithful witness for God in these evil times? Already John's anxiety on this point had been set at rest; for in virtue of the same commission by which he had cast out the outer court, he had included the temple, with the select company that ministered at the altar. This implied their preservation during the coming eventful epoch.

But the angel now proceeds to communicate fuller particulars. Under the history of the witnesses—for, while taken in connection with the temple they are priests, taken in connection with an apostate world they are witnesses—a succinct and clear account is given of the struggle which the followers of the

Lamb should be called to maintain, during the forty-two months, with an ungodly and antichristian world; the persecutions that should befall them in the maintenance of their testimony; their almost total suppression, together with the truth to which they had testified; their sudden and miraculous revival at the very moment that their enemies were rejoicing on account of their death, and their public assumption to a state of dignity and power.

Thus we have the leading events of the twelve hundred and sixty days epitomized in the history of the witnesses, and presented in figures comparatively plain, that the more highly-wrought symbolical prefigurations that were to come after might be the more easy of interpretation.

“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.” – Revelation 11:3

God left not the old pagan apostasy without a witness, neither would he leave the antichristian apostasy without a witness. “I will give unto my two witnesses,” for so runs the original. The question is, what shall be given? The implied answer of our translation is, we think, the right one—“Power.” The power is spiritual; power to perceive the truth, and reject the errors by which so many would be misled; power to cleave to the truth, and resist the temptations before which the majority would fall; power to proclaim the truth, and, by doing so, to convert others who might stand in their room and maintain their testimony when they were called away, so that the line of witnesses should not be cut off, but might run continuously on till better times should come. Individually they would be removed by death or persecution, but, as a body, the witnesses would be inviolable.

Their work is next defined—“They shall prophesy.” Prophesying means here, as in many other passages of the New Testament, every kind of preaching by Divine aid. The prophesying of the witnesses was to consist, not in the revelation of new truths, but in the exposition of old ones. They were to receive and profess the whole body of doctrine revealed by Christ and His apostles; and, in doing so, they would testify against and condemn the Romish apostasy. Hence the name given to them—“Witnesses.” The name is borrowed from the Old Testament—“Ye are my witnesses,” said God to the ancient Israel. The honorable office of Israel—as a nation to whom had been committed the sacred oracles—was to stand before the other nations of the earth, and testify to the fact that Jehovah was the one true God, and that they were no gods that were made by men’s hands. The same honorable office was to be assigned to the little company before us. They were to stand before the antichristian nations, and testify to the fact that Christ was the one only Intercessor. As God termed the ancient Israelites “my witnesses,” because they witnessed for the supremacy of God the Father, in opposition to the heathen deities, so here the angel, that is, Christ, calls these men “my witnesses,” because they were to witness in behalf of the supremacy of God the Son, in opposition to the antichristian deities; and especially were they to witness for Him as the one Intercessor, in opposition to the numerous intercessors of the Romish Church.

The guise in which they were to discharge their office is specially marked. “They shall prophesy clothed in sackcloth.” This is no mere stroke of coloring, introduced for the purpose of deepening the dark picture. It is a most significant symbol. It denotes the deep distress and mourning of the true Church during the whole of that period.

It was a thankless office which they were to discharge; and rough and cruel treatment was all the recompense that they would receive at the hands of man. The thought of the Church of God lying waste, and their brethren slain, would oppress their hearts with a continual sorrow. Denied all participation in honors and offices—deprived sometimes of their natural rights—hated of all men for His name's sake whose witnesses they were—and banished from society—they would exhibit the same picture of mourning as the ancient prophets, of whom it had been recorded, "They wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy); they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." The attire of the witnesses presents a striking contrast to that of the harlot. During the period in question she was arrayed in scarlet and fine linen—they in sackcloth.

They were to prophesy clothed in sackcloth, many days. The exact number is determined—twelve hundred and sixty. These are not literal, but symbolical days, and denote years. The question touching the commencement of these days, which determines, of course, their expiration, is one of the most famous in the whole field of Apocalyptic inquiry. Of that we shall speak afterwards. At present we shall merely indicate the principle on which our interpretation of prophetic time proceeds. Scarce any principle is more clearly taught in the Word of God.

A day for a year is a mode of symbolic speech which appears to have been in use in very early times. The institution of the Sabbatical year was given in these terms. In Leviticus xxv., that year is spoken of as if it were one day, and termed the Sabbath of the land. When a mystic character was given to the prophet Ezekiel, and he was called, as the substitute of the house of Israel, to bear their iniquity, the length of the infliction was determined on this principle—a day for a year.

Ezekiel 4:5.6 For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.

God Himself announces the principle on which that arrangement proceeded. "I have appointed thee each day for a year." Like the prophet Ezekiel, these mystic witnesses were substituted for the Church, and called to prophesy, clothed in sackcloth, during as many days as she was afterwards to do years.

We have had experience, moreover, of the truth of this principle. Daniel's prophecy of seventy weeks completely establishes it. Between the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, and the death of the Messiah, seventy weeks were to intervene. In seventy weeks there are four hundred and ninety days. And between the edict of Artaxerxes Longimanus and the death of Christ there were four hundred and ninety years (Editor: 490 – 3.5 years because Jesus was crucified in the midst of the 70th Week). In the prophecy before us, then, we are to substitute years for days. Our authority for doing so is clear.

During the long period of twelve hundred and sixty years was the Church to prophesy, that is, she was to testify against the apostasy of Rome doctrinally by professing the opposite truths, and practically by separating from her communion (fellowship); and she was to prophesy in sackcloth, that is, in the endurance of all the sacrifices and sufferings to which her faithfulness might expose her. Chased beyond the pale of civilized life, the confessors of the truth would pass their lives in hunger and thirst,

in nakedness and reproach; and would often close them, as a testimony for the gospel, in prison or on the rack, at the burning stake, or amid the horrors of the scaffold.

The next question of importance is, Who are the witnesses? This part of the Apocalypse has been the subject of boundless conjecture. These interpretations, incongruous and irrelevant in many instances, we do not stay to enumerate; for it is unnecessary to state what it would be useless to refute. The character of the witnesses may be determined with certainty from the nature of their work. The matter of their witness-bearing was the TRUTH. The party for whom this testimony was borne was Christ —“my witnesses.” The party against whom it was borne was Antichrist. Whom, in that case, can the witnesses be, but those, in whatever land, who, during the period of Antichrist, professed the truth of Jesus, and testified against the idolatries of Rome?

But why only two? “I will give power unto my two witnesses.” We prefer the more common, because the more natural explanation. Two witnesses were enough in law to substantiate any fact. “At the mouth of two witnesses shall every word be established.” But they were the smallest number that could do so. And, therefore, when we are told that TWO witnesses should prophesy, we are given to understand that such a number would be preserved from apostasy as should be competent to condemn the Romish idolators, and leave them without excuse. And when we are told that only two witnesses should prophesy, we are to infer that the number would not be greater than was absolutely requisite to give credibility to their testimony, and to take away all reasonable ground of excuse from the apostate nations. Few will maintain that individuals are intended: two literal men would have been far too few to bear testimony with effect against the apostasy of a world. Organized societies must be meant. It is not persons, but Churches, that constitute the two witnesses. And if we look to the history of the period, we find a small but competent number, both in the East and in the West, who continued all along to testify against the prevailing corruptions.

We are disposed to concur in the opinion of Mr. Elliot, Mr. Faber, and others, that *the reference here is to the Eastern and Western Churches*. The former has, with great historical research, and with complete success, traced a succession of witnesses in both Churches, from the close of the sixth century till the Reformation. Speaking of the eastern Christians, and showing their claim to be regarded as one of the two Apocalyptic witnesses, Mr. Elliot (“*Horae Apocalypticae*,” pp. 277—287) remarks—

“First, then, in regard both of ministers and congregations, the teachers and the taught, it is notorious that they bore a continuous and unvarying protest against those grosser superstitions of saint-mediatorship, image-worship, and other kinds of idolatry, through which the so-called Christians of the Roman world had degenerated into Gentiles of the outer court; and against which, consequently, witnesses answering to those of the Apocalypse must needs have testified.”

“Second, though before the eyes of men the self-styled Catholics of the eastern and western Roman world seemed to constitute Christendom— though they filled, as it were, the whole *visible* temple—yet did these Paulikians” (the name given to the eastern Christians) “regard and speak of them throughout as those who belonged not to the Church of Christ, but, being apostates, belonged rather to the *Gentile* or *outer* court. Small as their numbers were, yet they called their assemblies the *Catholic Church*, and said, ‘We are Christians, you are Romans.’”

“Thirdly, as the Apocalyptic witnesses are said to have observed the *commandments and Word of God*, so the adherence of the Paulikian dissentients to the gospel word, as the alone ground of their faith, subject of their preachings and teachings, and rule of life, is all along marked most strongly.”

“Fourthly, it is obvious that the *privations and sufferings* entailed on them by their profession of faith were such as to make the mourning garb of sackcloth their fit clothing; as also that under them they exhibited a *self-denial, unwearied zeal, constancy, and fortitude*, through life, and unto death, just as if there was some superhuman power sustaining them; even a power such as St. John was told of in those words of the Apocalypse, ‘I will give *power* to my two witnesses.’”

In these particulars we discern in this body of Christians the essential character of witnesses. They are divinely illumined. They see what has been hid from the wise and prudent of the world—the Truth to wit. They are divinely upheld: for they fulfill their testimony despite the numbers and power arrayed against them. And in the reproach, and buffetings, and death to which their testimony exposes them, we recognize what it had been foretold would be their distinguishing attire, their canonical vestments, if we may so speak—the robe of sackcloth.

Chapter X. The Western Witnesses, or The Waldenses

THE growing light of historical research makes it everyday more probable, if not, indeed, certain, that the “Church of the Valleys” dates from Apostolic times. The refugees from pagan persecution were its first founders. Then it was that this lamp was kindled, and ever and anon, as the ages pass by, we catch sight of its ray streaming down from the mountain-tops, where Providence found for it an asylum. This Church is seen in the third century by the light of its martyr-fires. It comes before us in the fourth, in connection with the zeal and diligence of some of its pastors, and again, in the fifth, by the refuge which it offered to the confessors, whom persecution compelled to flee from Africa. In the ninth century, its existence is attested by Claude of Turin, whose oversight it enjoyed. Nay, onward to the tenth century, we can trace its existence, for it is a well-established fact that even in this century there were Churches of comparatively pure creed, not in the valleys of the Alps only, but also on the great plains of Piedmont and Lombardy at their feet.

And when at length Rome had established her dominion over the north of Italy, and the whole peninsula was subject to the Pope, not utterly extinct was this Church. In the center of the thick darkness, which lay wide upon the face of Europe there was a little speck of light. God did not leave Himself without a witness. Entering into her “chambers,” and shutting the “doors” of the eternal hills about her, this Church kept alive her lamp. True, its light was enjoyed only by those favored few “redeemed from the earth,” who dwelt here, in the very midst of their enemies, yet defended from them by bulwarks of impregnable rock and eternal ice; but that light was as a “bow” set in “the cloud,” which gave assurance that God had not forgotten His covenant with His Church.

Would the reader like to see those famous valleys, where abode this venerable and Apostolic Church, and where she endured her great fight of afflictions, let him, in fancy, accompany us thither. Advancing from the south, he is traversing, we shall suppose, the plain of Piedmont. Right in front of him is the great chain of the Alps. The sight is one of the most glorious on earth. From where day opens to where it sets, the mountains run on in a line of continuous towering grandeur. Of the summits which form this goodly rampart, some shoot up spiky as needles, others rise strong and massy as castles, crowned with the snows of a thousand winters, and when the rising or setting sun strikes full upon them, they show like torches, and burn like a wall of fire along the sky.

This region, of more than historic renown, we enter by a long, low gorge—its portal. The valleys open before us, carpeted with meadows, and walled in by rocks and great mountains, whose sides are clothed with vineyards, and great forests of the chestnut tree. Thickly sprinkled over their surface are the villages and chalets of some twenty thousand vine dressers and herdsmen. Simple in their manners, and industrious in their habits, of pure morals and evangelical faith, they are here dwelling amid the hills which their fathers glorified by their deeds, hallowed by their prayers, and watered with the blood of martyrdom.

The valleys are seven in number, and are placed, as regards one another, so as to make the region unique; in fact, a network of fortresses, lying enclosed within a common wall of mountains, and accessible only by a common door, which a handful of men could shut against thousands. It is impossible to survey the region, and fail to perceive the traces of design and plan so manifestly stamped upon it.

The great Architect reared it for a moral end. He sank deep its foundations in the earth, He reared high its bulwarks, He stored it with corn, and wine, and oil; and, placing there the ark of His Truth, He gave it to the Waldenses, and bade them be brave, and keep their mountain citadel inviolate, and their lamp unquenched against a world in arms.

And nobly did they discharge their trust. The darkness gathered; one furious tempest after another burst upon them, but they watched around their Lamp, and there it burned, while the rest of the world lay buried in night.

Wide Christendom around was desecrated by idolatrous temples and pagan rites; in the valleys of the Waldenses mass was never sung, and in the churches of the Waldenses no image was ever set up. Knowing that God is a Spirit, they worshipped Him in spirit and in truth. Their territory was reserved, like the inner temple, for the worship of the Lamb, when the outer court was cast out to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles. The period of their active war against Rome was not less than five centuries. They endured not fewer than thirty persecutions. These were inflicted by the swords of the kings of France and Savoy, but always at the instigation of the Pope. Never did tempest burst over their mountains, but it had its rise in the Vatican.

With regard to their claim to rank as one of the two Apocalyptic witnesses, we may quote the following passages from the “*Horae Apocalypticae*” (pp. 350—355, Third Ed., 1847):—

“With regard to the *doctrine* of the Waldenses, their own writings offer us, of course, the best evidence. In the former” (the Noble Lesson) “written, as it has appeared, within some twenty years of 1170, the following doctrines are drawn out with much simplicity and beauty. The origin of sin in the fall of Adam, its transmission to all men, and the offered redemption from it through the death of Jesus Christ; the union and co-operation of the three Persons of the blessed Trinity in man’s salvation; the obligation and spirituality of the moral law under the gospel; the duties of prayer, watchfulness, self-denial, unworldliness, humility, love, as ‘the way of Jesus Christ;’ their enforcement by the prospect of death, and judgment, and the world’s near ending, by the narrowness, too, of the way of life, and the fewness of those that find it, as also by the hope of coming glory at the judgment and revelation of Jesus Christ;—all these points, I say, of Christian doctrine are drawn out in the Noble Lesson very simply and beautifully. Besides which, we find in it a protest against the Romish system generally, as one of soul-destroying idolatry, against masses for the dead, and therein against the whole doctrine of purgatory, against the system of the confessional, and asserted power of the priesthood to absolve from sin; this last point being insisted on as the most deadly point of heresy; its origin referred to the mercenariness of the priesthood, and their love of money; the iniquity further noticed of the Romish persecutions of good men, and teachers that wished to teach the way of Jesus Christ; and the suspicion half hinted, and apparently formed, that though a *personal Antichrist might be*

expected, yet Popery itself might very possibly be one form of Antichrist. Such is the doctrine of the Noble Lesson.

In the Treatise of Antichrist, we advance to an admirable and direct identification of the *antichristian* system of the *Papacy*, which, though written after the period we are passing under review—perhaps in the last quarter of the fourteenth century—may yet be fairly presumed to exhibit the opinions of the Vaudois of the thirteenth century on the subject; they having embraced, as we know, at the least as early as that period, the view of the Papacy and Roman Church being the very Babylon and harlot of the Apocalypse.”

The following is an outline of the views held on this subject by the Waldensian Church:—

“That the *Papal* or *Romish* system was that of *Antichrist*, which, from infancy in apostolic times, had grown gradually, by the increase of its constituent parts, to the stature of a full grown man; that its prominent characteristics were, to defraud God of the worship due to him, rendering it to creatures, whether departed saints, relics, images, or Antichrist, i.e. the antichristian body itself; to defraud Christ, by attributing justification and forgiveness to Antichrist’s authority and works, to saints’ intercessions, to the merit of men’s own performances, and to the fire of purgatory; to defraud the Holy Spirit, by attributing regeneration and sanctification to the *opus operatum* (I borrow the Tridentine term used afterwards) of the two sacraments; that the origin of this antichristian religion was the covetousness of the priesthood; its tendency, to lead men away from Christ; its essence, a vain ceremonial; its foundation, the false notions of grace and forgiveness.”

Such was the noble testimony of the Waldenses; and how nobly they maintained it, history testifies. How marvelous the ways of God! How astonishing His power and faithfulness in preserving His truth in the worst of times! When all the dwellers on the plains and in the cities of the Roman world were bowing the knee, and saying, “Who is like unto the Beast,” in the midst of the earth—in the very center of Europe—rose a temple not made with hands, in which the true God was worshiped. In the midst of their myriad foes an asylum was opened, where the witnesses prophesied a thousand two hundred and threescore days. At the heart of the great Apostasy a Tabernacle was pitched, within which, kindled by no human hand, and fed by no earthly oil, there burned a Lamp of blessed light, from one dark century to another, till its rays melted at last into the morning of the Reformation.

Chapter XI. Avenging Power of the Witnesses

THE office of the two witnesses is still further symbolically described. It is not unimportant to attend briefly to the more noticeable points in this description. Chapter xi. 4— “These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.”

The station of the witnesses was a very dignified one: they stood before the God of the earth. Not less dignified and excellent was their office. They were “the two olive-trees”—the only repositories of the true oil; they were “the two candlesticks”—the only dispensers of the true light.

Let us consider them first as the two olive-trees. Of all the valuable trees with which Palestine abounded, the most precious was the olive. Not to speak of its numerous commercial and domestic uses, its oil alone was permitted to be burned in the temple lamps. Seeing this tree was devoted to a sacred use, it may well be used as a symbol of persons in sacred office. The pastors of the Church are here intended.

There is an evident allusion to the vision exhibited to Zechariah, at a period of great depression in the history of the Old Testament Church. The prophet was shown a candlestick, all of gold, with seven lamps burning on its branches. By the side of the candlestick stood two olive-trees, whose oil flowed into the seven lamps, and kept them alive. The prophet had the vision interpreted to him, and was given to understand that the candlestick was the symbol of the Old Testament Church—the lamp of Divine truth preserved by God in the midst of heathenism; and that the two olive-trees which supplied that candlestick with oil were “the two anointed ones (sons of oil) that stand by the Lord of the whole earth”—meaning the prophets and priests who communicated the truth to the Church of old.

The same symbols are employed in the vision of the Apocalyptic witnesses, and, of course, are to receive the same interpretation. The two candlesticks are plainly the Churches—the Eastern and Western, we have supposed—preserved by God’s power and mercy during the period of Antichrist. Zechariah saw seven lamps; John, at a former stage of the Apocalypse, had seen seven candlesticks—the seven Churches of Asia; but now he beheld only two candlesticks. This showed how dark would be the time; no light in the world but the two candlesticks, struggling to dispel the thick gloom that shrouded the earth. Yet there they burned throughout the long night, maugre (in spite) all the efforts of the Man of Sin to extinguish them, till the light of a glorious day returned once more to bless the earth.

By the two olive-trees are meant plainly the pastors of these Churches. They conveyed the oil which maintained the brightness of the mystic candlesticks. They performed the same office to these Churches which the prophets and priests performed to the Old Testament Church; they preached the Word, and they were employed, moreover, in multiplying manuscript copies of the Holy Scriptures. The art of printing had not yet been invented, and the Church was indebted for the *written word* to the *pens* of her ministers, as she was indebted for the *word preached* to their personal ministry; these two means of supply answering, according to the ingenious and natural supposition of Vitranga, to the two golden pipes by which the two olive-trees in Zechariah’s vision emptied the golden oil out of themselves.

Besides its great fruitfulness, the olive possesses this property, that it remains green all winter. So did these mystic trees. They were green during the long winter of the Christian Church. When the storm of temptation arose, and others were overturned, they remained firmly rooted and grounded; when the poisonous wind of error blew, and its deadly influence became visible in the seared leaves and moldering (decaying) trunks of the spiritual vineyard, they remained unscathed by the blight—like the fleece of Gideon, wet when all around was dry.

And why did their lamps burn amid the darkness that had extinguished those of others? Why was their leaf green during the winter that brought so deadly a blight on all around them? They were full of oil—oil drawn from no earthly fountain, but flowing down upon them from the heavens.

Placed in the midst of powerful enemies, called to discharge a duty peculiarly irritating and tormenting to these enemies, provided with no outward means of defense, how would they be able to repel the assaults to which they should be exposed? How, in short, should they continue to exist? The Apocalyptic symbols represent them as armed with the most ample avenging powers. “And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will.”

The avenging powers here ascribed to the witnesses are threefold. First, they should have power to smite the earth with famine; second, to desolate it with the sword third, to consume it with fire and burning. “These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy.” The allusion here is to an incident in the life of Elijah; and we are taught by association the horrors of the famine that was to prevail during the prophesying of the witnesses. Elijah’s first appearance before us is with the words, “As the Lord God liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these three years, but according to my word.” And the word of the prophet was fulfilled. That moment the heavens became brass over the land of Israel. The spring came, and summer and autumn followed, and these were succeeded by winter; but there was neither cloud in the heavens, nor rain or dew on the earth. What a doleful picture did the land of Israel then exhibit! Every mountain and pleasant field was burnt up, the channels of the brooks were dry, the figs dropped from the fig-tree, the cluster hung rotting on the vine, the herd perished from the stall, and the faces of men began to gather the blackness of famine.

As it was with the land of Israel during these three years and a half, so was it to be with Roman Christendom during the three and a half prophetic years of the prophesying of the witnesses. It was not a literal famine with which the world was to be scourged—a blight upon the earth, which should consume its fountains and its fruits, and cut off from man the bread on which the body lives. The drought here foretold was to afflict the spiritual heavens and earth, and dry up the fountains of salvation. It was a famine of the Word of God. It is a historical fact, that during the ages of their ministry, there was neither dew nor rain of a spiritual kind on the earth, but at the word of the witnesses. There was no knowledge of salvation but by their preaching, no descent of the Spirit but in answer to their prayers; and as the witnesses were shut out from Christendom generally, a universal famine ensued. The Word of God was locked up in a dead language, or forbidden to be read. The priests of Rome, instead of preaching the gospel, descanted (sang) on the merits of indulgences, the

efficacy of relics, or entertained their hearers with monkish traditions, or ridiculous and mendacious (false) legends—things that could not feed the soul.

The heavens were shut, and there was no rain. Pining away under their sore thirst, men sought to the fountains of life, but only to find that they were dry. Had the spiritual world been disclosed to one's eye, what a terrible spectacle would it have presented! Everywhere sterility and death; souls, pale, sickly, emaciated, peopling the earth, and hell gaping for its prey.

“And have power over waters, to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will.” There is, we apprehend, an allusion here to the plagues by which Egypt was destroyed, which began by the turning of her river into blood. The former symbol indicated a spiritual infliction. This imports a temporal judgment. We are told, at a subsequent part of the Apocalypse, that waters are the symbol of peoples; and when we are told that these symbolical waters should be turned into blood, we learn that the nations in question were to be wasted by direful carnage and bloody wars. The Egyptians had attempted to destroy the Hebrews, by drowning their children in the Nile; and righteously was the Nile turned into blood. The antichristian nations would employ the sword to exterminate the witnesses, and by the sword should God exterminate them.

Hence the song of the angel of the waters, when the third vial was poured out “upon the rivers and fountains of waters”— “Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus; for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets; and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.” This angel was answered by another from the altar—“ Even so, Lord God Almighty; true and righteous are thy judgments” intimating that the Church would take special notice of the Divine equity, in that God had done unto her persecutors as they had done unto her.

Rome had lived in blood, and in blood she expires. When power is ascribed to them to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will, the allusion to Egypt is plainly continued. Moses had power to smite that kingdom with all the plagues necessary to accomplish its overthrow, and set free the Israelites. A similar power were these men in sackcloth to possess over the Papacy—a power to bring destruction upon destruction, till the kingdom of the Man of Sin should be annihilated, and its captives liberated. Not that these plagues should come at their wish, as if they cherished a vindictive spirit, or had pleasure in the destruction of their enemies; but, foreseeing the doom with which prophecy menaced the antichristian nations, they should predict its approach.

For the quarrel of the witnesses, moreover, all these plagues would be inflicted. Christ, their Head, would take care that, under His administration, not one wrong ever done them should pass unavenged. For every drop of martyr-blood split by her, Rome must one day reckon.

“And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies.” We have placed this last, because it is a final judgment. The symbol becomes of easy interpretation when we refer to that part of Old Testament history from which it is taken. “Behold,” said God to Jeremiah, “I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.” This plainly refers to the consuming judgments Jeremiah was commissioned to denounce. Of the same sort is the fire that proceedeth out of the mouth of the witnesses.

When Rome was wasting the witnesses with fire and sword, they foretold a time when she should be visited in like manner—have blood to drink for all the blood she had shed, and be consumed in the fires she had kindled for them. And not one of their words ever fell to the ground. The warning is repeated, to intimate its terrible certainty:—“If any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed;” a caution not unnecessary, seeing they were apparently so defenseless; for never did men appear more completely in the power of their enemies. But—as if the caution had run—let no man plot their harm, tempted thereto by the hope of impunity, seeing them, as he may believe, so completely without the power to retaliate. In seeking to hurt them, he will most infallibly destroy himself. Invisible guards protect them, invisible powers are at their command, they need only to utter the word, and the bolt of heaven is not more speedy nor more deadly.

And have not their words been as fire to the nations? What mean the bloody wars, and the calamities of divers kinds, which have ravaged the Popish countries of Europe these three hundred years? What, especially, mean the terrible wars of the present century, which have covered the Papal earth with conflagration and slaughter? These are the words of the men who dwelt amid the Alps— words uttered long ago, remembered in heaven, though forgotten on earth, and now awfully verified. This is the answer to their prayers.

This is the fire from the mouth of the witnesses, kindled, burning, and to burn yet more fiercely. This power the witnesses were to exercise, not when the time to possess the kingdom should come, but during their prophesying, and while they wore sackcloth. It was especially during the latter half of the period of their prophesying that these judgments were to be inflicted, and particularly after the seventh angel had sounded, and her last plagues had begun to fall on Rome. All these plagues will come in answer to the prayers, in fulfilment of the predictions, and in recompense of the wrongs of the witnesses.

The words we have been considering look back on three theaters of judgment—Jerusalem, Egypt, Sodom—and they exhibit the three leading plagues by which Rome’s destruction shall be accomplished—Famine, Blood, Fire. By famine was Jerusalem scourged, by blood was Egypt destroyed, and by fire was Sodom consumed. These are the three awful types of Rome’s end. Neither Jerusalem alone, nor Egypt alone, nor Sodom alone, could suffice as the symbol of her unprecedented doom. The terrors of her punishment could be adequately represented only by combining all three. When her end approaches, a combination of calamities, any one of which singly would have sufficed for the punishment of any ordinary criminal, will burst upon this great and notable enemy of Christ in a tornado of wrath, which will be remembered with horror, and spoken of with awe, while men dwell upon the earth.

God has raised up mighty prophets to warn her: He has spoken to her by Luther, by Calvin, and by all the reformers; but Rome refused to hear. He has visited her with fearful judgments, but Rome refused to be humbled. She put from her the robe of sackcloth, saying, “I shall see no sorrow.” Woe unto her! for if the mighty works which have been done in her had been done in Jerusalem, or in Egypt, or in Sodom, these cities would have repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes: therefore it shall be more tolerable for Jerusalem, and for Egypt, and for Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for Rome.

“Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.” -Revelation 18:8

Chapter XII. War With The Witnesses

“AND when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.” – Revelation 11:7 This introduces us to the solemn subject of the death of the witnesses.

Whether are we to place the slaying of the witnesses among the *fulfilled* or among the *unfulfilled* predictions of the Apocalypse? There are able expositors who regard this as by no means a past event, but one still to come. Of late, not a few in our country, whose attention has been turned to the Apocalyptic predictions, have not hesitated to avow it as their belief that the days of slaughter and extermination prefigured in the symbol before us are yet awaiting the Church. If such are correct in their interpretations, all organized societies professing the truth, all visible Churches throughout the earth, are fated yet to meet extinction. It remains that Europe shall yet be covered with the bodies of slain Protestants. Not yet has Rome reached the summit of her power, or committed the greatest of her crimes. She must lift her head higher still towards heaven, and smite the prostrate earth with more dreadful bolts than She ever yet hurled against it. She must efface (make indistinct) the memory of all her past wickedness, by deeds of more awful cruelty—by slaughters and massacres more inhuman and exterminating than any with which her past annals are stained. All this must come to pass, if the event we are considering falls to be classed among the unfulfilled prophecies of this book.

If such, indeed, be the times we are approaching, it behooves the Church to have warning, on good authority, that she may prepare herself; but if already the witnesses have been slain, the fear such a prospect is fitted to inspire, being unfounded, cannot be salutary, and ought to be dismissed.

The witnesses were to be slain by the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit. This is the first appearance in the Apocalypse of this great enemy of God, and murderer of His saints. We here simply assume, what we shall afterwards prove, that this beast is the ten confederate kingdoms of Europe—the same that grew out of the old Roman empire—the Papacy prompting their policy, and guiding their arms. This beast was afterwards seen by John, with seven heads and ten horns, rising out of the abyss or sea. It was on this ten-horned beast that the harlot rode; and we find the interpretation of the symbol in the historical fact that the wealth and power of the ten kingdoms were lent to aggrandize the Papacy, and that their swords were ever at her service when she needed them to slay the saints.

The time when the witnesses should be slain is marked by these words—“When they shall have finished their testimony,” (five Greek words) The verb “to finish,” is used in numerous passages in the New Testament in two distinct and different senses: First, to finish *in point of time*, so that the person ceases to act. Second, to finish *in the way of perfecting* the work on which he is employed: he has perfected, matured it; and, though he still repeats it, he ceases to perform it more completely or perfectly.

We may make our meaning clear by a few instances. We have an example of the first sense in Paul’s words to Timothy—“I have finished (Greek word) my course,” 2 Tim. iv. 7. Here the word clearly refers to time. We have an example of the second sense in James i. 15— “When lust hath conceived, it

bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished (different Greek word), bringeth forth death.” The meaning here, “sin, when it is finished,” is plainly not that so soon as the sinner has ended his course of sinning, but so soon as his sin is perfected, completed, ripened, it bringeth forth death. These are examples of two different sets of passages in which this word occurs. In the one set the verb “to finish” has reference to the expiration of a certain period; in the other, it denotes the perfecting or completing of a certain act.

Mr. Elliot has selected an instance of the use of the word in the latter sense, from what is said of the Jewish priests, in Hebrews ix. 6, and which is much in point:—“They enter the Tabernacle continually (three Greek words), *fulfilling their services*, or priestly functions.’ The which, day by day, including several acts—the receiving incense, carrying it with altar-fire into the holy place and burning it, kindling or snuffing the lamps, &c.; after the whole of which was accomplished, on any one defined occasion, then it might be said that the priest had fulfilled his service, (four Greek words) yet not so as then to have finally ceased, (Greek word) or to have resigned thereon his priestly office. Just in the same way,” continues Mr. Elliot, “supposing a repetition, more or less frequent, of their (Greek word) testimony, required of the two witnesses of the Apocalypse—so soon as they might once have gone through the several component parts or acts of that testimony, so soon it might be said of them that they had fulfilled or completed their testimony, yet not so as to imply that their whole period of testifying was at an end, or that they thereupon ceased to be any longer Christ’s witnesses.”

Seeing the word is used in these two senses—that of finishing a course of acting, and that of completing an act by performing all its parts—the question remains, in which of these senses is it here used? Whether does it relate to the time of prophesying—the twelve hundred and sixty days—or to the witness-bearing (Greek word) abstractly viewed? The more natural reference, we admit, is to the time of prophesying; and were there no elements of judgment but such as are found in the verse before us, we would at once grant that this is the true reference. But other considerations, springing from other parts of the Apocalypse, render this supposition impossible, and constrain us to apply the words to the (word in Greek) testimony—that is, to regard the slaying of the witnesses, as foretold to happen, not at the end of the twelve hundred and sixty days, but as soon as they should have fulfilled their testimony, not in the sense of ceasing to bear it, but in the sense of making it complete and full as against the Papacy. This might be expected to happen whenever Popery should be fully developed, and the testimony of the Church pointed against all the leading errors in the Papal system, which would then be seen and proclaimed to be the Antichrist. Let us mention these considerations.

First, there is the place the prophecy of the slaying of the witnesses occupies in the Apocalypse. It comes in between the sounding of the sixth and the sounding of the seventh trumpet. This leads naturally to the conclusion that the slaughter of the witnesses would occur during this interval. The sixth trumpet was sounded at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and the seventh a very considerable while after the Reformation; and it is an historical fact, that almost all the slaughters that have been committed on the adherents of the truth occurred during this interval.

What is the very next announcement after the resurrection of the witnesses? It is this: “The second woe is past, and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.” This is a sufficiently plain declaration, one should think, that even after the witnesses were risen, the seventh trumpet was still to be sounded. Accordingly, on its being sounded, loud voices were heard proclaiming the advent, not of the triumphs

of Antichrist, and the death of the witnesses, but of events of an exactly opposite character— even the time of God’s wrath, and of the dead—that is, of those who had been slain in former times, that they should be judged in order that God might give reward to His servants, the prophets, and to the saints, and destroy them who had destroyed the earth.

Second, immediately after the prophecy of the slaying of the witnesses, the approach of the third woe is announced. Now, on whom does the third woe fall? On Antichrist. It consists of the seven plagues by which he is to be brought to his grave. It is natural to conclude that the slaughter of the witnesses should take place when Antichrist was at his height, and not when he was reeling and staggering under the weight of his last plagues. It is natural to suppose that affairs would be at their lowest in the Church when they were at their highest in the kingdom of Antichrist; that the midnight of the one would correspond with the noonday of the other; and that the greatest effort of the beast would be made when his affairs were flourishing, and not when his power was broken, and his kingdom had begun to pass from him.

Third, while it is stated, at this part of the Apocalypse, that the issue of the war between the beast and the followers of the Lamb should be, that the beast would overcome them and kill them, it is stated at a subsequent part of the Apocalypse, that the issue of this same war would be, that the Lamb should overcome the armies of the beast. The only way of reconciling these apparently conflicting statements is by the natural supposition that the war was to have these different issues at different times; that the beast should for a time prevail, and seem to be carrying all before him; but the advantage would turn out to be only temporary, and, the war going on, final victory would remain with the Lamb. These two issues could not be contemporaneous; and there can be no doubt as to which of the two will be the final one. It is plain, therefore, that the slaughter of the witnesses cannot be deferred till the conclusion of the war, but must take place at a previous stage, sufficiently early to allow of a second battle being gained after the first has been lost. We presume it will not be maintained that the termination of the prophesying of the witnesses in sackcloth is earlier than the termination of the war; for what is meant by their warring with the beast, but just their testifying, in adverse circumstances, against the abominations of Popery?

Fourth, in the same hour in which the witnesses revived, there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell—Britain, one of the ten kingdoms. This renders the conclusion inevitable, that the resurrection of the witnesses is considerably prior to the fall of the Papacy; for observe what happens when the seventh vial is poured out. The great city is divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fall, which is a much more striking result than the overthrow of merely the tenth part of the city.

Fifth, it is not the manner of God to visit with punishment—at least with final judgment—before the sin has been completed.

“Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.” – Isaiah 33:1

In the Apocalypse the slaying of the witnesses is distinctly marked as the greatest of the crimes of Rome—the crowning point of her guilt. But they who hold that the judgments which have befallen the

Papacy since the first French Revolution are the pouring out of the vials, and, at the same time, hold that the slaughter of the witnesses is yet to come, must believe that Rome has been overtaken by her last plagues before she has committed the greatest of her sins—that the cup of God’s wrath has been put into her hand before her own cup has been filled up. This is not very likely to be the case. We do not deny that isolated acts of persecution, perhaps of an aggravated character, Rome may yet be guilty of, and that some startling crime may immediately precede her fall, to establish before the world her connection with former enormities of the same kind. Some of these we have seen in recent events. In the persecutions in Madeira, in the massacre in Cochinchina, in the slaughters in Tahiti, and in the carnage of Barletta, Rome has been serving herself heir to the blood of former ages. In Tahiti, especially, she has been enacting, on a small scale, the same tragedies she was wont to enact on a greater—dethroning sovereigns, ravaging kingdoms with fire and sword, and compelling submission to her authority at the point of the bayonet. But that Rome should be able again to persecute on so large a scale as to suppress all public profession of the truth in every part of the earth—for nothing short of this can fulfill the symbol of the slaying of the witnesses—appears to be scarcely credible. And what increases the incredibility of such a supposition is, the absence of all allusion to such an event in the narrative of the vials, when, according to the theory we are contending against, this occurrence ought to take place. Instead of enjoying a respite, or of regaining its former supremacy, and something more, the Papacy is exhibited under the vials as sinking lower and lower, at each successive stroke, till it is finally and irretrievably ruined. Rome is seen in the grasp of an omnipotent power, which drags her along, and, without the respite of a moment’s pause, casts her headlong into the abyss.

In fine (in conclusion), the course of events during the past three hundred years, and the state and prospects of the world at this hour, strongly countenance the belief that the slaying of the witnesses is past.

From about the year 600 onward till the Reformation, the course of events ran steadily in favour of the Papacy; all the great social revolutions and political changes of the world helped it onward; even the most insignificant and trifling occurrences turned to its advantage—brought it new accessions of wealth and power. In every contest in which Rome engaged, whether with bishops or kings, she was victor; and by a course of almost unbroken prosperity of more than eight hundred years’ duration did Antichrist reach the summit of his grandeur. But at the Reformation how plainly did the tide in his affairs turn! Almost every event that has happened since has gone against him. We can trace the same uniformity in the operation of events now, as before, so far as they regard Antichrist; only then they wrought his advancement—now they are working his downfall. Partial revivals and successes Popery may yet have; but we are strongly persuaded that affairs will continue to run steadily in the same course, till they end in its total downfall.

Let us think, moreover, of the state and prospects of the world. Its state is now such as to render the supposition incredible, that Popery, especially after it has been so greatly weakened by the judgments of God, should raise itself to such universal power as to be able to suppress the truth in the same degree as before the Reformation. Though the gospel should be suppressed in Europe, there are wide realms around where it has been planted, and would continue to flourish—America, India, Australia, and the islands of the Pacific. If a period of darkness yet awaits the Church, such as that foretold in the symbol

of the witnesses, the gospel must be suppressed in all these places, and all the labors of the past three hundred years, and all the efforts of missionaries, must come to naught.

But happily the world seems to be secured against a catastrophe so universal, not only by its own inherent improbability, but also by the terms of the Apocalyptic prophecy. Both the scene of slaughter and the agent of slaughter appear to be limited to Europe. It is the ten horned beast by whom the witnesses are slain, which every commentator admits to be the symbol of the ten Roman kingdoms of Europe. And it is on the streets of the great city that their dead bodies are exposed, which plainly identifies the scene of the tragedy with the European dominions of the Papacy, and restricts the time of its occurrence to the age when the true Church was confined within these limits. On all these grounds we unhesitatingly conclude that the slaughter of the witnesses is past.

But how stand the facts of history with our interpretation? They are in perfect accordance therewith. The Waldenses, the Vaudois, and other bodies of Christians, had borne an open testimony from the beginning against the various corruptions of Rome—her errors in doctrine, her idolatries in worship, and her immoralities of life,—but at last, in the end of the twelfth century—the same century in which, according to Gibbon, the meridian of Papal greatness was attained—they proclaimed her to be the Antichrist of Scripture—the harlot of the Apocalypse.

Thus and then did the witnesses fulfill their testimony. It was foretold that this should be the signal for the beast to make war with them; and so it was. Rome as a body now moved against them, which she had not done before. The war was commenced in the edicts of councils, which stigmatized the pure doctrines drawn from the Bible as heresy, and branded those who held them as heretics. The next step was to pronounce the most dreadful anathemas on those whom Rome termed heretics, which were executed in the same remorseless and exterminating spirit in which they were conceived. The confessors of the truth were denied both their civil and their natural rights. They were forbidden all participation in dignities and offices; they could not buy or sell; their goods were confiscated; their houses were razed, never more to be rebuilt; and their lands were made over to such as had the inclination or the power to seize on them. They were shut out from the solace of human converse; no one might give them shelter while living, or Christian burial when dead.

At last a crusade was commenced against them. Preachers were sent abroad through Europe, to sound the trumpet of vengeance, and assemble the nations. To stimulate their ardour in these holy wars, a full remission of all sins, from the cradle to the grave, was promised to such as might fall in battle. Nay, a service of forty days was so meritorious as to entitle the person to no less a reward than paradise. The Pope wrote to all Christian princes, exhorting them to earn their pardon and win heaven, rather by bearing the cross against these heretics than by marching against the Saracens. Army after army was assembled under such men as Simon of Montfort and Saint Louis. We do not intend to darken our page with a recital of the horrors of this war. We search in vain for anything equal to these horrors in the worst atrocities of savage tribes, when engaged in their most sanguinary conflicts. Were a faithful account of them to be given, the recital would fill many volumes, and would shock and outrage every man in whose heart there remains the least touch of humanity. Though legions of fiends had become incarnate, and been let loose to ravage the earth, they could not have devised more exquisite torments—they could not have inflicted more ruthless slaughters and massacres—nor could they have stood by and witnessed the agonies of their victims with a more hellish delight. The peaceful and fertile valleys

of the Vaudois were invaded, and speedily devastated with fire and sword; their towns and villages were burnt; while not one individual, in many cases, escaped to carry tidings to the next valley. The young and the gray-haired, the most helpless and the most unoffending, were involved in the same indiscriminate slaughter; mothers, with their infants, were thrown from the rocks; bonfires were kindled, and human beings by hundreds piled upon them; pits were dug, and vast numbers buried alive. In short, every cruelty, barbarity, and indecency, which rage, lust, and bigotry could invent and perpetrate, were inflicted on these confessors of Christ.

To accomplish what these crusades, though carried on with indescribable fury, failed to effect, it was at last resolved that the Holy Office of the Inquisition should be erected. The horrors of this terrible court far exceeded those even of the crusades. The crusades did their work quickly: they swept across the scene of their visitation like a tempest, converting in a few days, sometimes in a few hours, busy and populous seats into profound solitudes. Such a proceeding was merciful compared with the lingering and excruciating torments to which the victim was doomed in the dungeons of the Holy Office. The ravages of the crusades were acted in the face of day: the smoke of burning cities and human hecatombs (a large-scale slaughter) rose into the air, polluting the firmament with a dismal cloud; the shrieks of the mother, as in her agony she clasped her babe, when both were about to be precipitated headlong from the top of some precipice, were repeated again and again from the rocks adown (downward) which they were thrown.

”Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven.”

Accordingly, history has recorded part at least of these horrible tragedies, that we may admire the grace of God, as shown in the constancy and courage of the noble confessors that endured them, and that we may know at what an expense of suffering and blood the truth has been handed down to us.

But it is not so easy to chronicle the deeds of the Inquisition. History has been forbidden to descend with her torch into the dungeons of the Holy Office. The crimes that have been there enacted, and the sufferings that have been there endured, remain untold. The familiars and the racks of the Inquisition plied their dreadful work in darkness. No eye saw the writhings of their victim; no ear heard his groans; and the much that these dungeons conceal shall remain concealed for ever, till the dread judgment-day. This terrible court ramified into every country where there were professors of the truth—into Piedmont, France, Spain, Bohemia, Germany, Poland, Flanders, England; and endeavored, by the most horrible means, to exterminate what it termed heresy and heretics—to wear out the saints of the Most High. Thus were the words fulfilled, “When they shall have completed their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war with them.”

The history of the world is little else than a series of wars: many of these are sufficiently melancholy and revolting; but in no age of time, and in no country of the globe, has there been seen a war of so cruel, ferocious, and blood-thirsty a character as that which the beast carried on against the witnesses. Having partaken of her cup, and being frenzied and maddened with her wine, princes wasted, at the instigation of Rome, the blood and the treasure of their subjects, and literally beggared themselves and their heirs to carry on this war.

Philip the Second of Spain, when on his death-bed, acknowledged to the prince, his son, that he had spent on the civil wars of France, on those of the Low Countries, and other enterprises of the same nature, more than five hundred and ninety-four millions of ducats—a sum altogether inconceivable. How many millions of lives, as well as of treasure, have the efforts to extirpate the Huguenots cost the kingdom of France! France crowned this good work under Louis XIV., in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. But when she cast out the Huguenots, she cast out with them patriotism and piety, the seeds of virtue and, the elements of order. All followed in the train of the exiles; and Revolution with its furies rushed in to fill the gap their departure had made.

As an instance of how careful Rome was to bind all secular princes to prosecute this war in the most unrelenting spirit, we may mention the decree of the council of Toledo, which was to the following effect:—

“We, the holy council, promulgate this sentence, pleasing to God, that whosoever hereafter shall succeed to the kingdom shall not mount to the throne till he hath sworn **to permit no man to live in his kingdom who is not a Catholic**. And if, after he hath taken the reins of government, he shall violate his promise, let him be *anathema maranatha* in the sight of the eternal God, and fuel for eternal fire.”

Numerous bulls of the Popes, conceived in the same terms, and enjoining the same duty, might be adduced. Who can tell what vast numbers of Christians have fallen a sacrifice in this way? When, at the last trumpet, the mounds of this great battle-field—which is wide Europe—shall be opened, what numbers of slain shall rise up to condemn their common murderer!

Calculations have been formed of the numbers whom Popery has slain. From the year 1540 to the year 1570, comprehending only the space of thirty years, no fewer than nine hundred thousand Protestants were put to death by Papists in the different countries of Europe. During the short pontificate of Paul the Fourth, which lasted only four years, the Inquisition alone, on the testimony of Vergerius, destroyed an hundred and fifty thousand. Those that perished in Germany during the wars of Charles the Fifth, and in Flanders, under the infamous Alva, are counted by hundreds of thousands. During many years, especially after the Reformation, these countries swarmed with executioners, and were covered with scaffolds and fires. In France, several millions were destroyed in the innumerable massacres that took place in that kingdom. It has been calculated that, since the rise of the Papacy, not fewer than fifty millions of persons have been put to death on account of religion. Of this inconceivable number the greater part have been cut off during the last six hundred years—for the Papacy persecuted very little during the first half of its existence. It was not till the witnesses completed their testimony that it made war against them.

Fifty millions in the space of six hundred years gives a rate of upwards of eighty thousand every year. Had Rome but once, during her career, consigned eighty thousand human beings to destruction, a deed so cruel would have been enough to stain her annals with indelible infamy, and to confer on her a terrible pre-eminence in blood. But when we think that she has repeated this fearful deed year by year during the long period of six centuries—when we think that eighty thousand human beings has she sacrificed six hundred times told—we have no words to express our astonishment and horror at her

guilt. What an HOLOCAUST! FIFTY MILLIONS OF LIVES! How fearful a meaning does this fact impart to the words of John,

“I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints. and of all that were slain upon the earth.” – Revelation 17:6

Chapter XIII. Death Of The Witnesses

“THY way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known.” – Psalms 77:19 Such was the exclamation of the Psalmist, as he recalled the past events which had befallen the Church, and thought how much of mystery her history had wrapped up in it. A retrospect of Divine Providence at this day would furnish abundant cause to repeat the exclamation.

One would have thought that after Christ had come, and, by His death, put an end to the comparatively dark dispensation of Moses, and introduced the more glorious and spiritual economy of the gospel—that after Christianity had been published to many of the nations, and established in many of the countries of the Gentile world, it would incur no risk of ever being suppressed. We would have expected that now a final end would be put to all the trials and calamities of the Church—that her path henceforward would be one of unbroken prosperity and ever-enlarging triumph—that her light would wax brighter and yet brighter, till it shone in the full splendor of the Millennium, ushering in that day, long foretold and long ardently expected, when earth, transformed into a majestic temple, shall resound with the songs of ransomed nations.

This is what the Old Testament saints doubtless expected. They looked forward to the coming of the Messiah as the end of the Church’s troubles, and the introduction of an era in which the truth should have no opposition to encounter, and its friends no suffering to endure. This was what the primitive Christians also expected. When the Word of God grew mightily and prevailed—when the Church, which had been confined hitherto to the land of Judea, went forth among the Gentiles, and the desolate parts of the earth were inhabited—little did they anticipate that her period of greatest darkness was yet to come, and that her severest trials were yet awaiting her—that all she had suffered in Egypt, all she had suffered in Babylon, was as nothing, compared with those more dreadful sufferings which she had yet to endure at the hands of an enemy to arise within herself.

Even we, when we look back, and think of the little progress the gospel has made, and that of the countries once enlightened, some are plunged again into darkness, while others are Christian only in name—wonder why God has allowed so great obstacles to impede the progress of the gospel, and not to impede it merely, but actually to roll it back, and to leave those countries once covered with its fertilizing waters to be scorched and burned up by the fiery rays of idolatry. We feel persuaded that God has some special and great end in view in this arrangement—that the early triumph of the gospel would, in some way that we know not of, have marred its ultimate and final destiny—and that the long delay of its success was, some way or other, connected with the happiness of future ages. We feel assured that God has some end of this kind in view in this arrangement, which shall be clearly understood by the men of future ages, and which we ourselves, in other stages of our being, shall know and admire; but, meanwhile, it is a mystery unfathomable to us.

It yields, however, no small satisfaction to know that all has happened according to the Divine arrangement. If we compare the events of the past eighteen centuries with the prophecy before us, we find that there is an exact accordance between the two. In the Apocalypse, John was warned, and we

through him, that even after the truth had been widely spread, and the Church planted in all the more important countries of the world, she would be brought into a more depressed condition than she had ever formerly been in, that truth would be all but totally suppressed, that for twelve hundred and sixty years the whole world would apostatize, that two witnesses only would appear in behalf of Christ, and that these should have to maintain a terrible warfare, waged against them by the beast, the issue of which would be truly disastrous, that the Church, like her Head, must die, and, to reach her glory, pass through the grave.

We have already sketched the outline of the war with the witnesses, we have traced its beginning to the edicts of councils, and have shown that the form in which it first displayed itself was that of the anathemas of Popes—those thunders from the seven hills which have ever betokened woe to the world—that scarcely had these anathemas been launched, till hosts began to muster, and immense armies to roll towards the Alps, amid the deep valleys and inaccessible cliffs of which the witnesses dwelt. When it was seen that the sword was inefficient to exterminate them, the Inquisition was called into existence. To the fire and sword of war, the racks and wheels of the Holy Office were now added. Undismayed by the hosts that gathered round their hills, and bidding defiance to the terrors with which they were menaced, the witnesses still maintained their testimony. The world was in arms against them, but greater was He who was in them than he who was in the world.

Their numbers were thinned, their dwellings were laid in ashes, their valleys were stained with the blood of their dear brethren and their beloved relatives, they were compelled to abandon the low plains, and betake themselves to the high valleys, and there, amid rocks and eternal ice—“the place prepared of God”—they maintained, with noble constancy, from age to age, their testimony against the corruptions and idolatries of Rome. Throughout the whole of the fourteenth, and fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, was the war carried on. At last it became apparent that the end approached; not because the fury and rage of the Church’s enemies had abated, but because her members had been well nigh all cut off. This happened towards the end of the fifteenth century. There is something so truly pathetic and mournful—something so much in the spirit of the Apocalyptic prediction itself—in Fleming’s account of this transaction, that we shall here give it at length, though doubtless already familiar to many of our readers:—

“Now, the slaying of these witnesses began in the year 1416, when John Huss, and afterwards Jerome of Prague, were burnt, but came not to its height until the Bohemian Calixtines complied with the Council of Basil, 1434; after which the faithful Taborites were totally ruined, as well as their brethren in Piedmont, France, &c., which happened about the year 1492. For they, being destroyed, the Calixtines were no better than the dead carcasses (as they are called, verse 8), or corpses of the former living witnesses, over which the Popish party did triumph; for they looked upon them as standing trophies of their victory, and therefore did not think fit to kill them further, or bury them out of their sight.

For it is said, verses 7, 8, that after they had finished their testimony, the beast did make war upon them, (Greek words), &c, he killed them, and their corpses also (for the additional words in our version, shall lie, are not in the original, and do but mar the sense), or their bodies in the street of the great city, i.e., in Bohemia, one street of the Papal dominions, or the great city Rome, in a large sense. For I find that towards the end of the fifteenth century, the witnesses were, in a manner, wholly extinct. For

Comenius tells us, that about the year 1467, the Waldenses in Austria and Moravia had complied so far as to dissemble their religion, and turn to Popery in profession and outward compliance. The Taborites, in the meantime, upon their refusing to do so, were so destroyed, that it was much that seventy of them could get together, to consult about continuing their Church, and about finding out some qualified person to be their minister, for they had none left, 1467. And so low was the Church of Christ then, that when the hidden remains of the Taborites (who were called Speculani, from their lurking in dens and caves) sent out four men (as the same author relates in another book) to travel, one through Greece and the East, another to Russia and the North, a third to Thrace, Bulgaria, and the neighbouring places, and a fourth to Asia, Palestine, and Egypt, they did all, indeed, safely return to their brethren, but with this sorrowful news, that they found no Church of Christ that was pure, or free from the grossest errors, superstition, and idolatry. This was in the year 1497. And when they sent two of their number, two years afterwards—via, Luke Prague, and Thomas German—to go into Italy, France, and other places, to see if there were any of the old Waldenses left alive, they returned with the same melancholy news as the former had done, that they could neither find nor hear of any remaining; only they were informed of the martyrdom of Savonarolla (who suffered in the year 1498); and they were told of some few remains of the Piemontois, that were scattered and hid among the Alps, but nobody knew where.

Now, a few years after this, even the few remains of the Taborites were found out and persecuted, hardly any escaping; so that, A.D. 1510, six suffered together publicly; and the year following, that famous martyr, Andreas Paliwka, who, I think, was the last of that period, from whose death, in the end of the year 1511, or beginning of 1512, to the dawning of the Reformation by the first preaching of Carolastadius and Zuinglius (who appeared at least a year before Luther, as Hottinger and others tell us), there was only about three years and a half, which answers, as near as can be, to the three days and a half of the unburied state of the witnesses; so that the Spirit's entering into the witnesses, verse II, began with the year 1516, if not the year before, though this appeared most remarkably when Luther opposed the Pope publicly in 1517."

The two witnesses were not individuals, but organized societies—Churches. Their death, therefore, must needs be symbolic: not their death as individuals, but their extermination as organized societies—the suppression of that public testimony which these Churches had borne before Christendom.

Now, if we look back, we discover but one period in the history of Christendom to which the prediction can apply—the period we have indicated—the beginning of the sixteenth century, just before the Reformation. During that period, all public testimony of the witnesses against the Papacy was silenced in every part of Europe, and Rome appeared to be universally and completely triumphant. Fleming has told us in his own affecting language, with what wonder and dismay the few individuals who were left after the slaughters and massacres of three centuries, beheld the universal triumph of the Beast—with what terror they witnessed that total obscuration of the light which shrouded the earth when the gospel had ceased to be held forth by any constituted Church. He has told us that, as if only half-believing the tremendous fact, the survivors sent out four messengers to search throughout the earth, if haply they might discover somewhere a pure Church of Christ. The messengers returned, like the dove to Noah, but with no olive leaf plucked off—they returned to tell those who had sent them forth that the faith of the apostles existed nowhere—that error and superstition everywhere prevailed—that a second deluge had rolled over the world, and that its dark waters stood above the tops of the highest hills.

But the most satisfactory and convincing exposition of the fulfillment of this Apocalyptic prediction is that which Mr. Elliot has given. By a variety of historical references and documents he has shown, that from the 5th of May, 1514, to the 31st of October, 1517—three years and a half precisely—all public testimony against the Papacy was suppressed; and that at the latter date that testimony was suddenly and gloriously revived. The importance and interest of the subject will justify us in giving a series of extracts from that part of the “*Horae Apocalypticae*,” to show the eminent clearness of Mr. Elliot’s demonstration. “And thus,” says Mr. Elliot, “what was the aspect of things when the new (sixteenth) century opened? Let Milner’s be my first historic testimony. ‘The sixteenth century opened,’ he says, ‘with a prospect of all others the most gloomy in the eyes of every true Christian. Corruption both in doctrine and in practice had exceeded all bounds; and the general face of Europe, though Christ’s name was everywhere professed, presented nothing that was properly evangelical. The Roman Pontiffs were the uncontrolled patrons of impiety. The Waldenses were too feeble to molest the Popedom; and the Hussites, divided among themselves, and worn out by a long series of contentions, were at length *reduced to silence*.’

To the same purport is the testimony of Mosheim. ‘At the commencement of this century no danger seemed to threaten the Roman Pontiffs. The agitations previously excited by the Waldenses, Albigenses, Beghards, and more recently by the Bohemians, had been *suppressed* by counsel and the sword; and the wretched surviving remnant of Bohemian heretics were an object rather of contempt than fear.’

So, again, Mr. Cunninghame (whose historic sketch of the epoch I may the rather quote because his prophetic explanation is independent of it):—‘At the commencement of the sixteenth century Europe reposed in the deep sleep of spiritual death, under the iron yoke of the Papacy. That haughty power, like the Assyrian of the prophet, said, in the plenitude of his insolence, ‘My hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people; and as one gathereth eggs, I have gathered all the earth,- and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped.’

Once more, in language strikingly to the point, the writer of the article on the Reformation in the “*Encyclopedia Britannica*” thus describes the era:—‘Everything was quiet—every heretic exterminated—and the whole Christian world supinely acquiesced in the enormous absurdities inculcated by the Romish Church—when’—I only break off the quotation at his notice of just such a speedy, sudden, and extraordinary revival of the witnessing as we saw from the prophetic sequel ought to follow the event intended by *the death of the witnesses*.”

Having adverted to the proofs arising from the Apocalyptic description of the scene of the slaughter—“The street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified”—and of the public rejoicings on account of their death held by them, of the peoples, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, to which we ourselves shall afterwards have occasion to refer, Mr. Elliot proceeds as follows:—

“In turning from prophecy to history—from the symbolic picture to the thing symbolized—it seems almost impossible to mistake the precise scene and occasion alluded to. It can surely be none other than that of the very *Lateran Council* held from 1512 to 1517, under the pontificates of Julius the Second and Leo the Tenth, just before the Reformation.”

Having stated that the object for which this Council was assembled was the suppression of all that might yet remain in Western Christendom of witnesses for Christ, and particularly the *Bohemian Hussites*—for both the *Lollards* of England and the *Waldenses* of Piedmont had been reduced to silence— Mr. Elliot resumes—

“In a Papal Bull, issued with approbation of the Council, in the very next or eighth session, held December 1513, a charge was issued, summoning the dissidents in question (the Bohemian witnesses), without fail to appear and plead before the Council at its next session, unless, indeed, they should have previously done so before a neighboring Papal legate—the object declared being their conviction and reduction within the bosom of the Catholic Church; and the time finally fixed for the said important session, May the 5th, in the spring ensuing.”

Thus was the crisis come which was to try the faith of this bleeding remnant of witnesses, and exhibit its vitality or death. And would they then face their Lord’s enemies? Would they brave the terrors of death, and plead His cause before the lordly Legate, or the antichristian Council; like the Waldenses at Albi and at Pamiers, like Wickliffe and Cobham in England, like Huss and Jerome at the Constance Council, or Luther afterwards at Augsburg and at Worms? Alas! no. The day of the ninth session arrived. The Council met. But no report from the Cardinal Legate gave intimation (announcement) either of the pleading, or even of any continued stirring, of the Bohemian heretics. No officer of the Council announced the arrival of deputies from them to plead before it. Nor, again, was there a whisper wafted to the Synod from any other State, or city, or town in Christendom, of a movement made, or a mouth opened, to promulgate or support the ancient heresies. Throughout the length and breadth of Christendom Christ’s witnessing servants were silenced; they appeared as dead.

The orator of the session ascended the pulpit, and, amid the applause of the assembled Council, uttered that memorable exclamation of triumph—an exclamation which, notwithstanding the long multiplied anti-heretical decrees of Popes and Councils—notwithstanding the yet more multiplied anti-heretical crusades and inquisitorial fires—was never, I believe, pronounced before, and certainly never since—

‘Jam nemo reclamat, nullus obsistit!’

‘There is an end of resistance to the Papal rule and religion: opposers there exist no more.’

So did ‘they, from the people, and kindred, and tongues, and nations,’ assembled in the (Greek word), or Broad Place of the Great City, look on Christ’s witnesses as (from thenceforth) dead. Let the reader well mark the description, for it is a description from the life; and let him well mark the day, for it seems scarce possible that we can be mistaken in regarding it as **the precise commencing date of the predicted three and a half years, during which Christ’s witnesses were to appear as dead corpses in the face of Christendom. It was May 5, 1514.**”

So ended the long and furious war waged by the Beast against the witnesses. After existing for fifteen centuries, Christianity, as regarded the public profession of it, had become extinct. There were still a few individual saints upon the earth; but there was nowhere a Church. There were now none who dared open their mouth and proclaim Rome to be Antichrist. The event was astounding; and yet it was only what the prophecy had foretold:—“The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and KILL THEM.”

We may lay it down as an axiom, that whatever has obtained a conspicuous place in the Apocalypse, holds a place of equal prominence in history. The prophecy of John was intended to disclose only the great facts of the Church; and in great events only are we to look for its fulfillment. Facts which are found lying concealed in the nooks of history, and which can be discovered only after great search, are obviously not those which the Holy Spirit had in His eye in this Revelation. The catholicity of the Apocalypse requires that its grand symbols be interpreted by events which affected not a part only, but the whole of the Church. The death and resurrection of the witnesses is a grand epoch of the Apocalypse; and we must look for its fulfillment in some grand epoch of the world. We are at once arrested by the dark ages, and the awful state of matters in which they terminated.

And though to determine the very day, as Elliot has done, may be to commit the fault of over-exactness, nevertheless we feel assured that the years that immediately preceded the Reformation is the era in question; and that in the fact, which rests on undoubted testimony, that till the voices of Zwingli and Luther broke the silence, there was no public testimony against Rome, and no public profession of the gospel, we behold beyond all peradventure the “death of the witnesses.”

This dark night was but the prelude to a glorious morning.

Chapter XIV. Resurrection Of The Witnesses

THE witnesses were slain; and how were their bodies disposed of? Doubtless by being committed to the grave—the quiet grave. When one dies, both friends and foes unite in consigning him to the tomb—his friends to show respect to his memory, and his enemies not to incur the reproach of a revolting inhumanity. When John was beheaded, his disciples came and took up the body and buried it. The tyrant who put him to death did not think of carrying his resentment so far as to forbid the rites of sepulture (burial) to his remains. But it was not to be with the witnesses as with other dead. They had no friends who might perform this office to their remains; and their enemy, whose rage and Vengeance extended beyond death, would not suffer their dead bodies to be put into graves. Therefore, where they had fallen, there they lay. “And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city.”

Our first inquiry regards the place where the dead bodies of the witnesses were to be exposed—the street of the great city.” As regards the “great city,” there is no difficulty. The symbol is explained in chapter 17, where it is said to be that “great city that reigneth over the kings of the earth.” (Rev. 17:18) There is only one city to which this can apply, even Rome; not the literal city, but that system of polity, ecclesiastical and civil, of which Rome was the center, and which extended over, and was supreme in, all the ten kingdoms of Europe. Governed by the Papal code, Europe formed but one corporation or symbolic city.

To make the city indicated still more clear, its designation is given, “which, spiritually, is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” It will not be supposed that the literal Sodom is here meant, because she had been turned to ashes many ages before the visions of Patmos. That it is neither the literal Sodom nor the literal Egypt that is here intended, is plain from the words, which, *spiritually*, is called Sodom and Egypt.” The city, on the street of which the dead bodies of the witnesses were to lie, was to exhibit the same moral and spiritual character as Sodom and Egypt. The resemblance would be as close as if these long-perished kingdoms had risen from their graves. She is called Sodom, to denote her impurity and lewdness. This was the characteristic vice of that city on which God rained fire and brimstone.

But we question whether the most revolting abominations of Sodom equaled those gigantic and dreadful pollutions of which sober history affirms the palaces of the popes and cardinals, and the religious houses throughout Europe, were the scene. This “great city” is called Egypt, to denote her idolatry and cruelty. Egypt was the land of false gods; and she was, moreover, the first and cruelest persecutor. The resemblance holds good, too, in that Rome was a land of superstition, a worshiper of demons; and, like Egypt, held the Church in captivity; and, in seeking to destroy it, shed more righteous blood than ever was shed on the earth by any other power. Others have been sated—she was drunk with blood; and that drunkenness brought with it a raging thirst for more. Both cities have inherited an immortality of shame—Sodom from her lewdness, and Egypt from her superstition and cruelty. Rome has become the heir of both: she unites in her own person the impurity of the one, the cruelty of the other.

It is added, as farther descriptive of this city, “where also our Lord was crucified”—that is, Jerusalem; Jerusalem being used, not literally, but symbolically. “Where our Lord was crucified,” not in His own person. Since the day that He ascended from the Mount of Olives, and entered within the gates of heaven, no suffering has come near His blessed person. But there are other ways in which Christ may be crucified. The apostle tells us that they who apostatize from the faith crucify the Son of God afresh. Rome is the grand apostasy. Christ, in His truth, she has crucified; and Christ in His members she has crucified. His own blessed body was beyond her rage. She could neither imprison, nor torture, nor crucify it. His members were fully in her power; and there are no torments which racks, and fires, and steel can inflict, to which she did not subject them. “Inasmuch,” said He from Heaven, as another and another of His witnesses was slain —“inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these, ye did it unto Me.”

Here, then, are the three types of the city—Sodom, Egypt, Jerusalem. Here are portrayed, by a single stroke, her three leading characteristics—impurity, idolatry combined with persecuting cruelty, and infidelity. And as we are to view these three as types of the manner of her life, so, as we have already said, we are to view them as types of the manner of her end—utter rejection, like Jerusalem—the sword, like Egypt, and burning, like Sodom. All three are needed to constitute the type of her unequalled and inconceivable doom.

The “great city,” we have said, is wide Europe in its Papal character. But what locality is symbolized by the “street” of the great city? The street, (Greek word), literally the broad place, has reference plainly to the forum of ancient cities. This was the place where public assemblies were held, where laws were proclaimed, justice administered, and merchandise set forth. To guide ourselves to the street on which the sad spectacle of the dead bodies of the witnesses should be seen, we have only to inquire in what city of Europe was it where the Papal gatherings took place, where the Papal laws were proclaimed, where Papal causes were adjudged and sentence pronounced, and where the Papal merchandise was set forth? The answer is, Rome. This was the broad place, or forum, of the great city. And here it was that the death of the witnesses was proclaimed with all formality and pomp. From here Rome sent forth the tidings to all Europe, that the object for which she had so long labored she had at last attained, in the total suppression of all public testimony against her errors. Thus she made a public spectacle of the witnesses, lying slain and dead upon her street, and inviting the nations, as it were, to come and gaze upon their remains.

“And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.” – Revelation 11:9

To deny burial to one is one of the greatest indignities that can be done him. It was in ancient times employed to express the extreme of contempt. Nothing more may be here meant than the scorn which Rome ever expressed for heretics, and the ways innumerable which she took to inflict the last humiliation upon their persons, and to heap the lowest disgrace on their cause. But perhaps this may not be thought precise enough. Then we must first inquire what we are to understand by their corpses or dead bodies.

Life and organization are connected. The moment life departs, the organization is lost, and the body is reduced to its component elements. The witnesses were organized societies, and the slaying or silencing of them lay in their suppression as Churches. After that, though a few of the individual

members which had composed these Churches existed, they had lost their organization—the principle of social life; they were the mere elements of what had been the living witnesses—they were their corpses. The same day in which it was proclaimed that there were no longer any opposers to the Papal rule and religion, the Council issued an edict cutting of all heretics, of whatever kind, and of whatever nation, from the Church, and decreeing against them the usual punishments. Seeing that, on the avowal of Rome herself, there was no longer any organized Church anywhere opposing her authority, the edict could have respect only to individual dissidents which might and did exist, though concealed, in some places—the corpses of the witnesses. These by her edict she cast out of the Church, and adjudged to contempt and punishment.

By her famous proclamation, “*Jam nemo reclamat, nullus obsistit,*” she affirmed that the witnesses were slain; by the edict that followed, she proclaimed that their remains were still upon the earth. That edict, in truth, served the same end to these remains of the witnesses, which the refusal of burial does to a dead body—it kept them in the sight of men. Now indeed there was rejoicing. The two witnesses were slain, and every square and street of the great city rang with shouts of triumph over their death.

“And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts to one another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.” – Revelation 11:10

What! So powerful and proud, and yet so afflicted by the sight of these two witnesses! How little was Rome to be envied, even when at the height of her glory! What tormentings burned beneath her purple, and scarlet, and fine linen! Had she not unbounded riches and dominion? Did not the whole world worship before her? And yet all this availed her nothing, so long as these two witnesses in sackcloth refused, like Mordecai at the palace—gate of old, to do obeisance. “These two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.” They condemned Rome as the Antichrist; and though one would have thought that that “still small voice ” would have been unheard amid the loud roar of a world’s homage, it reached her ear; and there was in it that which roused her indignation and at the same time shook her courage. Conscience—not utterly extinct—told her that the testimony of the witnesses was just, and that the words spoken by them on earth were ratified in heaven. But now the witnesses were silent; and the prediction before us—“rejoicing, and making merry, and sending gifts one to another”—whose terms are borrowed from the customs of ancient festive occasions, is finely and vividly descriptive of the unbounded exultation and congratulation which reigned throughout the Roman world, now that all heresy was suppressed, and the voice which, like a barbed arrow, pierced the folds of her armour and rankled in her heart, was silenced for ever. But since man was placed upon the earth, the triumphing of the wicked is short.

Accordingly, the next event in the Apocalyptic scene is the RESURRECTION of the slain witnesses.

“And after three days and a half, the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.” – Revelation 11:11

Three days did Christ lie in the grave, and then He returned from it, to the terror of His enemies. In this He was the prototype of His witnesses. Their enemies imagined, doubtless, that, being dead, they had now done with them; but at the very height of the triumphing of their foes the witnesses suddenly arose—spectacle appalling to those who had slain them!

The resurrection must be of the same kind with the death. The death was symbolic; so also must be the resurrection. It was the truth that was suppressed; it was the truth that again burst forth. *The witnesses did not arise in their persons, but in their cause.* The confessors that had been put to death in former ages, and whose martyred blood and ashes had been sown over the various countries of Europe, still continued in their graves; their spirits returned not from their glory, to animate their former bodies, and contend over again on the stage on which they had suffered and died; but *a new generation of men, animated by the spirit of the ancient martyrs, and testifying in behalf of the same cause, arose;* Churches were organized; and a public testimony was again borne against the abominations of Popery—fuller and bolder than ever. This was the resurrection.

The spirit that quickened them is termed the spirit of life from God—the knowledge of the truth conveyed by the Holy Spirit. It is said the Spirit entered into them. The original term denotes not only entrance, or taking possession, but entrance so as to dwell in them. The witnesses were not again to be slain; the truth was not again to be totally suppressed, as before. They stood upon their feet; terms which indicate the courage with which they were filled. They stood boldly up, as men who knew that God had raised them from the dead, and that their enemies had no power to kill them a second time.

But in what event in the history of the Church are we to seek for the fulfillment of this symbolic resurrection? If we were right in applying the death of the witnesses to the suppression of all public testimony in behalf of truth at the beginning of the sixteenth century, their resurrection can refer only to that remarkable Revival which immediately followed this event, namely—the Reformation. Indeed, in the past history of the Church, there is not another event to which we can apply it.

The exposition which Mr. Elliot has given of this prediction is so precise, striking, and satisfactory, that it is enough on this subject to quote it.

“But does the chronology suit?” asks Mr. Elliot. “It was predicted that for three-and-a-half *days* the witnesses were to be looked on as dead; in other words, that there was to be the interval of three-and-a-half years between the *first recognition of their extinction* by the assembled deputies from the states of Christendom, and their *resuscitation*. Was this the interval between that memorable day of the ninth session of the Lateran Council, on which the orator pronounced his paeon (fervent expression of joy or praise) of triumph over the extinction of heretics and schismatics, and the first and yet more memorable act of protestation by Luther?”

Let us calculate. The day of the ninth session was, as we have seen, May 5, 1514; the day of Luther’s posting up his theses at Wittenberg (the well-known epoch of the Reformation), October 31, 1517. Now, from May 5, 1514, to May 5, 1517, are three years; and from May 5, 1517, to October 31 of the same year 1517, the reckoning in days is as follows:—

| | |
|----------------|----|
| May 5-31 | 27 |
| June..... | 30 |
| July | 31 |
| August | 31 |
| September | 30 |
| October | 31 |

In all, one hundred and eighty, or half three hundred and sixty days; that is, just half-a—year. So that the whole interval is *precisely, to a day, three-and-a-half years—precisely, to a day, the period predicted in the Apocalyptic prophecy!* Oh, wonderful prophecy! is the exclamation that again forces itself on my mind. Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and the foreknowledge of God!”

That the symbol of *the rising from the dead* was fulfilled in the fact that, although the martyrs continued in their graves, the cause for which they had suffered arose, we may appeal to the testimony of both friends and foes. “And I,” said John Huss, speaking of the gospel-preachers that should appear after he had suffered at the stake—“and I, awakening as it were from the dead, and rising from the grave, shall rejoice with exceeding great joy.” Again, in 1523, after the Reformation had broken out, we find Pope Hadrian saying, in a missive addressed to the Diet at Nuremberg—“The heretics Huss and Jerome are now alive again in the person of Martin Luther.” The consternation and dismay which fell upon all the adherents of the Papacy when Luther arose, and the Reformation under him began to gain ground, is a fact too well known to every reader of the history of the period, to need any particular illustration here.

This symbolization is the picture of a transformed Church. A marvelous change has she undergone—we cannot say in the tomb—for her enemies would not permit her the quiet of the grave, but in the state of the dead. She was sown in weakness, she is raised in power. “The Spirit of Life,” it is said—not life only, but “the spirit of life from God entered into her.” She is now quickened with an intenser vitality. Aforetime she had the “sentence of death in herself,” and, as if against the day of her burial, she wore a robe of sackcloth; but now, risen from the dead, she wears the sackcloth no longer. She feels in her veins the throbbings of immortality, she knows herself invulnerable, she stands upon her feet, and bids defiance to her unnumbered foes. So stood Luther before the Diet of Worms. He felt that all the power of the empire could not crush him. So, too, stood the Reformers before the Diet of Spiers. What a moral grandeur belongs to these scenes! What a fulfillment of the prophecy! And with what rage and terror did these appearances fill their enemies! Prophecy has foretold that they would be witnesses for (*testes pro*) the truth,- and it is sufficiently striking that this is the very name by which they have become known in history—*Protestants*.

“And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud.” What was done in Christ the Head is here represented as done over again in the Body mystical.

This symbolizes some notable advance in the position of the Reformation Church. She was no longer to dwell upon the earth, hidden from the sight of men, unfelt by the world, and subject to the power of her enemies. She would be taken up into a higher region, so to speak, whence she would look down upon her foes, and where she would enjoy a security unknown to her till then, and wield an influence on the world she had never aforetime been able to put forth.

Look at the Church before and after the Reformation, and what a contrast do we see! From the sixth to the sixteenth century her members are truly a “little flock.” They are entirely without social position, and without political privileges. But, at the opening of the sixteenth century, what an accession of members, influence, and moral power! Suddenly she grows into an army. How numerous her champions! Men of prodigious intellect, of profound erudition, and of the most dazzling eloquence, stand up to plead her cause. But the most wonderful characteristic of the Reformation Church is her

deep, and clear, and spiritual insight into truth. The Bible opens, and Revelation now discloses its full glory. A new day has broke upon the Church, and the primitive era is remembered in comparison but as the morning twilight. She dwells no longer amid the clouds of earth; she has mounted into the light of heaven, and, by her joint confession of truth—the harmony of the “Reformed Confessions” ——she sheds upon the world a glorious noonday.

Moreover, we now find her wielding a host of subsidiary agencies for the defense and diffusion of the truth, not one of which had she possessed in previous ages. The revival of learning enables her to translate the Bible; and the invention of the art of printing enables her to circulate it. The world is opening around her—new continents and islands are being discovered—and the facilities of intercourse are daily multiplying. Liberty is advancing; states and princes profer (put forth) their protection; and although she still has enemies—nay, against her is still arrayed the great military powers of Europe—yet no force is able to put her down. The Popish nations fight against her, but they cannot destroy her. The Reformation Church is the true phoenix. She rises from her ashes, instinct with immortal youth, clad in the panoply of divine strength, and radiant with celestial beauty.

The resurrection of the witnesses, like that of their Lord, was accompanied by an earthquake. The earthquake was connected with and sprung out of the resurrection, and may therefore be viewed as symbolizing a revolution mainly of a moral or religious character. In the earthquake, “the tenth part of the city fell.” To explain this, we have only to bear in mind that the “city” was constituted of the ten Roman kingdoms of Europe, confederated under the Papacy. Which of these ten kingdoms was it that fell at the Reformation, as a Popish country? The answer is, Britain. The fall of this tenth part (the tithe) of this city was the first-fruits, as it were, of that great harvest of destruction awaiting the Papacy.

This wonderful chapter is closed with an intimation (announcement) of the final doom of the Papacy. That event was to follow at the distance of some centuries from the Reformation: nevertheless it is given here by anticipation, accompanied with a brief account of the attendant circumstances. It is the manner of the Apocalypse, as it is that of ordinary history, to glance at the grand close, and to give a succinct view of what is afterwards to be described in detail. The great progression that here takes place in point of time is sufficiently marked by the announcement, “The second woe is past.” This tells us that we have passed from the beginning of the sixteenth to the middle of the eighteenth century; for not till then, as we shall afterwards show, was the second woe past, and Christendom delivered from the terror of the Turkish arms.

“And, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.” A short interval indeed was to separate the second and the third woes. There were not fewer than five hundred years between the first and the second woes; but the second was to be followed by the third at a much shorter distance. Moreover, it would come swiftly and stealthily; it would take the world—which would be looking for no such event—by surprise; and it would do its work quickly after it had come. A series of fearful and exterminating judgments, following each other with astounding rapidity, should fall on Rome, and accomplish her overthrow.

“And the seventh angel sounded.” The end comes at last. The domination of the Gentiles and the sackcloth of the witnesses are both alike terminated. Thrice welcome sound!——welcome, though but the herald, in the first instance, of the lightnings, voices, thunders, and earthquake, of civil convulsion.

To mystic Babylon this was a terrific peal. It was her death-knell—her trump of doom; but to the Church it was a trumpet of jubilee. It proclaimed the fall of her prison-house, the expiry of her bondage; and the coming of her King to set up His throne, and, with the Church seated by His side, to reign over a ransomed earth. No sooner does this trumpet sound, than great voices are heard in heaven, announcing the reduction of the world under the reign of God.

“The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. And the four-and-twenty elders which sat before God on their seats fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because Thou hast taken to thee Thy great power and hast reigned.” – Revelation 11:15-17

Chapter XV. The Ten-Horned And Seven-Headed Beast Of The Sea

BEFORE describing the third and last woe, we must speak of the object of that woe. We have had no occasion to do so till now, because he has not appeared on the Apocalyptic scene. The next vision of John, however, brings him before us. Paul, as well as other apostles, had spoken of one whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders—the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2 Thess. 2:3,4) But when Paul wrote, as he himself tells us, there were lets and hindrances in existence, which obstructed the appearance of the Man of Sin, and would continue to do so for some ages to come. But the apostle intimated, at the same time, that these obstructions should in due time cease to exist—that the *let* (restraining force) would be taken out of the way, and then that that Wicked would be revealed, affording to the saints an opportunity of displaying their patience in the endurance of his tyranny, and to God of manifesting His power in breaking him in pieces.

The Roman empire, in its imperial form, was the grand let to the rise of Popery in Paul's time, and for some time after. It was necessary that the throne of the Emperor should be abolished, in order that the chair of the Bishop might be erected in its room (designated position). And to what were the great acts of the drama we have been contemplating—the events falling under the seals and trumpets—directed, but just to break in pieces the fabric of imperial Rome, that, the let being taken out of the way, the Man of Sin might be revealed. Accordingly, in the vision to which we have now come, we witness his portentous rise.

“And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.”
(Rev. 13:1)

This chapter contains an account of the rise of two beasts. The first beast is represented as rising out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns; the second beast is represented as rising out of the earth, having two horns like a lamb, and speaking as a dragon. We shall briefly indicate what we are to understand by these two beasts. This will enable us to enter with advantage upon the exposition of the details of the symbols.

The first beast—that which rose out of the sea—we take to be the secular empire, with its Papal head. The second beast—that which rose out of the earth—we take to be the hierarchy or ecclesiastical state. It was by the union of these two that the world was so long oppressed, and the Church brought to the very brink of extermination. Between the two branches of the Papacy there was as close and intimate alliance almost as between body and soul. The State served the same purpose to the Popedom which

the horse does to the rider—which the hand does to the will. It was the beast on which the harlot rode; it was the arm by which the Papacy executed all its cruel and bloody decrees.

It appeared to John as if he were stationed on the seashore; and, as he gazed upon the waters, which at the time were agitated with tempest (the Gothic invasion), he saw a monster emerging from the deep. His appearance was sufficiently dreadful. He had seven heads, indicative of craft; ten horns, the symbol of power; crowns upon his horns, the emblem of royalty; on his head blasphemous titles, plainly indicating an idolatrous and impious character. Such was the frightful combination of evil qualities—craft, ferocity, power, impiety—which was apparent at the very first glance.

Spencer has well hit off the salient features of this monster:—

“Such one it was as that renowned snake
Which great Alcides in Stremona slew,
Long foster’d in the filth of Lerna Lake,
Whose many heads out-budding ever new
Did breed him endless labour to subdue.
But this same monster much more ugly was;
For seven great heads out of his body grew,
An iron breast, and back of scaley brass,
And all embu’d in blood his eyes did shine as glass.

“His tail was stretched out in wondrous length,
That to the house of heavenly gods it raught;
And, with extorted power, and borrow’d strength,
The ever-burning lamps from thence it brought,
And proudly threw to ground, as things of naught;
And underneath his filthy feet did tread
The sacred things, and holy hests foretaught.
Upon this dreadful beast, with seven-fold head,
He set the false Duessa for more awe and dread.”—

Faerie Queen, Book i., c. 7.

It is usual in Scripture to represent a tyrannical kingdom under the symbol of a wild beast. It is impossible not to admire the propriety of the symbol. It is the property of man to be ruled by reason, to be accessible to considerations of clemency and pity, and to have respect in his actions to the will of his Maker. It is the attribute of a beast, on the other hand, to be actuated only by brute passion and appetite. Now, have not the kingdoms of the world hitherto, and especially the four great Despotisms seen by Daniel in vision, acted more like the beast of prey than as associations of reasonable and accountable beings? Have they not exercised at lawless violence all along, and done whatever they listed, without regard to the will of Him who ruleth among men? The ascertained import of the symbol, then, renders it clear that it is the rise of a tyrannical and persecuting power that is here prefigured. A reference to the prophecy of Daniel will give us material aid in determining the kingdom here symbolized.

There is the closest resemblance, as any one may see who compares the two descriptions, between the fourth beast of Daniel and the beast of the sea seen by John. The description given by Daniel is such as to lead us to conclude that the fourth beast was a compound of the preceding three—that it had the teeth of the Babylonian lion, the claws of the Persian bear, and the spotted skin of the Macedonian leopard—that is, it possessed all the propensities of its predecessors, in addition to its own characteristic qualities. Now, such is precisely the appearance of the beast of the sea, verse 2:—

“And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion.” -Revelation 13:2a

Hence we conclude that it is one and the same political association which is symbolized by the fourth beast of Daniel and the beast of the sea of John. But the fourth beast of Daniel is, by the universal consent of expositors, the symbol of the Roman empire; and it is this empire, therefore, that is symbolized by the beast of the sea; only we have mainly to do with it in its divided form, as held forth by the ten horns. We may note this farther point of resemblance—that the two beasts came to the same end: Daniel’s is slain, and his body is given to the devouring flame; John’s is taken prisoner at the battle of Armageddon, and is cast into the lake burning with fire and brimstone. A short commentary will make the application of the vision to the Papal empire exceedingly plain.

The beast rose out of the sea. The sea is the symbol of society in a state of agitation. The western world at this time was convulsed. The winds that agitated it blew from the north, and were formed of the Gothic nations, whose successive eruptions completely destroyed the fabric of the empire, and plunged society into frightful confusion. It was out of this social flood that the ten Roman kingdoms of modern Europe emerged.

“Having seven heads.” Let us here avail ourselves of the aid of an interpreter who, we are sure will not mislead us. In Revelation 17:9,10, we are told the seven heads have a twofold signification. First, they symbolize the seven hills which were to be the seat of the government of the kingdom. This, as Elliot remarks, “is a character as important as it is obvious. It binds the power symbolized, through all its various mutations, from its earliest beginning to its end, to that same seven-hilled locality, even like one *adscriptus glebae* (Latin, a tenant tied to the land), and as an essential part of his very constitution and life.” This leads us at once to the city of Rome.

In the passage just referred to, we are further informed that the seven heads also symbolize seven kings, i.e., seven forms of government. Now, such is the number of distinct forms of government which the Roman empire has assumed from first to last, as enumerated both by Livy and Tacitus—kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs (official ten-man commissions established by the Roman Republic), military tribunes, emperors. Of these kings, or forms of government, it was said, “five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come.” Five of these had fallen before the days of John; the sixth—namely, the imperial—was then in being; and the seventh was then future.

It was intimated (announced), “and when he [the seventh head] cometh, he must continue a short space.” Who is this seventh head, whose term of existence was to be so brief? On no point are Apocalyptic commentators more divided, or their conclusions more vague. Mead makes the seventh head the demi-Caesar, or western emperor. Bishop Newton thinks the dukedom of Rome, established after the conquest of the Heruli, is meant. Others suppose that the Christian emperors, extending from

Constantine to Augustulus, constituted the seventh head, and had its wound by the sword of the Heruli. Mr. Elliot finds the seventh head in the change of government that took place under Diocletian, who, together with his successors, in place of emperor or general of the Roman armies, became king or lord; and, in place of the laurel crown and purple, assumed the diadem and robe of silk—the Asiatic symbols of absolute rule. This was followed by great and fundamental changes in the administration, and is marked by Gibbon as the “New Form of Administration.” The empire henceforward was under the joint administration of four princes—two supreme rulers, or *Augusti*, and two inferior ones, or *Caesars*. This was introduced, not as a temporary expedient, but as a fundamental law of the Constitution. These are the nearest approaches which have been made to the solution of the difficulty of the seventh head.

To our mind none of these expositions are satisfactory; and, therefore, we here adopt a line of interpretation which, we think, takes us clear of all these difficulties. There is no reason, as it appears to us, why we should confine our view to the last form of Satan’s idolatrous empire—the Roman, to wit—and seek in connection with it all these seven heads. Rather let us take Satan’s empire in its totality. The beast that rose out of the sea was no new monster; he had been seen on earth before. He had momentarily disappeared in a great catastrophe, but he rose again to resume his ravages. Idolatry was one continued confederacy from the beginning, being inspired all through by the same spirit—even the old serpent, the devil.

Nevertheless, it culminated in seven great empires or heads, which rose in succession. The first was Egypt—the earliest persecutor of the Church. The second was Assyria; the third was Babylon; the fourth was the Medo-Persian; then, fifth, came the Grecian Power; and, sixth, the Roman, which was in being at the time of the prophecy. Under the sixth head, the head then in being, was the beast destined to pass out of view for a short time—to suffer a brief extinction—it was to be slain by the sword of the Goths, and so to become “the beast that was and is not.” “And I saw one of its heads as it were wounded to death.” But it was to revive in the form of the Ten kingdoms of modern Europe.

It was essentially the same Pagan kingdom, Satan-inspired, which had lived in its five previous heads—Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Medo—Persia, and Greece; and which in John’s time was existing in its Roman head; which was to arise from its apparent death by the Gothic invasion—emerge from the weltering flood of the sixth century, and to live a second time, in the Ten kingdoms of Europe, under its head the Pope.

A sort of dual character was to belong to this head; for it is counted as both the seventh and the eighth. And in actual fact this duality of head or government has characterized modern Europe. In one aspect its ten kings were its head; in another its head was the Papacy. In the Papacy the ten kingdoms found a common bond of union, and a common center of action. Under their chief, the Pope, they were marshaled in one empire, which was inspired by one spirit, and ruled by one law, which obeyed one will, and pursued one grand aim—all having a common source in the chair of the Popes. Both a temporal and spiritual supremacy did the Pope wield over Europe. This supremacy is necessarily inherent in the fundamental dogma of the Papacy.

The Pope is the vicar of Christ, according to the Romish teaching; but to Christ has been given “all power in heaven and in earth.” He is a King of kings; and if the Pope be what Christ is, he must possess the power which Christ possesses—he must be a King of kings. And in fact he did claim this power

for many ages; and in deposing sovereigns, releasing subjects from their allegiance, disposing of crowns, and annulling laws, the Pope demeaned himself as the Lord paramount of Europe, both in temporals and spirituals. This jurisdiction he exercised, not as the modern Popish gloss would have it, by the general consent and acquiescence of the kings and nations of the period; he claimed it as of divine right, and as one to whom the God of heaven had delegated His divine prerogatives, commissioning him to represent Him on earth; in short, as one who had been enthroned as vice-God, and into whose hands had been delivered all the kings and kingdoms of earth.

A singular, and apparently contradictory account is given of the beast—“the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.” How was it possible that both statements could be true—— that the beast had ceased to exist, and yet was in existence, i.e., when it was the object of wonder to all who dwelt on the earth? What we have already said will enable us to understand this. The beast was in the five idolatrous empires or heads which had already fallen. The beast *is not*, for its sixth head, the Roman, had followed its predecessors, and gone out of existence during the Gothic irruption. The beast *is*, that is, when the whole world wondered after it, and bowed down in worship before it, because it had returned from the abyss, and was living again in its last head, the Papal. It was the same infernal idolatrous beast throughout; but in respect of the successive eras at which its heads flourished, it was “the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.” “He is the eighth, and is of the seventh, and goeth into perdition.” This discloses its end. The eighth head will have no successor. The decem—regal form, such as is seen in modern Papal Europe, will be the last organization which Idolatry will be suffered to assume. When Rome imperial fell, Rome Papal rose. But this will not occur over again. The beast will have no second resurrection. In its form of ten kingdoms, under its chief the Pope, it will fill up its cup, and go to its own place. It “goeth into perdition”—final perdition; for never will it be seen coming up again from the abyss which will then open to receive it.

“And ten horns.” This is explained in chapter 17:12. “And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings”— not individual kings, but lines of rulers or kingdoms— “which have received no kingdom as yet;”—an intimation (announcement) that their appearance was still future. The empire had to be broken in pieces by the shock of the barbarous nations, and out of what had been one undivided monarchy, ten distinct and independent kingdoms were to arise. It is well known that such was the origin of the ten Roman kingdoms of Europe. Let us trace the boundary line of the western empire. The wall of Adrian, dividing Scotland from England, forms the boundary on the north. This line we prolong across the German Ocean to the Rhine. We ascend that river to Baden-Baden; thence strike eastward to the source of the Danube, which we descend to Belgrade, and thence in a south-western direction, across the Adriatic and Mediterranean, to the great desert of Africa. This line will include the Roman empire of the west; and on this platform were the ten kingdoms to arise. We should expect that these ten kingdoms would be formed not long after the Gothic invasion, for the beast emerged from the flood, with all the ten horns already apparent.

We are disposed to take the era A.D. 532. At that epoch we find the following ten kingdoms within the limits we have traced:—the Anglo-Saxons; the Franks of central, the Allaman-Franks of eastern, and the Burgundic-Franks of south-eastern France; the Visigoths; the Suevi; the Vandals; the Ostrogoths in Italy; the Bavarians; and the Lombards. Great changes have occurred at various periods in Europe.

Some of its states have fallen, and others have arisen; but from the Gothic invasion to the present era, ten has been the prevailing number of its kingdoms.

Of these ten kings or kingdoms it was said, that they “receive power as kings one hour with the beast.” The (Greek word), *one hour*, indicates not the duration of their power, but the time when they should receive it. Their formation as independent kingdoms, and the development of the beast, would synchronize; both should receive their power at one and the same time.

It was at the end of the fifth century, or rather the beginning of the sixth, that the formation of the ten Gothic kingdoms was completed; and by this time the Pope, supported by the decrees of councils and the acquiescence of kings, had asserted his character of vicar of Christ and vicegerent of God, and had begun to exhibit the antichristian characteristics of blasphemy against God, and rage against His saints.

No sooner had the beast of the sea appeared, than “the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.” The dragon recognized the beast newly arisen as the lineal descendant of Pagan Rome, and, as such, hastened to serve him heir to all the power, wealth, and dominion of that empire. By the seat of the dragon is denoted the countries over which Rome had swayed the scepter, which included the richest lands and the wealthiest cities of the western world.

Of all these, once the possession of Pagan Rome, Papal Rome has long been mistress. She occupies the same seat as the dragon of old. “On his heads were names of blasphemy.” All the great empires, from Egypt downwards, were idolatrous. Blasphemy was written on every one of them. Every form of government which has arisen at Rome has assumed titles and arrogated powers of a blasphemous character.

The chief magistrate of the Romans from the first was the high priest—Pontifex Maximus—and the supreme authority in matters ecclesiastical. To come down to the emperors, some of them were addressed as the “august” and the “eternal one.” Most of them were worshipped as God after death, and some of them were so even before it. But the last head—the Papacy—has far surpassed its predecessors. There is nothing in the history of the universe that equals the blasphemous titles and powers which the Popes have assumed. They have openly laid claim to be regarded as vicar of Christ, the vicegerent of the Creator, and governor of the world; and on that claim is built up the tremendous and monstrous fabric, partly civil and partly ecclesiastical, that constitutes the Papacy.

“And all the world wondered after the beast.” This was partly owing to what is stated before, namely, that “his deadly wound was healed.” The event was so marvelous, that it drew the admiration of all that dwelt upon the earth to the beast that was the subject of it. When it was pierced by the sword of the Goths, men thought there was now an end of that terrible kingdom, which had shed so much blood and devoured so much flesh; but when they saw it revive in its ten horns or kingdoms—occupying the same territory, governed by the same laws, as its predecessor, and finding a new bond of union in the Papacy—it appeared to them as if Rome had returned from her grave—so completely had the wound been healed. This appeared little less than a miracle in the eyes of a blinded world, which accordingly fell down before the beast. They had worshiped the dragon—given unbounded admiration and implicit obedience to every edict of Pagan Rome, whether it regarded things civil or things spiritual—it had dictated supremely both law and religion. And when they saw the beast sitting on the same throne, and

wielding the same power, as the dragon, they could render nothing less to the beast than they had given aforetime to the dragon.

“And they worshipped the dragon, which gave power unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” -Revelation 13:4

The religion of Papal Rome was but a revival of that of Pagan Rome, under different names; and it became an easy matter to those who dwelt upon the earth to transfer their worship from the one to the other. They who had worshiped demons could do so by whatever name they were called, whether the classic one of Venus, or the Christian one of Mary.

“And there was given unto him a mouth, speaking great things and blasphemies.” -Revelation 13:5

When the beast found himself on the throne of the dragon, and the world prostrate before him, his heart was lifted up within him, like that of the king of Babylon of old. He imagined himself to be some great one—to be God, and the pride of his heart found vent in the dreadfully blasphemous words of his mouth. “He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.” No names have been so fearfully blasphemous as those which the Pope has assumed. He has claimed dominion over the whole world; and, as if this were not enough, he has extended it into the other. Whom he will he can consign to hell, and whom he will he can save from it. The gates of paradise he can lock and unlock. He has issued his order to angels, straitly charging them to do his bidding. “We command the angels of paradise to introduce that soul into heaven,” said Clement the Sixth, of such as might die on their pilgrimage to Rome in the year of Jubilee. He has exercised authority over devils, compelling them to release such as he wished to deliver from flames. Gregory the Great rescued thus the soul of the Pagan emperor Trajan.

To speak of his setting his throne above that of kings is nothing remarkable: he has exalted it above that of angels and archangels—he has exalted it above God Himself; he has annulled Divine ordinances, and claimed a power to abrogate the moral law, thus challenging an authority superior to that from which the law emanated; he has sat in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. “To the Romish Church,” writes Clement the Second, “every knee must bow of things on earth, and that at his pleasure even the door of heaven is opened and shut.” We find Cardinal Domiani, writing to Victor the Second, introducing Christ as speaking—“I have appointed thee to be as the father of emperors; I have delivered into thy hands the keys of the whole Church universal, and placed thee my vicar over her: yea, by the removal of a king” (the Emperor Henry the Third had just died), “have granted thee the rights of the whole Roman empire now vacant.” We find Innocent the Third calling himself the “Lieutenant of Him who hath written upon His vesture and on His thigh, the King of kings and Lord of lords,” and telling King Richard that “he held the place of God upon the earth; and, without distinction of persons, he would punish the men and the nations that presumed to oppose his commands.”

We find Clement the Seventh affirming, in a letter to King Charles the Sixth, that “as there is but one God in the heavens, so there cannot nor ought to be of right but one God on earth.” Politianus thus addresses Alexander the Sixth: “We rejoice to see you raised above all human things, and exalted even to Divinity itself, seeing there is nothing, except God, which is not put under you.” Under the pontifical arms, at the coronation of the Pope we have just named, was inscribed this distich—

**“Caesar: magna fuit, nunc Roma est maxim, Sextus
Regnat Alexander: ille vir, inde Deus.”**

But, not to multiply proofs, we close with the very extraordinary titles assumed by Martin the Fifth, in the instructions given to a nuncio sent to Constantinople:—“The most holy and most blessed, who is invested with heavenly power, who is lord on earth, the successor of Peter, the Christ or anointed of the Lord, the lord of the universe, the father of kings, the light of the world, the sovereign pontiff, Pope Martin.” Nor are we to suppose that this was a mere empty boast, or unallowed claim, like the high-sounding titles which eastern despots have sometimes assumed. It was ratified by councils, submitted to by kings, and exercised, in the very spirit in which it was arrogated, over the persons, consciences, and lives of all men.

There is not a fact in history better established than the literal fulfillment of what is here foretold:—“These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.” “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

And thus, too, was Paul’s prophecy in his epistle to the Thessalonians fulfilled:—“ Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” -2 Thessalonians 2:4

“And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.” -Revelation 13:7

We have already spoken of this war under the head of the witnesses, and our space does not permit us to re-open the subject. There is not one of the ten horns which has not at one period or another of its history persecuted the saints; nor is there a spot in Europe, within the limits we have formerly traced, which has not been sprinkled with their blood. We need only name the murderous crusades carried on for ages against the Waldenses and Albigenses;—the slaughter of the Piedmontese, whose bones whitened the Alps; the martyrs of Provence, whose blood tinged so oft the blue waters of the Rhone; the massacre of St. Bartholomew, in August 1572, which continued three days, and in which, in Paris alone, thirty thousand Protestants, and throughout the departments of France forty thousand more, perished.

The news of this terrible slaughter was received at Rome with the ringing of bells and the firing of cannon, while the medal of Gregory commemorates it to this day as a deed of illustrious virtue;—the revocation of the edict of Nantes, in 1685, under Louis the Fourteenth, when, as has been computed, many thousand Protestant churches were razed, a million of citizens were driven into banishment, an hundred thousand were murdered, while those whom the sword spared were consigned to the galleys, and many of the youth of both sexes were transported as slaves to the West Indies;—the bloody wars of Alva in the Low Countries, who boasted that in the course of a few years thirty-six thousand had died by the common executioner;—the suppression of the Reformation in Spain and Italy by the terrors of the axe, the fagot, and the horrors of the Inquisition;—besides the countless thousands who perished at other times, and in other parts of Europe, of whom no record has been kept, and whose names shall never be known till the books are opened.

Engraven on the page of history stands the record of her crimes. Rome shall perish, but this record is eternal. To the end of time not a line of its crimson writing shall be effaced; and so long as it continues to be read, it will excite the mingled horror and indignation of mankind.

But the most marvelous thing in the prophecy is, that the beast should overcome in the war, i.e., in the first instance, for in the final issue the Lamb shall overcome. Let us here mark the adorable sovereignty of God. This power to make war, and to overcome in the war, was given unto the beast. "Thou couldst have no power at all against me," said Christ, when standing before Pilate to be judged, "had it not been given thee from above." The beast, in the plenitude of his pride and power, thought that he might do according to his will, without having respect to any God or man, saying, no doubt, with the king of old, Who is he that can deliver out of mine hand? The beast was mistaken herein: he could not have spilt a drop of the Church's blood, nor have touched a hair of her head, had he not received power from above.

But why did God permit His fold so long to be a field of slaughter? Why did the Church's blood continue to flow, and her groans to ascend to heaven, while He stood by as one who either would not or could not deliver? We know not. But this we know, that it was God who did it, and that He had wise purposes for doing it, and that He will yet bring good out of it all, and glorify both Himself and the Church by the course of suffering through which He has led her.

Chapter XVI. The Two-Horned Beast Of The Earth

“AND I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.” We intend here simply to indicate, in a few brief sentences, who this lamb-like beast is, and then pass on to the grand catastrophe.

It is the *ecclesiastical hierarchy* which we take to be here symbolized. The vision brings the Pope again before us; in the beast of the sea he is seen as the ruling head of the ten Papal kingdoms; here he is beheld as the ruling head of the Papal clergy. This beast rose out of the earth—the symbol of the western empire in its tranquilized state had two horns like a lamb. He had two horns like a lamb. The key of the symbol is found in our Lord’s warning:—“ Beware of them that come to you in *sheep’s clothing*.” Such was the clothing in which the beast of the earth appeared—a circumstance which fixes upon him a clerical character. He is called “another beast.” It has ever been the policy of the Popes to keep their ecclesiastical distinct from their temporal kingdom. They have governed it by distinct assemblies, laws, and officers. Their clergy have generally been exempt from the ordinary tribunals and taxes, and amenable in both respects to the Pope alone. Thus has the ecclesiastical estate appeared before the world as “another beast.”

The two horns indicate, we are disposed to think, the two powerful organizations through which the ecclesiastical jurisdiction was wielded. The clergy of the Pope were divided into regular and secular. They were the two arms of his strength. Bishops and priests, with the machinery of councils and synods, were a powerful instrumentality for executing the pontifical will; but an equally pliable and effective instrumentality for the same purpose did the Pope find in the numerous monkish orders which covered Europe. These were the two horns of the ecclesiastical beast. The beast of the earth was a pretended minister of Christ; we say pretended, because, while he had horns as a lamb, “he spake as a dragon.” The dragon is the symbol of Pagan Rome. The Popes displayed all the lust, cruelty, ambition, tyranny, of the Caesars. But it was in his speech mainly that he was to display the characteristics of the dragon, which clearly points to the character of his teachings.

The religion which the hierarchy of Rome inculcated was paganism very slightly disguised. The doctrine of the Popes was the doctrine of devils. We might instance in proof, the morality of the Jesuits, some of whose leading maxims are, that it is lawful to do evil that good may come, that excommunicated princes may be murdered, that no faith is to be kept with heretics, and that actions, however contrary to the Divine law, may be innocently performed if the person is able even ideally to join a good end to them, or, in the style of the Jesuits, to direct aright the intention. In these the dragon speaks.

“And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him.” -Revelation 13:12a

It is here foretold that the last should be first—last in coming up, but first in respect of the rule it should exercise. And as the prophecy foretold, so has it happened. The spiritual has clothed itself with the prerogatives, and executed the functions of the temporal. By his doctrine of pontifical supremacy the Pope really grasped the secular government of Europe. In the middle ages he claimed and exercised

direct temporal supremacy, and in virtue thereof, he put himself above all kings, and sustained himself supreme judge in all cases temporal and spiritual. In those days he never scrupled to show himself openly to the world with the keys of Peter in the one hand, and the sword of Caesar in the other; pleading as his warrant for thus uniting the diadem and the mitre, the commission given to Jeremiah,

“See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, and to build, and to plant.” -Jeremiah 1:10

After the Reformation the Pope claimed only an *indirect* Temporal supremacy; that is, the power of passing sentences in spiritual matters, carrying temporal effects, however, to the extent, should the case be so, of the dethronement of monarchs, and the releasing of subjects from their allegiance. At this day the Pope claims only the power of DIRECTION. In virtue of this power he can determine whether a sovereign's title be or be not *valid*; whether an oath of allegiance is *existent* or *non-existent*; whether it is or is not the subjects' duty to rebel. In short, he can bring within the province of *Direction* the whole domain of political, social, and moral duty, and the whole question of princes' prerogatives and subjects' rights—sanctioning or annulling them as it may seem right to him, This is naught else than muffled temporal supremacy. It is, in truth, more formidable than direct temporal power, inasmuch as it works noiselessly and invisibly, is believed to be divine and impotent, can evacuate laws of their force, and sovereigns of their authority, and lay prostrate beneath its foot the conscience and the reason the bodies and the souls of men. Thus has the second beast come in before the first, and under pretense of honoring him, has despoiled him of his functions, reduced him to vassalage, and done his work.

It is added, “and causeth the earth, and them who dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.” The Papal clergy were the great preachers of passive obedience. They were the grand supporters both of secular and spiritual despotism. Through their instrumentality mainly was the world plunged into slavery, and kept enslaved for so many ages. No human power can prevent a people enlightened by religion from achieving their independence: and no human power can make a superstitious and ignorant people other than slaves. What advances might the world, by this time, have made in the principles of civil liberty and of physical science, but for this grand obstacle to progress! The great discoveries in physics and mechanics which have distinguished our times might have been made ages ago, and more numerous, beautiful, and useful applications of them but for this hindrance. The laws by which nations are to be governed, commerce carried on, and the intercourse of States with one another regulated, are only beginning to be understood. And why only now? Because mind was completely overborne by a Church which placed all virtue and wisdom in the maxim, that the world should worship the beast.

“And he doeth great wonders.” Who has not heard of the pretended miracles of the Popish Church—the palpable cheats, gross delusions, and impudent falsehoods, which she has practiced in support of her authority? Transubstantiation alone, which her priests are performing every day, were enough to confer on that Church unrivaled pre-eminence as a wonder-worker. Nor are the wonders of the beast sometimes of a very harmless kind: “He maketh fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.” Has he not arrogated to himself the power of wielding at will the thunderbolts of God? What dreadful curses, with bell, book, and candle, has he not pronounced on the persons, goods, and souls of his victims? These anathemas struck terror into the hearts of the bravest, and laid the mightiest monarchs prostrate in the dust. No armies, no human might, could avail the man against whom had

been launched the thunders of the Seven Hills. The fire of heaven could not have been more instantaneous or more deadly. With this fire how often has the Pope scathed whole nations at once! When the sentence of excommunication was thundered against a kingdom, what wailing, despair, suffering, overspread it! The whole course of life was instantly arrested; the churches were closed; the sacraments were interdicted; and whoever died while the excommunication was in force, his body lay unburied, and his soul was cast out of paradise.

The second beast, addressing the dwellers on the Papal earth, said to them, “That they should make an image to the beast that had the wound by a sword.” The “beast that had the wound by a sword” was the Pagan Roman empire; and the project of the lamb-like beast was that a political structure should be set up, bearing a close resemblance to the grand old empire which the Goths had swept out of existence. This was actually accomplished in the revival of the “Roman empire,” under Charlemagne. The Pope had the art to persuade the States of Christendom to form themselves into a federation under the name of the “Holy Roman Empire,” and to place at its head a prince of their own, who should be styled Caesar, and should wear the imperial diadem. This empire was the shadow or “image” of that which had been before it. Its laws, maxims, and religion, were the same as those of imperial Rome, whose likeness it bore. It was the servant of the power which had called it into being. And that it might the more effectually execute the bloody decrees of Rome, her priests were peremptory in enjoining on all the dwellers in Europe the duty of rendering obedience, reverence, and service to it.

“And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.” -Revelation 13:15

The image set up by the Pope stood there, not like some great idol, fixed movelessly on its pedestal, and compelling the veneration of a blinded world by its colossal but inanimate bulk, and the resemblance it bore to the terrible empire which had reigned before it. The Pope conjured it unto life. The priests so wrought with their arts that the image spake—spake as they inspired it, and did the deeds they willed it should do. “That the image of the beast should both speak”—speak in blasphemy against God, by arrogating His titles and powers, and speak in anathemas against the saints—“them that dwell in heaven”—by denouncing all who would not worship him as heretics, and giving their bodies to be burned.

It is instructive to observe, that while the first beast is said to make “war with the saints,” the second beast is represented as doing no more than causing them to be killed. The prophecy is in exact accordance with fact. The Popes and bishops did not, with their own hands, murder the saints; they delivered them over to the secular arm, and caused them to be killed.

“And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” Revelation 13:16-17

It was customary, in ancient times, for servants and soldiers to have imprinted on their persons the mark of their master and commander. The mark was sometimes a hieroglyphic, sometimes the capital letters of the name, and sometimes the name in full. Popery, too, required its supporters to wear its mark, more or less conspicuously, if not in their forehead, yet in their right hand. That mark consisted

in the profession of the Romish faith, without which Rome would not permit any man to enjoy either natural or civil rights: “no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”

From instances almost innumerable we shall select only one. Pope Martin the Fifth, in his bull, issued soon after the Council of Constance, enjoined the professors of the Catholic faith not to permit heretics to have houses in their districts, or enter into contracts, or carry on commerce, or enjoy the comforts of humanity with Christians. This furnishes a striking point of resemblance between the beast whose deadly wound was healed, and the image of that beast—between the dragon and the dragon’s successor, which, though it wore the lamb’s skin, had the dragon’s voice; for we find an edict issued against the primitive Christians by the Pagan emperor, Diocletian, in precisely similar terms. According to that edict, “The Christians,” says Justin Martyr, “had not the power of buying or selling anything, nor were they allowed the liberty of drawing water itself, before they had offered incense to detestable idols.”

But what are we to understand by the number of the first beast, which the second beast was to compel every man to wear?

“Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred three score and six.”-Revelation 13:18

Anciently the letters of the alphabet served as numerals: accordingly, a man’s name might be expressed by the number indicated by the letters of the name, when used as numerals. *Touth*, the name of the Egyptian Mercury, was expressed by the number 1218; *Jupiter* by 737—that being the sum of the letters taken numerically. We are told that the letters of the name of the beast would make up the number 666. To discover the name, we have only to take the Greek alphabet, and select from it those letters that contain this number. On doing so, we have the word LATEINOS, or Latin. This shows us that the Latin empire is meant. The word Lateinos contains the number 666, and is, moreover, the name of the founder of the fourth monarchy, the name of that monarchy itself, and the name of all its individual members. The evidence appears perfectly satisfactory; according to which we conclude that LATIN is the true interpretation of the number of the beast.

We might go on in this way presenting the portraiture of Popery; but many volumes would not suffice to contain it, and a whole lifetime would not be long enough to finish it.

Chapter XVII The Commencement And Termination Of The Twelve Hundred And Sixty Days

WE now come to discuss the question of time. There is a certain period fixed by God between the birth and death of every man. The same Providence, by an irresistible decree, has numbered the days of the Man of Sin. Between his appearance above the dark flood, and his descent into his burning grave, an interval will elapse of twelve hundred and sixty years. This number occurs in the Apocalypse, in connection with the existence of Antichrist, not less than five times. The Gentiles were to tread the holy city under foot forty and two months: the witnesses were to prophesy, clothed in sackcloth, a thousand two hundred and threescore days. The woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God for a thousand two hundred and threescore days; and in the wilderness she was nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. Power was given unto the beast of the sea to continue forty and two months.

The period is variously expressed in days, months, times; but its length is the same in all—twelve hundred and sixty symbolic days, or years. The prophecy of Daniel, too, limits the duration of Antichrist to the same period—a time, times, and the dividing of time. Thus, as regards the length of the period, there is no doubt. The Papacy cannot possibly survive its twelve hundred and sixtieth year, dated from its rise. This is the hour of its doom, beyond which neither craft nor power can prolong its existence: then it goeth into perdition.

The main point here, then, is to ascertain the period of the rise of the Papacy: twelve hundred and sixty years added to which will give the epoch of its fall. Of course its rise must be placed subsequent to the Gothic invasion: for out of that flood did the ten kingdoms emerge. The ten kingdoms, as we have already stated, were completed by the opening of the sixth century. We are not, therefore, to look for the full development of the Papacy before that century, nor are we to look for it at any era very much subsequent, as must be evident from our former explanations, that the ten kingdoms of Europe, united and governed by the Pope, their last and eighth head, forms the beast of the abyss, whose continuance is limited to forty-two months.

Do we find any strongly-marked epoch occurring soon after the commencement of this century in the history of the ten kingdoms or of the Papacy? Do we find any signal change in the constitution of the first, or any signal enlargement or confirmation in the powers and claims of the second? We do. About the year 530 we find a change passing upon the ten Gothic kingdoms, which made them, in fact, Roman kingdoms, and linked them to the fourth monarchy of Daniel, and made them, in truth, but a continuation of that Roman empire to which the Gothic invasion had given a deadly wound.

From A.D. 530 to A.D. 533, Gibbon tells us, the Emperor Justinian published his immortal works, the CODE, the PANDECTS, and the INSTITUTES. These contained a digest of the laws of the ancient Roman empire, which henceforward became the law of the ten kingdoms. Gibbon remarks that, by the

execution of this work, “Justinian, the Greek emperor of Constantinople and the East, was the legal successor of the Latian shepherd who had planted a colony on the banks of the Tiber.” Much more, would we remark, was it true of the ten kingdoms, which now began to be governed by the laws of ancient Rome, and into which the very spirit of Rome was thus breathed, that it had now become the legal successor of that Latin kingdom which Romulus founded on the banks of the Tiber. The promulgation of the Justinian Code seems to mark the epoch of the full emergence of the ten-horned beast above the Gothic flood. The ten kingdoms became then the true lineal descendant of Pagan Rome.

Seventy-five years later we find another strongly-marked epoch in the history of the Papacy. In A.D. 606, the Emperor Phocas confirmed a former recognition of the Pope’s authority by Justinian, by constituting the Pope universal bishop, and requiring all the Churches to acknowledge the Papal supremacy; and in A.D. 608, Phocas gave Pope Boniface the Pantheon, which, from being a temple originally dedicated to all the Pagan gods, was henceforward dedicated to the worship of the Virgin Mary and all the martyrs. It had been the high place of Pagan idolatry, and now it became the high place of Antichristian idolatry. We would request our readers specially to mark these two stages in the rise of the Papacy. They are Justinian’s edict, say, A.D. 532, and Phocas’ edict, A.D. 606.

Others have traced yet a third stage in the rise of the Papacy—the era of Charlemagne. Charlemagne, king of France, was crowned Emperor of the Romans, by Pope Leo, in AD. 800. By the help of Charlemagne, the Pope’s temporal authority was enlarged and confirmed; three of the ten kings whose territory adjoined the Roman See being abolished, and the Pope vested in their authority and their territories—thus fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel, that three of the horns should be plucked up before the little horn. We now behold the Antichrist not only risen, but fully revealed to the world. From the summit of the Seven Hills he shows himself to Christendom, decked out in the glories of the triple crown, and claiming the blasphemous title of Christ’s vicar and God’s vicegerent.

From which of these three epochs are we to date the commencement of the twelve hundred and sixty years? The opinion that there may be a double, or perhaps even a treble commencement of this period, is very probable. It is countenanced by a prediction long since fulfilled. The “seventy years” of Jeremiah determined the length of the captivity in Babylon. But there was at three several times a carrying away; and, of course, the question came to be, from which of these periods the commencement of the seventy years should be dated. It was found that as there were three commencing stages in the captivity, so there were three terminating stages in the return, with exactly seventy years between each. So, to the three stages in the rise of the Papacy there may be three answering stages in its downfall and total extinction. If we date the commencement of the twelve hundred and sixty years from the era of Justinian, A.D. 532, we are brought down to 1792. If we date from the era of Phocas, A.D. 606—8, we are brought down to 1866—68. And if we date from the era of Charlemagne, A.D. 800, we cannot look for the downfall of Popery till 2060. (Webmaster: This could fit with what I am seeing today. I believe Popery is still in control albeit covertly.)

Let us examine these three epochs a little more particularly, and see how they correspond with the present state of the world and of the Papacy. We feel satisfied that we are warranted to make the era of Justinian the *primary* commencement, at least, of the twelve hundred and sixty years. At that epoch we behold the ten kingdoms risen, and governed by Roman law—the beast from the sea. If to that we are

to add twelve hundred and sixty years, we are brought down, as we have said, to 1792, the era of the French Revolution. How does that period correspond? Was there any similarity between the rise of the Papacy in A.D. 532 and its fall in 1792? A very striking similarity. In A.D. 532 we see the “ten kingdoms” risen: in 1792 we see them falling before a tremendous political tempest. But further, the code of Justinian first recognized the Pope’s absolute ecclesiastical supremacy, virtually gave the saints into his hand, and placed the civil sword at his disposal. Twelve hundred and sixty years thereafter, at the breaking out of the French Revolution, the leading kingdom in Continental Europe, and that one which for ages had been the chief stay of the Papacy, abolished the Pope’s supremacy, declared the *clergy fatally independent of the See of Rome*, vested the election of bishops in the departmental authorities, and, to complete the change, made a national profession of atheism.

The two epochs, in their bearing on the Papacy, appear the very counterparts of each other. At the one epoch we find the supreme civil power bent on aggrandizing the Pope, framing all its laws with that special view, and subjecting both secular and spiritual authority to him. At the other epoch we find the supreme civil power bent on the Pope’s overthrow, enacting laws to effect that object, and emancipating both the secular and spiritual authorities from his sway. The manifold calamities of which the Revolution was productive to the Papacy we shall have a future occasion of stating: we only here further remark, that the tremendous blow then inflicted on Rome she has somewhat repaired, but is very far from having fully recovered. (Webmaster: In 1848 when this book was first published.)

The second epoch—that of Phocas, A.D. 606-8—brings us to 1866—68. All admit that the Pope was by this time vested in the title and powers of Christ’s vicar. The general consent on this point warrants the conclusion that at this era there was a fuller manifestation of Antichrist; that now, at least, he was fully come; and that at the corresponding era of 1866—68 he may be overtaken by the plagues of his final ruin. But though the Papal system may, about that time, begin to be broken up and swept away as a government, remnants of Popery may linger in being, and the full glory of the millennium, consisting in the restoration of the Jews, and the full conversion of the Gentile world, may not be realized till toward A.D. 2000, forming a third period corresponding to the era of Charlemagne.

Daniel speaks of two periods—one of thirty, and the other of forty—five years, making seventy-five years in all— which are to be added to the twelve hundred and sixty days. “And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days,” (Daniel 12:11) which are just thirty days added to the twelve hundred and sixty. Thirty years after the termination of the twelve hundred and sixty years, we may expect some event bearing with decided effect on the downfall of Antichrist. But a still more blessed change may be expected forty-five years after that again; for it is added, “Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five-and-thirty days.” (Daniel 12:12) It is a remarkable coincidence, that in the rise of Antichrist there were seventy-five years between his primary appearance at the era of Justinian, and his secondary at the era of Phocas; and that we find an era of corresponding length in his predicted downfall, extending from the French Revolution to 1866—68, which marks most probably the epoch of his consummated ruin, the interval being filled up with the plagues of the consummation.

It is the claim to be Christ’s vicar that constitutes the Pope the Antichrist. This claim involves in it supreme dominion, temporal as well as spiritual; and to us it appears a matter of no moment at what

time he obtained his insignificant patrimony, seeing his supreme dominion was neither in point of theory nor in point of fact founded upon it. The moment that the Bishop of Rome avowed himself the vicar of Christ, and had that claim acknowledged, the Antichrist was come: he had a character allowed him which placed him above sovereigns, entitled him to dispose of their crowns and kingdoms, and to press into his service, when occasion required, the revenues and armies of Europe. This claim was first admitted by Justinian in 533, and more formally and fully recognized by Phocas in 608. These seventy-five years form a broad line, marking off the era of the reign of Antichrist, and the twelve hundred and sixty days of sackcloth to the witnesses; and a line of equal breadth will mark the termination of his reign, filled up by two terrible catastrophes, the first of which has already passed over the world; the last is most probably opening upon it;—the former symbolized in the Apocalypse by the Harvest, and the latter by the Vintage.

There are three and only three great lines in prophecy, and though the starting point of each is different from that of the others, all three have a common termination, and that common termination lies within our own era. The first and longest line is the “seven times” which comprehends the whole period of the domination of idolatry, and by consequence the whole period of the oppression of the Church. We are disposed to say that this period began with the captivity of the ten tribes under Shalmaneser, in B.C. 728, and running on for two thousand five hundred and twenty years—for such is the length of seven prophetic “times,” terminated in A.D. 1792.

The second line is that of the cleansing of the sanctuary (Dan. 8:13-14), “How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Counted from the pushing of the Persian ram, in B.C. 508, its probable starting-point, this line too runs out in A.D. 1792.

The third line also mentioned by Daniel, is the “time, times, and the dividing of time,” that is three years and a half, or the twelve hundred and sixty symbolic days, or years, of the Apocalypse. Reckoning from the edict of Justinian in A.D. 532, when the beast from the sea arose, this period runs out, like the other two, in 1792.

It is striking, first of all, that we should have only three great prophetic lines in the Word of God, and that all three should relate to the same exceptional period of the world’s history, even that of Satan’s domination through a succession of idolatrous empires. God, in great mercy to the Church, kindled this light to guide her during this dark night, till the dawn of a better state of things should arise. On the side of Satan these lines are exhibited as eras of triumph, on the side of the Church they are represented as eras of bondage. This would lead us to expect that all three should have a common termination; for the breaking up of idolatry necessarily implies the cleansing of that sanctuary which it had defiled, and the overthrow of Antichrist implies the escape of those whom he had held captive, and who, now, no longer called to prophesy against him, put off their sackcloth. It is further remarkable, that when we trace down these three lines, each from its most probable commencement in the past, we find them ending together. But still more striking is it, that the era of their common convergence, should be one of the grand crises of the world. It is the era of the great French Revolution.

That event sounded the knell of the idolatrous despotisms, which, in one form or another, had exercised dominion in the earth, from the days of Shalmaneser to 1792, and which had been shown to the king in his dream, as but one image or structure, from its head of gold to its ten toes. Surely it is not by chance, that the instant, as it were, that these three lines meet, the aspect of Providence should change; that a new drama should open; that a great earthquake should shake the world; and a mighty political tempest should set in, which begins the cleansing of the sanctuary, in the casting down of those despotic thrones and idolatrous altars, which had so long defiled Christendom.

This event, if the death-knell to the world-power, was the trumpet of jubilee to the Church. It told her that her period of bondage had expired; that her prison-doors had been opened;—not opened willingly by her great oppressor, but burst open by the mighty earthquake which had shaken the world. Like a voice from heaven, it invited her to arise from the dust, to put away her chains and her sackcloth, to array herself in her beautiful garments, and to come forth into liberty. Her exodus from Egypt was a great event; so, too, was her exodus from Babylon.

These the Church had not ceased to celebrate in her songs. But the grandest deliverances of the past were to pale in the presence of that complete, final, and majestic exodus which was now approaching. The song of Moses was to swell into the mightier and loftier song of the Lamb; and this sublime melody was to roll its numbers down the ages, till time should merge into eternity.

Daniel adds a supplementary line to the three great lines we have mentioned. This line begins when the others terminate, and runs on seventy-five years beyond them. Reckoning from about 1792 or 1793, the acme of the French Revolution, these seventy-five years terminate with the present year. They probably mark the period during which the final plagues—those which the seven thunders uttered—will be inflicted on Antichrist. With terrible, stunning, consuming swiftness will plague follow plague, till, at the end of the seventy-five years, they will culminate in a tremendous stroke—an all-embracing convulsion, which will shake in pieces, and lay prostrate in ruin the whole frame-work, political and ecclesiastical, of Popish Europe.

Yet again: the most probable calculation of the world's chronology makes the world's seventh millenary to begin about seventy-five years after the epoch which we have fixed on as that of the primary termination of the twelve hundred and sixty years. It was an old Jewish opinion, and likewise an early Christian belief, that after the year 6000, dated from the creation, the world's Sabbath would begin. It wants only a little while to the seventh millenary of time. We are on the eve of the long-anticipated Sabbath. It already begins to dawn towards that great First Day of a coming era of rest and blessedness. Thrice welcome to a world which has been so long desolated by the tempests of war, and so long enthralled by the fetters of superstition! and not less welcome to a Church which for so many ages has worn only sackcloth! Unless the shadow on the dial of prophecy greatly misleads us, that mighty consummation is at hand.

Chapter XVIII. The Harpers On Mount Zion

As the night of his seven last plagues closes darkly around Antichrist, we behold the day opening upon the Church. John had just been shown a vision of the rise of the beast of the abyss. He had seen him erect his monstrous and horrid shape above the troubled deep. He had seen him cast looks of pride and scorn towards heaven; and he had heard him blaspheme the God who dwells there. He had beheld him rushing in his fury upon the two witnesses, and killing them; and, not content with shedding their blood, he had exulted over their remains, subjecting them to foul dishonour. All the while these deeds were being enacted, John had seen the world bowing down before the beast, and worshipping him as God.

After these awful events, one would have expected the next scene to be the terrible one of the beast's overthrow. But the catastrophe is not yet. When the curtain rises, the view rests on a comparatively small but blessed company gathered with the Lamb, and standing with their harps amid the light of the Mount Zion: "And I looked, and lo! a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion, and with Him an hundred, forty, and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." (Chap. xiv.)

We saw this company before. Immediately previous to the apostasy of Christendom, and just as the beast, after which the whole world was to wonder, save those whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life, was about to rise and begin his domination, we saw a certain number—the precise number that now appears on Mount Zion with the Lamb—selected in Divine sovereignty, and sealed by God, in order that they might not be seduced by the craft of the beast, nor destroyed by his power.

But where had they dwelt, and how had they been preserved? When Antichrist reveled in the wealth and dominion of the western world, they had found an asylum in the wilderness; when the Gentiles were treading under foot the outer court, they ministered at the altar; and how often did they there present the sacrifice of their own lives! For as individuals they were mortal, though as a sealed company they—were inviolable and immortal. But now, after being so long hidden from view, they reappear, and not one of them is lacking.

The identical number sealed at the commencement of the twelve hundred and sixty years of sackcloth is seen with the Lamb on Mount Zion, now that these years begin to draw towards a close. "And I heard the number of them which were sealed." The special attention of the Apocalypse was called at the time to the number sealed, that he might afterwards mark the wonderful fact of their complete preservation: "I heard the number of them which were sealed; and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand." John recognized them as the same company, and could not but admire their completeness, notwithstanding the calamities and apostasies that had been prevalent since the epoch of their selection:

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." -Revelation 14:1

To what occasion in the Church's history does this appearance refer? It is exceedingly improbable that so important an epoch as the Reformation would pass unrepresented in this symbolical drama. It had been referred to in the history of the witnesses under the symbol of their resurrection; but we would expect also to meet it in the parallel prophecy of the beast.

The chronological point where we would naturally look for it is precisely that which this vision of the hundred, forty, and four thousand on Mount Zion occupies. Without hesitation, therefore, we conclude that this vision symbolizes the Reformation. Then the cloud which had veiled the "sealed church" all throughout the long night of the domination of Antichrist was parted, and she looked forth "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners."

The several parts of the vision exactly agree with the various facts of that great event. These we shall briefly note.

The company appeared on the Mount Zion—the symbol of the true Church, in opposition to the city now trodden under foot of the Gentiles. They appeared with the Lamb—the true priest, in opposition to the false prophet, after which the world wondered. His Father's name was written on their foreheads, i.e., they made open profession of His truth. John heard a voice from heaven, "as the voice of many waters," symbolizing the nations that embraced the Reformed faith (waters being the symbol of nations)—Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Holland, Geneva, England, Scotland.

He heard, too, "as the voice of a great thunder," the symbol of those mighty dispensations of Providence which attended and followed the Reformation. "And I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps." The wonderful unanimity of sentiment and harmony of confession which reigned among the Reformed Churches are brought finely before us in this symbol. Scattered throughout several of the countries of Europe, yet holding and expressing the same views of truth, they resembled a confederated company of harpers, whose sweet melodies filled the lands where they dwelt. And even in our days of division we perpetuate the recollection of that noble song which was sung upon their well-strung harps, by the general use of the phrase, the *harmony* of the Reformed confessions.

"And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders." -Revelation 14:3a

In the various places in Scripture in which reference is made to a new song being sung, we find that the occasion is some new and signal deliverance—a deliverance so great, marvelous, and complete, as to take precedence of all former deliverances, and supersede all former songs. Such was the song of Moses at the Red Sea; such was the song of Deborah when Sisera was discomfited; and such was that of the captives when they escaped from Babylon: "The ransomed of the Lord returned and came unto Zion with singing."

And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.-Isaiah 35:10

So the new song sung by the hundred and forty and four thousand who had escaped from mystic Babylon is finely expressive of the stupendous character of the deliverance now wrought, and of the wonder, gratitude, and joy of those whom it redeemed from Antichristian bondage. They were like them that dream. Their mouth was filled with laughter, and their tongue with singing.

“But no man could learn that song, save the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.”- Revelation 14:3b

They only who had participated in the deliverance —been redeemed from the Papal earth—could join in the song of thanksgiving. Or if by that song be meant the truth professed with such singular unanimity by the Reformed Churches, then none but those who had been elected by God’s grace, and illuminated by His Spirit, could learn that song. God had an “election in the various countries of Christendom; and they only, from the era of the Reformation downwards, have been able to profess the truth as held by the Reformed Church.

Several particulars of their life and character are added. “They are virgins,” which intimates the care they would exercise to preserve themselves, both in doctrine and practice, from the pollution of the Romish idolatry. “These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth” (Revelation 14:4)—the symbol of their steadfastness, self-denial, and patient endurance. Many and grievous accusations would be preferred against them: they would be regarded as rebels by the civil authorities, and heretics by the ecclesiastical. Nevertheless they should stand acquitted in the presence of Him whose judgment is according to truth:

“And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God.”- Revelation 14:5.

To these elected and sealed ones should attach the further interest of being the first—fruits of reformed Christendom. Like the sheaf presented of old in the temple at the beginning of harvest, the Reformed Church was the first sheaf of that glorious harvest yet to be gathered from all the countries of Europe. The Christians of the Reformation were a truly noble band, yet they were only the pioneers of that myriad host which was to follow them in the ages to come, and which they were to lead up to the throne of the Lamb.

“These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.” - Revelation 14:4b

The great apostasy was now drawing to its close, and by three grand epochs was the work of God on earth to be revived, and the millennial glory of the Church introduced. These three distinct stages are exhibited under the symbol of three successive angels seen by John flying in the midst of heaven. To each of these revivals in the Church there is a corresponding epoch in the downfall of the Papacy.

The first is thus described:—

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” - Revelation 14:6

This angel is the symbol of a body of faithful preachers of the gospel, to arise at the time referred to in the various countries of the Roman earth. To ascertain the epoch in question, we have only to inquire when was the first general promulgation of the truth in Europe after it had been suppressed by Antichrist? Undoubtedly at the Reformation. And what corroborates this opinion is the fact that the

angel gave warning of the danger of continuing in the idolatry of Rome, and revealed to men the true object of worship—

“Saying, with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come; and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters;”
-Revelation 14:7

...the very call which the Reformed preachers addressed to the Popish idolators.

The second angel, we apprehend, marks the epoch of the termination of the twelve hundred and sixty years. He proclaimed the fall of Rome.

“And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” -Revelation 14:8

It is not the final, but begun fall of Babylon that is here announced; for the second angel is followed by a third, who proclaims her consummated ruin. The reference here, we conceive, is to the tremendous blow which the first French Revolution inflicted on the Papacy, and from which there is no probability that it will ever recover. On the minds of Protestants that dispensation produced an impression that Popery was near its fall, just as if an angel had cried it from heaven. The third and last angel announces the completed overthrow of Babylon. This is plain, from the fact that the terms of the proclamation are the same with those which in other parts of the Apocalypse are employed to express the final and consummated doom of Antichrist—a cup of unmixed wrath and torment, with fire and brimstone, the smoke of which ascendeth up for ever and ever.

“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.’ And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.” -Revelation 14:9-11

Then follows an intimation (announcement), the import of which we take to be, that now, at last, the period of suffering allotted to the Church had terminated, and that henceforward the saints should enjoy a special blessedness.

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.” -Revelation 14:13

Has the third angel—the herald of Babylon’s final doom—yet appeared in heaven? We cannot confidently affirm that he has, neither are we prepared to maintain that he has not. When we look to the Roman earth, and contemplate the insurrections, massacres, intestine broils, and bloody wars, of which it is at this moment the theater—when we think of the fierce resentments and animosities which have sprung up, and which every hour is exacerbating, and which are now being directed in their full force against the members of that city whose capital is the seven hills—we are persuaded that we see the cup in the hand of Babylon, the fires kindled amid which she is to be consumed, and the smoke of her torment already ascending into the skies. It is not here only, but in other parts of the Apocalypse, and

also in Daniel, that we find the three great epochs that will constitute “the time of the end” predicted. Daniel, as we have already said, adds a period of seventy-five years to the twelve hundred and sixty—the commencement of that period synchronizing, we conceive, with the second angel, who announces the begun ruin of Babylon; and its termination, with the third angel, who proclaims Babylon’s completed destruction.

In chapter xviii. of the Apocalypse, which contains a lengthened and detailed account of the overthrow of the Papacy, we find that overthrow marked off into three periods. The first is that of an angel, with whose glory the earth was lightened, and who

“...cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.” – Revelation 18:2

This angel seems to correspond with the era of Reformers, whose preaching lighted Europe, and who exposed the abominations of Popery in almost the identical words of the angel.

The next stage is that of the voice which gave warning of the approaching plagues of Babylon, and called on God’s people to flee out of her, which synchronizes, we apprehend, with the French Revolution, when her doom began to be inflicted. The last is termed “a mighty angel:” power is his attribute, for he shall finish what the other two only commenced; and accordingly the act he performs strikingly symbolizes the sudden, fearful, and irretrievable ruin that shall then overtake Rome.

“And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.” – Revelations 18:21

There are yet other two prefigurations in the Apocalypse of “the time of the end,” fraught with more terrible import than even those to which we have just adverted—the HARVEST and the VINTAGE. These are terms of vast significance. They denote scenes of judgment, outstanding in terror, unique in character, inasmuch as they close eras, and concentrate, into a brief period, the punishment due for long ages of spiritual sorcery and bloody tyranny. The first—the Harvest, to wit—we are disposed to think synchronizes with the termination of the twelve hundred and sixty days, and was opened by the great event which marked that era, and which, breaking out in unprecedented horror in France, overspread Europe in a desolating war.

The last and more awful scene—the Vintage, to wit—is yet to come; but probably it will fall out at the termination of the seventy-five supplementary years. The intelligent reader can scarce fail to remark how strikingly this accords with the manner of Antichrist’s destruction, as foretold by Paul, in 2 Thessalonians 2:8—

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming”

—*Consume* gradually, by the preaching of the gospel, as has been the case ever since the Reformation, and destroy suddenly at last by the lightning-like and exterminating judgments of the Seventh Trumpet.

It thus appears that not in a single day or year, but by three mighty and progressive dispensations, is Rome to be destroyed, and the millennial glory of the Church established. Rome must pass through long years of shame, disgrace, humiliations, sufferings, and torment. Awful horrors will crowd around the path that leads down into her tomb. Dismissed she cannot be from this earthly scene, till the world resound with her woes, as once it resounded with her crimes. The history of the past is filled with the record of her grandeur, and the history of the future must be filled with that of her disgrace. Most equitable and just, surely, is the sentence which has been passed upon her—

“How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her.” – Revelation 18:7

The justice that pronounced this sentence will infallibly execute it. And as the gloom deepens around the False Church, the glory of the True shall wax brighter and brighter like the day, till at length it shine in the full splendor of the Millennium. In this, as in everything else, God has provided for the full display of His wisdom, the ample vindication of His saints, and the signal punishment of His foes.

Chapter XIX. The Seventh Trumpet

THE dark scene of Babylon's overthrow now opens to our view, in the symbols of the Apocalypse, as, not improbably, it is about to do in the astounding events of our times—a consideration fitted, surely, to produce that solemn and devout spirit which eminently becomes an inquiry like the present.

The commencement of the dreadful catastrophe is notified to the world by the trumpet of the seventh angel. The first question here is, When did this angel sound? We derive material aid in determining this point from an intimation (announcement) immediately preceding that of the angel's sounding.

“The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.” -Revelation 11:14

The second woe was the Turkish invasion. The capture of Constantinople, in 1453, formed the acme of that power. We cannot surely make that date the end of the Turkish woe; for we find the Turks afterwards becoming a woe to the western world.

The first check given to their arms was in 1673, by John Sobieski, before the walls of Vienna. This is the earliest date we can assign to the passing away of the second woe; but even this appears to be too early; for the form of speech here employed intimates not merely that the woe had begun to decline, but that it was past; and we think, with Mr. Elliot, that 1774, in which year the Turks, after sustaining repeated defeats by the allied forces of Russia and Austria, signed a peace, the terms of which were dictated by the conquerors, is the true period when the woe had passed. Before 1774, then, the seventh trumpet, which forms the third woe, could not be sounded. But it must have been sounded soon after, for the third woe was to follow quickly on the passing away of the second. The next great epoch of calamities that opened on the world followed the exhaustion of the Turkish woe at the distance of only fifteen years—the French Revolution. Beyond that event—1789—we are not disposed to defer the sounding of the seventh angel; and we cannot fix it earlier. This makes the sounding of that angel synchronize with what Daniel designates “the time of the end,” and also with the termination of the twelve hundred and sixty years; and the appearance of the angel with the cry of Babylon's falling.

The sounding of the seventh trumpet was instantly followed by great voices in heaven, announcing the conversion of the kingdoms, the wrath of the nations, the time of the dead that they should be judged, and the opening of the temple of God in heaven, accompanied by lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail. What an awful picture! Darkness and light, terror and joy, are strangely blended in it. The earth shakes beneath our feet, and the heavens begin to thunder fearfully above us; while tempests of lightning and hail are poured from the sky. Mysterious voices are heard announcing the coming of a new age, and, brightest omen of all, the temple of God in heaven opens, but the darkness of the tempest which is raging on the earth does not as yet permit us a sight of His glory. This symbolic scene sketches, as it were, the character of the era to be introduced by the seventh trumpet; and it specifies the leading events that were now to fall out, and the heads of those great judgments, the particulars of which were to be given under the vials.

These symbols we can only indicate, not illustrate. They depict the era which the seventh trumpet was to introduce as eminently an era of “earthquakes,” that is, of revolutions; as an era of “hail-storms,” that is, of fierce wars, originating in a quarter of Europe lying to the north of Italy; as an era of “lightnings,” that is, of sudden explosions of popular wrath; as an era of the “dead,” that is, of the vindication of the good, and the condemnation of the bad, of past ages. But with these would mingle other agencies. The era would wear a singularly mixed character; the agencies of destruction would be unusually powerful, but the agencies of good would also be unusually active in the promotion of the cause of human amelioration, and the spiritual enlightenment of the nations. In short, if this symbolization reveals the terrible spectacle of the destruction of the old world; it portrays the blessed and gladdening vision of the rising of a new and better in its room.

But, more particularly, the voices which spoke in heaven announced, as the first consequence of the sounding of the trumpet, the conversion of the kingdoms, i.e., of the Roman earth. “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ.” This foretells a radical change awaiting the kingdoms of Europe—a change as great as that which passed on Nebuchadnezzar, when, at the end of the days, his understanding returned, and he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and blessed the Most High. Like their prototype, these kingdoms have long been smitten with the mad rage and ferocious cruelty of the wild beast; they have labored under a moral and political madness: but at the end of the days their reason shall return, and they shall praise and honour Him that liveth for ever. The Roman element which Justinian breathed into them shall become extinct; new principles shall guide their policy, even those of the Word of God; their wealth and power shall be devoted to higher objects—the true happiness of their subjects; and whereas they have been the bulwarks and fences of superstition, they shall come to account it their glory to subserve the interests of God. But first they must pass through that period of convulsion foretold by Daniel under the symbol of the breaking in pieces of the image.

“And the nations were angry.” (Revelation 11:18) This implies, that at the period of the seventh angel, the nations of the Roman world will become exceedingly exasperated. The words forbode an era of turbulence and fierce contention. The object of their rage is not stated: but it is instructive to observe that it is the nations that are angry, not the beast. This period will be marked by some terrible outburst of popular fury; perhaps against God, by denying His existence and government; perhaps against rulers, by whom they have been so long oppressed; or, which is more probable, their madness will be directed against both.

“And thy wrath is come.” (Revelation 11:18) This is a terrible announcement. The era of the seventh trumpet will be the day of God’s wrath. Before the world can enter on a new and better dispensation, it must pass through a judgment-day. If, on the one hand, there will at this period be a fearful exhibition of human passion and wickedness, there will, on the other, be a solemn display of the essential holiness of the Divine character, and the eternal rectitude of the Divine government. Till the seventh angel sounded, God’s wrath was suspended. Though His saints were put to death, and though His own name was blasphemed by idolatries and wickedness on the most gigantic scale, He sat silent in the heavens, as if He saw not the crimes done upon the earth, nor heard the cry from under the altar, “How long!” but now His wrath, no longer restrained, will burst upon the world. Crimes of long standing,

particularly the slaughter of the saints, will come up for judgment, and will draw down the hoarded vengeance of ages.

The heathen will rage; but He that sits in heaven shall speak unto them in wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. (Psalm 2) This great judgment-day, or period of wrath, will begin, we apprehend, at the termination of the twelve hundred and sixty days, and continue during the seventy—five supplementary years. And it is confirmatory of our opinion that the twelve hundred and sixty years ended at the close of last century, that we find the world making then a sharp and sudden transition, in fact, traversing the gulf which divides modern from medieval times.

Up till this very hour the Papal world had been at rest. Rome sat tranquilly upon her seven hills, and as she cast her eyes abroad upon the subject nations, promised herself an eternity of dominion. She was saying in her heart, “I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow,” (Revelation 18:7) when, suddenly, a great shock was felt, a terrible crash was heard, thrones and altars came tumbling down, and from the very depth of the earth there came up a terrible power, rending the framework of society in its passage to the surface, and establishing itself on the earth, amid the wailings of dynasties and hierarchies, and the cry of agonized nations—the Revolution of 1789.

“And the time of the dead, that they should be judged.” (Revelation 11:18) The idea of a judgment-day is carried out in this symbolic resurrection, or “time of the dead.” Who these dead are, and the design for which they are now judged, we gather from the next clause:—“And that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great.” (Revelation 11:18) It is some grand and public vindication of the martyrs slain in former ages that is here foretold. They had this day in their eye when they were slain; and from the tribunals where they were condemned—from the fires, and scaffolds, and dungeons, where they perished—they appealed to the judgment of this day; and when it comes, the events of Providence shall make it as clear to the world as if the great Judge Himself were to erect His tribunal on the earth, that their cause was just, and that they perished witnessing for religion and liberty. In the triumph of their cause on that day, and the honour to which their memories shall then be raised, God shall give reward unto His servants the prophets, and to His saints, and to those of them especially who lived during the twelve hundred and sixty days of the domination of Antichrist, and were called to prophesy clothed in sackcloth.

“And shouldst destroy them who destroy the earth.” (Revelation 11:18) Still the figure of a judgment-day is carried out. After the raising of the dead comes the separation between the two companies—the public acquittal of the one, who now receive their reward, and the public condemnation of the other, who now pass to their punishment. “Them who destroy the earth.” This is a description of Popery as striking as it is compendious (marked by brief expression of a comprehensive matter). Popery has destroyed man morally, by the idolatry and crime in which it has sunk him. It has destroyed him socially, by the demoralizing and disorganizing principles it has imbued him with—loosing him from the most solemn obligations of morality, and from obedience to lawful authority. It has destroyed him intellectually, inasmuch as it has enfeebled his mind by superstition, and crushed his liberty, together with all those arts and sciences which can flourish only where liberty is enjoyed. And it has destroyed man physically, by plunging him into ignorance, improvidence, sloth, and poverty. It has covered those countries in Europe where it prevails with comparative barrenness, hovels, and rags; thus making them monuments of the fact, that Popery, as a system, destroys the earth. But now itself shall be destroyed.

An eminently judicial character will belong to the era of the seventh trumpet. “The judgment shall sit,” says Daniel, at the end of the twelve hundred and sixty days, to take away the dominion of the Papacy, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. So clearly retributive a character will then belong to the events of Providence, that God’s tribunal will be, as it were, visibly set up before the nations. The moral sense, if not the bodily eye, will see an august Judge erecting His throne amid the clouds and tempests of that era, and summoning before Him one great criminal. The past murders, tyrannies, crimes of Rome will be brought up to confront her; and so signal a disclosure of her true character shall be made before the nations whom she has seduced and destroyed, that the whole world will acquiesce in the justice of her DOOM.

“And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament,” (Revelation 11:19) the symbol of the partial enlargement of the Protestant Church, and the readier access now afforded to the men of the Roman earth to the Bible. Contemporaneously with the French Revolution, or immediately subsequent, there was a signal revival of the evangelic and missionary spirit in Britain. Numerous societies were formed for the spread of the gospel and the circulation of the Scriptures. Missions were set on foot to almost all parts of the world—the West Indies, the South Sea Islands, Africa, Australia, Greenland. The evangelization of India was a work not too mighty to be undertaken. The Jews were visited; and even the benighted and idolatrous Churches of Eastern and Western Christendom were not neglected. The French Revolution opened great part of Europe to the preaching of the gospel. Thus the temple was opened: and the ark of the testament—the Bible and gospel—which Popery had veiled, was anew discovered to the Roman nations. But this statement must be taken in connection with another most important (announcement) , in the end of chapter 15, respecting the temple now open:

“And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power: and no man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.” - Revelation 15:8

God was present on the scene as an avenging God, punishing the Popish nations for the blood they had shed and the idolatries they had committed, the smoke from the glory of God, and from His power, that filled the temple; and, till He had vindicated His holiness by the infliction of these awful plagues, no man was able to enter into the temple. Nevertheless, all the while the storm was raging, it stood open, revealing, as it were, to the nations, the sanctuary of safety, and the temple of worship, where they should ultimately be gathered. Since evangelic agencies began to be employed on the Continent of Europe, there have been individual conversions not a few; but there has been no general or national evangelisation; nor are we to expect that there will be, till the judgment of the seventh vial is ended. France, Austria, and the other Popish countries continue nominally Popish to this hour. This has often occasioned great discouragement to the friends of truth; but when they think that is precisely what was foretold, the result ought to confirm their faith in the Divine Word, and stimulate to greater exertions in spreading it.

The labours of the missionary are not in vain, though not followed by immediate fruit. After the “lightnings, and thunderings, and great hail ” of the vials, will come the “tender rain” of the Spirit; and then the seed He is now sowing shall spring up. He who has gone forth to sow in tears, shall carry back the sheaves of that glorious harvest amid songs of joy.

The Arc de Triomphe at Paris, which forms the approach to the city on the west, is inscribed all over with the great battle-fields of Napoleon. No nation but the French could show so long a list of victories gained in so short a space. These are the lightnings, thunderings, earthquake, and hail of the seventh trumpet. Paris may become a field of ruins or an heap of ashes, heaven thus marking its abhorrence of a city in which so much iniquity has been committed, by making its site like that of Nineveh or of Babylon. But though this fate should befall this splendid but guilty capital, the Arc de Triomphe, from its isolated position and amazing strength, will most probably survive, with its awful scroll, and, like the Arch of Titus amid the ruins of Rome, will become a witness to the truth of prophecy, by proclaiming to after ages how terrific the storm that burst on Europe— overturning its thrones and desecrating its temples: enwrapping in flames its proudest capitals and fairest cities: blackening its plains with battle, and dyeing its rivers with blood; and of all that industry had accumulated and art had created, and victory achieved in past ages, leaving only a melancholy wreck—the instant the trumpet of the seventh angel was heard to sound.

Chapter XX. The First Three Vials

As the opening of the seventh seal introduced the seven trumpets, so the sounding of the seventh trumpet introduces the seven vials. The particulars we have noted above form the general characteristics of that trumpet, and they strikingly agree with the historical facts of the French Revolution, the full details of which are given under the vials:

“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous—seven angels, having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.” – Revelation 15:1

These solemn dispensations are here beautifully personified. They are seen attired as priests, and they issue from the temple:

“And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breast girded with golden girdles.” – Revelation 15:6

From worshiping before the God of all the earth, they come to execute His vengeance on the world, now ripe for judgment. And mark the purity and beauty of their attire. They wore, like the priests of old, white robes and girdles of gold; for, though their work was awful (full of awe), it was holy. Each angel bore a vial, which was filled, we are told, with “the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.” This has respect to God’s eternal remembrance of crimes long past, and which, though unnoticed at the time, cannot escape the vengeance of the ever-living God.

The vials were put into the hands of the seven angels by one of the four living creatures. The four living creatures stood round about the throne; they received the vials from the hand of God Himself, and gave them to those whose office it was to pour them out. They show no impatience to begin their work: they feel how awful it is. The pause here is like that which reigns in the judgment-hall, preparatory to the judge passing sentence of execution. The seven ministers in white vestments and golden girdles stand silent, having each his vial in his hand, waiting the Divine behest. A great voice out of the temple thus addresses them:—

“Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.” – Revelation 16:1

Before proceeding, we would offer one remark. This Apocalyptic history has been arranged into three grand periods; and it is instructive to observe that each period has its own peculiar symbol. The symbol of the first period is a SEAL; that of the second a TRUMPET; and that of the third a VIAL. These symbols are not arbitrary; they are selected on a principle as definite as it is important, namely, their peculiar fitness to represent the character of the period which they respectively govern. What could more fitly symbolize the introduction of a new dispensation of Providence than the opening of a Seal? Accordingly, the first period comprises a series of dispensations, the design of which was to weaken, and ultimately destroy, the Roman empire in its Pagan state.

A Trumpet summons the approach of those who are distant: it is the symbol of foreign war; and such was the character of the second period. It consisted of wars which arose not within, but which burst upon the empire from beyond its limits.

The symbol of the third great period is a Vial; and who needs be told that a vial, or *cup*, is everywhere in Scripture used to represent judgment or vengeance? Such will be the character of this era. It is the period of the seven last plagues—the time of God’s wrath—the judgment-day of the Papal earth. Its calamities will not come from a distance, as did those which were summoned by the trumpets of the second period: they will spring up within the limits of the Roman earth. The cup which their sins in former ages have filled up, the apostate nations shall then be made to drink. It is instructive surely to trace so beautiful an analogy between the periods and their symbols.

Our scheme of interpretation of the vials is somewhat different from that which has hitherto been given; but we think it is more consistent and complete. It makes the vials begin at the very foundations of the Papal world, and proceed regularly upward, till at last the whole fabric is involved in ruin. The first stroke falls upon its individual men; the next upon its nations; the next upon its monarchies; then its great centralizing and governing head, the Popedom, is smitten; and the last and finishing vial is poured into its air, thus wrapping the entire Papal universe in ruin. Like the Flood, these waters of wrath cover first the level grounds and the low valleys of the Romish earth; next, the little hills are submerged; but, the waters continuing to rise, the proudest of its mountains are overwhelmed, and the very lights of its firmament are at last extinguished.

“And the first went and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.” – Revelation 16:2

Now, there is no delay. Scarce has the voice spoken till the judgment of the vial strikes the earth. “The third woe cometh quickly.” This vial fell upon the men of the Latin earth, and showed itself in the sores that immediately broke out on their persons.

A physical disorder is here used as the symbol of a moral and spiritual malady. It is the very figure which Isaiah uses to depict the corrupt state of his nation:—

“There is no soundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores.” – Isaiah 1:6

The prophecy portends the rise, within the region of Popery, of doctrines, political and religious, of a character corrupt, abominable, and blasphemous, and peculiarly envenomed as well as infamous; for the sore was grievous, as well as noisome. It is scarce possible to doubt the correctness of that interpretation which applies the symbol to the infidelity and atheism of the French Revolution. These revolutionary and infidel principles, so industriously and insidiously propagated by Voltaire and Rousseau, after corrupting to an unprecedented extent the national morals, found vent at last in an outbreak of blasphemy and crime so fearful, that nothing like it is found in the history of the world.

In this vial there is a reference to one of the plagues of Egypt. Moses took a handful of ashes, and sprinkled it towards heaven, and it became a boil, breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast. The handful of ashes, by God’s direction, *was taken from furnace*—thus pointing to the cause of Egypt’s ruin, namely, the oppression of the Israelites. This act of awful significance was repeated at the commencement of the plagues of the mystic Egypt. The angel took an handful of ashes *from the furnace*, and sprinkled it over Papal Europe, inasmuch as the calamities of that era all sprang directly and immediately out of the crimes they were meant to avenge. The anti-Protestant wars which France

carried on at so great an expense of blood and treasure, were meant to conserve the lofty claims, irrational dogmas, and idolatrous ceremonies of Rome. They did conserve these claims, but only to be the ruin of France. These dogmas engendered atheism, and atheism, in its turn, brought on the tragedy of the Revolution. Voltaire could never have succeeded in his mission against Christianity, but for the Popish religion, from which, as from a vast armoury, he borrowed his weapons. It was from Popery that he drew his illustrations, furbished his arguments, and whetted his sarcasms. These principles cast into the air of public opinion in France vitiated in a trice the whole moral atmosphere, the men who breathed that air caught the infection, the venom entered their blood, as it were, the blotch soon appeared breaking out in immoral principles and a fearful profligacy of manners. The democracy and atheism (the noisome and grievous sore which fell upon the men who had the mark of the 'beast) which the encyclopaedists spread throughout France, brought on the catastrophe of the second and of all the succeeding vials.

“And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea, and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea.” – Revelation 16:2

The first vial falls upon the “earth,” denoting the stable and tranquil state of society when this judgment began. The second vial falls on the “sea,” that is, on society in a commoved (moving violently), agitated, and revolutionary state. This commotion had been brought on by atheism, which had destroyed conscience, dethroned law, and unknit all the bonds that held society together. France was now a *sea*. One of the earliest of the plagues of Egypt was inflicted upon the Nile. The Nile was called the sea of Egypt, being its one great river, and the main source of its riches and power. France held an analogous place in the Papal world. It was its kingdom of chief dignity, it was the main pillar of its strength and the prolific fountain of its revenues. While the other kingdoms were the rivers of the Papal world, France was its Nile, its sea. Upon this sea, whose waves were now rolling in terrific grandeur, and swelling even to heaven by the mighty force of the tempest which atheism had let loose upon it, was this vial poured.

The 5th of May, 1789, is commonly reckoned the first day of the Revolution. The democratic and atheistic principles with which the whole nation was leavened, like peccant humours (disease) corrupting and inflaming the body, bore, for a short space only, bloodless fruits. But at last the GUILLOTINE was set up, and it then became plain to all that it was a drama of blood that was opening in France. The hostile preparations of foreign nations, joined to the apprehensions entertained of the royalists at home, led the revolutionary party to the adoption of extreme measures. The suspected of every rank, sex, and age, were hurried to prison, and, after undergoing the mockery of a trial, were led to execution.

During the years 1793 and 1794 the massacres and executions went on with scarce a pause, and blood flowed as plentifully as water in the streets of Paris. Nor were these horrible excesses confined to the capital. A civil war broke out in the provinces, attended with every circumstance of the most savage and revolting cruelty. The whole of France became, in fact, an *Acelanda* (field of blood). In Lyons the victims of the Revolution were reckoned too numerous for the guillotine, and accordingly were mowed down by grapeshot (a cluster of small iron balls shot from a cannon). In the war that raged with such frightful violence in La Vendee, there were towns where the whole male population to a man was slaughtered, and only a few women spared. Whole cities were burnt to ashes. The cattle, without owner

or keeper, roamed about in terror; and throughout entire districts no sound was to be heard save the hoarse notes of carrion-crows, coming from the recesses of the forest to prey on the slain.

About two millions, it is computed, were murdered in that country, from the breaking out of the Revolution till 1794. Nowhere can we find a figure that presents so true an image of France as this Apocalyptic one. Without a throne, without an altar, without a government, she resembled a sea wrought into tempest by a mighty wind, and reddened with the blood of some immense slaughter. But the storm which had wrought such havoc in France was destined to extend its violence far beyond the limits of that country. Accordingly,

“The third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood.” – Revelation 16:4

Here is a transference of judgment from France to the nations in its neighborhood. Rivers and fountains are the symbol of nations; and the nations here indicated are those of the Latin earth, on whom the propagandist spirit that accompanied the Revolution led the French to wage war. The armies which revolutionary France sent forth were such as the world had never before seen. The legions of Alexander or Caesar, the hordes that followed Xerxes or Attila, were nothing to them. Under their terrible leader Napoleon, they entered on a career of conquest which continued from 1795 to 1815, and extended to all the kingdoms of Papal Europe.

We trace, by the carnage of the battle-field, by the smoke of burning cities, and the blackness of ravaged provinces, the progress of these armies in Savoy, the ancient persecutor of the witnesses. We follow them over the rich plains of Northern Italy; along the valley of the Rhine, and the States right and left which form the confederation of that river; and in the dominions of the “bloody house of Austria,” to the banks of the Danube and the gates of Vienna. From Holland on the one side, to the waters of the Adriatic on the other, there was scarce a province in Europe that escaped the rage of the revolutionary armies. Such another stroke had not befallen the ten kingdoms since their erection.

The third vial smote not only the “*rivers*,” the minor states, but the “*fountains*,” or chief kingdoms of the Papal world. The year 1805 brought to an end the revolutionary wars, strictly so called; and now the imperial campaigns were commenced. Napoleon by this time had assumed the title of Emperor, and had conceived the design of annexing to his crown the titles and dominions of all the emperors and kings of Europe. To realize his scheme, the monarch of France raised armaments on a scale surpassing all previous example. To confront these immense levies, armaments of corresponding magnitude were required on the other side. The conflict that ensued was attended with more awful carnage and more dreadful suffering, both to the victorious host and to the kingdoms they overran, than had ever been endured, perhaps, since the first origin of war.

There was not a throne in Europe that escaped the shock of these wars, nor a kingdom but was scorched, more or less severely, by their plagues. In the years 1807 and 1808 most of the monarchs of western Europe were either dethroned or had their power greatly abridged. With the exception of Austria, which became the vassal of France, the thrones of the ten kingdoms were now filled with the satellites of Napoleon.

The tremendous conflict, caused by the ambition of Napoleon to acquire, and the desire of the kings of Europe to retain their territories, lasted for eight years; and the horrors that Europe groaned under during these years no language can describe. France was scorched by the weight of the taxes and the rigor of the conscription; while the other countries of the Continent were scorched by the ravages of an army which lived by plunder, and which, leaving out of view the carnage of the regular battle-field, most mercilessly and ruthlessly—themselves goaded by hunger and suffering—gave the inhabitants to the sword, and their towns and villages to the flames.

Striped of the terms with which the vocabulary of war seeks to dignify these awful events, what do we see in the armies of Napoleon but an overwhelming horde of robbers and murderers turned loose upon Europe, to slay, burn, and desolate? The narratives of the time speak of the view from Leipsic presenting only “one wide waste,” with the numerous villages or hamlets almost all entirely or partially reduced to ashes. “The destruction and distress which marked the countries through which the French army fled from the bloody field of Leipsic were altogether indescribable. Dead bodies covered the roads. Half-consumed French soldiers were found in the villages destroyed by the flames. Whole districts were depopulated by disease. For a month after the retreat, no human being, no domestic animal, no poultry, nay, not even a sparrow, was to be met with; only ravens in abundance, feeding on corpses.”

It is equally astonishing and melancholy, that the nations on whom these plagues fell remained totally insensible to them in their character of judgments; evinced no repentance for their own idolatries and impieties, or the murders of their fathers, who had shed the blood of the saints; and plunged anew, as soon as these calamities were at an end, into all the excesses of their obscene atheism and gross Popish superstition. They repented not, to give God glory.

The Pope did not wholly escape the judgment which was falling on his subject kingdoms. He now began to taste the bitter cup of humiliation and woe of which he was doomed to drink more deeply under subsequent vials. The last drops of that terrible tempest which had burst over the thrones of Europe fell upon the Vatican. Napoleon, having subjected all the sovereigns of the West to his authority, next proceeded to abolish the Pope’s temporal power to incorporate Rome with the empire of France, and reduce the Pope to a stipendiary of the State. This he did in the two celebrated decrees which he issued in 1809 from Schoenbrunn and Vienna.

Here we meet strong corroborative evidence that we were right in fixing the commencement of the twelve hundred and sixty years at the promulgation of Justinian’s Code in A.D. 529, which gave a legal existence to the Papacy, and laid the foundation for its future wealth, power, and grandeur. Precisely twelve hundred and sixty years after, we find that spoiling of her wealth and power begin, which had been foretold by Daniel as “the taking away of dominion from it, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.” (Daniel 7:26)

Elliot has condensed into a single paragraph the various acts of spoliation then committed upon the Papal Church. “One of the first measures of the Assembly,” says he, “was to abolish tithes, establishing an insufficient rent-charge on the State in lieu of them; a second, at one fell swoop to sever from the Church, and appropriate as national property, all ecclesiastical lands throughout the kingdom—lands, let it be observed, which had been regarded ever before as not French property only, but that of the

Romish Church, and as needing, therefore, the Pope's sanction to its alienation. Then followed the suppression of all monastic houses in the kingdom, to the number of four thousand; and in regard of the clergy, already made pensioners of the State, the substitution of popular election, for institution after the Papal Concordat; and the requirement from each of them, on pain of forfeiture of the pension, of a solemn abjuration of all allegiance to the Pope. And then, in 1793, the decree issued for the abolition of the Christian (or rather Romish) religion in France, whereupon the churches were many of them razed to the ground; others left in partial ruin; and of the rest, shut against priests and worshippers, the most sacred places defiled, the treasures rifled, and the bells broken and cast into cannon.

So was the whole French ecclesiastical establishment then destroyed. As to the French clergy themselves, twenty-four thousand were massacred, as I have before stated, with the most horrid atrocity. The rest, for the most part utterly beggared, found refuge from the popular fury only by flight into other, and chiefly Protestant lands, bearing about with them everywhere visible evidence that the predicted hating, and tearing, and making bare, of the great whore of Babylon, had indeed begun. Begun in France, the spoliation of the harlot Church, and of its Papal patron and head, spread quickly into the other countries of Christendom. A propagandist spirit, in respect of this, as in respect of its other principles, was one of the essential characteristics of the Revolution; and the tempests of war gave it wings."

But the crowning act was reserved for 1809. The resistance which the Pope ventured to offer to Napoleon's views drew down upon him the two decrees, to Which we have already referred, of Schoenbrunn and Vienna. These decrees laid the Pope's temporal authority, for the time, in the dust, and reduced the Eternal City to the rank of the second capital of the French empire. As the ancient dynasties had by this time been discrowned, and the thrones of the Roman world, with the exception of Austria, which had now become the ally of France, had been filled with the vassals of Napoleon, the act of the Emperor, by which the power of the Pope was wounded, and his treasures rifled, was not Napoleon's alone, but also that of all the nine kings of the Roman earth (Britain having fallen as a Papal power at the Reformation) who were consenting thereto—a striking fulfillment, surely, of the prophecy that the ten horns of the beast should hate the harlot Church, and make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

There was now a pause in the tempest, as there is in the narrative; and the voice of the angel of the waters was heard, indicating in solemn song the fearfully retributive character of the vial.

“And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus: for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets; and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.”- Revelation 16:5-6

To this song a response was made from the altar, the symbol of martyrdom:

“And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty; true and righteous are thy judgments.” – Revelation 16:7

The words have reference to the great effusion of blood under both vials. This blood did justice demand, as a sacrifice for the blood shed in these countries in former ages. There is no intelligent reader of the modern annals of France who can fail to be struck with the resemblance between former

atrocities and present excesses in that country. In truth, if we change the names of parties, we behold in the Revolution but the fearful drama of the Huguenot persecution passing again across the same stage. The actors in the bloody scenes of the first Revolution studied the ancient chronicles in search of models, and avowedly imitated the Cardinal de Lorraine, who led the infuriated mob at the St. Bartholomew massacre. At both periods we find disorganizing and murderous doctrines diffused, secret societies instituted, which issued at length in the outbreak of violence and the reign of assassination.

At both periods a civil war raged in the provinces, churches were razed, property confiscated, villages and towns laid in ashes, the galleys and the dungeons filled with captives, and the frontier crowded with hordes of wretched exiles. So striking a resemblance between the fate of the victim and that of the criminal looks like a grand judicial execution.

If we look beyond France to the nations on whom the third vial was poured, what an air of retribution in the calamities that befell these nations! Where do we find the greatest carnage occurring? Is it not on the scenes of ancient martyrdom? As if the martyr-blood, sprinkled on these spots so long before, had attracted thither the avenging tempests of war. Savoy, the north of Italy, the Rhine, the Low Countries—precisely the places where the hottest persecutions had raged—became now the scenes of the greatest bloodshed. Could events more emphatically announce that the hour of judgment had come to the nations of the Papal earth?

“They have shed the blood of saints and prophets,” said the angel of the waters, “and thou hast given them blood to drink for they are worthy.” “Even so,” replied the angel from the altar, “Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.” -Revelation 16:6-7.

Chapter XXI. The Fourth Vial—The Sun Of Fire

WE have contemplated the period of judgment that passed over Europe, commencing on the 5th of May, 1789, with the splendid ceremonial of the assembling of the States General at the palace of Versailles, and terminating on the 18th of June, 1815, with the awful carnage of the field of Waterloo. History has been guilty of an untruth, if another period can be found, of the same length, in which so many dark woes befell the human race. But when the period of judgment came to an end, it was seen that, though the world had suffered much, it had learned nothing.

“They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.”- Revelation 16:11

No sooner had the deluge passed over, than the ancient landmarks began to be restored. “Where is the promise of his coming?” said the men of that time; and, concluding that all things would go on as before, they began to make provision accordingly. Absolutism set up the thrones which the revolutionary tempest had overturned; superstition purified the altars which atheism had profaned; and infidelity, unawed by the display which God had given of His being and His holiness began again to vent its horrible blasphemies, and propagate its shallow and impious dogmas.

On the same stage, the same three principles which had already convulsed Europe, and deluged it with blood, began anew to act with increased activity and energy. For three and thirty years had God waited for the repentance of the men of the Papal earth; but they repented not. And now the drama of vengeance is resumed.

“And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.” - Revelation 16:8-9

Upon the sun of this symbolic universe was the fourth vial poured. The effect of the vial was that the sun was shorn of his light, but this obscuration lasted for only a little while, for immediately almost that luminary shone out again, fiercer than before the vial had been poured upon him, and began to flame in such burning strength, that men were scorched with great heat.

Let us mark here the progression of the judgment; and the widening, according to a certain law, of the sphere of its infliction. The first vial was poured upon the individual men of the Papal earth; the second was poured upon one of its leading nations; the third fell upon all of the ten kingdoms that remained subject to the Papacy;—the symbolic rivers of the Papal world; and now the fourth vial is emptied upon its sun. The “sun” is a symbol of established usage in prophecy: it denotes the ruling powers of the world. The same office which the lights of the firmament perform to the earth do kings and statesmen perform to society, and hence in Scripture the sun and stars are put to denote these ruling authorities. The “sun” of this symbolic world can mean only the conjoined monarchies or monarchs of Papal Europe.

We are disposed to find the pouring out of the fourth vial in the Revolution of 1848.

The revolutions of 1848, known in some countries as the springtime of the peoples or the springtime of nations, were a series of revolutions throughout Europe over the course of more than one year, from 1848 to 1849. It remains the most widespread revolutionary wave in European history to date. (Source: Wikipedia)

The events of that epoch fulfill all the conditions of this vial. The Revolution came suddenly. It extended to all the thrones of Papal Europe. Its effect was as if while the luminaries of the Papal firmament were shining, with light untroubled and serene, a vial of darkness had been poured upon them, and there followed a sudden night. And not less striking was the fulfillment of the remaining particulars. The symbolic lights, so suddenly and terribly smitten, soon resumed their functions; and, shooting from their lofty spheres more fervid rays than ever, scorched men with intolerable heat—the heat of a political reaction of unparalleled rigor and severity.

A deep calm preceded the outbreak of 1848. The great Revolution, which had so fearfully rocked the thrones and altars of the Papal world in the beginning of the century, had retreated to its deep cave, there to slumber profoundly, it was believed, for a very long period, if not for ever. The kings were at amity (peaceful with each other); and the nations were disposed to cultivate friendly relations, and take from one another pledges of peace. The world, it was said, was too old and too wise ever again to play at the game of war. The expectation of a lengthened period of tranquility was thus confidently entertained.

And so far as human foresight could reach, the hope appeared to be well founded. The generation had not yet passed away who had witnessed the horrors of the last war, and, before plunging into a new one, were likely to inquire whether they would derive more profit from it than they had reaped from that which preceded it. The warriors and statesmen were still alive who had sworn to wreath with myrtle the sword of Waterloo. We possessed other and stronger guarantees of tranquility. Peace was multiplying her trophies; commerce was enlarging her field of operation; the intercourse of nations, daily extending, was strengthening the feeling of amity and the bonds of concord. The press was forming a public opinion strongly adverse to war. In the July of 1847, the profound tranquility of the western world, and the probable continuance of that tranquility, were proclaimed from the thrones of England and France on almost the same day.

Such was the position of Europe six months before the outbreak. That part of the world had for ages been ruled by the twin powers of superstition and force. But now the Continental nations had in part loosened themselves from the restraints of superstition. Infidelity had broken that yoke. Force only remained. It was the last bulwark; and if it should give way, no human power could prevent the waters breaking in. Of that order of things Mettenich (Klemens von Metternich, a conservative German statesman and diplomat who was at the center of the European balance of power) was the type. He stood between the dynasties and the democracies—the last bulwark which guarded the ever increasing decrepitude of the one from the ever-growing strength of the other.

Such, we say, was the position of Europe immediately before that unexampled outbreak which took by surprise those only who were unacquainted with the true state of matters; and none shared so deeply in this dangerous ignorance as those who had most at stake, and to whom it was at once a matter of duty

and interest to take measures of precaution. The avalanche had gathered, and hung trembling on the mountain's brow; but, alas! the dwellers in the plain beneath lived on in profound security, little dreaming that a single breath might draw down upon them the thundering ruin. The breath stirred, and the avalanche descended.

On the 23rd of February the Revolution broke out at Paris; and before the 5th of March, every country lying between the Atlantic and the Vistula had, in a greater or less degree, been revolutionized. Although the outbreak in France had impregnated the whole atmosphere of Europe with the principles of revolution, the effect could not have been more striking. The contagion crossed the Alps, and gave additional urgency to demands which had already begun to be made by the Italian principalities for constitutional rights. It passed the Po (the longest river in Italy), and penetrated the very stronghold of European despotism. Metternich fled before it, leaving the once powerful empire, whose policy he had so long guided, a prey to terrible calamities. It descended the Rhine along its entire course from the mountains of the Black Forest, stirring its dukedoms and electorates into tumult and insurrection. It struck eastward into the very heart of Germany, still producing, wherever it came, the same commotions, popular assemblies, demands, threats, insurrections, skirmishings—all hostile to royal prerogative. The great kingdom of Prussia felt its shock, and was well nigh prostrated. The force of the movement was spent only when it had reached the Russian frontier. Providence had said to it, "Hitherto, but no farther;" and here, accordingly, its progress was arrested.

It did not cross the Vistula; for Russia forms no part of the Romish earth, and Providence has reserved this powerful kingdom, it would appear, for other purposes. Such was the extent of the movement. On almost the same day, the various nations inhabiting from the hills of Sicily to the shores of the Baltic met, to discuss the same grievances and urge the same demands. They did not act by concert; nothing had been arranged beforehand; none were more astonished at what was going on than the actors themselves in these scenes. One mighty influence had moved the minds of an hundred nations, as the mind of one man; and all obeyed a power which every one felt to be irresistible. Thus suddenly were all the lights of the political firmament smitten, and, as it seemed at the time, extinguished.

Let us take a brief survey of the changes which this second and grand development of revolution so speedily achieved. We place ourselves at the spring of 1848. We look for the governments, the laws, the armies, which have borne sway in Europe these fifteen hundred years, and which existed, apparently in all their strength, when the current year opened, and find that they have been shivered by a tremendous blow, and driven away as chaff before the tempest. Ere the French Revolution was a month old, it had effected an entire change upon the aspect of Europe. The events of centuries were crowded into as many days; one astounding change followed another with a rapidity which dazzled the imagination; and the occurrences of yesterday gave place, in the astonishment of men, to that caused by the more surprising intelligence of today. Defying the checks of power, and transcending the anticipations of even the most sanguine, the great movement went on, gathering momentum as it proceeded, and leveling in the dust all the barriers of a venerable despotism. Let us follow its course, and mark its changes.

In certain of the Italian principalities some popular concessions had previously been made. To these it not only communicated permanency, but it still farther enlarged them. It extorted religious freedom from Charles Albert, monarch of Sardinia; it emancipated the duchies lying at the base of the Alps—

Modena, Parma, Lucca; and lifted the long proscribed Waldenses to an equality with their countrymen in civil and religious rights; it excited the wealthy province of Lombardy—which, like Issachar of old, seeing that rest was good and the land pleasant, had couched down between the two burdens of Rome and Austria—to rebel against at least the latter yoke; it gave a new impulse to the war of independence in Sicily; above all, it told Pius the Ninth (Pope of the Catholic Church from 1846 to 1878) that he could no longer deal in sham reforms, and no longer amuse his subjects with verbal concessions, and constitutions on paper, but must begin in good earnest the work of reform, by bestowing real and substantial privileges on the Roman people.

But its greatest achievement awaited the Revolution on the east of the Po (river). Austria had been the key-stone in the arch of Continental despotism; and when Austria fell, the fabric of European feudalism became apparently a mass of crumbling ruin. The vast change which the revolutionary spirit effected on this country may be conceived of from the single fact, not to dwell on other particulars, that universal suffrage was established, and liberty given, for the time, to all the subjects of the empire to worship according to their conscience; and that, too, notwithstanding that the power of the aristocracy, and the wealth and pride of the Romish hierarchy, had continued, up till that period, to be far greater in Austria than in any other country of Europe.

North of the Alps the effects of the great Revolution were just as palpable as on the south of these mountains. It awoke the spirit of the Germans, long repressed, and recalled the memory of their ancient liberties and their past renown. It darted a ray of light between the dark clouds which had long rested above the land of Huss. It gave a free Government to priest-ridden Bavaria; and it gave constitutional privileges to the numerous duchies that girdle the Black Forest, long enthralled by petty tyrants. In the electorates on the Rhine it produced popular demands, which were instantly followed by popular concessions.

In the great empire of Prussia, and in the neighboring kingdoms of Hanover and Saxony, it made its power equally felt. In the former kingdom, a momentary indecision of the monarch served only to render more apparent the force of the movement. In Berlin barricades arose, blood flowed, and the populace, triumphing over the throne, were able to dictate their own terms.

Thus, in the short space of a single month, the pouring out of this vial changed the condition of every country lying between the Straits of Messina and the shores of the Baltic. It created, in fact, a new Europe. It established in all its countries, by concession at least, the three great bulwarks of civil liberty, namely, constitutional government, trial by jury, and the right of public meeting. In the rear of its political changes it brought likewise vast social and moral meliorations (process of improving something). It rent asunder the chains that bound the press; it abolished the lines of custom-houses with which Europe was crossed and recrossed in all directions; and it swept away the restrictions employed to fetter the truth; thus giving to the nations an unrestricted commerce, the free diffusion of knowledge, and liberty to read the Bible and enjoy the gospel.

Had the Revolution stopped at the point it had now reached it would have accomplished more good for Europe than any similar movement which had preceded it. It embodied all that amount of civil and political freedom which it is right that civil society should enjoy. It was, so far, the passage of Europe from despotism to constitutional liberty. It left room for nothing to come after it, on just grounds, either

in the way of demands or concessions: all that remained was to turn it to account, and especially to prosecute its moral ends. But here it did not stop. The vial became a vial of judgment to both the kings and the nations.

Let us mark with what terrible force the vial struck the sun. The Revolution soon passed the Rubicon; and the terrible fact stared men in the face, that it was on anarchy that Europe was drifting. We speak not of the confusion and misrule into which its little principedoms fell: its greatest monarchies were breaking up; its oldest statesmen were nonplussed; and its mightiest thrones were rendered powerless. A moral decomposition was going on everywhere: authority was prostrate; laws were violated with impunity; and from the Atlantic to the Vistula, kings were little better than captives, and the mob was the sovereign. In the train of these political evils came a host of commercial and social mischiefs. The ordinary business of life was to a great degree suspended—commerce paralyzed—trade and manufactures at a stand-still—the exchequers woefully impoverished—the lower classes discontented, and at war with those above them—the upper classes terrified, and without confidence in the future. The towns swarmed with barricade-heroes, the country with rural marauders, and the masses everywhere were ripe for any mischief.

What a picture of dislocation and ruin did France then present! That once powerful kingdom—the eldest horn of the beast, and one of the chief agents in the slaughter of the witnesses—was then, as it has been before and since, **visited by God for the blood of His saints**. Her Government was unable to guarantee safety of life and property; her Assembly, instead of grappling vigorously with the evils that surrounded it, was torn by faction, and passed its time in indecorous and tumultuary (marked by haste, confusion, disorder, and irregularity) debates.

National bankruptcy was advancing with rapid strides; the expenditure of the monarchy exceeded its income by two-thirds of a million of francs; but the loss to the revenue of the Republic for the first year was calculated at twenty millions of pounds sterling. The citizens lived amidst perpetual alarms—*iras inter et timores* (Latin meaning between anger and fear)—and were harassed by never-ceasing calls to military duty. Fearful rumors and terrible threats distracted the minds of men, which were still farther agitated by conspiracies, having avowedly for their object the confiscation of all the property in the kingdom, and the surrender of the upper and middle classes into the hands of the ruffians and malefactors which infested the country.

Turning to Austria, there was seen a gigantic wreck where this magnificent empire once stood. The emperor had fled to the Tyrol, whither he was followed by a frightened herd of archdukes and nobles. The dying embers of Tyrolese loyalty were unexpectedly fanned by this mark of royal confidence; and it seemed just possible that the zeal of these mountaineers might bring upon the fallen empire the horrors of a civil war. Vienna was filled with barricades, concessions were demanded, and the same work of confusion commenced in Vienna which was in progress in Paris. Austria, the successor of the Germanic Caesars, had gathered under her eagle men of every race—the industrious and enterprising Lombard, the acute Illyrian, the stately Hungarian, the meditative German, the persevering Bohemian, the fiery Pole. She had drawn her riches from the flourishing trade of Lombardy, the waving harvests of Gallicia, the rich pastures of Bohemia, and the wealthy mines of Carinthia and Hungary. But the fall of the central authority had set loose all these various nations, and dried up all these sources of wealth.

The provinces were breaking away from the empire; and Austria exhibited a chaos great in proportion to her former grandeur.

In Italy disorganization had not proceeded to the same length, only because its progress meanwhile was arrested by the war with Austria; but dissensions were rife throughout the Peninsula. A sanguinary war raged on the Po, brought on by the ambition of King Charles Albert, who hoped that Milan would place her iron crown upon his head. The revolting massacre at Naples broke up the ill-omened league between the Pope, Albert of Sardinia, and Ferdinand of Naples, and complicated still farther the affairs of Italy. Rome itself became the scene of tumult. The Jesuits, with their famous general, Roothann, were expelled; and though the Pope was still suffered to hold the rank and titles of sovereign of the Roman States, he was completely shorn of the sovereign power. He had the perplexing alternative proposed to him, of drawing the sword against those whom he calls his children, or abdicating the throne of the Quirinal.

If the kings who were compelled to bend their necks to the Gregories and Hildebrands of the middle ages had then looked up, how would they have grimly smiled to see the foot of the Roman mob upon the neck of Pius!

Thus was the vial poured upon the sun. All over Papal Europe royalty was smitten—suddenly, terribly smitten. Laws were abolished; armies were forced to flee; dynasties were sent into exile; the Supreme Power was in the dust; and the mob was the monarch.

The extinction of the sun was not intended by the vial. It would smite him with disastrous eclipse, but that eclipse would soon pass off, and he would reappear, but in such a blaze of fire as to scorch men. “And power,” it is said, “was given unto him to scorch men with fire; and men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, who hath power over these plagues.” – Revelation 16:8-9.

This manifestly implies a resumption of the powers of government, the suspension of which had been the first effect of the vial; but their resumption, not in their natural or usual way, but in some most malign and mischievous mode of working. The sun that usually enlightens and nourishes, was now to scorch those on whom it shone. This can mean only some grievous perversion of all the ends of government, whereby, instead of protecting and blessing society, it would blight and destroy it by the exercise of a fearful and cruel tyranny. Instead of light and warmth, this symbolic sun would rain fire upon men.

And the event very signally fulfilled the symbol. The Revolution of 1848 was followed by the Reaction of 1849. The first panic having subsided, the kings and dynasties whom the Revolution had chased into exile began to gather heart, and make a stand. They asked whether it were not possible to re-assemble their armies, confront anarchy, and recover their thrones. The attempt was made; and, after many a scene of conflict and carnage, it was successful. “Power was given ” to that sun whom the vial had smitten.

The battle of Order against Anarchy began in Paris. After a bloody struggle of three days in the streets of its capital, CAVAIGNAC (French general and politician) reduced France under the government of the saber. The example thus set was followed in all the countries of Western Europe, to which the revolt had extended. Rome was bombarded, and, after a heroic defense of two months, fell before the arms of

the French; and the Pope, returning from Gaeta, entered through the riven walls of his capital, and over the slaughtered bodies of his subjects, to take possession once more of that chair which is mightier than the throne of kings. The head of the old confederacy being now lifted up, power returned to the limbs. The Bourbon of Naples came back to violate the Constitution he had solemnly sworn to maintain—to deliver up Naples to the cruel rage and lust of his soldiers, as a chastisement for the insolence of its inhabitants in driving him out; and, by the unsparing exercise of a frightful tyranny, to fill with dungeons and doleful captives a land which nature has clothed with a dazzling beauty. By the orders of the same tyrant, Messina was besieged, and left only when it had become little better than a mass of mingled ruins, blood, and corpses.

The same scenes were enacted in most of the capitals of the principalities and dukedoms into which Italy then was portioned out. Radetzky and his Croats appeared on the Adige, and after a series of sanguinary conflicts, Lombardy was compelled again to submit to the yoke of Austria. Venice, once more, sat in fetters amid her glorious lagoons— all unconscious of her storied renown, and utterly bereft of her traditional gaiety. There was no song upon her waters, and the voice of the harp was silent in her palaces.

Milan, upon her noble plain, and in the presence of her glorious Alps, sat silent and sunk, oppressed by an intolerable sense of shame and woe. Many of her sons had fallen by the saber of the Croat, others had been swept off to prison, and those who were left were in hourly danger of a similar fate. Padua, Ferrara, Bologna, whose names recall a past of glory, presented the same images of sorrow. The Austrian was their master; their inhabitants trembled under the rod of the oppressor, and walked their streets more like corpses than living men. The passing traveler felt the prevalent and mysterious dread taking hold of him the moment he entered within their gates, and he made haste to depart, not without a touch of sorrow for the unhappy fate of those who would have gone with him, but could not. He passed on from city to city, and from province to province to find that “all joy was darkened,” and that “the mirth of the land was gone.”

Vienna itself, the proud capital of Austria, was bombarded; and, after the massacre of her citizens and the conflagration of some of her palaces, was taken by the imperial troops. Then it might be seen sitting silent and sullen by the Queenly Danube, brooding over the barbarities, cruel as useless, which followed its capture. A war of races was excited in Hungary, which, after opening brilliantly, and giving a deceitful promise of victory and independence, had, as everywhere else, for its issue, submission. Thus the Continent became a camp; soldiers and sabers were seen everywhere; and Europe was compelled at the sword’s point to return to her dungeon, and yield her limbs to the old fetters.

There was no loosening of these fetters—no intermission in the rain of fire which the sun poured upon men—for ten long years. We doubt whether another decade in the history of Europe could be found, in which its people suffered so dreadfully, day by day, and from one year to another, from the exercise of a minute, searching, envenomed, crushing tyranny. How appropriate the symbol—a rain of fire. That very authority which should have existed but to cherish and foster, studied only how to make itself a curse to its subjects, and by its thousand myrmidons to irritate and torment them.

In 1851, this Reaction took a new start. Then was struck the *coup d’état* in France; and immediately thereafter this symbolic sun attained the maximum of his burning power. The *coup d’état* consolidated

the Reaction. It produced upon the political stage a new prodigy—or rather, it advanced him to a higher position, for he had previously stood up. It brought forth a man of insoluble character and inscrutable thoughts, who, by some strange destiny, had come from exile and poverty to reign, not over France only, but, in a sense, over Europe. This man seemed to wield a mysterious influence over the Revolution. He had power to bid it cease; to bring order out of the wild chaos that existed before his advent. The political elements recognized in his voice that of a master, and the nations, quailing before him, lay down in their old chains. He swept off the Legislative Assembly to prison; he deported the citizens in thousands to Cayenne; he threw the press into fetters; and served by an obsequious priesthood, a devoted army, and numberless train-bands of *gensd'armes* and spies, he left only one will acting in France—his own.

This man became the center of the European coercion. All he did prospered: the fame of his sagacity rapidly grew, and his policy became the model on which other kings fashioned theirs. They asked his counsel; they borrowed his aid; they courted his friendship. They were lifted up or cast down according as the exile of former years smiled or frowned upon them. This tyranny waxed fiercer and yet more fierce, for the wrongs of today must be supported by the greater wrongs of tomorrow. This was the case especially in Italy and Austria. The populations in these countries were decimated—they were bastinadoed (beaten with a stick or cudgel, especially on the soles of the feet), imprisoned, banished, shot. Commerce and agriculture were overwhelmed by oppressive taxation. Progress was arrested; every aspiration for liberty was stifled; and a universal terror overspread the kingdoms. The sun of government shone not to nourish, but to scorch.

The rulers of Rome and Naples enjoyed an unenviable notoriety among these oppressors. But we refrain from any detailed account of the deplorable condition of the Papal and Neapolitan States, and of the frightful, and indeed, to all save those who had an opportunity of witnessing them, incredible atrocities which were committed upon their inhabitants during this period. A statesman of our own, whose veracity is as undoubted as his eloquence, has told us what he himself saw in the dungeons of Naples, where, as in those of Rome, some thirty thousand men were incarcerated; and it is not yet forgotten how the whole British nation was thrilled, shocked, and horrified by the revelation. “I believe,” said Lord Palmerston, on June 14, 1852, “there is no example of misgovernment, of cruelty, of illegality, of violence, of abuse of power of every sort and kind, equal to that which prevails at present in the Neapolitan and Roman States.”

It is added, emphatically but affectingly, that the men who were thus fearfully scorched “blasphemed the name of God, who hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give Him glory.” The judgment was not more awful than it was righteous and holy. It was sent to call past sins to remembrance, and to induce repentance for them; but it utterly failed to accomplish its end. The men, now so terribly smitten, had been the instruments of these very governments in the slaughter of the martyrs of Jesus. The *tools* were now made the *victims*. They were now, in the providence of God, compelled to suffer at the hands of their merciless oppressors all that variety of wrong which, three hundred years before, they themselves had inflicted upon the disciples of the gospel. They had this reflection further to embitter the judgment, that it was themselves who had opened the way for this tyranny. If the champions of religion had not perished in the sixteenth century, the champions of liberty could not have been put down in the nineteenth.

But the men of the Popish world neither saw the hand of God in their punishment, nor understood the lesson He meant to teach them thereby. Nay, they “blasphemed the name of God, who had power over these plagues.” It is a historic fact that these awful calamities seemed but to confirm them in their atheism. Some took occasion from them to revile God’s government, and deny His being; while others were led to greater excesses in their idolatries; betaking themselves for help to gods of wood and stone.

It is an instructive fact that this period was signalized by the proclamation of the crowning dogma of Popery, the Immaculate Conception. Thus both oppressor and oppressed continued impenitent, hardened, and blinded under the holy hand of God; and accordingly the curtain is dropped upon this the fourth act in the awful drama, with the emphatic announcement, “They repented not to give Him glory.”

Chapter XXII. The Fifth Vial—Darkness In The Kingdom Of The Beast

WE now transfer ourselves to the banks of the Ticino, in upper Italy. It is a quiet eventide in April, 1859. The squadrons of Austria, two hundred thousand strong, are defiling (marching in a line) along the noble granite bridge which spans the river; while the little army of Piedmont hastily assembles in front, in order to delay the advance of the Austrian host, and give time to the French legions, which are at this moment descending the slopes of the Cottian Alps, to come to their aid. The campaign for Italian Independence—the fifth act of the drama—is about to open.

“And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness.” – Revelation 16:10

The locality this vial was to smite was the “seat,” or, as it is in the original, the “throne” of the beast. The order of progression, according to which the judgment rises higher and higher, is here maintained. This vial strikes the loftiest seat—the very pinnacle of the Papal power—the very center of the Papal world. We were previously told, when shown the rise of the beast, that the dragon that is imperial Rome gave him his “throne and power;” and it was actually the boast of the Pope that his palace, his city, his territories, “the patrimony (inheritance) of Peter,” he had received as a gift from Caesar. It is thus clear that the fifth vial was to be poured upon the Temporal Power, and the territorial possessions of the Pope.

How do the historic events of 1859 fulfill this supposition? Did the war-cloud which so suddenly rolled down from the Alps, after sweeping over Italy, discharge its last and heaviest burst over the city and throne of the Popes? It did.

The strife was begun in that spacious Lombard Plain, on which so many bloody fields have been stricken, and where countless hosts sleep their last sleep. The campaign was short, sharp, and decisive. First came the great battle of Montebello: this was immediately followed by the yet greater battle of Magenta; and, last and bloodiest of all, came Solferino; and now Austria retreated beyond the Adige, and all of Italy on the west of that river was free.

These exploits of France in the north of Italy were immediately followed by the yet more brilliant campaign of Garibaldi in the south of the Peninsula. Setting sail from Genoa with a thousand followers, he liberated Sicily, and crossing the Straits of Messina, completed almost as soon as he had begun the conquest of the Neapolitan kingdom, the soldiers laying down their arms, and the king fleeing at his approach. The Almighty had given the Neapolitan princes as stubble to his bow.

And now the cloud which had discharged itself in peals so terrific first in the north and next in the south of the Peninsula gathered darkly round the territory and throne of the Pontiff. Victor Emmanuel carried the war into the Papal States, and reft (robbed) the chair of Peter of its goodliest possessions. Bologna on the north, the Marches of Ancoha, and the fertile Umbria on the east were taken from the “Holy Father,” and he was left with only the herbless and treeless plain around Rome, and half a

million of subjects. Thus was the “throne of the beast” not extinguished indeed, but eclipsed—shorn of its power and revenues.

The events that fulfilled this vial are characterized, in common with those that fulfill all the other vials, with a startling and dazzling suddenness. This characteristic was eminently to mark the third woe;—it “cometh quickly.” The very words in which the pouring out of the vials are narrated indicate celerity of execution. This unexpectedness—this launching of the bolt with lightning speed and power was designed, not only to make the blow more stunning, but to make the hand of God more manifest, if men would but see it.

Alas! They have extolled the genius of the human agents, they have lauded their promptitude in action, their fertility of resource, their courage; but they have not acknowledged the God who endowed them with these gifts, and used them for the execution of His holy purposes.

This vial was to shroud the kingdom of the beast in darkness. “Darkness” is the symbol of social and political confusion. No term but “darkness” could adequately describe the condition in which the events of 1859 left the affairs of Italy and of the whole Roman Catholic world. The actors in these scenes thought they were advancing to a settlement of European affairs; the Italians were dreaming of a fully emancipated kingdom, with Rome for its capital, when suddenly all parties found themselves unexpectedly confronted with a great insoluble problem. This problem ramified into a hundred other enigmas which equally defied adjustment, and which presented a state of affairs of the utmost perplexity and entanglement. The exigencies (urgent demands) of Victor Emmanuel require that the Pope should demit (resign) his temporal power: the exigencies of the other Popish sovereigns require that he should retain it. The Italians demand Rome as their capital: but Rome is precisely the city which the Pope cannot give up. Italy wishes to be consolidated as a kingdom; but this she cannot be while there are two sovereigns in her. But two sovereigns there must remain, for the Temporal Princedom is the center of the Papal empire, and its destruction would infer a violent rending and dissolution of that whole empire: it would convulse the “Catholic world” to its extremities.

It is nothing to say that it is not within the compass of diplomacy to reconcile these antagonistic claims: it is not in the nature of things—it is not within the compass of possibilities to reconcile them. The position is darkness—darkness that may be felt. “We dwell in darkness,” says M. Guizot, referring to these numerous insoluble problems, “we walk on ruins.”

This awful night, foretold to fall down on the Papal world, was typified by the plague of darkness in Egypt, during which no one rose from his seat. At this hour there is a complete arrest upon the three leading actors in the Papal world—the Emperor of France, the King of Italy, and the Pontiff. Not one of the three can adopt a definite line of political action. They can but sit still, and wait. They are galled, and they fret in their position: yet stir they dare not, save at the risk of bringing on a convulsion which would shake the whole of Europe.

This darkness is the prelude to the long night that awaits the Papacy. In its sky, sun and stars will shine no more; the gloom will be dispersed not otherwise than by the fiery light streaming in through the rents of ruin.

It was foretold that they should “gnaw their tongues for pain;”—that is, kings, priests, and people, all of whom were to be cast into this darkness. The result of affairs in Italy has been disappointing to all parties. Their most cherished hopes have been falsified; and in the bitter recriminations which one has urged against another, and in the expressions of chagrin and mortification which have come from all, we behold the predicted “gnawing of the tongue.” No one has raised so loud and persistent a wail over the misfortunes which have come upon him as the Pope. His sacred person has been insulted; his divine prerogatives have been contemned (treated with contempt); sacrilegious hands have been laid upon the revenues of his Church; and horrible blasphemies have been spoken against his holy seat, and he has not been slow to publish to the world the anguish of soul which these multiplied afflictions have caused him. Allocution (spoken address, formal speech) has followed allocution; expressed in almost the very words of prophecy. As for instance, in his allocution of August 1860, he tells us that he is “drinking to the lees the cup of bitterness and sorrow.” The *Times*, putting into the Saxon of England what the Pope expresses in the theological language of Italy, called these allocutions “a continuous shriek of cursing.”

Again we hear the thrice melancholy announcement, “they repented not of their deeds.” Kings, priests, people, go on, like Pharaoh, impenitent, tormented, blaspheming to the very end. What an awful picture of the state of the Papal world, as it is here beheld on the brink of its last woe! The plagues of all the vials are pressing upon it at once; the atheistic sores of the first vial; the revolutionary and sanguinary (blood thirsty, murderous) doctrines of the second; the wars of the third, in the shape of overgrown armaments; the tyrannic inflictions of the fourth; and now the “darkness” of the fifth; for the judgment is cumulative, and each vial as it is poured out, so far from revoking the plague of that which went before it, but adds to it, till the suffering becomes overwhelming and intolerable, and the last expression of physical torment is exhibited in “the gnawing of the tongue.”

Still there is no confession of their own and their fathers’ sins; there is no turning to the God of heaven; and no forsaking of their idolatries. They still wear the chains of their great spiritual oppressor. Their conscience is still in his keeping. The nation of Italy has not even yet escaped from the prison of the Vatican. The Bible has entered at the red gap of war, but alas! The liberty it offers is little prized. We are the Church’s children, say they, and were never in bondage to any man. And so, instead of bathing their eyes, long darkened, in the blessed radiance of the gospel, they love the shade of the old darkness, and resent as an injury rather than welcome as a kindness, any attempt to dispel it. Thus they repent not of their deeds.

Chapter XXIII. The Sixth Vial—Drying Up Of the Euphrates

THE shadow of the sevenfold night into which the symbolic earth of the Apocalypse was cast when the fifth angel poured out his vial is still seen resting upon it, when suddenly another terrible peal is heard rolling from its sky, and another flaming bolt is seen cleaving the darkness, and, falling upon one of its principal streams, it drinks up its waters, and lays dry its bed.

“And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared.” – Revelation 16:12

Expositors of the Apocalypse have been much divided hitherto as regards their interpretations of this vial. They were of opinion that it predicted the overthrow of some leading power of the Papal world—some power which stood related to the Church of Rome, much as the Euphrates did to the ancient Babylon; but which power it was, and whether it was a European or an Asiatic one, they were not agreed.

One class of expositors thought that the “Euphrates” was put as the representative or symbol of that great empire of which it is the principal stream, and saw in the apocalyptic picturings the gradual exhaustion of the Turkish empire, and its ultimate and total subversion. Another class of interpreters were of opinion that the kingdom in question was to be sought for within the limits of the Papal earth, and that it must be a kingdom holding a pre-eminent rank as a supporter of the Papacy, and that it was most probably Austria.

Providence, the one and only interpreter of prophecy, has now, as it appears to us, decided this question, and has decided it in favour of the latter class of interpreters. We say this all the more freely, inasmuch as we were inclined to be of the opinion of those who saw in the figurations of this vial the approaching fall of the Turkish Empire, and the doom of Mohammedan superstition. That event, so much to be desired, is manifestly at no great distance; the morning will break, the darkness that has so long covered these once glorious lands will flee away; but instead of preceding the fall of Romanism in the West, it will most probably accompany it; and the events of the sixth vial will pave the way for the execution of the Divine purposes upon both idolatries. In a common catastrophe—unexampled in its extent, in its terror, and in its completeness—will Romanism and Mohammedanism most probably find their end.

We return to the vial. It takes us to the East, and carries us a long way back in history. We are beside the Euphrates; its stream has been suddenly smitten, and the kings of the East are crossing its dry bed. This calls up before us the last eventful night of the literal Babylon. Inside the walls all is revelry. The monarch and his nobles, gathered in the palace, keep a feast in honor of the gods of Babylon, and the vessels of Jehovah are brought forth to grace the banquet. While they are praising the gods of wood and stone, sudden consternation strikes the assembly, for there, in the midst of the city, is the host of Media and Persia. But how have they entered? In the darkness of the night the beseigers, having dug a trench,

draw off the waters of the Euphrates, and, marching along the dry bed of the river, penetrate within the walls, and Babylon is taken.

The same thing, in substance, is to take place over again in the siege of the mystic Babylon, and this, we conceive, is the event which is brought before us in the symbols of the sixth vial. We are shown “Great Babylon” sitting within the shadow of her last night. The vial which immediately preceded the one we are now considering, had covered her with darkness, and that darkness is to pass away only when on her shall break the lightnings of ruin, and on the Church shall open the golden morning of deliverance.

In the gloom that mantles her we can see the agents of her destruction busy at work: for she who once was worshiped by the nations is now hated of them, and they have come up against her to besiege her. Already her towers and battlements totter to their fall. The five previous vials which have been emptied in fury upon her have made hideous gaps in her defenses. For what do we see in the demoralized and prostrate state of the Popish nations—Spain beggared, France revolutionary, Italy in revolt, and committing acts of sacrilegious spoliation, as Rome accounts them, upon the property of “the Church”—but the demolition of those ramparts, which, in former ages, stood in impregnable strength around the Papacy.

But there still remains, that is, at the time just anterior to the pouring out of the sixth vial, one state, which has escaped, in good degree, the general decadence of the Popish nations, and which is still thoroughly loyal to Rome. That state covers her with the shield of her policy and her arms. That state is to the mystic Babylon what the Euphrates, rolling its deep floods beneath its walls, was to the literal city. It is on this symbolic Euphrates that the next judgment is to be executed, that its waters—its people, revenues, and military prestige—may be dried up. Upon this power is the sixth vial emptied: it falls, and its crash announces to Rome that her last political bulwark has given way, and that the road is now open for the entrance of her foes, whatever time they may judge it fitting to put an end to her dominion. So much the symbol suggests. Let us now come to facts.

The events of Divine Providence have made it plain, we think, that the one remaining defense of the antichristian system, here specially marked out for sudden and unexpected overthrow, was Austria. That empire had largely escaped the general blight of the Popish kingdoms. It was not revolutionary. It retained its military prestige up till the very morning of the battle of Sadowa. Among the great powers it was pre-eminently the champion of Rome, and the only one which she thoroughly trusted. To the last Austria preserved her fidelity to the concordat which placed her political and military strength at the service of the Papacy. If France was the “Nile” or “Sea” in which thereby Rome traded and carried on her spiritual commerce and became rich, Austria was her “Euphrates,” her encircling rampart; for the arms of that empire were in Rome’s last days her main reliance. But the hour came when the sixth vial must be poured out.

On the one terrible day of Sadowa (a major battle) was this vial emptied upon the devoted kingdom. Like all the vials it came quickly. On the morning of that day—9th July, 1866—Austria stood forth before the world the same mighty empire it had always been. The injury it had sustained in the tempests of 1848 it had repaired. Its territories were as wide, its subject races as numerous, and its military renown as great as before. But the same day which opened so proudly for Austria set upon it an

appalling and irretrievable wreck. We know not if in all history there be such another collapse of a great empire. Her archdukes and princes slain: her armies routed, her place among the great powers lost: the renown acquired on a hundred battle-fields perished, and the prestige which had come down to her from six centuries vanished; all this forms a catalog of calamities greater perhaps than ever before befell kingdom in one day. It seemed as if an angel had come down from heaven and breathed upon this empire, and its strength, glory, and dominion were in an instant gone.

And what a blow to Rome! Austria was an embodiment of absolutist (absolutism: a political theory that absolute power should be vested in one or more rulers) and reactionary (ultraconservative in politics) principles—the principles against which Providence has been making war these three centuries. She existed only to guard these principles. Her soil was an interdicted one to the Bible and the missionary. There art stood still, knowledge was proscribed (forbidden as harmful or unlawful), and commerce was fettered. On the frontier of Austria progress of all kinds was arrested.

One art only did that empire study—the art of war. Austria was a great military power, and it employed its arms to restrict the rights of peoples and to uphold and enlarge the claims of prerogative. It was an embodied “right divine.” It was the political cesspool of Europe. To it there gravitated whatever tyrannous maxim or noxious prejudice had been expelled from neighbouring states. Other Papal kingdoms moved a little with the tide, Austria lay immovably fixed above her old moorings. She was a very tower of strength to that “Church” whose last authoritative utterance, the Encyclical of 1864 (Webmaster: Also known as the [Syllabus of Errors](#)), is one compendious anathema upon liberty, religion, and progress.

It is not Austria only—old absolutist and priest-ridden Austria—which has closed its career; it is Europe—Europe as readjusted in 1815, and readjusted in the interests of the Papal power—which has closed its career, and which must be reconstructed. Those famous treaties which Rome always appealed to, and behind which she entrenched herself, are now torn in pieces. This is a rampart fallen, a source of defense dried up.

While Austria retires from the stage which she has alternately desolated by her arms and illumined by her glory, Prussia (a historical nation that consisted of parts of Germany, Poland, Russia, and Lithuania) comes in her room. Population, territory, political influence, and military power, now pass over to the latter state. This is a mighty gain on the side of Protestantism and civilization. The shadow that rested on the east of Europe recedes, and the sphere of the light is enlarged. Draw a line along the Main eastward through Germany; all the states on the north of that line are ranged on the side of Prussia.

Here is a Power governing a territory, which embraces middle and northern Germany, and is inhabited by upwards of thirty millions, having one policy, and one military organization, substantially Protestant. On the south of the Main we behold another confederation, amounting to about ten millions of Germans, not yet formerly united with Prussia, but in all likelihood destined to be so, but of which she is even now virtually the ruler. Thus, as the result of a campaign of only ten days in the July of 1866, we behold the rise of a great German and Protestant Power, forty millions strong, under the leadership of Prussia. While Austria—the champion of the Papacy, the persecutor of the saints—finds herself suddenly shorn of her power, and the numerous races which, like a great river, she had gathered

into her immense channel, are fleeing from under her scepter, and leaving her without strength on the battle-field, or influence at the council-table. In both respects Rome will sorely miss her.

But all these dark events turn their silver lining to the Church. Christ has heard the cry of His saints, and broken Austria “in pieces as a potter’s vessel.” So shall He one day lay low the towers and pinnacles of all those proud empires which have lifted themselves up “against the Lord and His anointed.”

Though sorely humiliated, Austria has not been altogether extinguished. With a change of policy, and under the direction of a Protestant prime minister, there may yet await her a future of no small promise. To become a first-rate power, a great predominating military empire, stretching her wings from the border of Asia to the heart of Germany, she can no longer hope to be: but dissevered from the Papacy, it is possible that she may recover not a little of what she has lost, and maintain a respectable position among the kingdoms of the world.

On the morrow after Sadowa her star seemed to be set for ever; but no sooner did she begin to part company with the Papacy than her star re-appeared, and began to mount into the horizon. Loosed from the chains of Rome, new life entered into her, and already she has made great progress in the work of reconstruction. The constitution recently sanctioned by the emperor contains a pretty full measure of constitutional liberties. But the greatest achievement of the new Austria is that by a fundamental law of the state she has nullified the concordat. This made her the slave of the Papacy, and to have flung aside that incubus was indeed a wonderful triumph over the old ultramontane spirit and a most gladdening manifestation of the growing power of the principle of a free conscience.

If Austria is making these strides into the open air of liberty, if Austria declares that her sword shall no longer be at the service of priestcraft, and that a Papal bull shall no longer override an imperial edict; if Austria proclaims the equality of all religions before the law, of what European country shall we despair? There is a spirit at work, which grows as it passes, like a great ocean wave, and which is driving the night before it, and bringing in the day of evangelical truth. From the carnage-covered field of Sadowa what blessings have already arisen, and what blessings may yet arise, to Austria and to Europe. In the thunders of that battle-field, Rome heard the fall of her last political defense, and liberty and religion saw a barrier swept out of their path which had long withstood their advance. When the smoke of the battle-field had cleared away, an unexpected and blessed sight met the eye! The ancient and venerable Churches of Bohemia, Moravia, and Hungary, which had suffered an all but total extinction by the House of Austria, were seen rising out of the dust into which they had been trodden, and taking quiet and sure possession of a soil which had been so abundantly watered by their fathers’ tears and blood. As they look around on the new world, into which they have been ushered, and find all so changed;—that now they build their Churches, and organize their missions, and exercise all their civil and religious rights, none making them afraid, they scarce believe for joy. But when at length they feel that their new privileges are real, they give vent to their wonder and joy in the ancient song, “Lo! the winter is past; the rain is over and gone: the flowers appear upon the earth: the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.”

Chapter XXIV. The Kings Of The East—The Three Frogs

THERE was a special end to be served by the drying up of the “Euphrates.” We have already glanced at that end; let us again turn to it for a little. The time has nearly come when “Babylon” must fall. The predestined instruments of her overthrow are on their way to besiege her; but this great river—“the Euphrates”—lies in their path, and arrests their march. The sixth vial falls upon it, and dries it up, and the host go forward.

Who are these kings from the East? How will the drying up of the symbolic Euphrates prepare their way? On what errand will they travel westward? Expositors of the Apocalypse have found themselves much at a loss for a natural and satisfactory answer to these questions. The symbol is taken, as we have said, from what occurred at the siege of the literal Babylon. The Euphrates was diverted from its channel, and the conquerors, who came from the East, entered the dry bed of the river, and the city was taken. Mystic Babylon is now on the eve of being overthrown; and the exhaustion of the Austrian empire—the last remaining military prop of the Papacy—may open a passage to the kings and armies whom it may be the purpose of God to summon to the scene of Babylon’s destruction, partly to aid in overthrowing her, and partly to be themselves overthrown.

An intimation (announcement) follows almost immediately, that in the battle of that great day of God Almighty, not only will the kings of the Roman earth be present, but likewise the kings of the whole world. It is probable that the representatives of the four great monarchies—the Assyrian, Persian, Greek, and Roman—so far as these are still on the earth, will be assembled on that occasion, and finally destroyed. Thus the monarch beheld in his dream, that the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, was broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer thrashing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them. But of this we shall have occasion afterwards to speak.

The changes which have passed upon the Austrian Empire have opened the way for other and greater changes, all of which will in the end prove adverse to the Papacy. It has unsettled the order of things in both East and West. It has rent the Treaties of 1815, which were so many guarantees for the continuance and supremacy of the Papal Power. It has cast the predominance of political and military power in Germany on the side of Protestantism. It has stirred into life the numerous nationalities and tribes which people the Danube valley, and the regions stretching away to the Asiatic frontier. Fierce, predatory, warlike, these tribes hold themselves ready for any incursion which may promise to reward them with rich booty, or new seats. It has brought the Eastern Question upon the stage with a new significance. All these uncertainties, perils, changes, the day of Sadowa (1866 decisive battle of the Austro-Prussian War) has hung over the world. It was the opening of the gates of the West to the nationalities and powers of the north and northeast of Europe—to their policy first, and to their arms, it may be, next.

In connection with this, it is instructive to mark that in Isaiah we have a series of prophecies extending from the forty-first to the forty-sixth chapters, foretelling a great uprising of nations, and describing

their westward march, in hostile array, on some errand of vengeance. Before this terrible army “rivers are to be dried up,” and “the two leaved gates” (Isaiah 45:1) are to be opened. The scene on which this mighty host is to make its appearance is the same of which we are now speaking—the final siege and overthrow of the mystic Babylon. We are thus led to think it probable that the closing scene of the Papacy will be attended by a wider convulsion than a merely European one; that it will embroil both East and West; that peoples of Asiatic and Scythic blood—the remnants of ancient historic nations, and the races of modern origin—will come up to the siege of the mystic Babylon, and be mingled with the nationalities of Europe, on this theater of consummating judgment.

After the pouring out of the sixth vial upon the Euphrates, Europe will become the scene of busy intrigue. The skies of the western world are to clear up for a little space; the lightnings and hail of the seventh trumpet will be deferred, and the quiet interval will be intensely occupied by the agents of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, who shall prosecute with incredible zeal and activity their unconscious mission of bringing on the grand catastrophe.

“And I saw three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” – Revelation 16:13-14

We determine the character of these three frogs, or spirits, by tracing their origin. The first issues from the mouth of the dragon, which is the old serpent, the devil. This can be nothing else than infidelity, the religion of Rome in its dragon form, in conjunction with its usual concomitants, democracy, and rebellion against all authority, Divine and human.

The next issues from the mouth of the beast, i.e., the seven-headed and ten-horned beast. The characteristic principle of this beast, as distinguished from that of the false prophet, is despotism.

The third and last spirit comes from the mouth of the false prophet, and beyond question is *Popery*. We have no hesitation, then, in concluding that the three principles that are to burst into widespread and vehement action, during the brief interval of quiet in Western Europe, are infidelity, despotism, and Popery. This marks conclusively, we think, our own times as the period to which the prophecy has reference. It is plain that the advocates of these principles were to propagate them, not by the sword, but by loquacious (excessive) talk; for they are symbolized as frogs—stingless frogs; a figure which has been employed since the time of Cicero, who applies it to the prating demagogues of his day, to designate the noisy advocates of demoralizing principles.

Who is so ignorant as need be told how rampant these three principles are at this moment in every country in Europe? No sooner had peace returned to the West, than Popery, with prodigious effort, set about repairing the calamities of the vials. She advanced her former blasphemous pretensions; intrigued in every court of Europe; flattered sovereigns; pandered to the passions of the people; had her men of science for the learned; her miracle-workers for the ignorant; sent missionaries into every land; affected liberality in free states, and erected the Inquisition in certain despotic ones. Thus did she labor to recover her ancient dominion.

The spirit of despotism, too, rallied from the terrible blows which the French Revolution had dealt it. The former dynasties were restored, and, untaught by the bitter experience of the past, began systematically to act on the principle of enlarging the kingly prerogative, and curtailing the popular privilege. France itself was no exception. There this line of policy was pursued, both by the elder Bourbons and the house of Orleans, who have borne sway. since the Revolution of 1830.

And, as regards infidelity, there never was an age since the Flood in which so great a proportion of the human race were disbelievers. Were the great apostles of infidelity, Voltaire and Rousseau, to look up from the dead, how would they be astonished at the success of their labors! For we affirm, without fear of contradiction, that a large proportion of the people of Europe at this moment have a creed which may be summed up in three words: they fear nothing, worship nothing, and believe in nothing. With what restless energy has this spirit been propagating itself these thirty years past! Agencies innumerable has it pressed into its service: the journals and novels of France, the poetry and philosophy of Germany, the university chairs on the Rhine, the academies and printing-presses of the Helvetic towns—all have been the vehicles of conveying infidelity, under its various forms of neology (new Bible interpretations), socialism, communism, pantheism; and the result that has been wrought out, especially on such a groundwork as the Popish mummeries had been the means of creating, is not surprising. Thus have these symbolic frogs covered Europe, penetrating everywhere, loading the air with their croakings, and polluting the earth with their filth.

Ours is pre-eminently the age of *great secret societies*; and these societies are of three classes, corresponding in character, as they do in number, to the “three frogs” which were seen to go forth on their mission when the sixth vial was poured out. **Among these societies that of the Jesuits holds a first place.** Instituted about a quarter of a century after the Reformation, with the view of checking (hindering) the progress of the gospel, its numbers have prodigiously increased, and now they swarm in all the countries of Europe. Wider still, **there is not a land on earth where they are not busy, intriguing, and conspiring.** Their advance is as silent, and their trail as rank and abominable, as that of the frogs of Egypt. They have but one object—the glory of the Popedom; and to accomplish this object their constitutions declare all means to be lawful—deceit, assassination, insurrection, perjury—all are sanctified by the end. Their myriad wills are in complete subjection to one will, that of their general. They are in his hand as the staff is in the hand of a living man. His edicts are of equal authority with the commands of God. He has but to speak, and it is done. Other rulers have to use persuasion, or to employ force, or to hold out bribes: none of these encumbrances embarrass the action of the general of the Society of Jesus. He has but to signify his will, and myriads of agents are ready to execute it, whatever the service—to strike down an individual or to convulse a kingdom; or wherever performed, at home or at the ends of the earth.

The great ambition of the Jesuits is to direct education; but they fill all offices, as they profess all creeds. They have enrolled kings in their company; and they do not disdain shoe-boys. When we take into account their numbers, their organization, their principles, their objects, **they are truly the most mysterious and formidable power that ever existed or operated on the earth.**

The strength of the main body is much increased by their custom of creating and attaching affiliated societies. These greatly extend the operations of the parent society. The members of these societies are

bound by secret oaths, they are employed in special services, and they go under different names in the different countries, such as the Paolotti in Italy, and the Fenians in Great Britain.

Pope Clement XIV. proscribed (banned, abolished) the Jesuits (in 1773) in the bull "*Dominus ac Redemptor*," exclaiming as he affixed his signature, "I have subscribed my death-warrant." Pius VII., after the battle of Waterloo, restored them (in 1814). The deed was done at a moment when the Papal power had to be re-established, and when the temporal and spiritual authority had to reconstruct new machinery for its working. The bark of Peter, as the bull hinted, sorely buffeted by tempests, needed these experienced and skillful rowers. This act of the Pope gave a new Romanism to the world. Henceforward **Jesuitism became the executive of the Church of Rome. The Society dominates bishops, councils, and the Pope himself.**

Increased extension and activity has of late been given to revolutionary clubs. The journals of France and Germany notify the rise of **such societies** in almost every town of the Continent. **Their object is the overthrow of all existing governments**, the establishment of a great European Republic, the abolition of all priestcraft, the inauguration of the religion of Reason—whatever form of faith that may be—and the redistribution of property. The organization of these societies is less perfect, and their secrecy less complete, than that of the Jesuits; still their machinery and ramifications are on a very extensive scale. They are the reaction against a Church which has outraged reason, and against governments which, of late years, by their enormous armaments, and their crushing taxation, have outraged liberty, and are mining trade. Governments which can maintain themselves only by bayonets, and whose only work is to repress, have tempted their subjects to ask on what foundation they rest their moral right to exist? These societies have their organs and missionaries for diffusing their principles among the populations of Europe. The Convention which met at Geneva. last summer, made up of delegates from every country, and which preached a crusade against all churches and governments, may be accepted as a token of how the tide is running, and of the growing power and energy of the revolutionary idea.

Nor is the old despotic principle asleep: it couches in attitude ready to spring: it eyes steadfastly the Ultramontanes on the one side, and the Revolutionists on the other; and watches the moment to make its leap. The frequent meetings of crowned heads; the frightful growth of armies; the ceaseless manufacture of warlike materiel, including newly invented machines of destructive power so enormous, and so absolutely terrific, that their use must speedily bring either war to an end, or the world to an end, attest the existence of the old spirit of tyrannic power, and that before it closes its career it will yet furnish some new and awful proof of its ferocity.

Such are the three principles that strive together in Europe. All three are vile and diabolical. They mark our era as that of the "three frogs," and they bid us be ready for the catastrophe which it is their mission to provoke. When we see contrary currents blowing in the sky, we say it will be tempest: a little while, and the flash of the lightning will be seen, and the roar of the thunder will be heard.

When we lift our eye to the ecclesiastical and political firmament, we can clearly discern three well defined currents contending in it. They blow with steady force; every hour their fury increases; black masses gather on the horizon; the darkness grows deeper; a little longer, and the contending winds and the gathering clouds will issue in the tempest's crash. With what terrific grandeur will the storm then

rage! Through the vault above will career the lightning; from one end of heaven to the other will be heard the thunder's voice; while great earthquakes will shake the world. In that day the cities of the nations shall fall, and great Babylon will rise up in remembrance before God.

On the very eve of battle a solemn warning is tendered. "Behold, I come as a thief;" (Revelation 16:15a) for this event is to overtake the world with unprecedented and startling suddenness. How plainly do these words indicate a pause in the judgment, and a sudden recommencement!

"Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."-Revelation 16:15b

This warning plainly imports, that immediately before that great day, individuals and Churches will be exposed to peculiar temptation to forsake their principles, here symbolized by their garments. The temptation will **not arise from the persecution of force, but from the seduction of these three spirits.**

Do recent events throw no light on this prediction? Has not Puseyism (also known as Tractarianism, a system of High Church principles set forth in a series of tracts at Oxford in 1833–41 that tried to bring the Church of England back under the Roman Catholic Church) solicited some to part with the doctrine of Christ's atonement and intercession? Has not Erastianism (advocating the doctrine of state supremacy in ecclesiastical affairs) solicited others to give up the headship of the Lord Jesus? And has not neology (new method of theological interpretation) tempted others to make shipwreck of the faith altogether? A peculiar blessedness will be his who watcheth and keepeth his garments. When the night of judgment descends upon the world, a sanctuary will be opened, where he may mark in safety the widespread ruin, and come forth with his Lord when it is over.

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." – Revelation 3:10

Chapter XXV. The Harvest Of The Earth

THE harvest implies several preliminary stages. There is, first, the sowing of the seed; there is next the season of growth; and, last of all, comes the harvest, when, by the process of the suns, the plant having been ripened, it is cut down by the reapers, and borne into the garner. All these processes go on by fixed laws, which the Creator has ordained, and which are unalterable by man. By no human power can Spring and Harvest be made to coincide, or the period he annihilated which God has ordained to intervene between the two. And especially by no human power can the relation between seed-time and harvest be changed, so as that one shall sow bad seed and reap good. The same kind of seed, and no other, which one carries to the field in spring, will he gather and lay up in the barn in autumn.

It is the harvest of the symbolic earth which is now to be reaped.

“And another angel came out of the temple crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.” – Revelation 14:15-16

This great symbolic harvest arrives by the same stages as the natural one. There is, first, a time of sowing; there is, second, a process of ripening; there is, third, a great era of reaping, and the seed reaped is of the same sort with that which is sowed. What are we to understand by this symbolic harvest? Undoubtedly there is here foretold a grand appointed era when evil principles having ripened, and noxious systems having arrived at their widest possible development, are to be mowed down by the sharp scythe of Divine judgment.

The principles and systems here in question are those which were to flourish on the Papal earth. Their spring-time was the fifth and sixth centuries, when the despotic principles and the superstitious dogmas were planted, which, in later ages, grew up into the tyrannic governments, and idolatrous churches of Europe.

Our Saviour, in His parables, oft made reference to a great coming harvest: in that harvest the tares were to be rooted up; not before, lest the wheat, the institutions of the Truth, not yet having as yet acquired stability, should perish also in the fiery judgments which were to consume the tares. Both were to grow together until the harvest. This is the harvest which has now arrived: for now the great systems of evil, which were planted so early, and which were ripening all through the middle ages, have now reached their maturity, and are ready to be cut down.

We must here distinguish between the “harvest” and the “vintage,” for it is the “harvest of the earth” that we now behold reaped by the angel. The vine is the symbol of a Church; and the vintage, by consequence, symbolizes the appointed period of destruction, waiting the ecclesiastical institutions of the Papal earth. The “harvest” has respect to the secular institutions of the Roman world; to its governments, and to nations in their civil capacity: and it predicts an era when these institutions shall be cut down, and burned in the fire of judgment.

That era opened at 1789. Then the bloody scythe of war began to reap the harvest of the Papal earth. It has been going on ever since. In the great battle of Sadowa the last leaf of that harvest was carried on. There now remains the “vintage,” the reaping of the ecclesiastical institutions of the Papal world, and this will fall under the Seventh Vial. It will be shorter but sharper than the harvest. It will consist of one terrific dispensation of vengeance: the “great winepress of the wrath of God.”

But it is of “the harvest of the earth” that we now speak. It opened in 1789. The dark Angel of Revolution came up from the depths below and France was reaped with the guillotine. The same terrible reaper went forth to all the countries of the Papal earth in succession—to Spain, to Italy, to Germany, to Austria—bearing the great red scythe of war, and all were reaped in their turn. Institutions and laws, crowns and ducal coronets, nations and their capitals, all fell beneath the terrible scythe of this dread reaper, and all were borne home in one bloody harvest. And even now that reaper does not seem to have fully ended his work, or laid aside his sharp sickle, for he is still seen striding across the fields of Europe, and we fear the last and most terrible sweep of his scythe is yet to be witnessed.

But how does the Revolution fulfill the symbol of the “harvest?” When was the seed sown, and by what process ripened, from which has come this great harvest? This is what we would briefly explain. There never was a revolution since the beginning of time whose causes were so deep-seated as that which broke out in 1789, and which, with occasional pauses, has been progressing ever since. The upheavings with which the whole of the Continent is from time to time agitated come from the very bottom of society. The changes we have seen are not the production of an agency that operates only on the surface: they are the growth of feelings and views with which the whole of European society is leavened. There are events which attract much attention while in progress, and raise great expectations of the good they are to accomplish; but the changes they work lie only on the surface of society, and never penetrate so deep as to affect its internal constitution. Such events always disappoint the hopes they excite; they produce no permanent change in the condition of the species, and leave no track behind them in future years. These changes have been induced on society rather than grown out of it. They have come without preparation, and therefore have gone without result. They have had their birth in the heads of statesmen, and not in the hearts of the people. They have been thrust by strength of arm into the soil, not sprung from the seed; and hence, like those trees of liberty which our Parisian neighbors were so busily engaged in planting in 1848, the same sun which expands the green leaves of others only burns up theirs outright. But the revolution now in progress in Europe is not one of these. It is the harvest of a great seed-time.

The laws which regulate these moral harvests are as fixed and definite as those which regulate the harvests of the earth. A certain time must intervene between the sowing and the reaping in the one case, as necessarily as in the other. What is literature in one generation is opinion in the next, and law and fact in that which succeeds.

Through these several stages has the great harvest passed which Europe is now reaping. It was literature in the days of Voltaire and Rousseau; it became opinion in France in the end of last century, where many favorable circumstances conspired to ripen it somewhat earlier than in the rest of Europe; but now, and for the past quarter of a century, it has been opinion both east and west of the Rhine, both south and north of the Alps; and what was first literature, and, as such, was expressed in biting sarcasms and ingenious sophisms on the elegant pages of Rousseau, and next opinion, finding vent in

vigorous articles in the daily papers, or in fiercely-spouted orations at the evening clubs, has now, with marvelous and astounding suddenness, passed into such tangible and palpable facts as barricades, blouses, pikes, and caps of liberty.

There have been few revolutions in history whose springs have been so deep-seated; and hence it is that it is daily widening its sphere, and growing intenser in its action. Its plowshare is reaching the very foundations of society. It appears destined to form one of the grand epochs of time, and to work a change—we feel satisfied, ultimately, of a beneficial kind —on the condition of the species, which will entitle it to take rank with the mightiest revolutions of past ages, some of which it may even surpass in the magnitude of its issues.

History does not furnish an example of such another revolution—a revolution which has advanced gradually, yet irresistibly, from its first principles—which has molded opinion for itself—which has never advanced a stage till it had first prepared its ground—which has required many centuries for its growth, and, now that it is fully developed, has changed the aspect of the world; for its effects cannot be confined to Europe, but must extend to the farthest verge of civilization.

We are accustomed to speak of three French revolutions; but, in truth, the great movement in that country, though it has had three noted manifestations, is but one, and is truly European in its character. This movement was stopped for a while by the great war which followed its first outbreak; but no sooner was that war at an end, than the movement began again to progress. It is bearing the world onward to a new and untried era. Its course is entirely in the hands of God; and lies as far beyond man's control as does that grand movement of the sun and planets which is every hour advancing our system upon some unknown point in space.

It is beyond question the great agent by which the fourth and last monarchy of Daniel is to be broken in pieces. And we see it executing its mission with irresistible and uncontrollable force, abrogating the laws, abolishing the very forms and symbols of authority, and grinding to powder the framework of the iron kingdom of Rome; prostrating thrones; extinguishing dynasties; crushing altars and priesthoods; driving into exile princes and nobles; pouring contempt upon the policy of statesmen and the strength of armies; rocking the chair of St. Peter itself, and filling its occupant with inconceivable grief, perplexity, and dismay; and evoking against the seven hills, whose thunders were wont to shake the world, the mighty winds of popular rage, which threaten every moment to sweep in their fury, from the face of the earth, that awful throne which has so long enslaved and desolated it.

Chapter XXVI. The Seventh Vial Poured Into The Air

STANDING as we now do in the immediate presence of the great final catastrophe, we are tempted to look back to the beginning of the long and eventful drama. The retrospect includes a period of twenty-five centuries. In the remote past, to which we now direct our glance, the idolatrous world-power is seen mounting the throne of universal dominion, while the Church, attired in sackcloth, passes into her long captivity. Slowly the ages revolve, but they bring with them only increased power and glory to idolatry, and to the Church crueler persecutions and darker woes.

In its progress westward empire transfers the scepter of the world from the Babylonian to the Merle-Persian; from the Medo—Persian to the Macedonian; from the Macedonian to the Roman: and this last finally hands over his throne and dominion to the Papal power. In the Papacy we behold tyrannous oppression and idolatrous blasphemy finding their fullest and most monstrous development. He is the last enemy, for the very height to which he carries his wickedness precludes the possibility of a more “Wicked” coming after him: “He as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing Himself that He is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4) than which there is no higher seat to which a successor might aspire.

But all this while it was going ill with the Church. To her there came no relaxing of her chains, and no opening of her prison doors. But now the revolving years have completed their cycle, and brought round the appointed day, and the trumpet of the great Jubilee is now to be blown, announcing that the world’s oppressor and the Church’s great persecutor is to be hurled from his throne, and that truth and peace are to reign upon the earth. But terrible throes attend the birth of this new creation.

“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not, since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.”- Revelation 16:17-18

A short calm, a heavy and anxious suspense, will precede this great tempest. The angels will hold the four winds of the political firmament that they may not blow till the frogs have fulfilled their mission. These missionaries of evil will go about their work with the utmost dispatch (promptness and efficiency), and with unexampled persistency and energy. In countless croaking swarms they will spread everywhere; defiling the earth, and polluting the air. They will inspire the policy of governments, they will place them in antagonism to one another, and thus sow the seeds of wars. In one country they will stand up for the despot: in another, they will preach insurrection: skilfully sowing suspicions and fomenting passions.

Churches they will labor to corrupt and divide, or, where it better suits their purpose, to combine. They will organize in the dark, forming great secret societies, prepared against the hour of action. Thus having poisoned society by their corrupt principles, and alienated classes and interests by their stealthy machinations, there will arise, all suddenly, when perhaps the world is saying peace peace, and its wise

men can see no sign of coming convulsion, a terrific tempest, which will darken the whole social and political horizon of the world, and by its lightning wars, and earthquake revolutions will shake Europe, and very probably also eastern Asia, from one extremity to the other.

“It is done,” so does the great voice proclaim the moment the angel has emptied his vial. In the original the announcement is conveyed in one single word, and that a word having the sharp, clear, ringing sound of a trumpet (Greek word). The voice proceeded “out of the temple of heaven, from the throne;” from which we infer that the event, when it comes, will proclaim as with trumpet-blast, its character and mission. It will be so decisive and all-embracing, that not a doubt will remain as to who He is who has sent it, or what the work it is destined to accomplish. It will be manifest at once that it is a last and consummating blow, for the great voice is heard even before “the thunders and lightnings” which are to follow have burst over the world, or the earth quake has shaken it—which is to throw down the great city. When that knell shall strike upon the ear of antichrist, as he sits, Belshazzar-like, in his palace, his countenance will be changed, the joints of his loins will be loosed, and his knees will smite one against another. He will know that his kingdom is departed from him.

But to the Church, oh, what a welcome and blessed sound! It is, shall she say, my Saviour who comes. It is the thunder of His chariot wheels that I hear. This is the marriage supper of the Lamb. This is the day I have longed to see. The hope of its coming has kept me from despair in days of darkness. It has gladdened my heart in prison and at the stake: and now it is come! Make haste, and bring me my bridal robe, that I may go forth and meet my Lord. Let me take down my harp from the willows, and greet His coming with a song of joy. Sorrow and tears! long have I been familiar with you: now I bid you farewell. This day I begin my anthems, to which earth shall listen entranced, and whose notes, as they swell upwards, will blend with the song of prophets and apostles, and be prolonged in the alleluias around the throne!

The Vial Poured Into The Air

“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air.” -Revelation 16:17a

The preceding vials had affected each a part of the antichristian system; but this falls with destructive force upon the whole of it. The first was poured upon its earth, the second upon its sea, and so on; but this is poured into its air. The atmosphere encompasses the globe, and any derangement occurring there is fatal to the whole earth; so this vial poured into the air of the Papacy, will involve the entire system in ruin. Its earth, sea, rivers, and firmament, will all be smitten at once; and after a series of dreadful convulsions, its fabric will be for ever dissolved.

As regards the symbol before us, we can be at no loss to interpret it, seeing it has been adopted into the forms of our ordinary discourse. We daily speak of the social and political *atmosphere*. Into this atmosphere will the seventh vial be poured.

The air is the region of electric storms: accordingly, the pouring of the vial into it will be instantly followed by “voices, thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great.” (Revelation 16:18) These are the usual Apocalyptic symbols of tumults, insurrections, wars, and revolutions. The great and universal

changes introduced by the earthquake are further described by a reference to the islands and mountains, the symbol of great and small monarchies:

“And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.” – Revelation 16:20

Contemporaneous with the shocks by which the earth will be moved to and fro, the mountains overturned, and the islands submerged, a great hail will be poured down from the firmament. **Hail is the emblem of northern war;** and this hail-storm will be of unprecedented severity, every stone being about the weight of a talent. This tremendous infliction, however, does not induce repentance; for “men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.” (Revelation 16:21)

Accordingly, the vial is consummated by a last and awful judgment on the Papacy. In the earthquake, the great city was divided into three parts, as not unusually happens to cities similarly visited; and the cities of the nations fell. This was the immediate precursor of the destruction of antichrist; for it is added,

“And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.” – Revelation 16:19

We are taught, then, to expect, at the period referred to, some sudden and great derangement of the political atmosphere of Europe—the consequence, most probably, of the action of the three spirits, who will succeed in charging it, as it were, with the most vicious, disorganizing, and antagonistic elements, which some event will suddenly bring into fierce collision; and in a single day, as it were, the whole of Europe, so far, at least, as it was included in the limits of Pagan and of Papal Rome, will burst out in violent tumults and insurrections; and these will issue in a revolution of unprecedented magnitude—unprecedented both in the largeness of its sphere and the complete and radical character of its changes. All former revolutions have implied only a change from one form of government to another; but this will involve the destruction of government altogether.

When the Chaldean empire fell, it was succeeded by the Medo-Persian; when that was removed, it was replaced by the Macedonian; and when the Macedonian came to an end, it was followed by the Roman. But by what will the fall of the ten Roman kingdoms be succeeded? By the reign of anarchy, for a short period. The fall both of the little kingdoms and the great monarchies of Europe is plainly predicted in the Apocalyptic representation; for John saw that in the earthquake every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

This revolution will be followed, or, more probably, accompanied, by a war of unexampled severity and horrors. The hail of the first trumpet was fulfilled in the descent of the northern nations; the hail of the seventh trumpet, in the terrible wars of the French Revolution; but here we have a hail-shower whose violence is more terrific, and its effects more destructive still; for every stone is about the weight of a talent. This symbolic hail will fall on Europe from some northern region—for hail is a northern product— from France, *or perhaps Russia.*

Another accompaniment, or rather consequence, of the earthquake, is the division of the great city into three parts—either the formation of the European commonwealth, after its present kingdoms are broken up, into three grand confederacies, or a threefold schism in the Roman Catholic Church, or very

probably both. This will be immediately followed by the destruction of great Babylon, whose doom is here intimated in terms the partial obscurity of which imparts a terrible emphasis to their meaning:

“And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.” -Revelation 16:19b

Let us compare that part of the monarch’s dream of the four kingdoms which synchronizes with the prediction before us. Nebuchadnezzar traced the image to its ten toes—the ten kingdoms. He saw the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and become like the chaff of the summer thrashing-floors; when all suddenly the winds of heaven arose, and swept away their very dust. The fourth kingdom was not succeeded by a fifth; nor was it overthrown by external violence, or removed by a foreign sword: it grew weak apace; its iron became mixed with clay: the democratic mingled with the despotic element, and undermined it. It fell at last by internal disorganization; and the winds of popular fury, bursting upon it in terrific force, swept its fragments away, and effaced every trace of its existence. Such is the catastrophe which prophecy reveals as awaiting the ten Roman kingdoms of modern Europe.

The prophecy of Daniel synchronizes with the seventh vial, and throws light upon it. The symbols of Daniel and John are different: not so their import, however; for both point most obviously to the same terrible conclusion. Both portend (indicate) an entire change in the social and political fabric of Europe—the fall of its kingdoms, the extinction of its dynasties, the alteration of its laws and forms of government, the abolition of its offices and dignities, the dissolution of its armies, the destruction of all the symbols of its authority, and the obliteration even of the territorial boundaries of its States. Nothing short of this can fulfill the figures of Daniel and the symbols of the Apocalypse.

In the one we not only behold the image ground to powder, but its last particles swept away by the tempest. In the other we see the earthquake burying cities, overthrowing mountains, and so agitating the ocean, that its islands are submerged by its tumultuous waves. If figures have any meaning, these must import the total overthrow of all the powers that now bear rule in Europe, and the utter extinction of the last vestige of their authority. It is a new creation which the world is to undergo, and dreadful upheavings and convulsions will usher it in.

Already almost we seem to hear the great voice saying, “It is done,” in the impression, strong and deep, in which men of all classes and all nations share, that a new era is opening on the world! The statesman, the Christian, the masses, all alike participate in this feeling. That awful and unknown Future discloses itself to few, but it makes its approach felt by all. It is a pillar of cloud to the world—a pillar of fire to the Church. The elements now dominant in society are altogether diverse from those which at any former period molded its institutions or governed its affairs. Thus, we lack the clue in our endeavors to explore the future. The conditions of the problem are unascertained. Induction, analogy, and even our past experience, avail us nothing. One thing only do all feel and acknowledge—that an unprecedented change is approaching, and that the Future must be altogether different from the Past.

This is no vague and ungrounded impression, like what has existed at some former stages of the world’s history, springing from the ferment of men’s minds, whose hopes were excited and their imaginations dazzled by the novelty of unwonted events. It is the legitimate conclusion of calm reason. It rests on a basis of well-ascertained facts. Its strength in different minds is in proportion, not to the

ignorance, but to the knowledge which the person possesses, of human society. Those who have the best opportunities of making themselves extensively acquainted with the state of the world, are those who entertain the impression most deeply. Society has come to possess new powers of thought, new principles of action, new elements of change. We speak more particularly of that part of the world which is held forth in the Apocalypse as the scene of its catastrophes. In the first place, the foundation of all obligation has been completely razed in the minds of the inhabitants, generally speaking, of this portion of the world, which, let us ever remember, is, and for the past two thousand years has been, the most influential portion of the world.

The Pantheism which in the end of the last century was confined to the closets of the studious—whose three foci (plural of focus, center of activity or attention) were Clarence, Lausanne, and Ferney—whose three apostles were Voltaire, Gibbon, Rousseau—is now the vulgar creed of the European masses. God to them is but a principle, not a person. They feel that they have no relations to Him, are not accountable to Him, and have neither good nor evil to hope for from Him. It is plain that in minds in which this creed is entertained, all sense of obligation must be at an end; and with the sense of obligation extinct, on what ground can authority longer maintain itself? It has lost its fulcrum, and finds itself paralyzed. It is plain that men with such a creed are prepared to abolish all authority, make their own will their law, and their own interest their end, the very first moment they may become sufficiently numerous and powerful to resist constituted order with impunity.

Popery has been the primary agent in bringing about so fearful a state of matters. The mummeries (pretentious ceremonies) of her priests prepared men to listen to the impieties of Voltaire. The dogmas of atheism are not more shocking to reason than those of the Papacy. And as on Popery mainly rests the guilt, so on her mainly shall fall the doom.

But along with the new mental philosophy came a new political philosophy—new theories of social life—new opinions regarding the uses and prerogatives of Government, the source of power, and the extent of popular privileges. The spread of these theories was powerfully aided by the means, of recent discovery and invention, for the instantaneous diffusion of knowledge—the daily journals, the clubs, delegates, university lectures, tracts, pamphlets, volumes, sermons, songs. Machinery the most varied and powerful was employed in the cause, and wrought with untiring energy; and converts were made by hundreds and thousands. While the two great apostles of infidelity were sleeping in the catacombs of the Pantheon, their disciples were traversing Europe, fighting with the weapons their masters had supplied, battering down the strongholds of superstition, and undermining the fabric of Government. While the guardians of the old order of things slept, the enemy was sowing his tares. Every day recruited their numbers: numbers gave them courage, and union gave them strength. They saw that without them governments were weak; they saw, too, that governments had lost them; and they stood prepared, on the first provocation, to shiver into atoms, at one mighty blow, the old powerless monarchical fabrics, whose appearance was still imposing, but whose real strength was gone. To recur to Daniel's symbol, the heavens are, at this hour, black with the gathering storm, and the merest accident may suffice to draw down the lightnings of popular fury, which are destined to shatter into a thousand pieces those political structures from which the golden splendour and the iron strength have alike departed.

Voices, Thunders, and Lightnings

In the Vision the fated monarch is seen to pause for a moment amid the deep silence of a vast hall. Its floor and walls are of black marble. It is centinelled (guarded) by two gigantic figures, who stand rigid and motionless. The one is giant Time, and bears a scythe and sand-glass; the other is the angel of Destiny, and is armed with an iron mace. The two dread figures stir not; nor word nor gesture of theirs breaks the silence of that wide funereal (solemn, mournful) looking chamber. In the glass in the hand of old Time the few remaining sands drop one after one: and the angel of Destiny watches their ebb with a stern inflexible look.

The last grain has fallen. And now is come the moment of fate. Raising aloft his ponderous club, the angel of Destiny strikes the wall against which he stands with a terrific blow, in an instant it is rent, it is shivered into a thousand pieces; and what a scene of savage warfare meets the eye. The stillness is at an end; and the roof of the vast chamber re-echoes fearfully with the tread of armies, the clang of trumpets, the clash of arms, the wild shout of the victor, and the dying groan of the vanquished.

Such, but on a scale immeasurably vaster, will the scene be when the seventh angel shall pour out his vial. Equally sudden will be the transition from deepest stillness to wildest uproar; and the calm will give character and effect to the tempest. Europe, like the Hall in the tale, will exhibit only motionless figures. It will present a floor of marble despotism, sealing down opinion, and governments standing, statue-like, leaning upon their vast armaments. No sound will break the silence save the stealthy motion and the low croak of the frogs, who will strive, in myriad swarms, to propagate their principles. One after one the years will pass. The breathless silence will remain unbroken. Moveless will stand the governments of the world, moveless, too, their vast armaments. History will appear to lack incident. Nevertheless, the years, and months, and days will keep running on. The last grain in Time's glass will drop, and now the appointed hour will have arrived. Destiny will strike asunder the marble curtain of old conventionalities which has walled in Europe, and kept its affairs moving in the old-accustomed groove, in which men will be prognosticating they will move on for ever.

And through the vast chasm effected by the rending of the curtain what a scene of fierce conflict and tumultuous revolution will meet the eye! It will be felt that the pillars of the world have been shaken, and the foundations removed out of their place. A time of great trouble will suddenly come upon the kingdoms of the earth—a time of “famines and pestilences, and fearful sights and great signs from heaven”—“signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars;” and on the earth “distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.”

The first intimation (announcement) which will be given to the world that the last and consummating vial has been poured out will be the “great voice,” saying, “It is done.” (Revelation 16:17) By this we are not to understand a literal voice sounding from the sky, but a dispensation of Providence proclaiming unambiguously to all who have hearts to understand it, that the old order of things is for ever at an end, and that a new era has come. It will give assurance to the Christian that the Divine and wondrous plan which God has been prosecuting throughout the ages has found its predestined conclusion in the universal and total overthrow of Satan's kingdom on the earth. “It is done.” On the empire of the great Tyrant has fallen the finishing blow, and it sinks in ruin utter and irretrievable.

This will be immediately followed by “Voices, Thunders, and Lightnings.” These are the symbols of popular tumults, insurrections, and wars. This certainly predicts an uprising of all the nationalities of Europe. The great governments will lose their controlling power, and race will be seen warring with race, and party conflicting with party. This great battle of revolted and wrestling nationalities will rage from side to side of Europe, and will, not unlikely, include Western Asia as well.

We witnessed a similar uprising in 1848, when in a single fortnight a conflagration broke out which blazed from the shores of the Atlantic to those of the Vistula (the longest river in Poland). Wider still and fiercer will the coming conflict be. The plains of Poland, the mountains of Carpathia, the vast valley of the Danube, the shores of the Bosphorus, the towns of southern Germany, and the mountains of the Tyrol, will all be stirred into tumult. The fire will run along the chain of the Alps and Apennines, kindling local conflagrations in France, in Spain, and in Italy. Everywhere will be strife; populations moved; governments menaced, or paralyzed. These will be but the beginnings of change, the first tremblings of the earth before the great shock which is to rock the world, overturn the mountains of political society, and bury them in the wide weltering ocean of revolution.

This convulsion will be the work of the three frogs; that is, the *Popish ultramontanes* (clerical political conception within the Catholic Church that places strong emphasis on the prerogatives and powers of the Pope), the *political reactionaries*, and the *atheistic revolutionists*. Each party has its own cherished project, which it will strive to the utmost to realize. The Ultramontanes will conspire to lift the Church of Rome once more to universal sway over the nations. The Reactionaries will energetically labor to bring back the palmy days of despotic governments; and the Revolutionists, inferior in numbers and energy to neither of the other two parties, will leave no stone unturned towards realizing their golden dream of a universal republic.

To realize these grand visions, a somewhat varied and extensive instrumentality is now being employed. The Ultramontanes are avowing their old theories, that the Church is vested in a supreme sovereignty over society, and they are sending forth countless swarms of Jesuits, and affiliated members, to indoctrinate the world into ultramontane principles.

The Reactionaries are prosecuting their special scheme by the open agency of armies, and the secret machinery of police.

The Revolutionists advance their projects by clubs, by public conventions, by lectures and journals. Thus do these three great parties strive together; there is no land, however remote, no city, or village, however insignificant, scarce a family is there to which their operations do not extend, and in which they do not seek to plant their principles. Day and night the work goes on: much of it is unseen; it makes little noise, and creates no great alarm; but it proceeds with an energy that never abates, and a diligence that never pauses. Europe is mined and countermined by the machinations of these parties. The ground on which men walk is hollowed. The air overhead is surcharged with explosive materials. It needs but a spark to awaken the tempest. When it does burst, the ground will fall in; the structures that repose upon its thin crust, will be engulfed; and the silence that went before will be succeeded by a roar, as if of many waters, by the wailings of sorrow and terror; by the wild shrieks of dismay and suffering; by the thunderings of artillery; by the wrathful shouts of armed millions; by the despairing cry of sinking dynasties, and the crash of falling thrones.

For the coming of these terrible events, the battle of Sadowa has been largely instrumental in opening the way. The fate of that battle called suddenly into existence a powerful Protestant empire in the center of Europe, and threw the political balance on the side of liberty. Rome was not slow to see that a grand crisis had arrived; a crisis which left her only the alternative of sitting still, and being borne down by the progress of events, which everywhere— with one most anomalous exception, England, to wit— were setting powerfully against her, or, at whatever hazard to herself, and injury to society, of striking a bold blow for supremacy. She must attack the political predominancy of Prussia. The power of the new German kingdom is a fatal menace to herself; she must labor to break it up; she must sow dissensions among the various states and kingdoms which the victory of Sadowa placed under the sway of the House of Hapsburg, and, if possible, persuade them to desert the central state, and bring back old divided Germany once more. She must if possible prevent the states on the south of the Maine (a river in Europe) uniting with Prussia. She must arrest the constitutional progress of Austria. She must keep central and eastern Europe disunited, and play off the Popish against the Protestant principalities. She must fan the flame of insurrection in Poland, and so check somewhat her dreaded Muscovite foe. She must intrigue for the restoration of the old Bourbons in France and Italy. She must distract Naples by brigands, and Tuscany and Piedmont by the Paolotti, if so be the new kingdom may be broken up.

Arms she can no longer wield since Austria is fallen. She must conquer by *principles*. **All states she must invade by her missionaries; and when her plans are ripe she will bring on a great war, and dash the European kingdoms one against the other, hoping to make fallen thrones and exhausted and prostrate nations the steps by which she may mount to her old dominion.** This is the policy on which Rome has staked her future. It is a policy that is fraught with infinite hazard, for if it fails she must perish with it; **if it succeeds she becomes the ruling power in Europe, and mistress, once more, of its nations.**

This policy can be carried out only at vast suffering, for it involves the overthrow of the present order of things; but it is the plan which Rome, at this hour, boldly plots, in the hope that **on the ruin of society she may be able to plant anew the foundations of a more glorious reign.**

The action and re-action of the three parties upon one another will bring on

THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE.

The earthquake of the “Seventh Vial” is emphatically styled a “mighty” and “great” earthquake, “ such as was not since men were upon the earth;” “Earthquake” is the apocalyptic symbol of Revolution. The revolution here foretold will bring with it greater changes than ever before passed upon society. It will revolutionize the world once for all.

Since the Church entered into her great captivity, now twenty-five centuries since, there have been at least four great revolutions in the world. First the Chaldean power was overthrown. Next the Medo-Persian, after its term of rule was fulfilled, bowed to the supremacy of the Greeks: and the Greeks in their turn yielded up the sovereignty of the world to the Romans; and thus a third time the condition of mankind was changed. There came yet a fourth mighty revolution. The great empire of Rome, which had civilized by her genius and ruled by her scepter so many of the nations of the earth, closed at last her years of sovereignty, and fell before the Goths.

But the apocalypse foretells the coming of a fifth revolution. This will surpass all the revolutions which have been before it: its plowshare will reach to the very bottom of society: it will lay prostrate in the dust the Gothic kingdoms which stood up when the great empire of Rome fell, together with all that remains upon the earth of those great empires which flourished before the era of the ten kingdoms, sweeping from off the earth in a mighty tempest all those laws, institutions, religions, and customs, which grew out of these kingdoms, and which were connected with, and helped to defend the old Pagan idolatry, which was incorporated with, and received its fullest development in the politico-ecclesiastical constitution of medieval Europe. All must fall. This great tempest will bring with it a universal purification, for, in the first place, it will clear the ground of all those evil systems which have grown and flourished these three thousand years bygone; and, in the second place, it will open a way for the diffusion throughout all lands on earth of that light and truth which alone can purify the soul and regenerate society.

This blessed influence began to operate when the first shocks of this great earthquake were felt in 1789; and heathendom began, here and there, to be spotted with light, and the ancient promise to be fulfilled,

“And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.” -Isaiah 30:25

But the instant the last and consummating shock of that great earthquake shall have shaken the world, there will burst from the sky, like the coming of a sudden spring-time, or the opening of the portals of the morning, a sweet and gracious influence, which, in a marvelously short time, there is reason to think, will convert the earth. And so will be realized the sequel of the prophecy we have just quoted.

“Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.” -Isaiah 30:26

This, then, is the one grand revolution of the world. It will mark off its evil from its good days, “numbering and finishing” the one, and bringing in the other. It is that blessed change to which the prophets looked forward, with longing hearts, and kindling eyes, and whose dawn, though yet afar off, they could descry across the intervening tops of tyrannic empires and idolatrous ages. Not in a day, or in a year, will it come: it is already begun: the solemn events of our own strangely blended epoch, in which sweetest mercy walks side by side with judgments of unexampled terror, are in truth its footsteps; and mercies yet greater, and judgments still more terrible, which manifestly impend, will give to this change a consummation at once sudden, glorious, and complete.

All former revolutions looked toward this one, and prepared the way for it. The changes which they effected in the existing state of things were superficial and transient. They resembled the phenomena of a mid-winter storm, in which the rattling hail and the whirling snow descend upon the moveless surface of a frozen ocean. The waters, enchained by the frost, sealed down opinion, and presented a floor, hard and firm as a rock, on which still stood the old despotic governments, and the persecuting, idolatrous churches.

But the “earthquake” of the seventh vial will resemble the coming of a springtime. The waters will be upheaved from their bottom, the ice will be broken up, and while the mined fragments of the old

tyrannies, political and ecclesiastical, are seen to sink in a stormy ocean, there will come a gush of verdure from shore to mountain-top, which will cover the earth with beauty, and evoke a universal shout of joy.

As regards the governments of Europe, those of them especially which have refused to admit into their constitution the preserving salt of Protestantism, the question is not, will they fall? but when? today or tomorrow? this year, or the year after? There is a widespread revolt against them.

Nor has this revolt arisen from any temporary cause. It is not a frenzy, whose violence will work its own cure, and when it has subsided, the repentant nations will hail the rule they now spurn, and bow their necks to the old yoke. No: it has sprung from ideas which have been the slow growth of centuries, but which have now leavened the entire mass, and brought on a movement of mind so mighty, irresistible, and so far beyond control, that no Government now existing, or that ever existed on the earth, can withstand it. These Governments have been weighed in the balance, and the nations have found them wanting, both as respects the liberty which the individual ought to possess, and the advance which society ought to make. This result is not the achievement of one or of a few ages; it is the triumph of the race. A world has shared the toils of the arduous struggle, as a world shall reap its fruits. It forms one of the great epochs of the human mind—an epoch which can never be re-crossed, and the passage of which has for ever sealed the fate of the Gothic Governments.

They may contrive for a little to delay their dissolution. A timely concession today, and a successful battle tomorrow, may prolong their existence for a few years; but their doom is inevitable. They are in the arms of a foe whose fresh, unspent vigor is a match a thousand times over for the exhaustion and feebleness of their senility.

That which imparts to this movement its omnipotent strength, and will secure its steady onward course, is, that, in the main it is founded on reason. Illusion, like that from which the Crusades sprang, is transient;—truth is immortal. The influences now at work in the political and moral world can no more be arrested than can those secret yet all pervading powers which begin to operate in the bosom of the soil, when the months of winter have expired, and the time has come for summer to revisit the skies, and renew the face of the earth. It is now upwards of half a century since Sir James Macintosh, in his “*Vindiciae Gallicae*,” reasoning from the analogy between the then state of Europe and that period of Grecian history when the heroic passed into the legislative ages, gave it as his opinion, that “*the Gothic Governments of Europe had lived their time.*”

To the same import is the testimony of another high authority—one who has studied society, not in books merely, but in the living world, and who has enjoyed the farther advantage of having acted his part in the great area. “*We are arrived*,” says Lamartine, in his “*Polity of Reason*,” “*at one of the strangest epochs the human race has to cross in its progress towards their Divine destiny—an era of renovation and transformation similar, perhaps, to the gospel era. Shall we get over it and yet not perish?*”

No Apocalyptic theory biased the judgments of these men. Surveying European society, from their commanding position, with a keen glance, which observation had invigorated and philosophy enlarged, they announce the approach of that great moral revolution which the interpreter of the Apocalypse, guided only by its symbols, had taught the world to look for about this period of its history. What an

illustrious triumph did science obtain, when, after their long voyage across the hitherto unfurrowed Atlantic, there rose before the crew of Columbus, in far-extending line, dimly seen through a veil of haze, the shores of the New World!

A yet more blessed triumph is about to crown Revelation, and a yet more welcome sight, after her long dreary voyage across the dark ages, is about to unfold itself to the Church, now that the more sagacious and farsighted of our philosophers and statesmen are heard to cry out, like the sailor from the mast-head, that they descry, through the mists and darkness of fearful revolutions, that renovated state of society that stands predicted in the Apocalypse.

Despotism had long withheld from society its rights: Communism has now come, affirming that society has no rights—that all centers in the individual, who is everything, and society nothing. By the atheism of its creed, Communism looses man from every sacred obligation; by its doctrines on property and other matters, it relieves him from every social bond; and thus it aims at sinking him into all the isolation, and more than the barbarism, of savage life.

If ever Heaven in His wrath sent an incarnation of malignity from the place of all evil, to chastise the guilty race of man, it is Communism. But the hell from which it has come is Rome: Communism has drawn its birth from the fetid womb of Popery, whose superstition has passed into atheism, and whose tyranny has engendered lawlessness; and now the progeny, with parricidal (related to, inclined to, or guilty of, the murder of one's immediate family) fury, seeks to devour the parent.

From a feeble infancy it gathered strength by moments, till, finding itself strong enough to make war with the divinities of the political firmament, it threw down the gage (challenge) of battle. That battle has now gone on with varying success for eighty years. It has converted the Continent into a camp, and its territory into a battle-field. Its issue must be, that one or other of the two parties shall perish.

Should the Absolutists triumph, Europe must return, at the sword's point, to her dungeon, and yield her limbs to the old manacles. Should the Communists prevail, there remains on earth no farther power of staying the Revolution, and it must roll on, avalanche-like, to the awful bourne (destination) Providence may have assigned it, crushing and burying in its progress thrones, altars, laws, rights, the fences of order and the bulwarks of despotism, the happiness of families and the prosperity of kingdoms.

But above the crash of thrones and the agonies of expiring nations we may hear the voice of the angel of the waters saying,

“Thou art righteous, O Lord, because thou hast judged thus: for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.” -Revelation 16:5-6

Had the Reformation succeeded the world would have been spared all these dreadful calamities. The Reformation was the Elijah before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. It was the Voice crying in the Papal wilderness, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord.” It addressed the apostate Churches of Europe as John (the Baptist) did the Jewish Church,

“And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.” -Matthew 3:10

For three centuries, as John for three years, the Reformation has been a preacher of repentance to the Popish nations. Great as it was, and dignified and important as was its office, it announced itself, like John, to be only the harbinger of a mightier dispensation, saying,

“He that cometh after me is mightier than I. Whose fan is in his hand, and He will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” -Matthew 3:11b

But this great preacher’s warning, like John’s, was slighted.

Nevertheless, the Reformation has executed its mission, though in a different way from what had been anticipated. It has brought down the corrupt Churches and tyrannical Governments of Europe, not by the preaching of the gospel, but by the intellectual knowledge it has diffused. Had it been allowed to take its own way, it would have accomplished its mission without spilling a drop of blood, or overturning a single throne; but, fettered as it was by Governments, it has done its work amid direful wars and revolutions, for which those only are responsible who employed force to oppose it.

The Reformation gave to the European nations the printing-press and the Bible—the tree of knowledge and the tree of life. Providence designed that men should partake of both; but Governments put asunder what God had joined. The nations had access to the tree of knowledge, but were forbidden to touch the tree of life. The consequence has been, that they have acquired intellectual power, without moral principle to control it. Society has grown strong, but not wise. The Bible, with its ally the printing-press, would have reformed society without destroying it: the printing-press alone has destroyed it; though we trust that destruction will pave the way for its reformation. The wind, the earthquake, and the fire, will, as of old, be the harbinger of the “still small voice.”

Viewed in this light, what an aspect of fearful retribution does the present condition of Europe bear, and how strikingly does it correspond with the symbols under which the final plagues of the Papacy are exhibited—a harvest and vintage! The Papacy is not to be destroyed by supernatural agents. It is not fire from heaven in which Rome is to be burned. Her destruction is to be an *effect* from a *cause* long past, as the harvest is an effect from the seedtime. An era is to open on Europe, in which the tyranny and priestcraft of ages will yield all their evil fruits; and what, in truth, are the atheism and lawlessness that have so often celebrated their saturnalia (pagan sacrifice) of blood on the Continent, and may do so again, but the harvest of past oppression, secular and spiritual? May not the terrible wreck which has already partially befallen, and may yet in a fuller measure befall the thrones, princes, and hierarchies, the laws, commerce, and prosperity, of Papal Europe, be the burning of the great city Babylon, and the lamentations which have been poured forth over a catastrophe so unexpected and so vast, be the first echoes of the cry, “Alas! alas! that great city Babylon?” And, be it remarked, that the symbol, “the great city Babylon,” does not denote the priesthood, but that union of the hierarchical and dynastical powers which constitutes the Government of Papal Europe.

We take much too limited a view of the overthrow of the Papacy, when we conceive of it as extending only to the country of Italy and the persons of the Pope and his clergy. The system was a European one,

and so must be its destruction. The political constitutions of the various kingdoms formed the framework of the Papacy—the *body* of the beast—while Popery was its *spirit*; and therefore the destruction of these Governments must form a large part of the destruction of the Papacy.

Accordingly, at this hour we behold the ten horns, and the little horn, their head and ruler—the kings and the Pope—sinking by equal stages. On these grounds we are strongly disposed to view the present wreck of the political power, spiritual wares, and temporal merchandise, of Papal Europe, as being the begun realization of the awful tragedy of Revelation xviii.; and when that tragedy shall be complete, and when the world comes to look back upon it from a distance of two hundred years, it will be seen to contain all the magnificence, terror, and retribution, of the Apocalyptic symbols.

And is not the fact that Rome's destruction will flow directly from her crimes, analogous to God's usual procedure? and will it not form a solemn illustration of that law of moral retribution under which the world has been placed, and which, by linking the punishment to the sin, as the effect is linked to its cause, puts the idea of escape altogether out of the question? The dispensation in this way will wear a more judicial aspect. Although the Italian peninsula, as some expect, should sink in a sea of fire, that would prove nothing as regards the character of the Papacy. But when we behold the ruin of Rome growing out of her sin, her destruction is seen to be, not the result of accident, but the operation of law: her fall becomes a public execution, following, on a solemn investigation into her character, and solemn sentence on her crimes. God will not only destroy her, but He will destroy her in such a way as to make it apparent that she deserved to be destroyed. He will spare her till she has become corrupt and loathsome in the sight of all; and thus she shall perish, accursed of men, as well as abhorred of God.

We think we can see certain great ends to be gained by her destruction at this time. A scheme had been concocted in the depths of the Vatican for placing Rome once more at the head of the European kingdoms. She put herself forward as leader in the great European movement for reform; and for a short while the scheme succeeded beyond even the expectations of its authors. Italy was again prostrate at the feet of the Popedom: the journals of all Europe, England included, were hailing Pius the Ninth as the great reformer of the age. Dazzled by the visions of dominion which, after the widowhood of half a century, were again opening upon her, Rome was boasting, "I am no widow: I shall be a lady for ever." But while the words were in her mouth, the blow fell which brought to an end all these hopes. Her artfully-contriven scheme but conducted her to a height whence her fall was the greater—

"Unde altior esset
Casus, et impulsae praeceps immane ruinae."

(Latin for the bigger they are, the harder they fall.)

We think, too, that should Rome's destruction happen under the pontificate of a man personally amiable, it will teach a great truth to the world: it will show that God's anger is against the system; and that He is punishing, not so much the present race of Papists, as the system of the Papacy from its beginning. It is instructive here to observe that it is said,

"Great Babylon came in remembrance before God." -Revelation 16:19

It was not so much her present wickedness that God saw, as her past crimes that He *remembered*. As generations passed away, these crimes appeared to be sinking into a profounder oblivion: they were

forgotten on earth, and, as it seemed, in heaven, too, till recalled to Rome's remembrance, and to the world's, by the peculiar character and awful severity of her plagues. It is instructive to observe, likewise, that "the seven golden vials" were said to be "full of the wrath of that God who liveth for ever and ever." While this intimation (announcement) is fitted to convey an awful idea of the greatness of Rome's punishment, it also indicates the reason why its execution has been deferred. God's government is not limited to one age. Among men, when a crime is committed, it must be punished speedily, if punished at all, for both the offender and his judge will soon cease to be. But God lives for ever; and, under a government extending from the beginning to the end of time, the sins of one age may stand over and be punished in another; but the longer vengeance is deferred, as in Rome's case, it will be the more awful. It is indeed "a fearful looking for of wrath" that remains to her—the wrath of that God that liveth for ever and ever.

It was the opinion of Sir Isaac Newton, that *the main revolution foretold in the Prophets had not yet taken place*. In this opinion we thoroughly concur. The grand era of which the prophets speak with one consent, and in the description of which they have employed such a splendor of diction, and lavished such a fullness and variety of metaphor, is not yet consummated. We meet with nothing that answers to it amid all the revolutions of the past. But if the unprecedented events in progress be, as in truth they appear to be, that great coming of Christ, in the erection of His Kingdom, that is so frequently the burden of prophetic song, and that great destruction of His foes to which so many significant allusions are scattered throughout the Bible, what inexpressible grandeur does that impart to the drama now proceeding in Europe!

Viewed thus, it presents the noblest field of study which the providence of God ever opened to the mind of man. It is seen to be no mere ebullition (sudden, violent outpouring) of evil passions, chance directed, and ending in nothing; it is the winding up of a divinely-arranged drama. It is fraught with eternal principles, applicable to all ages and all nations. It reads to the world lessons the most important, and proclaims truths the most sublime; it brings truth from her grave, and consigns error to the abyss her own self had dug; it illustrates the character of God, and sheds ineffable splendor upon His government; it explains the past, and it unveils the future; it shows that the long struggles of the past—long to the Church, though not to Him with whom a thousand years are but as one day—struggles in which, in truth, iniquity hitherto has had the best of it—bear to the glory and prosperity of Christ's Kingdom yet to come, the same relation which the early wars of a nation bear to its state of settled and prosperous empire, and serve an analogous end to the future state of society, as did those geological convulsions to the world by which it was prepared for being the abode of man.

It is to be desired that the Church should take this view of the matter, otherwise it may turn out that she has neglected to take to herself the comfort, and to give to God the glory, of events which are an answer to the cry of the martyrs and to her own prayers. She may be in danger, too, of becoming appalled at the horrors that are darkening over the world, and which may shed no little gloom upon her, forgetful that the stage on which was shed the blood of the martyrs must be purged in like manner by fire and blood—that society, like the individual, must die before it can enter on a new and higher existence—and that a gulf, "deep beyond plummet's fathom," divides her from her kingdom, in the awful passage across which empires and societies shall perish, while she alone shall survive.

The Removal Of The Islands And Mountains

The “great earthquake” by which the world was rocked was so violent, and its shocks were so long continued, that the entire surface of the earth was changed, and presented an altogether new appearance. The mountains fell and the islands sank. The yawning earth swallowed up the former, leaving all a plain; and a raging sea covered the other with its tumultuous billows. There is no difficulty in reading this symbolic writing, but the meaning is so terrible that we fear to interpret it—

“And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.” – Revelation 16:20

It is a new earth on which we find ourselves. The old has disappeared. All the familiar landmarks which have stood for ages are vanishing around us. The mountains on whose verdant slopes men had planted the olive and the vine, and out of whose bowels they had dug the precious ore; the islands of the sea, where they had reared their habitations, and where they and their fathers had long dwelt, all that appeared most durable and stable, is passing away, and the place that knew them once is knowing them no more. Unseen but mighty forces are acting at the foundation of things, and the very framework of society is in a state of dissolution. Such is the change here foreshadowed. It is hard to believe that governments, great and small: governments which have lasted for a thousand years, which have left their imperishable footprints in history: which have molded the genius and directed the destiny of mighty nations by their institutions and laws, and which even to this very hour are upheld by the power of mighty armies, are fated to pass away—to disappear like the unsubstantial vapor which the sun lights up for a moment with a golden splendor—to shift like the painted scenes of a pantomime—and that the swelling waves of revolution are to break in and flow over, and cover the space where they stood.

Yet what other interpretation can we give to the prophecy? “Every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.” The world is to awaken out of its sleep; and the exploits of great empires —of France, of Spain, of Rome—the wars they have waged, the victories they have won, the glory, dominion, and power they have acquired, all in short that makes up their brilliant history, will be remembered, in the new and better age of the world, but as the dreams of a night that is passed, and as a tale that has been told. We cannot but heave a sigh when we think that this is the end that awaits the kingdoms of Papal Europe; and, without doubt, the monarchies also that have upheld Mohammedanism.

And it is not difficult at this hour to see the sure coming of what prophecy foretold so long before. Since they were first smitten in 1789, these governments have made no perceptible advance in inherent stability. Again and again have they been brought to the brink of ruin, but they have failed to learn the lesson these events were fitted to teach, that the principles on which they were proceeding would in the end work their ruin. Nothing effectual have they done to conciliate their subjects, or to advance the cause of rational liberty and true religion. Any ameliorations (the process of making a bad or unpleasant situation better) which have taken place have been the result of the action of other parties; and not of the governments which still retain their old attitude of antagonism to the great body of the people. Meanwhile, the principles of revolution are being more widely propagated. Pantheism is year by year enrolling more numerous disciples. Governments are every hour running deeper in debt, while their only precaution against the evil day is overgrown armies, a precaution which, by the taxation it

necessitates, and the drain it inflicts upon husbandry and commerce, only renders more terrible and sure the calamities it is meant to ward off.

In fine (ultimately), while on the one hand no principle of power has been found, on the other the forces of decay and destruction are ceaselessly working; and with every sand that falls in the glass of Time, the hour of OVERTURN comes nearer, in which the islands will flee away, and the mountains shall not be found.

It is generally agreed, among interpreters of the inspired Volume, that a single year comprises the history of the Deluge. From the day that the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, till the waters had again retired within their ancient bed, and the face of earth had become dry, an interval of only twelve months and ten days had elapsed. At the expiry of this short period, the rocky peak and the verdant slopes of Ararat rose, beauteous as ever, above the retiring waters, and the fathers of the post—diluvian world came forth from the ark to till and plant anew the bosom of the earth, cleansed in this awful manner from the pollutions of its first inhabitants. But though a brief twelve months sufficed to regenerate the Old World, the purification of the New must needs be a work of longer time. The fiat of Omnipotence could bury the earth and all its guilty inhabitants in one common grave, and, when the period of entombment had expired, the same power could again bring forth the ancient hills and shores, and an election from the ancient race.

But the vast moral change which society must undergo before it can realize its own anticipations, or fulfill its divinely revealed destinies, must necessarily form a much more lengthened process. Accordingly, the flood which 1789 poured upon Europe has not yet subsided. The waters are still upon the face of the earth: the doors of the great deep whence these waters issued have not yet been closed. Those mighty mountain billows with which they came thundering onwards at their first outbreak, have been allayed, no doubt; but the waters keep silently but steadily increasing. Inch by inch, they are swallowing up the mountains of political despotism. The springs, the pastures, and the woods, which girt their base—the tranquility and order which were enjoyed even under these despotisms—have long since been submerged; and now nothing is seen above the flood but the bare and rocky peak of military power. But a little, and even that will lie many fathoms below the dark surface of the flood, and a wide weltering ocean will cover all, from which the mountains of the political earth, unlike those of the antediluvian world, are destined never more to re-emerge, and, in their present form, appear on this scene of things.

The Vintage

In the land of Judea, the vintage followed the harvest, at an interval of about three months. So the symbolic harvest of the Apocalypse comes first, and the vintage succeeds. The harvest symbolizes, we have already said, the destruction to overtake the secular institutions of the Roman earth, and was fulfilled, we are of opinion, in the wars of the first six vials, which affected mainly, though not exclusively, the Popish thrones and nations. These have had a short term added to their existence, but not in their former power; and are reserved, evidently, that they may figure, as foretold, on the last scene with their companion the false prophet. The vine being the symbol of a Church, the vintage must necessarily symbolize, mainly, the judgments that await the ecclesiastical institutions of Papal Christendom—the corrupt Churches of the Latin earth.

It is very noticeable that the symbols now become full of a blessed meaning to the Church, even when most largely charged with wrath to her enemies.

“And I looked, and, behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle,” Revelation. 14::14

The term “Son of Man,” applied to Him who appeared enthroned upon the white cloud, leaves it undoubted that this is the Saviour. It refers back to the prophecy of Daniel, where “one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven.” How different the guise in which He now appeared, from that in which He showed Himself to His Church, immediately before the twelve hundred and sixty days! Then He was encompassed by dark clouds, His feet were as pillars of fire, and a rainbow was on His head; all denoting days of darkness, a mysterious and trying path to be trodden, in which the Church should have need to keep hope alive by recalling God’s covenant of perpetuity with her. But now He is surrounded by symbols of gladness, of prosperity, and of victory; He sits upon a white cloud; on His head is a golden crown; and in His hand a sharp sickle, the instrument of judgment. But why did Christ appear at this moment? He is seen sitting in judgment upon His great enemy, presiding over his final destruction; and thus the last act, as well as every preceding one, is seen to be His doing, and the end of this great drama is connected in a striking manner with its beginning.

The moment to thrust in the sickle and reap the vine of the earth is announced by an angel from the altar. This angel had power over fire—that is, it was his duty to keep alive the altar-fire, and take care of the ashes of the sacrifice consumed in that fire. This is a symbol full of meaning. It plainly indicates that the reaping of the vine, and the treading it in the wine-press, is a sacrifice to justice. But what was the sin that required this great expiatory judgment? This, too, is plainly shown in the symbol. The angel from the “altar” indicates, as the procuring cause of this vengeance, the slaughter of the witnesses. so early as the third century, on the opening of the fifth seal, the cry of martyrs had arisen from under the altar:

“How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? ... and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”
– Revelation 6:10-11

This points to a second company of martyrs to be slain before the blood of those that fell under Pagan Rome could be avenged, namely, the martyrs under the Papacy. But now the roll of martyrdom has been completed, and there is nothing to obstruct the infliction of a full measure of vengeance. Accordingly, the terms in which the pouring out of the third vial is described announce that the deferred vengeance had commenced. “They have shed the blood of saints [the primitive martyrs], and of prophets [those who prophesied during the twelve hundred and sixty days], and thou hast given them blood to drink.” The song of the angel, too, on occasion of this commencing act of retribution, refers us back to the invocation of the souls beneath the altar, seeing his song turns on the same attributes to which the souls beneath the altar had appealed:

“Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.”-Revelation 16:7

An awfully judicial character, then, shall belong to the epoch of the vintage. It is the answer to the loud cry which was heard to issue from beneath the altar while Pagan Rome was yet standing, and which has been growing louder with each succeeding age. The vengeance of that period will be on a scale commensurate with the blood Rome has shed, reaching back to the earliest days.

“And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.” – Revelation 18:24

“Thrust in thy sharp sickle,” said the angel, “and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.” – Revelation 14:18

We call attention to the reason assigned for reaping now: “her grapes are fully ripe.” This has been commonly referred to the sin of the Roman Church as being filled up. We apprehend it refers to a change that is to take place within that Church, analogous to that which the vine undergoes when it becomes ripe. When may a corrupt Church be said to be ripe? Just when the natural issue or fruit of her false faith has been fully developed, which it is when her worship passes into open idolatry, and the belief of her members into downright infidelity or atheism. This appears to fix the prophecy in its reference to our own times; for the Church of Rome has undergone precisely such a change as is here indicated. She has proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. She makes a creature the supreme object of her worship, and so she has completed and crowned her idolatry. And, as regards her people, their faith has turned into blind unreasoning submission to authority; and, in instances not a few, into grossest atheism, with works correspondingly bad. Thus the grapes of the mystic vine are fully ripe—the fields are white unto the harvest.

If the vine is allowed to overpass the period of its maturity, it becomes unfit for the wine-press. An analogous necessity exists for gathering the clusters of the mystic vine, now if ever. A century hence, if the influences at present in existence continue to operate, Popery will have rotted away, and perished in its excessive maturity, and scarce anything will remain to be gathered and cast into the wine-press. But it is not agreeable to the analogy of the Divine government, or consistent with the predictions of the Divine Word, that that Church should be permitted to pass quietly from the scene of her crimes, unvisited by punishment. No, the vine must not be allowed to molder and perish: it must be reaped and burned; its clusters must be gathered and trodden. But, unless we can suppose an infusion of fresh sap to make it flourish anew, it must be reaped speedily, if reaped at all. Hence the urgency of the command, “Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.”

It is especially worthy of remark, that each of the three leading idolatries—Hinduism, Mohammedanism, and Popery—is in precisely the same condition. All are ripe for the sickle of the Great Reaper. Their false faith has passed, to a greater or less degree, into no faith, and the nations which adhere to them are sunk in political and moral rottenness. When the sap of superstition flowed vigorously in the veins of these mighty trunks, their roots took so firm a hold of the soil, and the strength of their gnarled boughs was such, that they could bid defiance to any storm; but now, drained of their sap, the first breeze that sets in threatens to rend their moldering stems in pieces. Hinduism is passing into skepticism: it is now a weak, timorous, and shrinking thing, which cannot long subsist. Mohammedanism has become an affair of decent Observances, and has lost the fiery zeal and

proselytizing spirit that made it once formidable. Even Judaism has relinquished its peculiar glory and hope; and the only Messiah whose advent it now waits for is that of a political enfranchisement. Popery itself has become infected with infidelity, and is rotten to the very core.

It is sufficiently striking, surely, that all the leading superstitions in the world should have grown old simultaneously—that all should have reached their hoar age together. The fact is incontrovertible. Wherever we look it is the same. Everywhere idolatry is on the point of vanishing away, and a dark portentous ATHEISM is about to take its room. So far as man can see, the reign of UNIVERSAL SKEPTICISM is about to begin. But is not this the very character of the age that is to witness the predicted coming of the Son of Man?

“When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” – Luke 18:8

The vine of the earth being ripe, the sharp sickle is thrust in, and her clusters are gathered. The gathering of the vine may possibly symbolize the drawing together into one place of the adherents of Papacy, so that judgment may be executed upon them without compromising the safety of others. The vine being gathered, it is cast

“into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.”- Revelation 14:20

In scriptural times and countries the wine-press was placed without the city. So this symbolic wine-press is spoken of as being trodden outside the mystic city. The “blood ” indicates slaughter; and the dimensions of the wine-press are such as to show that the slaughter will be tremendous. The blood that filled it was found, when measured, to extend sixteen hundred furlongs, or about an hundred and fifty miles, and in depth to reach to the horses’ bridles. If one side of the wine-press only is denoted, the area would be enormous, and the slaughter fearfully great; and even though we should understand all the four sides as included in this measurement, the catastrophe would be unspeakably awful. This is about the breadth of Italy; and not a few have fixed on the Campagna as the fated spot.

Some stress may be laid on the circumstance that the term “great” is here dropped, which in other parts of the Apocalypse is usually prefixed to “city,” when the Papal system, in all its extent of territory, is meant, as “great Babylon,” “the great city.” This makes it not wholly improbable that, when it is said, “the wine-press was trodden without the city,” the allusion may be, not to the entire extent of the Papal territory, but simply to the limits of the literal city of the seven hills. If the territory around Rome should become the scene of the vintage, then that judgment is analogous to that of the second and third vials, whose inflictions fell mainly on those very spots where the blood of the martyrs had been shed.

Others look to Judea as the locality indicated; and it is worthy of notice, that the length of that country, from Lebanon to the southern boundary of the tribe of Judah, is about an hundred and sixty miles. “Wheresoever the carcase is,” said our Lord, “there will the eagles be gathered together.” And where the vine grew, there, it is probable, will her grapes be gathered, and trodden in the wine-press. Than the symbol of this judgment nothing could be more awful. A sea of blood, on the lowest computation, very nearly forty square miles in area, and four feet in depth. Apart from the prophecy, to what issue do things at present tend, save to some catastrophe great beyond precedent?

We have only to think of the overgrown armies of our times, of the cruel instruments wherewith a too successful invention has furnished us, and of the millions that will meet in conflict whenever the trumpet of war shall sound, to be able to realize, although still, very inadequately, how full of horror and blood must be the battle-fields of the future.

“As Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth.” -Jeremiah 51:49

Chapter XXVII. The Tripartition And Burning Of The Great City

BEFORE deciphering the ominous characters traced by the mysterious hand upon the walls of his palace, Daniel saw it fit to tender a reproof to the monarch, whose ear fear had now opened. First, he rebuked him for not profiting by the notable warning given him in the awful chastisement which befell Nebuchadnezzar, his father. As he well knew Nebuchadnezzar was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. And he was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses; they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that He appointeth over it whomsoever He will.

And second, he rebuked the monarch for having taken the vessels of the house of the God of heaven, and having with his lords, and his wives, and his concubines drank wine in them, and praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know. This was his double sin, impenitency (not penitent, not being regretful of wrongs done), and impiety. And lo! here was its punishment, written full in his sight, in a few brief characters, unread as yet, save by the conscience of the king, which most surely divined the doom with which they menaced him.

This two-fold sin has been committed over again by the monarch of "Babylon the Great." The modern Belshazzar has slighted with contempt the warning given him in the terrible overthrow of the man who was before him. He has, too, like his prototype of twenty-five centuries ago, prostituted the vessels of the sanctuary by taking them to grace his revels on the seven hills. When the "heart" of Caesar "was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride," the warriors of the North were sent against him, who "deposed him from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him," and drove him forth to herd with the barbarous Goths. Here was a fall as humiliating as that which befell Nebuchadnezzar, when, driven from the society of his lords, he roamed with the beasts of the field.

But the Pope refused to be warned by the fate of his predecessor. With spirit haughtier than that of Caesar, and with impiety more daring than Pagan emperor ever was guilty of, he appropriated the vessels of the house of the Lord, the blessed doctrines of Holy Writ, and prostituted them to the purpose of decking his Pagan temple. He made them simply the means of procuring riches, and honours, and glory to his cardinals, and bishops, and priests, and of upholding the pomp and pride of the pontifical chair.

The sin of the old Chaldean king was venial (minor) compared with that of his modern representative. The Vatican Mount has for ages been the scene of orgies more impious, more blasphemous, and more obscene, than any which the imperial Palatine ever knew, or any that shook the walls and roof of the royal palace of Babylon on that night, when the tumult was stilled at once and for ever, by the writing of the hand of doom. The Pontiff rifled the temple over again. He abstracted the golden vessels of the Christian Church, and he drank wine out of them with his lords, and wives, and concubines, and praised, in his drunken devotion, the gods of silver and gold, of brass, and iron, and wood.

It mattered not that liberty and virtue were outraged, that nations were destroyed, and that countless myriads of immortal souls were lost, if glory and wealth continued to flow in upon the “Church.” Divine ordinances were profaned, religion was turned into mockery, dead men were worshiped, the woman was drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and thus the obscene revel went on, its delirious mirth rising louder and louder every age, till at last, in 1789, a “hand” came forth—an awful dispensation of Providence—which wrote upon the walls of Europe the words of doom—God had numbered His kingdom and finished it.

Then the smoke of Babylon began to ascend into the sky, and the conflagration kindled then has gone on, with short pauses, ever since, in the revolutions, the bloody wars, the spoliation of ecclesiastical property and revenues, and the gradual consumption of all the dignity, wealth, and political dominion and power which upheld the Papacy. This is the predicted burning of the great city which has so often provoked the lament, Alas! alas! Again and again have we seen Papal Europe from side to side a scene of social burning. We have seen everything consuming, and turning into dross, just as if fire were preying upon it. Law, order, the power of princes, the dignity of thrones, the sanctity of altars, the estates of nobles, the wealth of merchants, industry, trade, confidence, all tending as rapidly to naught, as if thrown into the midst of a devouring conflagration. And we have seen both the kings of the Papal earth, and the false prophet of Rome, enduring torment in this lake of fire, and we have heard them venting their poignant grief in lamentations and bitter maledictions (cursing), gnawing their tongues, and gnashing their teeth, and, by reason of their ceaseless alarms, resting not day nor night.

But the most terrific blaze of that great conflagration is yet to come. Often has its fitful and lurid splendor broken over Europe since 1789; but higher yet in midheaven shall rise its flame, and wider yet over earth shall shine the light of its ruin, and then Rome shall sink in ashes, and lie covered for ever with the blackness of darkness. The instant sign of the final catastrophe will be the tripartition of the great city.

“The great city was divided into three parts: and the cities of the nations fell.” -Revelation 16:19

By the “great city” is meant that mixed system of polity, civil and ecclesiastical, of which the Pope was the directing head. This city was co-extensive with Papal Europe. The various countries were the several quarters of that city, the capitals of the nations were its streets. Rome was its form or broad place. In the earthquake of the Seventh Vial, this great city will be rent into three parts; that is, its States will break loose from their present arrangement, and form themselves into three confederacies. This tripartite division will be facilitated, doubtless, by the fall of “the cities of the nations;” that is, the several national polities throughout Europe. Like the parent polity of Rome, they are of a mixed character, partly civil, partly ecclesiastical. She is the metropolitan; they are the provincial cities of the Papal empire. They will fall in the shock of the great earthquake, leaving only three grand parties or political federations with, or, more probably, without their kings.

It will not escape notice that as we saw three frogs go forth, to enlist recruits each to his own banner; so now we behold a corresponding result, Europe ranged into three bodies or camps. On the flag of the one will be inscribed “Despotism,” on that of the other “Popery,” and on that of the third “Revolution.” Such are the three principles which will meet and wrestle together on this last fatal field. To this spot, unaware that it is the appointed place of doom, the “Tophet ordained of old,” (Isaiah 30:33, Tophet: a

place of ritual fire or burning for pagan sacrifices) will each lead down its followers, assembling, thus, all the Papal nations; and here will they wreak upon one another the vengeance due to ages of martyrdom. In that day of burning and wrath, of tribulation and bitter anguish, will the Papacy find its grave.

“And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.” -Revelation 16:19b

So soon as the tripartite division of the Roman earth has been completed, the final stroke will fall. The words, “came in remembrance before God,” are associated with one of the most terrific judgments of early times. Similar language was used by God with reference to Sodom, on the evening that preceded that awful morning when He rained fire and brimstone upon it from the Lord God out of heaven. The division of the great city into three parts will mark the very eve preceding the conflagration of the mystic Babylon. On the next morrow shall her plagues come. Upon that “Wicked” “He shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest.”

Will the fire in which she shall be consumed be literal fire? It is the opinion of many expositors of name that it will be literal fire; and their views receive countenance, as they suppose, from the fact that the whole country of Italy is volcanic. They think it not impossible that its now extinct craters may anew and simultaneously burst into action, and convert the country around Rome into a lake of fire. We are disposed to regard the fire and burning, under which the last judgment of the Papacy is set forth, as symbolic; and that this symbol has been selected from its fitness to denote the peculiar severity of her last plagues, and the utter consumption and annihilation which they will produce, it being the property of fire to annihilate that on which it preys. It will form a more striking demonstration of the baleful nature of Popery, as well as of the wisdom and justice of her great Judge, that her final calamities should grow out of her crimes; that the connection between the two should be manifest to the whole world; that the passions of the European nations, whom she has so long retained in ignorance and slavery, and robbed both of their temporal wealth and their eternal salvation, roused by the recollection of her numerous thefts, idolatries, and murders, should burst their chains, and be directed like burning fire against her.

Of this sort was the eating of the harlot's flesh, and the burning of her with fire, by the kings of Europe, after the first outbreak of the French Revolution. When authority shall be prostrate, and the popular vengeance comes to rage without restraint, what more likely than that the same scenes will be enacted over again? The pillagings, massacrings, burnings, the destruction of property, and the general proscription that fell upon the Popish hierarchy, may again be inflicted upon them, but in more terrible measure. Nor would we deny that the rage of the elements may combine with the fury of man, to give additional terror to the scene, and to make still more visible the hand of God in the awful plagues of her ruin. Of this we are certainly informed, that these plagues will come unexpectedly, when the words are in her mouth, “I shall not be a widow,” that they will come suddenly, “Alas! alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come;” and that they will be irretrievable, “As a millstone cast into the depths of ocean, so shall Babylon with violence be cast down, and shall rise no more.” Her plagues, moreover, will be unprecedentedly awful; exhibiting in point of horror the full realization of what Babylon and Sodom, in their fall, exhibited only in type, and forming an anticipation of the terrors of the judgment-day.

The thrones, hierarchies, and powers of the Papal world will accompany Rome in her descent into the tomb. That era will be the judgment-day to nations. It will be the burial-day of the old earth. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and all the stars of the political and ecclesiastical firmament shall fall. It is not easy to find words in which to convey an adequate impression of the solemnity of the epoch, and the transcendent importance and terrible grandeur of the events which will then be witnessed.

Kingdoms will be tossed and tumbled. The dominion and glory of twelve centuries will suddenly go out in darkness. Empires will be borne to the tomb; and how? Not amid the solemn grief of nations, but amid the exulting shouts and bitter execrations of enraged peoples. Princes of ancient and honourable lineage will go forth, discrowned, into exile. The beauty of renowned capitals will be defaced by war: the monuments of a past civilization, the creations of genius, and the triumphs of art, will perish amid the flames of conflagration. The symbols of authority will be desecrated: the fences of order will be torn down: the restraints of law, the obligations of morality, and the sanctions of religion, will all be contemned and set at nought.

The visitation will be awful beyond all former precedent, seeing it will contain the boarded vengeance of ages. Most impartial and unsparing will it truly be, sweeping off into destruction all that has lent itself to the support of idolatry, and purifying the earth as if by fire. The dukedom set up but yesterday, and the empire that dates its rise from the era of the Gothic invasion; the electorate that includes but a few hundred square acres, and the kingdom that comprehends within its ample limits extended plains, mighty rivers, vast mountain-chains, and races diverse in language and in blood; monarchs small and great, from the petty chief of a handful of followers, to the master of countless hosts—all “shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their brodered garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling: they shall sit upon the ground.”

The potentates that were of old time, who have long dwelt in Hades —Ashur, and all his company; Elam, and all his multitude; Edom, his kings and all his princes—when the rumor of this great event shall reach the dominions of death, will be moved at the tidings, and shall rise up from their seats to welcome this mightiest of crowned chiefs, whose day has at last come.

“Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!” – Isaiah 14:9-12

Chapter XXVIII. The Expedition of Gog; Or Irruption Of Nations From The North And East

UNDER the Seventh Vial, the judgment takes a sudden enlargement. The cloud of wrath, which hitherto had hung suspended above the Latin earth, stretches out, and shrouds in its tempests both the north and the east, the seat respectively of Greek idolatry, and Mohammedan superstition. All the prophets have spoken of this great era, Daniel, Isaiah, and Ezekiel, in especial, and it is only when we compare their prophecies, and attempt to read coming events, obscurely and doubtfully at the best, by the light of their convergent predictions, that we learn something of the revolutions and changes that await the world. We lift up our eyes, and lo! it seems as if the whole earth were in motion.

The plains of the east, where the centuries as they passed saw all unchanged, are stirred now; their countless tribes have struck their tents, and are marching westward. The doors of the frozen north are opened once more, and the bands of Scythia issue forth to invade the south. All are a-foot, and on the march; a motley host they form, speaking different tongues, brandishing every variety of weapon; clad in every costume, from the furs of Lapland to the silks of India; tribes of ancient lineage, and races of modern origin, all moved by a common impulse, rally to one point, where some great event is to be transacted, which shall form a culminating epoch in history.

At the head of this army marches a great leader. Prophecy had named him of old time, and had specially foretold his rise at this period of the world's history. Ezekiel chapter 38 styles him Gog, of "the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal." The land of Magog is that peopled by the Scythians. The Scythians are descended from Magog, the son of Japheth, and go under the various names of Turks, Tartars, and Scythians, and their territories extend from the center of Asia to the northern sea, comprehending the modern Russia. Rosh, which in our translation is rendered "chief," the Septuagint makes a proper name, in which sense it denotes Russia.

This power (Gog) is to conceive the great design of conquering the world. With this view, he is to put himself at the head of the various nations which people the north of Europe and the north-west of Asia. He is represented by Ezekiel as supported by Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya; Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands, and many people. With this great following, he is to set out on an expedition against the west and south of Europe, tempted thereto, it may be, by finding its nations exhausted by mutual wars and social disorganization, and, deeming the hour come, to make a prey of their cities and lands, their commerce and riches.

The suddenness and irresistible force of the irruption is finely described,

"Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm; thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land." -Ezekiel 38:9

This invasion will take place after several abortive attempts of the same kind. "I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws;" (Ez. 38:4a) but when the Divine purpose is to be served,

“I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses, and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords.”
– Ezekiel 38:4

The same conquering power is foretold by Isaiah chapters 45 and 46 under the name of the ancient Cyrus. That power is girded with strength by the true God; it is to come like “a ravenous bird from the east” to execute God’s judgments upon His enemies; and, having fulfilled its appointed mission, it disappears. Immediately thereafter the skies begin to drop down, and the earth bursts into singing; which fixes this irruption of the nations to the times immediately preceding the millennium.

May not the reference of Daniel be to the same great events, when he describes the “king of the north” coming “like a whirlwind, with chariots, with horsemen, and with many ships, and he shall enter into the countries, and he shall overflow and pass over?” – Daniel 11:40

These form a class of prophecies the most obscure, perhaps, in the sacred volume. Nevertheless, certain great events are here foreshadowed with tolerable distinctness. First of all, we may infer that these predictions will find their fulfillment in some gigantic scheme of ambition, which will precipitate the nations of the north and north-east upon the rest of the world. Second, that this irruption will be contemporaneous with the final judgment of antichrist, or so immediately consequent upon it, as to form one grand tragedy with it. Third, that this great host, after executing God’s purpose of destruction upon the countries and nations, against which, drawn by ambition on their own part, and a righteous providence on God’s, they will come, they shall themselves be destroyed. Fourth, that this destruction shall overtake them when they are on the point of turning their arms against a people standing in a peculiar relation to God, and enjoying his special protection. Fifth, that the hand of God will be so awfully visible in their overthrow, that the event will arrest the attention of men, and pave the way for the conversion of the world.

“And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face, for in my jealousy, and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God; every man’s sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself and sanctify myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations; and they shall know that I am the Lord.” – Ezekiel 38:18-23

It is scarce possible that we can be mistaken in fixing on Russia as the pre-destined leader of this grand invading host. Russia alone, of all existing powers, fulfills all the conditions of the prophecy. She occupies the territories from which this irruption is to issue. She is mistress of the various tribes and nations which are to form it. Her rise has been portentously rapid, springing up in almost our own day, from barbarous insignificance to the rank of a first-rate power, overshadowing two hemispheres, and, while herself safe from attack, she threatens all others.

But, mainly, her avowed policy runs in the very line, and tends to the very issue indicated in the prophecy. Dreams of conquest, such as never haunted the pillow of Napoleon, are the traditional and cherished purposes of the Czar. Since the days of Peter the Great, who is said to have first chalked out

the bold design and left it as a legacy to his successors, the ambition of Russia has been to push her conquests in the East and in the West, and fixing her throne at Constantinople, to make herself the predominating power in the earth; in short, its sole autocrat and master.

Repeated attempts have the emperors made to consummate this grand design, but hitherto these attempts have not been successful. Russia has been “turned back.” -That she will make another attempt is, we deem, just about as certain as that Russia exists, and, with the dry rot of revolution, weakening every year the kingdoms of Western and Southern Europe, and the prodigious accessions of strength daily accruing to Russia from the development of her vast resources, we do not see what is to hinder that attempt being at length completed and crowned.

Is not, in fact, the realization of this scheme going on at this very hour before our eyes? Every summer finds Russia farther advanced in her march southwards. Every campaign sees new tracts incorporated with her already vast territory, and new tribes enrolled in her already prodigious armies. These new adherents are the very nationalities and races pointed at in the prophecy, and it does seem as if, in this irrepressible expansion of the Russian empire and this gathering to her standard of diverse tongues and arms, we saw the rise of that very host which prophecy foretells, and the beginnings of that invasion which is to “ascend and come like a storm,” and to be “like a cloud to cover the land.”

The restoration of Palestine to the Jews, the resuscitation of Poland, the erection of a powerful and constitutional Protestantism in Germany and Hungary, would do something to ward off the danger. They are the only measures that offer protection against this threatened flood from the northern quarters. But, were these steps to be taken, it is not unlikely that Russia might attempt to anticipate them, by precipitating her purposed invasion, before there is time to complete such a bulwark.

The Testament of Peter the Great has a curious interest in connection with the prophecies which we are considering. The authenticity of that extraordinary document is somewhat doubtful. This, however, matters little. Whoever was its author, it truly describes the policy of the Czars. It is the program on which they are acting, and which they have already, to a considerable extent, realized. But more, it is the self-same scheme of gigantic ambition which the prophets of Israel, three thousand years ago, sketched out as that which would be adopted by “Gog, of the land of Magog.” It is the “very evil thought” which was to come into his mind in the latter days. It would almost seem as if the framer of the “Testament ” had borrowed his idea from the old prophets. As, for instance, the last seven clauses of The Will. (Webmaster: This is referenced in a Wikipedia article, [The Will of Peter the Great.](#))

“We must keep steadily extending our frontiers northward along the Baltic, and southward along the shores of the Black Sea.

“We must progress as much as possible in the direction of Constantinople and India. He who can once get possession of these places, is the real ruler of the world. With this view we must provoke constant quarrels at one time with Turkey, and at another time with Persia. We must establish wharfs and docks in the Euxine (Greek name for the Black Sea), and, by degrees, make ourselves masters of that sea as well as of the Baltic, which is a doubly important element in the success of our plan. We must hasten the downfall of Persia, push on into the Persian Gulf; if possible, re-establish the ancient commercial intercourse with the Levant through Syria, and

force our way into the Indies, which are the store-houses of the world. Once there, we can dispense with English gold.

“Moreover, we must take pains to establish and maintain an intimate union with Austria, apparently countenancing her schemes for future aggrandizement in Germany, and all the while secretly rousing the jealousy of the minor states against her. In this way we must bring it to pass that one or the other party shall seek aid from Russia; and thus we shall exercise a sort of protectorate over the country, which will pave the way for future supremacy.

“We must make the house of Austria interested in the expulsion of the Turks from Europe, and we must neutralize its jealousy at the capture of Constantinople, either by preoccupying it with a war with the old European States, or by allowing it a share of the spoil, which we can afterwards resume at our leisure.

“We must collect round our house, as round a center, all the detached sections of Greeks which are scattered abroad in Hungary, Turkey, and South Poland. We must make them look to us for support, and then, by establishing beforehand a sort of ecclesiastical supremacy, we shall pave the way for universal sovereignty.

“When Sweden is ours, Persia vanquished, Poland subjugated, Turkey conquered—when our armies are united, and the Euxine and the Baltic are in possession of our ships—then we must make separate and secret overtures first to the court of Versailles, and then to that of Vienna, to share with them the dominion of the world. If either of them accepts our propositions, which is certain to happen, if their ambition and self-interest are properly worked upon, we must make use of the one to annihilate the other; this done, we have only to destroy the remaining one by finding a pretext for a quarrel, the issue of which cannot be doubtful, as Russia will then be already in the absolute possession of the East, and of the best part of Europe.

“Should the improbable case happen of both rejecting the propositions of Russia, then our policy will be to set one against the other, and make them tear each other to pieces. Russia must then watch for and seize the favorable moment, and pour her already assembled hosts into Germany, while two immense fleets, laden with Asiatic hordes, and convoyed by the armed squadrons of the Euxine and the Baltic, set sail simultaneously from the sea of Azoff, and the harbor of Archangel. Sweeping along the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, they will overrun France on the one side, while Germany is overpowered on the other. When these countries are fully conquered, the rest of Europe must fall easily and without a struggle under our yoke. Thus Europe can and must be subjugated.”

We who now live, as also our sons, are, to all appearance, destined to witness a series of stupendous events, in which the hand of God will be visible to all the earth, and in which the most fearful judgments and the richest mercies will be signally blended. We are on the eve of the great final exodus of the Church; and mightier miracles than those which attended her first exodus will signalize this her last and final one. There is another pursuing host to be overthrown, there is another Red Sea to be passed through, and another song of deliverance to be sung.

Not in a day, not in a year, are we to expect that these changes will be consummated. If, in half a century from the present time, they are finished and over, the work may justly be regarded as great, marvelous, and rapid.

The Greek and Roman idolatries are to be swept from the earth; the imposture of Mohammad, and all kindred delusions, are to be smitten and to pass away; vast ethnical changes are to take place, implying a change in the general condition of mankind, and the peopling anew of many regions of the earth. And not till after these whirlwinds have shaken the world, and these fires have purified it, will be heard “the great voice of much people” (Revelation 19), “saying, Alleluia,” announcing that now the long-expected era of regeneration and blessedness has fully dawned.

Chapter XXIX. Harpers By The Sea Of Glass

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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