

LECTURES ON
THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

VOLUME II.

BY

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LECTURE XXI.

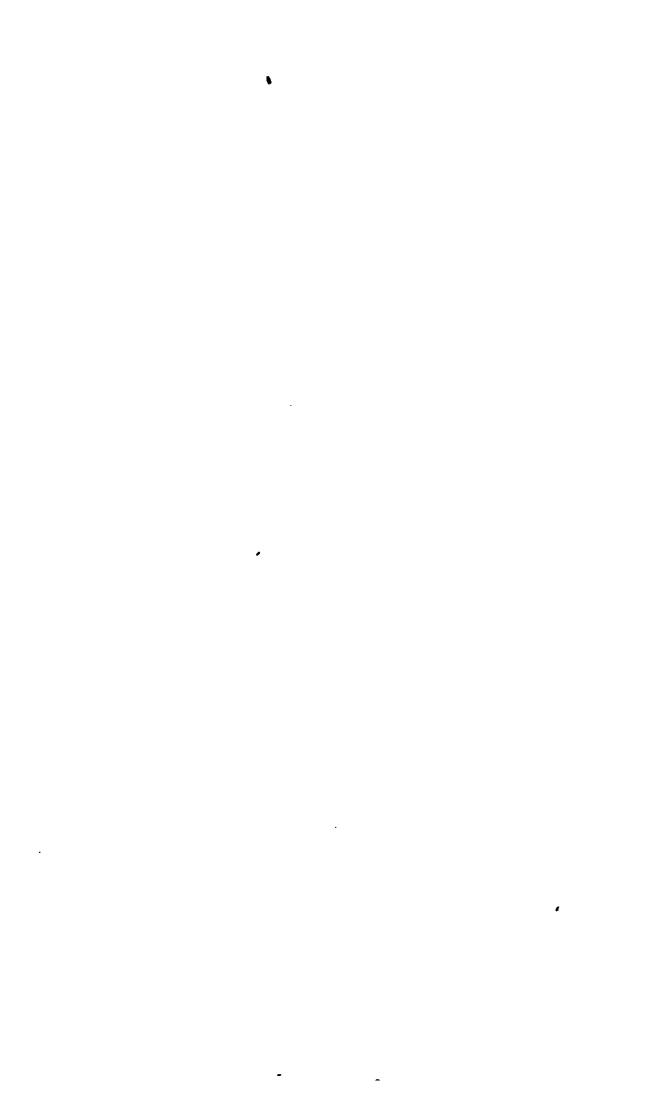
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LECTURES ON THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION.

LECTURE XII.

CHAPTER XII., VER. 1—12.—THE RAPTURE OF THE
MYSTICAL CHRIST. ITS CONSEQUENCE, THE EXPULSION
FROM HEAVEN OF SATAN AND HIS ANGELS.

FOR the sake of clearness, it had better be repeated that chapters xii.—xiv. form a great parenthesis in this book. All the schools of its interpreters, whether Preterists, or Historicists, or Futurists, admit this fact. The subject of these three chapters is The great tribulation, together with the two modes of God's deliverance of His own people :—the heavenly people, by His removal of them to heaven ere that tribulation commences, and the earthly people by His preserving them throughout its period of awful temptation, and of bitter sorrows.

This prophecy opens with an account of the rapture of the symbolic man-child, that is to say, of Christ

and the Church, which is His body. Then ensues at once a conflict in heaven between these its predestined new inhabitants with Satan and his angels, who are finally expelled therefrom. It is, therefore, perfectly clear that the Church cannot be in the coming tribulation, for that is caused by the agency of Satan enraged at his being cast down to the earth by those heavenly saints. Accordingly by him, the Beast, or Roman emperor, is raised up, who, with his ten subordinate kings, and with his ecclesiastical satellite, require all men to render supreme worship to himself. Then in chap. xiv. we are presented with a picture of the overcomers at this fearful time, together with a sketch of the judgment of the nations. And chap. xv. continues the general subject of the hardening of Christ's foes for the day of His wrath, where, at chap. xi. 14, it was left off. Only the first four verses of chap. xv. are largely tinged with the subject in the said parenthesis; but at verse 5 the seven subdivisions of the seventh Trumpet of chap. xi. are at once proceeded with.

But now the reader's rapt attention is specially invited to this 12th chapter. There is not, perhaps, a grander one in the entire book. Its importance will warrant, and even necessitate, greater fulness in its exposition. Indeed, we may safely assert, that according to any one's apprehension of the scope of this chapter, will be the measure of his grasp of the *general drift* of this book. If he mistakes the teaching

of this one chapter, he will be sure to err in his view of the book as a whole. On the other hand; if he is quite clear as to what is here taught us, no leading thought in any part of the book will occasion him much trouble. This chapter is, if I may be allowed the expression, THE BACK BONE of all the book.

The first question that arises is, "Who is this woman, or mother?" And again, "Who is this man-child that is born to her?" Now the identification of the man-child is very easy; for we are expressly informed in ver. 5 that this said child is the one that is destined to "rule all nations with a rod of iron." But this word is a citation from Psalm ii. 9, concerning the Lord Jesus. Hence it follows that this male child is Christ. But further, in Rev. ii. 26, 27, this very language is used by the Lord concerning His victorious people. And then their rule over the nations is in association with His own; for, says He, "The overcoming one shall rule these nations with a rod of iron, *even as I received of my Father.*" The symbolic child, therefore, is the mystical Christ—is that body of which we read in various scriptures, as John xvi. 20—22; Eph. iii. 6; iv. 13, 24; Col. iii. 15; 1 Cor. xii., and here. Of this wondrous body, the risen Lord Jesus is the one Head. (See Eph. i. 22, 28; Col. i. 18.)

But this body is something perfectly new in the works of God. With the sole exception of the head of this body, not an atom of it was in actual existence

anterior to the death and resurrection of the Lord. Nor was He Himself in this one particular character as Head of the body manifested until His resurrection. True, He was set up as the Word and as the Christ, in the beginning with God. (See John i. 2, and compare Prov. viii. 23.) But it is verily in His human nature, and, moreover, only in resurrection, that He is our Head. (See Eph. i. 20—23.) Until He had died and risen, He was alone. (John xii. 24.) His members were, indeed, all written in God's book of life, "when as yet there was none of them." (Psalm cxxxix.) But now as the Lord God, by breathing on Adam, made him into a living soul; so Christ in resurrection is a *quickening* spirit, and breathes on His people; and thus they derive their life from Him—His risen life. Like as God blessed Eve in Adam, ere yet she personally existed (Gen. i. 28;) so in that sense only were we known to God from before the foundation of the world. We were indeed chosen ere the world began; but chosen IN CHRIST only. But then in due time, whilst Adam slept, his partner, his other self, his Eve, was taken from his side. Likewise now, in the judgment of the world, Christ sleeps and is dead. True, He liveth unto God; but this the world knows not. Yet during this long eventful night, those who believe in Him derive life from His wounded side. Still they are not divers, nor even twain, but ONE. (See Eph. v. 32.) The *actual* body of the Lord was raised up after two

literal days ; His mystical body will be raised up and presented by Himself to Himself as His bride, after two prophetic days. For a day with the Lord is as a thousand years. Only in all things he has the preeminence. (So see the hint in John xx. 7.) He is the Firstborn from the dead. Thus our life is from Him risen ; our all is in Him. He is our all.

And thus the very term "create" has in the New Testament a new signification given to it, and which depends for its significance on redemption solely. (See, for instance, Eph. ii. 15, Greek ; iv. 24 ; Col. iii. 10.) Also we have the expression in Heb. xii. 9, "The Father of our spirits," and similarly in 1 Peter iv. 19, "A faithful Creator." These passages eye His new creation work.

But not until Pentecost was union with the risen Lord an accomplished fact. For it is "by one Spirit" that "we are baptized into one body." Ere He was glorified, the Lord had breathed upon His disciples new resurrection life ; but when the Holy Ghost came down in person, it was on purpose to unite them to the risen man in God and in glory. The Holy Ghost does not unite unbelievers to the Lord Jesus in order to make them into believers. He converts unbelievers ; He unites believers into one body and unto one Christ. They were believers who received the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. They were believers of whom the Lord spake, when he said that rivers of living water should flow from them. For

“this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive” after he was glorified. (Compare also Eph. i. 13.) Therefore it is one thing to be quickened by the breath, as it were, of the Lord; it is another thing, and greater grace still, to have the Spirit of God dwelling in us, and whereby we are actually united to the risen Man yonder.

The Head is there; the body is here, for the Holy Ghost is with us. By Him constant communication is maintained between the Head and His members. By the same Spirit are ever flowing down from the glorified Lord Jesus, life, joy, peace, and every other spiritual blessing. And when the body is completed, and the bride hath made herself ready, she shall be presented to her divine human Lord, who will descend from heaven to receive her to Himself. So of old, Isaac in type, as if risen from the dead, came forth to meet his bride. And as Eliezer escorted Rebecca, so the Holy Ghost is our Guide homewards. And when God's time has fully come, that same Spirit by whom our dead spirits have been quickened, will also quicken our mortal bodies, and lift us one and all into heaven to meet our Lord. (Rom. viii. 11.) Here is our Hope; we are to be “caught up to God and to His throne.” (See verse 5). Already this is true of our glorified Head. It is not yet true of His members; yet would it seem as if the reference in the chapter were rather to the members than to the Head. For from verses 9, 12 and 13 we learn that,

consequent upon the rapture of the mystic child into heaven, Satan and his angels are cast out thence. This received some initial accomplishment truly, even ere Christ's own resurrection. (Luke x. 18.) But in another sense, Satan no doubt is still in the heavenlies (Eph. vi. 12, margin.) Therefore the mystical Christ has not yet been caught up. The Holy Ghost uses the same word in Greek in 1 Thess. iv. 17, in speaking of the removal of the living saints to the presence of the Lord, as here He does of the rapture of the man-child.

But if Christ and the Church together be the symbolic man-child, then who is the mother thereof? From Micah v. 2, and Isaiah lxvi. 7, 8, the answer is found to be the Jewish nation. There is also a distinct allusion in the description of the woman's crown to the dream of the patriarch Joseph. For as Abraham illustrates the life of faith, so Isaac sets forth sonship, and Jacob service. Then Joseph represents rule according to God. From Bethlehem came forth He who was born King of the Jews. (Compare Gen. xxxvi. 9—10 with Rev. xii. 1; also see Solomon's Song, vi. 10.) Then the Church with her glorified Head is simply Christ multiplied or reproduced in resurrection, as the corn of wheat becomes an entire stalk, and even presently a sheaf itself. But as we read further of the history of the woman who is left on the earth, after the rapture of her child; so Israel, though dead nationally to God at

present, (even as in the type Sarah, Abraham's wife, died ere Isaac was married,) shall be raised again—this whole people, as if from the dead. (Rom. xi. 15 ; Ezekiel xxxvii.) *

* The analogy between the symbol of the woman and her child, with the scriptural truths above suggested, might be pursued further. For the believers of one age beget by prayer and faith the believers of another age. Then the church of one age, like Jerusalem above, may be regarded as the mother of the Christians of the next age. (Gal. iv. 26.) And then the crown of twelve stars may represent the apostolic band. So in John xvi. 20, there is mention of two sorrows of Christ's first disciples ; the one future and the other present. Their present sorrow was caused by the path that Christ took towards the cross. That terminated at His own resurrection. Then there was a future sorrow, which was only to be terminated by His second advent. Until that gladsome moment, the mystical Christ, the man-child, is being born. And the nearer the birth, the greater is the pain. Yes, and the more heavenly-minded we are, the more of pain as to the earth we experience. Then as the grief of the Old Testament saints (as Simeon) ended at the birth of Christ Himself, and specially, as in the case of His disciples, at His resurrection ; so the grief of all the New Testament saints will finally terminate at the birth of the Christ mystical in resurrection, not of the spirit only, but of the body also. For the child and the woman are in our chapter each of them symbolic. So when the mystical body has been born in resurrection and caught up, then she from whom came forth God's Christ, Israel, is left on earth. But I have preferred to put this ampler interpretation of the symbol in a note, partly because it is not requisite to the chapter and may appear far-fetched, and partly because I would not assert that *the simpler, briefer view above was not the truer one.*

We have in the next place to enquire who is this great red dragon, and wherefore his determined hostility to the child that this woman bears. Here perhaps is the proper place to call attention to an important point in the interpretation of this chapter, viz., whereas in some of its verses the scene is laid on earth, and in others, in heaven; in the one case all is expressed in symbol, in the other, the language is all in plain terms. As if in that light above there could be no obscurity, much less could wickedness be hidden. This is the more marked, since presently again, at the close of the chapter, the scene being there transferred back to earth, the symbolic style is immediately resumed. Now in that part of the chapter where the scene is in heaven, the enemy is not called a dragon. There he is disclosed; he is "the devil and Satan."

But why is he represented as with seven heads and ten horns? This is the picture of the rule of this world, which is headed up by Satan, though unseen. There is undoubtedly an allusion here to Dan. vii. There, when the kingdom was taken away from Israel, on account of that people's sins, the prophet beheld in vision the kingdom throughout the times of the Gentiles. For no monarchy could be acknowledged by God whilst Israel was yet to the front. But then, four monarchies pass before the eye of the seer, one after another, to wit, the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman.

And these are compared to four wild beasts. Now the third of these had four heads, corresponding with the well-known fourfold division of the third, or Grecian, empire. In further proof, see Dan. viii. 8. We shall have more to say upon this matter on chap. xiii. 1, 2. Suffice it, therefore, here to note that the one head of the first empire, and the one head of the second, and the four heads of the third, and the one head of the fourth, all appear here upon the dragon, Satan, the inspirer, and as it were, the soul of them all. Earthly grandeur and power are Satan's own. All rule, authority, and power originally emanated from God. They are now debased in men's hands, and have been usurped by Satan, though with God's sufferance. Presently, however, they will again be taken up by God. Whenever this is the case, the first nation of the world must be Israel, under its great King, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here the dragon has ten horns, which, like the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image, are a prophetic glance at the kingdom on towards the close of the Roman empire's rule. The crowns here are on the dragon's seven heads; but in chap. xiii. 1 the crowns are upon the *ten horns*. For there the idea is of the fourth empire in its very latest stage, when the beast and his ten kings alone shall reign over the Roman earth. But here in chap. xii. those horns are not yet crowned. The period contemplated in chap. xii. is therefore earlier. It is the period before the

Church, or the man-child, is caught up to God. In chap. xiii. it is the period subsequent to that rapture. Further, when Christ descends to the world in judgment, Satan's rule is over; the kingdom is then the Lord's. Accordingly, then, on His head are beheld diadems many. This word "diadem,"* too, is not the common word for crown in this book. The usual word, as I have before remarked, denotes a laurel crown, the crown of a victor. This is the word always used of the saint's crown. But the term diadem imports majesty. It is only used, first of the dragon's rule here, and of the beast's in chap. xiii.; and then of Christ's ample and glorious sway in chap. xix. 12. Hence, I think that the "many diadems" of Christ there, are in designed contrast with Satan's seven diadems in chap. xii., and the beast's ten in chap. xiii. Then as to the dragon's hostility to the symbolic man-child, the voice of all history throughout the last eighteen centuries confirms the truth of that which here in our chapter we have pictured so vividly. Scarcely was the Son of God born into the world ere men, incited by Satan, endeavoured to thrust Him out again and slay Him. (Matt. ii.) How often again, during His brief ministry, did men seek to lay hands on Him, and were only hindered again and again "because His hour was not yet come." And at last He was crucified and slain. But God raised Him from the dead, and

* *διαδημα*. † *στεφανος*. See note to p. 145 of Vol. i.

seated Him with Himself on high. So, too, of the church, the mystical Christ, it is written, "For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." This single passage, with its context, or again the last half of John xv., are sufficient to teach us what we are to expect from Satan and his agents, whilst it is God's good pleasure we should continue here. If we do not encounter so much as the Holy One did of the hatred of the world, it can only be because we are so little like Him. Now is our time for suffering with Him. So may we esteem His reproach to be riches indeed. If we suffer with Him now, we shall also reign with Him by and bye. And as the apostle ejaculates, "Would

* "The tail" has been interpreted on chap. ix., and the "stars falling," on chap. vi. But I have often thought, and still incline to believe, that here there may be an allusion indirect to the fall of angels, and that that fall is here attributed to Satan. Then the clause, "the third part," would afford a glimpse of the relative number of the angels that sinned to those that kept their first estate. Still I am by no means positive of this. It is uttered merely by way of suggestion. Certainly, in two other prophecies, namely, in Isa. xiv. 12 and Ezek. xxviii. 13—15, there is such an allusion. In the former passage it is the king of Babylon, and in the latter it is the prince of Tyrus, that is addressed, though each of these with a glance at Satan's own fall. And I am the more inclined to think that the first part of Rev. xii. looks back somewhat parenthetically to the fall of Satan and "his angels" from the fact that the statement there *precedes* the account of the *Church's* tearful history, or even of Christ's own sufferings.

to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you." Hence, as it is here written, this man-child "is about * to rule (or shepherd) all the nations with a rod of iron." But first, of course, we "must be caught up (i.) to God, and (ii.) to His throne." And these two expressions may denote—the former, His receiving us to Himself in full affection, His presentation of us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy; the latter, "caught up to His throne," may look onwards to the kingdom which we are to share with Christ. For even Solomon's throne is called the throne of the Lord in 1 Chron. xxix. 23. That king's rule was exercised in an earthly manner; but ours shall be after a heavenly sort, in fact, along with, though in subordination to Christ's own sway. Then the two clauses are found in their true doctrinal order. For grace must first have its full triumph in locating us in our full and proper place of blessing in the heavenlies ere the question of our works, of service, and of our suffering with Christ, can be at all looked at, and ere the rewards of the kingdom can be bestowed by Christ on any of His people.

So the rapture to heaven of the entire Church of God, the completion of our heavenly call, is that for which we are waiting. (1 Thess. v. 24.) And this may be at any moment, and will be accomplished when God wills, "in the twinkling of an eye." And

* μελλει ποιμαινειν.

thus the subject of our heavenly standing is in our chapter resumed exactly where, in Ephesians vi., it had been discontinued. As is well known, five or six times "the heavenlies" are glanced at in that epistle, and each time in reference to the sphere of our blessing. Perhaps it will be well to cite them, and in their order too. In the first place we are informed that God "has blessed us with all spiritual blessings IN THE HEAVENLIES * in Christ," (chap. i. 3.) Next, that God has already raised and seated Christ our Lord, the Head of the Church, in those same heavenlies (chap. i. 20.) Also we, who were dead in trespasses and sins, God has raised up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (chap. ii. 6). Thus already the principalities and powers which are at present in the heavenlies may learn through God's ways with His Church, His manifold wisdom (chap. iii. 10). From those heavenlies to which the Lord Jesus, as we have read in chap. i., has been exalted, He is constantly bestowing gifts upon His Church for the edifying of it, His mystical body, until we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (chap. iv. 8—13). Then, lastly, in chap. vi., we are twice exhorted to stand with all

* *ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις*. It is the same expression in Greek in chap. vi., though rendered in the authorised version, "in high places."

God's armour on, against the wiles of the devil. But the place of this our combat with Satan, is not as it is in the first epistle of Peter, which throughout contemplates us as here in the wilderness. No, here in Ephesians we are wrestling against the wicked spirits in the heavenlies. These would fain dispute the ground with us, and keep us in bondage and at a distance, experimentally, from our God and Father. In all this passage there is an eye upon the book of Joshua and upon the contests of Israel with the Canaanites. Only as Israel's call was earthly, whilst ours is heavenly; so our contest is not with flesh and blood, as was theirs, but with Satan and his hosts, whom, as this chap. xii. shows us, we are destined by God to dispossess. At present, indeed, as was the word to Israel, "every spot that the sole of your foot shall tread upon shall be yours," (Joshua i. 3); so do we as yet enter on possession by faith, even as, in that day, we shall obtain all by sight. And thus with the warfare still proceeding, the subject is closed in Ephesians with some degree of abruptness and incompleteness. But here, in our chapter, verily we have the due close and triumphant issue of this protracted contest. For we find that when we are bodily caught up into those heavens, the opponents are still seen to be in array against each other.

There is, however, one important point wherein the struggle at the close differs from the mode in which it is carried on now. Until that period arrives

we have but to "stand" in the place where His grace has placed us, and daily shall we experience the vehement assaults of the foe. Then, however, not the dragon, but Michael and His angels, to wit, Christ and His saints, commence the last attack. Because God's time will then have fully arrived for the heavens to be finally rid of those unclean but old inhabitants thereof; as also for those loved by Him before the foundation of the world, to be established for ever in their undisputed possession. Therefore, the place of Satan and his angels "is found no more in heaven." These others, though they had been incessantly accused by their tempter before their God, had been succoured and delivered by their gracious Lord. Oh! how perfect is the way of our God—to surround His throne eternally with His own blood-bought and begotten children, who had been picked up from the dust and from the dunghill; and using these redeemed ones, whom Satan had tempted and despised, whereby to hurl him and his angels from His holy presence for ever!

If it is enquired, How can this be possible? the answer is at hand. These overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, whereby every former charge against themselves is met and quashed, and whereby right and title for the Divine presence are abidingly secured. Only in the light of that Presence can the validity of their title, and the firm foundation on which they repose, be fully perceived. Also add

that with the Divine Lamb they have been identified in His shame, and must also be identified in His glory. Then is heard in heaven a loud voice, proclaiming, Now, or at length, is come salvation. Similarly this word salvation is used in Heb. ix. 28 and Rom. xiii. 11. That is to say, in these passages salvation has a future aspect. Nothing will satisfy the heart of our God, nothing will display the delight with which He regards the work of Christ, but the completest association of us with His Son in yonder glory. True, indeed, when we believe in Christ, we receive at once the salvation of our souls. But still we need the daily application of this by our High Priest; in other words, we need to be saved every day and every hour, and whenever we are tempted. That great work of our God, in its consummation, is only when in soul and in body too, and when all the Church together, is lifted up to where He is, and made quite like Him our Lord, inside and outside. What a salvation!

“Therefore, rejoice ye heavens, and ye who (now at length) dwell in them.” At last, amid the “many mansions” of which the Lord spake to us, there we have come. And this word “rejoice” is uttered, in order to make the new inhabitants of heaven feel perfectly at home there. When the heavens and their occupants are each enjoined to rejoice, the fitness of each for the other is suggested. The highest

heavens, already put on a redemption footing by the presence there of the risen Lamb, is a place exactly and correspondingly suitable for those for whom above all that blood was shed. And since only in that uncreated light that blood can be and is perfectly estimated at its full price, thither accordingly must those most loved ones, "the church of the First-born," be brought. Already, through resurrection life, eternal life given unto us, we have been rendered competent to partake of the inheritance of the saints in that light. And there, then, we must be brought and settled. Yonder is our proper home. Nay, more than this, even what is comprised in the promise, "I will come again and receive you UNTO MYSELF."

Above I have assumed that Michael and his angels are Christ and His saints. For indeed everything in the entire chapter confirms this interpretation. These "angels" of His, are those who know the value and how to plead the blood of the Lamb. They are those who had not loved their lives unto the death for Him. They are those who erst had been accused by Satan, and now, as they rise into the glory, are beheld with their Captain visibly, as in Eph. vi. are invisibly pitted against Satan and his host. And so, as we have already ascertained, whilst the scene is laid on earth, as it is in the first six verses, all is symbolically expressed. But when the scene

is changed to heaven, as it is from the seventh to the twelfth verse, all is narrated in the simplest style. The man-child of the symbol, whilst the scene is on earth, is He that is Michael conjoined with His angels, when the scene is in heaven. The Lord Jesus is spoken of here in His angelic character, for the reason assigned and largely explained on chap. vii. And these His saints are termed angels because they derive their every hue from Himself. In whatever character He appears, they at once resemble Him. When He is a Bridegroom, they are His Body and His Bride; when He is a warrior, and seated on a white horse, at once they are descried as armies, and are seated upon white horses too (chap. xix. 14). For not unto ordinary angels hath God put in subjection the world to come. But if now the four great monarchies of the world, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, and their several fallen angelic rulers, will at this time have been each and all overcome by Him as Michael, (Dan. x.—xii.); it is in order that the kingdom may be His own, with Israel under Him in the earthlies, and with His church in the same glory with Himself in the heavenlies. Michael is the one archangel known in scripture, the divine one, the only one.* And these “angels” of

* Jude 9. The expression “durst not,” may be explained from Rom. v. 10, as “chose not.” It is the same Greek.

His will be those who owe their all to His death, and who have His own life and Spirit from Himself, yea, and who are one with Him, and who therefore never can rebel against Him, but who, on the contrary, will adore Him and His God and Father with all their hearts.

Indeed, it would appear by the contrast of God's dealing with us otherwise than with the angels of the old creation, that those of them that fell rebelled through ignorance of Christ and of His matchless, infinite worth. For, verily, as God can only be known in Christ and by Christ; so Christ can only be known as respects us through His cross, and as respects unfallen creatures, through His kindness to us, on account of that cross. Here it is that His eternal unbought love of His people finds its full expression, and now God in blessing us, is gratifying the yearning love of His own heart, and telling out the worth, the merits of His beloved Son.

Hence angel-worship, such as it was of old, never could content God; because then God was unknown, and if unknown, He could not be adequately, worthily worshipped, and those angels of His could not sit or sing, save creation's song, in His presence; but now in resurrection all is changed. On this display of God and of His power, Satan never reckoned; God let him do his worst; so death reigned over all here. Resurrection presupposes wreck, and ruin, and death.

Thus the field was clear for God to work in. Then in the new condition of things introduced by God, none of these can ever come, seeing that it arises only consequent upon God's triumph over all, and out of all Satan's mischief. Herein God has displayed Himself out and out. And in this wonderful display, we who believe are the prime objects of His grace. Now we know God at least in part, and shall know Him even as also we are known. Oh, what praise, and adoration, and lowly service will not we render Him. His highest servants in the new and abiding state about to be introduced by God, will be His own begotten children. Christ is His perfect servant, because He is His only begotten Son. We also shall serve Him well and for ever, because we are His sons in very deed too. We are "the children of God, being the children of resurrection." Having His nature and His Spirit, we can understand Him and appreciate His ways and love. Oh! how perfect these ways of His are.

Then when the enemy is finally conquered and turned out of heaven, He is fully revealed. Similarly is this the case when he is cast out of the earth in chap. xx. 2, all his titles are heaped upon him. He is the old serpent, the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the world, and the accuser of the brethren; ere he is overcome he is hidden. Who would have thought, from the account in Gen. iii. alone, that the foe there

was Satan ? But here, when all is over, no covert has he ; his malignity and his evil workings are all bared. To God he is Satan or the adversary ; to us he is the devil, the accuser ; he accuses us to God, and God to us. He is now identified with that serpent who wrought such ruin in Eden. Time would fail me to cite the various instances in Scripture, where he has wrought unseen, and often unsuspected. Even in the very first book of Scripture after Genesis, I mean Job, you hear no more of Satan's cruel work against that patriarch after the first two chapters ; his wife and his three friends become Satan's chosen instruments to harass Job. And God in His description of Leviathan's prowess and pride, certainly alludes to the " king over all the children of pride." From the time of the cross, the greatness of Satan, and of his success in his wiles with the world are suggested by his titles as the prince and the god of this world. The former shows him to be the head of this world's power, and pomp, and glory ; the latter that he is the head of this world's religion. Therefore it is that this latter title of his occurs in 2nd Corinthians only. Through his craft, God's will, as to His church in responsibility on earth revealed in 1st Corinthians, has been wholly set aside and ignored. Likewise with individuals, temptation ever is potent as our eyes are blinded and the enemy remains unseen. But after the inspired account of the gospel, as we have it unfolded in

the epistle to the Romans, wherein God has displayed His resources in saving us despite of all the machinations of the enemy, then in its perfectly apt place it is added, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." And so here in our chapter, when God completes His wonderful work of grace, in calling us bodily into the heavens, Satan no longer can hide himself; he is cast down, and his angels with him. We might almost say, with Rom. xvi. 20 before us, he is kicked out of heaven.

And yet nothing is done in a hurry. Nothing is slurred over there. It would appear indeed as if AFTER the rapture of the church, the accuser will still be allowed to be in heaven, and his presence be brooked by the Lord for three years and a half. For seven years are most certainly to elapse between the coming of the Lord for His saints and His subsequent appearing in glory with them. These seven years are, as is well known, that last week yet unfulfilled, of Daniel's seventy weeks. (Dan. ix. 27.) This week, as others have proved, was broken off from the sixty-nine by Israel's murder of their Messiah. This period of time is, when what God has declared in this book of Revelation concerning the things coming on the earth, shall all be fulfilled. But here we find that Satan persecutes Israel, the woman who bears the symbolic man-child, so that she has to flee into the wilderness from before him for a time, times

and half a time, or for three years and a half. Then the question occurs, Where is Satan for the other three and a half years? The answer seems to be, In heaven. Then when Christ has us at His judgment seat, the *works* which we have done in the body shall, after those bodies have been glorified and made for ever like His own, all be judged. And Satan will be present. All will be done in full open court, and in the face of day. But Romans viii. 33—37 may well prepare us for the issue. The blood of the Lamb, as respects all that was against us, and as providing us with a plea of infinite weight in our favour, will reduce Satan to absolute silence. Whilst all that grace has enabled us to do for God, Christ will then publicly acknowledge and abundantly reward.

LECTURE XIII.

CHAP. XII. 13 to XIII. 18.—THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

ITS PRIME CAUSE—SATAN. THE TRINITY OF EVIL.

THE Rapture of the heavenly saints is completed. The voice at the commencement of chap. xii. 12, recognises how they shall be caused to feel at home in their new and eternal abode. Satan and his angels have been dispossessed and cast down to earth. Even from that part too of God's domains speedily shall he be ousted. The kingdom of this world also shall be Christ's. Satan will know that his time here can be but brief. Hence his rage against God's earthly people. Here, then, the secret cause of the impending tribulation is unveiled!

Now that the man-child has been taken home, the woman, Israel, is to the front again. From her has come forth those greater than herself. Of her, as concerning the flesh, Christ came. (Rom. ix. 5.) And from Him, His heavenly saints have been formed. But now, all this is past. The woman's history, therefore, recommences where it had been

discontinued. Again God resumes His loving dealings with her. Of old, He had carried Israel onwards from Egypt towards her earthly rest, as on eagle's wings. (Exodus xix. 1—4.) This loving way of His He will repeat. He will save. He will shelter His true people (Isaiah xxvi. 20 ; Zeph. ii. 8), not from the Tribulation itself. They must pass through this, for reasons already shown. But they shall be preserved from Satan in his attempt to hinder them from entertaining any hope in God, and from any confession of a coming Messiah and Deliverer.

The populates of the earth will be infuriated against them. Now that the church has gone home, the nations of the world will desire that all expectation, and even all thought of heaven's further intervention in the affairs of earth, should cease. And then, as the judgments of the Seals and of the first four Trumpets are proceeded with, great confusion and anarchy will, as we have seen, quickly ensue. Only be it well noted, that in this passage (chap. xii. 15) these evils are comprehensively traced to Satan ; as in chapters vi. and viii., they are, in all their terrible detail, ascribed to God and to the Lamb. But on the lawlessness ensuing consequent upon the overthrow of the thrones of Europe, and upon the large abandonment of Christianity by those clericals left behind at the rapture of the church, we need not again expatiate. We have only

to add here, that exactly in its place in this parenthetical section of the prophecy, the assurance as to the preservation of an elect remnant of Israel is again found. The sentiment in chap. xii. 14 and 17, is couched in more symbolic phraseology than it is in chap. vii. 1—8; otherwise the parallel of the two places with the context is complete. So, whilst the mass of the Jewish nation will continue as now in their unbelief, and be disowned of God (chap. xi. 1, 2); still, this "remnant," who shall form the nucleus of the new nation will be turned in heart to their Messiah, and notably by the instrumentality of those two witnesses whom the angel of the Lord will send unto them, according to chaps. x. and xi., even as of old the same Personage sent Moses and Aaron. These shall "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children" (Mal. iv. 6); these "shall restore all things" (Matthew xvii. 11), viz: those things that God of old enjoined. And thus shall they begin to obey the commandments of God, and to maintain a witness for their coming King. (Chap. xii. 17.)

But now, in chaps. xii.—xiv., this subject is continued from a widely different point of view to what we find in the other chapters of this book. For in those other chapters we have visions of the surging up of the wrath of God, with His hardening judgments on the nations. Here, on the other hand, in this section

which we are now considering, we have the account of the WORLD'S wrath against His own people. Hence the sequence of the outburst of lawlessness everywhere, and of mob-rule, is not continued as under the Trumpets up to the climax in chap. ix., of hordes of lost spirits let loose upon the men of the world to goad them on in their mad passions. But here we have represented, though in easy and usual prophetic symbols, what will historically eventuate from the democratic outburst on the Roman earth, viz: the rise of the Beast, that is, the great Roman emperor and his ten horns, or confederate kings, even as now in France democracy and imperialism are found to be not far removed from each other. Still, these two subjects, to wit, God's hardening judgments under the Seals and Trumpets, as in the other chapters of this book, and this section (chaps. xii. to xiv.), delineating the world's rage against God and His people, are intimately connected. For it is in consequence of God in His righteous and retributive anger hardening the nations under those judgments of His, and through His casting the devil out of heaven to the earth, that those nations are rendered so insensate in their fury against all, even the least witness for Him.

It is essential for the reader, in his apprehension of the teaching of this chapter, that he should perceive that he whom God calls in verse 1, "The

Beast," is, nevertheless, the great Roman emperor of the future. God, looking down at him from His own glorious throne, thus aptly designates him. But the world will regard him with admiration and with awe. So, too, of old, what appeared to Nebuchadnezzar as a gorgeous image, Daniel, the holy seer, beheld as four wild beasts. And it is in undoubted reference to these four wild beasts of Dan. vii., and specially to the last one of those four, that the description here is given. The explanation of the Beast's seven heads and ten horns, has already been suggested in the remarks on chap. xii. This need not therefore be repeated. But here there are some important divergences from chap. xii., which must not be overlooked. Thus there he, whose hostility to the woman or Jewish nation was represented, was compared to a dragon with seven heads and ten horns, that is, to Satan himself. Here, on the other hand, the dragon stands* on the sand of the sea, and, as it were, exorcises the Beast with seven heads and ten horns therefrom. This language, divested of symbol, signifies that, by the agency of Satan after his final expulsion from heaven, there shall arise over the Roman world, being elected by universal suffrage, an imperial potentate and ten

* Instead of *εστραθην*, "I stood," chap. xiii. opens with *εστραθη*, "he stood," that is, the dragon who had been cast out of heaven.

subordinate kings. For the horns represent the kings of the several nations, elected also as their chief, and "at one time."* (Chap. xvii. 12.) For these nations will, as we have seen, have repudiated their old rulers under the sixth Seal and first four Trumpets. Here, then, is the short-lived triumph of democracy, and here we perceive its ultimate issue—imperialism. We are not left in doubt as to the symbolic use of the word "sea," from which Satan raises the Beast. For we have it explained for us in chap. xvii. 15. And on chap. viii. I have glanced at the parallel between the sea and the populace. To the remarks on this point then I add this further thought, that, as water seeks its level, so democracy seeks to do away with all distinctions of society.

That the horns on the Beast are the kings of their respective nations we are distinctly informed in chap. xvii. 12. Indeed, many of the symbols in chap. xiii., the reader will find explained by an angel to the seer in chap. xvii., which latter chapter therefore

*In chap. xvii. 12 it is written, "The ten horns receive power as kings one hour with the Beast." This translation is faulty, and obscures the meaning. *Μίαν ὥραν* ought to have been rendered, "at one time." The reader will recal to mind how the coat of arms of each nation is usually some wild beast, e.g., England's is a lion, though the French maintain that rather it is a leopard.

he will do well to compare with this. And widely different from the present rulers of the world, whose great aim is "the balance of power," these elected kings will heartily consent to co-operate with the Beast, and to act in subjection to him. (Chap. xvii. 13.) The cause of this unanimity will doubtless be their feeling, how otherwise insecure their thrones, depending upon a popular vote, would be; and the more so, as the hereditary kings had been swept away by the then advancing tide of democracy. Hence these covenant mutually to stand by each other. And the Beast, or supreme monarch over them all, receiving their help, will in turn help them. Thus are all these rulers bound together by identity of interests, the cause of each one being the cause of them all.

It is very remarkable, that both Daniel and John look onward to this extreme end of this dispensation in their description of the fourth or Roman empire, for they each speak of the ten potentates, with their imperial head. But this has never been the case yet, never yet has all Europe witnessed a sovereign elected by the people over each several state, with one supreme master over them all. In fact, the Roman empire is in course of time to exist in three different conditions. Of old it was all under the sway of one emperor, without any subordinate kings. At present it is in pieces. The respective kings of

Europe acknowledge no superior. But this state of things is not the last aspect of the empire. Here, in prophecy, we find that the thrones of these kings will be overturned, (chaps. vi. and viii.), and that out of the chaos of society thence resulting, there will come forth this one imperial Beast, and his ten horns or kings. In chap. xii. the crowns were on the dragon's seven HEADS; but here they are beheld upon the Beast's ten HORNS. Thus it is evident that until the rapture of the man-child, that is to say, of Christ and the church, into heaven, those kings are not crowned. Their rule is subsequent to that event.

Here, then, we have sketched before us the final aspect of Europe previous to the appearing on the scene of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints. By the dragon, or Satan, being seen to be so intently engaged in the raising up of this autocrat after his own casting down to the earth;—by his calling up this monster in human shape from amongst the peoples in their struggles after some more atheistic form of lawless power, we have it implied that here is Satan's masterpiece. Whilst on the one hand, Christ, the God-man, and especially Christ in union with His church in glory, is God's masterpiece, His great mystery; here, on the other, is Satan's, "the mystery of iniquity," "the man of sin," "the lawless one." * (2 Thess. ii. 4, 7.) Satan can originate

nothing. He can only imitate God. God had for a long period been directing the eye of man unto His Christ, ere that Christ came. So Satan is now engaged in preparing men for the coming man, and in fanning their aspirations for the good time coming with him. "The mystery of iniquity doth already work." But the Holy Ghost by His presence as yet down here in the world hinders the full developement of those evil principles by which the world is actuated, and thus delays the consummation of its guilt. Already it has rejected God's true king. But this last human opponent of God that is to come, the world will receive and welcome with plaudits. (John v. 43.) So utterly contrary to the truth is that proverb, "The voice of the people is the voice of God." Thus the evil is to reach its due close. It began in the church itself, springing from men's constant habit since the fall, to instal a fellow creature in the place of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ. Clerisy and Popery are, in this dispensation, this same evil in its budding and blossoming stage. But he who is the last outcome and fruit, or final issue of all this apostasy, will "sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." In fact, his very appearance at this time will be by a sort of resurrection. For one of his heads, or forms of rule, had been wounded to death. But lo! the Cæsarean or Augustan sway shall re-appear. How often have

unbelievers regretted the "decline and fall of the Roman empire." But this empire shall be revived, restored. And as men have attributed the ruin of the empire to the spread of Christianity; so, when the true church has been summoned to her heavenly home, the empire shall rise again. Its fragments shall yet be gathered together under one supreme head. And that human ruler of the whole empire will possibly be goaded on in his awful career by some master-spirit of the lost spirits who are permitted by Christ to possess men in those days. (See notes on chap. ix. 11.)

Be this as it may, all here in our chapter about him is in contrast and in opposition to the way of God. When God raised Christ from the dead, He gave Him "all power," and earth's supreme sovereignty. But the lowly, the divine Lord, has been rejected even in resurrection. Not so this emperor. Governing as the representative of his invisible master Satan, his power is irresistible. "All the world wonder after" him in reverence and admiration. "They worship the dragon which gave power to the Beast, and they worship the Beast, saying, Who is like unto the Beast? who is able to make war with him?" (Verse 4.)

But this is not all. This Beast or ruler, of whom we have been reading, is the supreme CIVIL OR POLITICAL power in Europe at the close of this world's history. *But there is mention of another beast in verse 11,*

and who "comes up from the earth." This latter power is the ECCLESIASTICAL, or what will be in its stead in those days. And this second Beast is somewhat explained in chap. xix. 20, as "the false prophet," who wrought signs* in furtherance of the designs of his superior, the first Beast. Thus he causes fire to come down from heaven in the sight of men. (Chap. xiii. 18.) And as we have been taught from chap. xi. that Elijah will be present, encouraging the hearts of the Jewish remnant; so the world's great false teacher will caricature Elijah's work, in order to confirm all men in their allegiance to the emperor. (See ver. 12, 14.) The two expressions—the one, "He exerciseth all the power of the first beast *before Him*" † (verse 12); and the other, "The signs which He had power to do *IN THE SIGHT* of the Beast," are in identical language in the original. They denote his officiating under the sanction and supervision of the first Beast, and as his minister. His special theme, as we are twice informed, is the resurrection of the empire through the ability of his master. Thus does he incite men to worship the first Beast, whose deadly wound was healed (verse 12); and again, "Which had the wound by a sword and did live." (Verse 14.)

Here is what the Papacy and the Clerical element

* σημεια

† ενωπιον αυτου. ενωπιον του θηριου.

will drift to and end in, after the fall of the ecclesiastical stars from their profession of Christianity under the sixth Seal. Almost every word used of this second inferior Beast looks at this ecclesiastical power as the great teacher of men at this time. "He spake." (Verse 11.) "He causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first Beast." (Verse 12.) "He works signs and deceives them that dwell on the earth." (Verse 13, 14.) "He says." (Verse 14.) Particularly notice the description given of this second Beast. He "comes up from the earth." (Verse 11.) This was where, after the true saints had been gathered home, the stars or false teachers of Christendom had fallen to, thus betraying the real attractions of their hearts. (Chap. vi. 13.) Thence these arise again into prominence, to serve another master. Again, this second Beast, or power, has two "horns like a lamb," still in allusion by contrast to Christ. But "he spake as a dragon." By Satan he is thoroughly energised now!

And thus we have here a TRINITY OF EVIL! There is, first, the dragon, or Satan, the unseen one, but giving all his power to the Beast. (Verse 2.) There is, secondly, this Beast of ver. 2, very like the dragon. (Compare chap. xii. 3 with chap. xiii. 1.) And this Beast, the full manifestation of the unseen one, rules the world as his vicegerent. Thirdly, there is in verse 11 the other Beast, "the false prophet," minis-

tering to the glory of the first Beast. And so, as the world will then have a taste, according as they have desired, of the devil's millenium; likewise also here is the devil's caricature of the work of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Now having surveyed these two personages at the helm of affairs in Europe in the last days, let us briefly observe their actions.

1. The Roman empire at its commencement was of course Pagan. After the advent of Christ, its attitude towards His name quickly became one of opposition. (Chap. xii. 2, 3.) His professing people it began to afflict. Presently, however, through Satan its prince and inspirer, transforming himself into an angel of light, the empire accepted the deteriorated Christianity of the fourth century, and consented to aid and support it by every means in its power. This is the picture furnished us of Babylon, i.e., professing Christendom in her grandeur in chapter xvii. 3. There is the woman, the false church, sitting on the Beast, or Roman empire. Ultimately, however, the condition of things with this politico-religious alliance, becomes so corrupt and horrible, that instead of its being a blessing, it is positively injurious. (Chap. xix. 2.) So the true saints having been removed home, the ten kings with the Beast reject with loathing this woman, or false church, or city Babylon. (Chap. xvii. 16.)

But these potentates pause not here. On the contrary, as this chapter proves, they proceed to invent a religion and ordain a public worship for all their subjects. So likewise at the beginning of the Gentile's supremacy Nebuchadnezzar did the same. His object clearly was to weld together thereby the several parts of his vast empire. For nothing promotes discord among nations as does diversity of religion. So when the kings have rid their several countries of the main cause of all the strifes among their peoples, namely, the political worldly Christianity of preceding ages ; then will they seek to re-bind all men together again, by instituting a new, common-sense, matter-of-fact sort of worship, obligatory on everyone throughout the empire. The centre of this new religion is the worship of the Beast or emperor himself. He will claim to be lord paramount of every one, as well of their souls as of their bodies. "All the world wondered after the Beast." (Ver. 8.) "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him," except the elect. (Ver. 8.) See also verse 12 ; and 2 Thess. ii. 4.

2. As to the living God. The Beast or emperor, having his heart lifted up with pride for his destruction, will be defiant of Him. Blasphemy will characterise his sway. (Ver. 5.) Nor God alone will he rage against. His Name and His tabernacle,

them * that dwell in heaven, all will he scorn. It would appear from verse 5, that the rapture of the heavenly saints, which will but recently have taken place, will be a fertile source of his ridicule.

8. But since he cannot wreak his wrath on these, as they are out of his reach, having been safely housed in their Father's home, he will proceed to persecute the earthly † saints, and specially the Jewish remnant, (ver. 7, 8.) So sore will be this time of trial, that nothing but God's sovereign love will preserve any from succumbing to his threats. But mercifully also, the period, though a very sharp and sore one, will also be very brief. For the elect's sake the days shall be shortened. (Matt. xxiv. 22; Dan. xii. 1.) For forty-two months (ver. 5), or three years and a half, that is to say, for half of Daniel's last prophetic week, will the Beast be allowed to exhibit such open defiance of everything of God's. For the former half of that week he will pretend to

* The *καί*, or "and" after the word "tabernacle" should be omitted. God's tabernacle is His heavenly saints.

† See verse 8. The words, "of the Lamb slain," refer to the book of life, (compare chap. xvii. 8.) It is the slain Lamb's book. Then the names are said to be written FROM the foundation of the world=earthly blessing. (See page 130 of Vol. i.) It is a mistake to quote this verse as if it said the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world.

be Israel's friend. (Dan. ix. 27.) And when he subsequently throws off the mask of friendship to Israel, and requires universal worship, his cruel reign will be cut short by the appearing of the Son of God. (Chap. xix. 11.)

4. Yet, though the Tribulation will be so very sore and universal, those that are God's must not defend themselves with carnal weapons. Such is the import of xiii. 9, 10. He who has the hearing ear is enjoined to remember that he who leads into captivity must go into captivity. The Lord has not forgotten His precepts in the sermon on the mount, (Matt. v.—vii.), even though His professing people may ignore them. And these are to be prepared to witness for God only as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did before them. (See also John xviii. 86.) In this way they exhibit "patience" as to their foes, and "faith" in their God.

5. Then further, the second or inferior Beast of verse 11, is, if I may so say, the ecclesiastical power, or that to which such power will by that period have drifted. Erst the ecclesiastical ruled the civil, as the woman sat on the Beast. (Chap. xvii. 8.) But the final issue is for the civil power to be pre-eminent. At the present day things are in a transition state. Thus, in Germany these two powers are struggling as to which of them is to be pre-eminent. But here at length, the lamb-like

Beast ministers and panders in every way to the first or imperial potentate. And in order to show his ardour in this service all the more, he himself invents a mode of rivetting the emperor's chains more firmly on all his subjects. He proposes that an image of his master, the Beast, shall be made, calling to mind the scheme of Nebuchadnezzar. This image is what is termed in Matthew and Daniel "the abomination of desolation." "Abomination" is the usual expression in the Old Testament for an idol. (1 Kings xi. 5, 7.) This will be the abomination, or idol of desolation, or that which makes desolate, inasmuch as it spreads desolation, persecution and death everywhere. This image will be set up by the Beast's command in the Jewish temple. (Matt. xxiv. 15.) But probably, also, fac-similes of the same image will be with military honors, and much pomp set up and worshipped in all the cathedrals and churches and chapels of Christendom. Thus will God judge the whoredom of men, who now-a-days seek, under various specious pretences, to build gorgeous fanes, in which they may show off themselves. All this "overspreading of the abomination" God allows, in order that one last and plain test of every living soul may be made ere He appears. For compare chap. xiii. 15, with chap. xiv. 9, 10. Where this worship is refused by anyone, the penalty inflicted by the Beast is death;

where it is rendered, the judgment of God is unmitigated, and eternal wrath is the portion of that worshipper. So will a people from among the Gentiles be led to associate themselves with the Jewish remnant, and to look forward longingly for the appearing of their Messiah.

6. It is quite noticeable how, throughout this thirteenth chapter, the universality and the thoroughness of the Beast's sway over men are displayed by the worship that is enjoined and enforced. In fact, we may affirm that worship, the worship of the Beast, is the leading thought of this chapter. No neutrality throughout the empire is allowed. Zeal to promote this worship will characterize its ministers. (Ver. 14.) Particularly wherein Popery and Protestantism had just missed the mark, these men will be far more sagacious. The Papal symbol is the crucifix—a dead Christ. Than this, neither does Protestantism know better. It too, in its *heart*, believes that Christ is dead, buried and done with. So perfectly each of these misses the gospel of God. But on the other hand, this false prophet urges men, as we have seen, to worship “the Beast whose deadly wound was healed,” referring, of course, to the revival of the Roman empire under his sway. Again, in verse 14, the image that the ecclesiastical power procures to be made and worshipped is spoken of significantly as “the image of the Beast that had

the wound by a sword and did live." Then will all men be filled with admiring wonder at the indubitable resurrection of imperial power.

7. Once more. In order that all men may be entirely devoted to him, and to do away with the last semblance of insubordination or of opposition, he causes all to receive his mark either on the hand or forehead. The former mode may denote tacit connection, the latter more avowed complicity. Without this mark, or in lieu thereof* his number, none will in those days be even allowed to buy or to sell. In all places, even at the exchange, the market, or the counting-house, his mark will be everywhere worn. If Christ now be neglected for the sake of money-getting, the Beast will not. His worship and his service must be paramount to every other claim. In all this, again, God is still judging the heartless worldliness of men.

* The first "or" *ή*, of verse 17 should be omitted. The verse should read thus: "And that no man might buy or sell save he that had the mark :—the name of the Beast or the number of his name." That is to say, the mark might be expressed in letters, or cabalistically in numbers. The English reader may be informed that in the languages of the Greeks and of the Hebrews, letters are used to express numbers as well as sounds. The Arabic numerals, so generally used by us, were unknown to them. There is something with us of this use of letters for numbers, as any one may readily see who looks at the face of a clock.

8. But what is the Beast's number, as that by means of which his name may be expressed somewhat cabalistically? The answer given is 666. How are we to interpret this number? Here I am not sure that I should be far astray if I said that six hundred modes of understanding this number have by divers ingenious men been attempted. It would be waste of time to attempt to recapitulate the chief of these. That which found the number in the name Napoleon has been with some the most popular; as the name of Nero perhaps is the most recent. The most favoured interpretation of the protestant writers has been *λατεινος*—"the Latin man." And for this the authority of Ireneus has been cited. But, unfortunately for this view, the number 666 cannot be made up from it, without the letter *ε*, which yet is an interpolation. Apart from the exigencies of controversy on this point, the word "Latin" must be written in Greek *λατινος*. But then that clever rendering becomes as useless as is the parallel popish one, that finds the clue in the word "Lulther" for "Luther," where a second letter *λ* has to be supplied to complete the 666.

But putting aside these vain guesses and efforts of ingenious men, the general idea is plain enough. Whilst seven is God's number in His present dealings with the world; six is the utmost reach of man. Let us cite a Scriptural case or two in point. We

find, then, that the image of Nebuchadnezzar, to which reference is certainly made in this chapter, was in height sixty cubits, and in breadth six cubits. (Dan. iii. 1). Again, the gold that came to Solomon, the greatest king that the old creation has had, amounted in one year, in weight, to six hundred three score and six talents of gold. (1 Kings x. 14; contrast with this Matt. vi. 29.)

Besides the above, we must add that the Greek letters for six hundred three score and six, are $\chi\zeta\varsigma$. Now these three are the most twisted letters in the Greek alphabet. Is there any allusion to Satan in this? Moreover, the Greek word for Christ is, in its beginning and in its ending, similar to these three letters, only with the all-important exception, that the letter ρ , used for royalty and for rule in many languages, disappears here; and instead thereof, there is the Greek letter that resembles a serpent in its contortions.

The above is all I have to offer on this mysterious number. It is probable that its full application will be perfectly seen only when the Beast or Roman emperor, to whom it belongs, has appeared.

However, in conclusion, what is much more important for us to observe about both these two Beasts, to wit, the imperial and the ecclesiastical potentates before the world when the Lord returns, is this, viz: that they both, the civil and the religious

heads of the world, are caught so red-handed, in *flagrante delicto*, in their sin, that further judgment of them is wholly superfluous. They are cast alive, a thousand years before any one else, into the lake of fire and brimstone. They become, as some one has said, the Enoch and the Elijah of hell. (Rev. xix. 20, 21.) And such, then, is the end of this world's grandeur, and of this world's religion. Let us not be deceived by appearances. Let us judge things in God's light!

LECTURE XIV.

CHAPS. XIV.—XV. 4.—THE OUTCOMERS FROM THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

MUCH that is to be found in this chapter is wonderfully parallel with chap. vii. Thus, in chap. vii. there are two distinct parties, wit, the hundred and forty and four thousand saved out of Israel; and then, secondly, the multitude that no man can number, saved out of all nations. Here again, we have this same band of a hundred and forty and four thousand, nearest to the throne of all the people *that are upon the earth*. And then there is the everlasting gospel (verse 6) to be preached to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people; with the implied object, of course, of saving some out of all these nations. And by putting these two several accounts, additional

light on each is obtained. This will appear presently. Again: neither the hundred and forty and four thousands of Israel, nor yet the saved multitude out of the nations, is the church of God. This unique company is, as we have largely proved, represented in those early chapters by the twenty-four elders and four cherubim. And likewise here, in this parenthetic part of this book, the symbolic man-child of chapter xii. is Christ and the church. When once that man-child is caught up to heaven, the language concerning it is at once changed, the plural being invariably used. So those that have been caught up are termed "brethren," "dwellers in the heavens," etc. Thus, again, by combining these two accounts,—that one, of the elders and cherubim of chap. v.; and this other one, of the heavenly people called home,* of chap. xii.,—the additional touches in each picture assist in the understanding of the other. So that the three several groups, of the Church, of the Israelite, and of the Gentile, are perfectly discernible in those early chapters of this book, and again, in this great parenthesis of chaps. xii.—xiv. Only there is this important difference between the two pictures of

* In chap. xii. 12, and again in chap. xiii. 6, reference is made in the parenthetic part of this book, to the rapture of the church, as now already consummated.

chaps. vii. and xiv.; in that the overcomers are regarded anticipatively in chapter vii.; but in chap. xiv. the view is retrospective. There, in the former chapter, God's prescient care of His elect is sketched; here, on the other hand, in this latter chapter, it is seen that God's counsel did stand, and His elect were preserved.

This chapter, on the exposition of which we have now to enter, is sub-divided into seven or eight distinct parts, nearly every one of which is marked off from the rest by a reference to angelic intervention. For it is by the ministry of angels, that the Son of Man will, at the close of the age, separate the wicked for destruction who are found in His kingdom, from the good who are to be spared. (Matt. xiii. 41, 49.) But the church of God will be gathered home by the descent in person of the Lord Jesus. He loves her too well, and he has too much regard for her, to *send* for her; He Himself will come to receive us to Himself.

The first section of this chapter is comprised in verses 1 to 5. It speaks of the remnant or nucleus of the new nation of Israel grouped around the Lamb in the nearest place to Him of all *on earth*, and in the most exalted place too, even on Mount Zion. (Compare Isaiah ii. 2.) I may be excused if I remark, for the help of some readers, who have been wont to spiritualize, as it is called,

this word, that Mount Zion means Mount Zion, now in degradation, but then in honour. For above the earthly Jerusalem will overshadow the heavenly glory in which the church will be. (See Heb. xii. 22—24, with my notes thereon. See also Isaiah iv. 5). The reader will also recal to mind the hints given, when we were studying chap. x., upon Christ then standing up, in contradistinction to His session now at the right hand of God. And when we read here, and in chap. vii., of the twelve times twelve thousands* of Israel, with not one man lacking, who have gotten the victory, as it is further explained in chap. xv. 2, over the Beast and his false prophet, we are reminded of Numbers xxxi., where twelve thousand of Israel, a thousand from each tribe, were triumphant victors over Balak and his false prophet Balaam.

There is a supplementary account of these Israel-

* It is the frequent way of God to count His nation of Israel in their thousands. (See, for instance, Numbers i. 16, and Micah v. 2.) But we who are His heavenly people, are counted in units. (John x. 3.) Even the very hairs of our head are all numbered. (Luke xii. 7.) I may further add, that whilst seven appears to be the divine number in God's order now—three being the symbolic number for God, and four for the earth, (See Rev. vii. 17)—twelve appears to be the divine number in the future age. But more on this point on chap. xxi.

itish, and of the Gentile victors of verses 6, 7, to be found in chap. xv. 2—4. This supplement is added immediately after a brief reference to the angels with the seven Vials in verse 1 of that chapter, on purpose to identify the sufferers under the Beast in this parenthetic account, with the witnesses for God during the awful process of His hardening of His foes by the threefold series of judgments of Seals, and of Trumpets, and of Vials, in that part of this book which is outside this great parenthesis. And hence it is that at once again, directly after this rapid supplementary allusion, the inspired seer repeats his words of these seven angels with the seven last plagues, in verse 6. So that the long parenthesis of chap. xii.—xiv. which we are considering, does not fully close until the end of verse 4 of chap. xv. Bearing this important fact in mind, we shall do well to conjoin the two descriptions together, viz : of the Israelitish victors of chap. xiv. 1—5, and of the Gentile saved ones of verses 6, 7, with the instructive supplement of chap. xv. 2—4.

Now that these are an earthly people, I mean a people saved for the millenial earth, albeit the most exalted of these, even the new nation of Israel, is evident from the entire wording of the passage. Thus Christ stands upon Mount Zion with the thousands of each tribe of Israel around Him. On their foreheads is seen written, not *their* Father's name,

but "His Father's." They are said to be "redeemed from the earth," in its present defiled state, and "from among men." Thus they are the "first-fruits" * of the millennial harvest of saved, converted souls. (Compare verses 15 and 16.) They were "not defiled with women," that is to say, they were quite separated from the worldly-religious systems of Babylon, and her corrupt daughters.† Thus non-entanglement with religious evil may appear a small trifle during man's day, and with his lax judgment of the evil around him. But it will not appear so small when God arises and exposes the evil as it is seen in His sight. They have gotten the victory

* The term, "first-fruits," has in it certainly the idea of dignity. Being the first that are brought to God, they are placed down at once right before the Lamb. Then, those subsequently saved stand next in rank and in nearness to the Lamb. So, likewise, in the heavens, the church is the first-fruits and the first-born in resurrection. (See Heb. xii. 23, and compare James i. 18.) Also in a higher sense still, Christ is Himself the First-fruits. (1 Cor. xv. 20, 23.)

† To understand the expression about "not being defiled with women" (chap. xiv. 3), we must breathe the atmosphere of this book, and behold this world, with its religious corporations, as God beholds them. The very next words, about "following the Lamb," suggest what is meant. They clung to Christ in His rejection, and so share in His glory. (Also compare Rev. xvii. 2—5; xiv. 12; Luke xxii. 28; 1 Samuel xxii.; and 2 Cor. xi. 2.)

over, or rather “out of* the Beast;” even “out of his mark, and out of the number of his name:”—victory over him by separation from him, even at the cost of persecution. Therefore it is they are beheld as on the sea of glass, mingled with fire,†—standing on its brink, but not sitting down before God, as is the church’s wondrous privilege through infinite grace to do. These are the new nobles of Christ’s earthly kingdom—His chosen associates wherever He goes on earth. In their mouth is found no lie; for they are blameless.‡ Speaking of His reign, He had said in Psalm ci., “He that

* *τοὺς νικῶντας ἐκ, ἐκ, ἐκ.* The words, “from his mark,” should be omitted. The victory *out from* the Beast is by resistance and separation from the two ways in which the Beast marked his followers, namely, either with his name, or with his number. (Chap. xiii. 17.) But this *ἐκ* being thrice repeated, viz: “victory out of the Beast, and out of his image, and out of his number,” is very important in a controversial and in a practical sense. It goes far towards answering the question, as to whether those can win victories over an evil system, whilst yet they are not separated out from it.

† With this clause, “mingled with fire,” compare my note on chap. vii. of the outcomers from the tribulation having “palms” or “phœnixes” (*φοινίκες*) in their hands.

‡ For “guile,” read “lie,” and omit the clause, “before the throne of God,” after the words, “without fault.”

telleth lies, shall not tarry in my sight ; " specially as to that great lie * of this period, they have been preserved from all complicity therewith.

At the same time, their song, which through being near enough morally to the heavenly band, they are able to learn and sing, is sung by them not only before the throne, but also before the cherubim and elders too, that is to say, it is sung before the church of God. (Verse 8.) Now in chapter vii. the saved multitude out of all nations are represented as "crying with a loud voice," whilst the crowned elders or church are contrastedly heard to sing. (Verse 9.) Here these Israelites, being somewhat nearer to the Lamb on earth than are the Gentiles alluded to in the next verses (xiv. 6, 7,) sing also. This, as we are expressly informed in verse 8, no-one else on earth can do, but these redeemed thousands of Israel. Nevertheless, sing as they may, their song is termed, "The song of Moses," as well as "The song of the Lamb." (Chap. xv. 3.) The text of their song, of which we here read, is widely different, in its tone and character, from the song of the glorified church in chap. v. 9. It reaches no higher than "great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty ; just and true are Thy ways,

* Instead of "believe a lie," in 2 Thess. ii. 11, it should be written, "the (τῷ) lie," i.e., the lie of the lawless one.

Thou King of nations * ; 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." I only add here, that when it is said, " They stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God, and sing the song of Moses, etc., the allusion is very marked to the song of " Moses and the children of Israel," and to " Miriam," with " the women that followed her with timbrels," as they sang on the shores of the Red Sea. (See Exodus xv. 1 and 20.) Thus, every word here throughout is of so Jewish, or rather, of so Israelitish a cast, that no one need mistake as to who this company is. †

2. On the other hand, the next section (verses 6 to 7) looks at God's last call to the Gentiles, and to

* It is well known that for *ἁγίων*, " saints," here, we ought to read *ἐθνών* " nations." The words are a quotation from Jeremiah x. 7. The correction is important, inasmuch as the passage, as we have it in the authorized version, is the only warrant that can be adduced for our hymn writers persistently calling Christ our King, instead of the Scriptural designation, our Lord. He is King of the Jews, King of nations, and our Head and Lord. But as the word rhymes well with " sing," " ring," etc., so truth is oft sacrificed to sound.

† In their reference to both the works and the ways of God, there may be an allusion to Psalm ciii. 7 ; whilst in the grouping together in the chapter xv. 3 and 5, of God's way as both in the sanctuary and yet in the sea, the glance may be at Psalm lxxvii. 13, 19.

the saving of many of them by the preaching of "the everlasting gospel." The gospel which these receive, and by which they are saved, is but a very small part of the gospel that is to be preached now. Nay, it is widely different from what we are to proclaim. Instead of "Now is the accepted time ; now is the DAY OF SALVATION," the proclamation then will be, "The HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT is come." And the exhortation appended, to "worship Him that made heaven and the earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters," is peculiarly pertinent for the period when this gospel is preached, namely, when the Beast will be requiring the worship of all his subjects, as if he were their creator, and when all of them, save those who are incited by this call and warning of God's, will yield that worship. It is for this cause that this gospel is termed here, "The everlasting gospel," as it will require that faith in Him, and that clinging to Him, which are requisite at every age of this fallen world's history. Then we learn from the parallel part in chap. vii. 9, that a great multitude out of all these nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and peoples,* will heed God's message, and in consequence will refuse to worship the Beast, and will trust in the living God. Hence,

* The collocation of words about the nations, kindreds, peoples, and tongues, in chap. vii. 9, and in xiv. 6, is too similar to be overlooked.

their song, which they subsequently sing, "Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name," (chap. xv. 4), looks directly back at the gospel which they had embraced. Thus they, with the hundred and forty and four thousands of Israel, will be saved for the millennial earth. These all having watched and prayed, "have been accounted worthy to escape * the earth's sore time of trial, and finally to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke xxi. 86.) Then shall come to pass those sayings of the Lord in Luke xvii. 26: As it was in the days of Noah; and again, as it was in the days of Lot; so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man—"in the day when the Son of Man is revealed," (verse 30.) "In that night, two men shall be in one bed," or "two women shall be grinding together"; and the one shall be surprised, whilst he says peace and safety, and taken for wrath and judgment; and the other shall be left, as Noah and Lot were left for mercy and salvation.

So these two companies together † stand before

* The word "escape" in Luke xxi. 86, imports salvation by passing quite through the trial. See 1 Cor. x. 13, where the force of this idea of escaping trial is explained to be by ability to bear it.

† In chap. xiv. 1, 3, the hundred and forty and four thousands of Israel are before the throne and before the Lamb, and in chap. vii. 15, the saved multitude out of all nations are thus placed.

Him at His appearing, on the sea of glass mingled with fire. In their hands are palms and harps to praise withal. Their harps are termed "harps of God." They are not timbrels made by human skill. They are instruments of divine workmanship, fitted to awaken melody worthy of their praise. They have gotten the victory over the Beast. Therefore, they shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

8. Then after this reference to the above two classes of Jew and Gentile, who shall be saved out of the world, and go through the great tribulation, there follows, in the next place, by another angel, the cry that Babylon is fallen. It will be advisable at present to waive the enquiry as to what judgment is predicted by this cry. When we have concluded our meditation on the great parenthesis of chaps. xii.—xiv., we shall at once come to the third series of hardening judgments on God's foes. And there, under the sixth and seventh Vials, we shall obtain ample instruction as to the signification of this cry. At present we will only remark, that the position of this eighth verse affords no little aid to the interpretation of the angel's triumphant shout. For in

the subsequent verses of our chapter, the question appears put before all men with perfect plainness, as to whether they will worship the beast, that is, the future emperor of the Roman world, or God? And in this way it is suggested that there is nothing intermediate to stumble or to bewilder anyone. But if so, then the Babylon that disappears formally and totally from view at this time, by the decisive action of the emperor and his kings (chap. xvii. 16), and of their peoples (chap. xvi. 12—19), is nothing else than the last semblance of false Christianity in the world, not only after the rapture of the Church, but also after the apostasy of many of its preachers and other advocates under the sixth Seal. That is to say, all the religiousness in the world then left, which induces men to speak of so much of the civilized world as Christendom—all will be trampled out with violence by the rulers, and rejected with disdain by all their peoples. So the question will then have come narrowed to a point for each individual to answer.

1. Neutrality also will be quite impossible. This will be at once apparent by comparing the warning of the third angel in verses 9—11, with the Beast's renative of worship or death in chapter xiii. 7, 15,

No wonder that this angel's cry is, as was the angel's word of giving glory to God, uttered with a loud voice." Such is the urgency of the

question, which every one each for himself must reply to in one way or in the other. And according as each one chooses the worship of God or of the emperor ; so will such choice involve, on the one hand, present and sore suffering, with future salvation from the Messiah of Israel, when He appears with His church ; or else present, temporary ease and impunity, with future, eternal torment. Also it is probably for the same cause of the urgency of this matter at this time, and that none may incur such woe without full warning, that the horrors of hell are pictured and expiated upon in this passage with a fulness of detail nowhere else to be found perhaps in all the Word of God. Stronger language, surely, of the wrath to come it were difficult to conceive. The cup of God's vengeance, "mixt and unmixt"*—"mixt," that is, with every horrible ingredient, and "unmixt," that is, undiluted, will have to be drunk by each one for ever that attempts at this time of the end to trifle with God. And thus upon the last generation, ere Christ appears, comes down all the guilt, and so likewise all the punishment of all the preceding generations. And in this way, according to verse 12, will the saints' patience be maintained. They will know that it is far better to suffer at the hands of man for keeping the commandments of God, and abiding in the faith of a coming Messiah, than incur

* του κεκρασμένου ακρατον.

such sore and eternal wrath of the living God. But yet, in an hour of such terrible trial their preservation can be only owing, and is twice in this very book ascribed, to the divine predestination from the foundation of the world. So perfectly, therefore, had the omniscient One foreseen the extreme heights of mad rage against Himself, into which the seminal sin of Adam would eventually grow. But so perfectly, too, ere that sin was perpetrated, had He provided against all its wildest excesses, whether in men's rejection and murder of earth's rightful and gracious Lord (Acts iv. 27, 28), or in their abject submission and craven worship of him, the lawless one,—Satan's masterpiece. (Chap. xiii. 8, and chap. xvii. 8.)

5. And so those who dare to worship God, and to keep His commandments, must for their steadfastness expect death. But this death, even with those concomitant indignities and tortures to which they may be subjected, are after all an honour to those that incur them, and they themselves are "blessed." For thus they prove in very deed how inimical they are to this hell-inspired foe of Christ, and how heartily they acknowledge and await another Lord. And so these shall in their measure share with Christ and His church in the gladness of the approaching day of heaven's triumph. (See Rev. xx. 4.) Therefore they are a blessed people; ay, and this

sort of death is a part of their blessing too, from henceforth and until the Lord descends and stops the persecution. "Yea," adds the Holy Ghost, in encouraging explanation; for then their toils they have ceased, and their works and their sufferings for Him remain to be rewarded. Such is the tenor of the ill-understood passage of verse 13. And thus are these seemingly forgotten ones who die intermediately between the two dispensations amply watched over and provided for. (See Matt. xxiv. 21, 22; Isaiah xxvi. 20.)

The sixth and seventh parts of this chapter afford us a two-fold view of Christ's judgment of this world at His appearing; verses 14—16 picture the Lord as the Husbandman putting in His sickle at the time of harvest. But it is the harvest of the earth that He then reaps. The other verses (18 to 20) represent the Lord as treading the winepress of the wrath of God, and as trampling on His foes in His thoroughly aroused fury. And as of old, the harvest and the vintage were succeeded by the Feast of Tabernacles; so the Lord Jesus having separated His own that feared God, and having trodden down all His foes, will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His ancients gloriously, (Isa. xxvi. 23.) And men of all nations shall come up yearly to celebrate this feast with intelligence and joy. (Zech. xiv. 16.)

Now the former one of these symbolic views, may be designed to exhibit the Lord's way with those men of the nations that are to be spared at the time of His setting up His kingdom, and the latter, of the fate of the wicked then living. Or again : the latter picture may be of the destruction awaiting His open foes then gathered to defy Him to His face, and made His footstool to be crushed under His heel ; and the former may set forth His discriminating judgment of all those righteous, and also of those wicked who shall not be found in bold defiance of Him in that day. I think the latter interpretation may be the correct one. (Here compare Matt. xxv. 31—46, and Luke xix. 27 with verse 22.)

The Lord Jesus is called Son of Man in verse 14. as being about to execute judgment. (Compare chap. i. 13 ; John v. 27 ; and Acts xvii. 31.) A crown rests upon His brow, to signify that the time has arrived for Him to take the kingdom. Thrice here (verses 14, 15, 16) we read of Him as being seated. Thus it is evident that He having been duly invested by God with the sovereignty of the world, is also enthroned, and that His judgment, whilst it will be measured and exact, will also be irreversible and eternal. (See Matt. xxv. 31, 32, 33, 46.) In this picture He is not upon His Father's throne, as He yet is in chap. iii. 21. From that He had arisen and had come down. Now He is upon His own throne. His seat is a cloud ; for a different judge is He, indeed, to

any that man ever had before. His judgment is the judgment of heaven. If He is King, He is also God. As to the sickle, Elliott in his *Horæ*, lays stress upon its being spoken of as "sharp," and argues thence that this comparison also, as of the other in verse 19, is of vengeance. But the second explanation of these two similes, viz: of the Harvest and of the Vintage, which I have offered to the reader's consideration above, perfectly meets this difficulty. Whilst the leading thought in each is clearly of judgment; yet in the harvest scene of verses 14—16 it is of judgment in the way of separation of the goats from amongst the sheep, or of the tares from amongst the wheat. The test applied to distinguish between these two commingled classes is furnished us in Matt. xxv. 40, 45.

Then, lastly, we have the judgment of the Lord's open foes, when gathered together to defy Him at His appearing. These verses, in this closing part of the great parenthesis of this book, are strikingly parallel with the words in xix. 15—21, in the remainder of this book, that is, outside the said parenthesis. There, too, as if in distinct allusion to this earlier account of this same judgment, it is written that "He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." (See xix. 14.) The coincidence is the more remarkable, inasmuch as the prevailing idea in that later passage is rather of His foes, as armies set in battle array against Him, than

of a winepress for Him to trample down. But, indeed, this symbol is often made use of by the prophets to set forth the terribleness, the pitilessness, the universality of His vengeance on all His adversaries, at His appearing. See, for instance, Isa. xviii. lxiii.; Joel iii. Compare also Psalm cx. and ii. Note too, here, the peculiar language used: "The vine of THE EARTH." It is neither God's Jewish vine (Ps. lxxx.); nor yet, indeed, is it that vine of John xv., into which His own heavenly people had been engrafted. Rather, it is contrasted with these. Here is the end of Christendom—of all that Christendom which remains, after all that were God's own have been removed. Here are its rulers and people all hardened, and gathered together for their destruction. There is no separation here; it is utter wrath on all. These hosts of foes will be congregated in Palestine at his appearing. (See xvi. 14; xvii. 14; xix. 15, 19.) Also observe, that the identical word, "gather," of those Scriptures, is found likewise here. (xiv. 19.) And it is singular that the entire length of Palestine, from Dan to Beersheba, is just about "sixteen hundred furlongs," or two hundred miles. Whilst the city, "Megiddo," that is, Armageddon, will be the headquarters of the camp of the Beast, or Roman Emperor, at this juncture; his forces, as locusts, will cover the land. Likewise, their destruction will be on a very vast scale. So immense will be the

slaughter, that, as we are here informed, their blood will not only ensanguine the Holy Land from end to end; but reach up also unto the horses' bridles. Out of this vast Aceldama, or field of blood, the only place that appears to be excepted is the holy city, Jerusalem (verse 20.) The language is very vivid and intensely awful. The land that has been so often and so much down-trodden by Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, Roman, Moslem, yea, and by all the enemies of Israel in turn, shall at last, in God's time, be purged once and for ever of the presence of all foes by a deluge of their own blood. This slaughter is far beyond anything that has ever been known before: but then, it is executed by the Lord God Almighty, in unsparing vengeance. It is also, as would appear from verse 18, in ample retribution for the sorrows of His Jewish people.

Thus the seven parts of this chapter afford us a connected account of the entire dealings of God with the living at the close of this age. As to the supplement of this chapter in xv. 2—4, we have already remarked thereon, in the exposition of xiv. 1—8; where also we have accounted for the reference to the angels with the seven vials in verse 1, when rather we might have expected this reference in verses 6, 7, and where, remarkably, we find it repeated, namely, at the recommencement of the main subject, after the parenthesis in chap. xii.—xv. 4 has been concluded.

LECTURE XV.

CHAPS. XV. 5—XVI. THE THIRD AND LAST SERIES OF HARDENING JUDGMENTS ON CHRIST'S FOES.

WE have now completed our survey of the teaching in the great parenthesis of chaps. xii.—xv. 4. And we have seen that, whilst in the earlier portion of this book, beginning at chap. vi., the Lord is inflicting judgments on His foes; there, conversely, His foes are beheld in their last and determined attempts against His friends, to wit, His earthly people, at the period immediately anterior to His personal intervention in glory for their succour and salvation. Now, the insertion of this parenthesis in this particular place which it occupies in the entire prophecy, * *just after the*

* To illustrate how intimately this parenthesis of chaps. xii. to xiv. is linked on with the chapters before and after it, I cite two cases. Thus, just before chap. xii. we are informed that the death of the two witnesses is caused by the Beast from the abyss. (See chap. xi. 7.) But up to that part of the prophecy no explanation has been afforded us about this Beast. It is found in chap. xiii. So again, from the account of the Vials in chap. xvi., we learn that the first of these judgments descends

account of the second series of God's hardening judgments, namely, those of the Trumpets; and just *before* the third series of those judgments, namely, those of the Vials, looks as if it were designed to suggest the reason why the wrath must now be executed to the uttermost on those His opponents. For this peculiar arrangement in the construction of this book thus serves to illustrate the truth, that whatever is done upon the earth He doeth it Himself. He Himself has a hand in, and Himself does righteously what man designs wickedly. Thus we perceive *why* the vengeance of God proceeds against those unhappy men to their complete hardening, and even to their final destruction at His appearing. (See Psalm xxi. 8—12.) We cannot but feel awed, as we perceive the universal misery and the utter casting off of any natural fear of God from the minds of men, effected by the outpouring of these Vials; but we cease to pity, nay, with the angel of the waters, we exclaim in adoration, "Thou art righteous, O Lord," as we recall to mind to what a pitch of madness their hate grew against Himself.

Nor yet must it be forgotten that this extreme

on them that had the mark of the Beast. (Chap. xvi. 2.) Here, too, the reference is clearly to chap. xiii. Thus this parenthetical account is in the former instance alluded to ere it is commenced, and again it is alluded to after it is closed.

rage of the nations of Christendom against God has been largely produced, and eventually fanned into flame, by the false Christianity with which they have been surrounded, and the hollowness of which they have so perfectly seen through, that they are determinedly aroused to throw off the whole thing, once and for ever, as a loathsome incubus. (Chap. xvii. 16.) And thus Christendom's religiousness, instead of being aught serviceable in witness for God, conduces, in no small degree, to the growing infidelity throughout this dispensation, and largely contributes to help on the last outbreak of man in his daring rebellion against God, ere the Lord descends. Oh ! well may we see why God displays to us the picture of Babylon in her fall and in her doom, and also of the hatred of the nations first levelled at her, and then surging up openly against Himself. For thus we may learn, if we have the hearing ear, how dangerous it is for wilful, religious man to depart even a hair's breadth from the written Word, and from the precise instructions of God. Here we see that if disobedience does set in, and departure from the revelation of His written Word does take place, the evil will go on increasing, and the apostasy will become darker and darker. And this fact all ecclesiastical history confirms. Thus things reach a pass, for which there is no remedy. Nothing remains save for divine judgment to sweep

away the whole corrupt thing. That which was once "the house of God," (1 Tim. iii.), becomes "a great house," (2 Tim. ii.), Christendom is adjudged to be Babylon, and she who loudly claimed to be the chaste spouse of Christ, has become the great whore, not only corrupt herself, but positively corrupting all "kings and peoples" that have to do with her. (Chap. xvii. 2.) And this, reader, remember, is God's own representation of the spurious Christianity all around you. Oh! then beware. Begin with God and His Word; aye, and end there too. Turn not aside, either to the right hand or to the left. If you will add to, or subtract from His Word, you may here see whither such disobedience ultimately tends. Moreover, you cease to be a witness for God. Yea, you actually injure His cause. You give occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

But now that the drift of the judgment of the Vials may be distinctly apprehended, the reader's attention must be recalled to a principle of interpretation already* laid down in the exposition of the judgment of the Seals. It was then observed, that to get certainly at the main lesson intended to be conveyed to us in the account of either of the three series of judgments, whether of Seals, or of Trumpets, or of

* See *The Latter-Rain* for November 1873, page 155.

Vials, we must particularly note the result of the last one or two of the series. For in each series or set of judgments, the climax, the grand issue * of that entire set, will be found naturally somewhere towards the close. Then you will be able to read backwards, and observe what God was working to effect all along that course of judgments. The crash, which is traced to follow at the close of each series, has been doubtless contributed to by the preceding five or six judgments. Thither, for certain, they have all

* Here is one of the graver errors of the historical school of interpreters of this book. Such have amused themselves and their readers so much with minute criticisms on the details of the several judgments, that they have generally failed to enquire as to the drift of the judgments as a whole. The ingenuity has been taxed to find exact corroborations in the prophecy with some events in the history, that struck their minds; whilst God's own index, as to what the blows of His hand were aimed at, have been disregarded. I will cite a single instance of what I mean by the engrossed occupation with details to the exclusion of the general drift of the judgment. We shall, I think, come to see that the entire teaching of the chapters now specially before us (chaps. xvi.—xviii.) centres round the statement in chap. xvii. 16—18. Yet Elliott can make neither head nor tail of this important passage. He has to go far back in his scheme of interpretation for an explanation of these verses. For he refers them to the burning of Rome, which took place more than a thousand years ago. Yet, on the other hand, he largely discusses the question as to whether the ulcer spoken of in chap. xvi. 2 be the small pox!

tended. But the third series of judgments eventuates in the drying up of the waters of the mystic Euphrates, on which the apocalyptic Babylon is built, (chap. xvi. 12), and then, finally, at the out-pouring of the seventh Vial, this said Babylon is quite broken up. Then, when once the object of the entire series of judgments is fully manifested by the ultimate result—for God's purpose cannot fail—let the at last disclosed object have its full weight on the mind in the interpretations of the previous judgments.

But, further, there can be no question that the entire twenty or twenty-one judgments of Seals, Trumpets, and Vials are each and all closely connected. And the judgments of the Seals introduce those of the Trumpets, † and the judgments of the Trumpets introduce those of the Vials. But the final and overwhelming effect of the Vials is the overthrow of apostate Babylon. Therefore, it is to this overthrow, as to the main design of God in these judgments, that the whole of the three series have

† Thus the last three, or woe Trumpets, are somewhat distinguished in the prophecy from the first four Trumpets. And those first four Trumpets, as we have largely seen, are further unfoldings of the judgment of the sixth Seal. And so, ere the woe Trumpets commence to sound, ten judgments have been inflicted. But this fact goes to prove the homogeneity of all the twenty, or twenty-one judgments.

been directed. To expose and to judge Babylon is the ascertained grand object of God in all the sorrows inflicted by the Seals, and by the Trumpets, and by the Vials. This fact at once suggests to us how much the sin of Babylon had been covered up and varnished over by those parties benefitted by its grandeur, seeing that it required no less than three courses of sore judgments, and the second course being sorer than the first, and the third course being sorer than the second, ere it stood forth undisguised and bared in all its spiritual enormities of guilt. Like as when a surgeon, desiring to remove a bullet, has need to continue cutting deeper and deeper, until he has reached with his knife the part of the flesh where it lies ; so God's time of forbearance being past, and He being intent on the uncovering of Christendom's iniquity, proceeds on and on with these successive judgments of His, until that **BABYLON**, which religious man had for so many centuries lived and gloried in, is beheld as it actually is and had been. And it is found, and it is in these chapters adjudged to be, a wicked caricature of a divine mystery, that had been used for the purpose of ministering to man's selfishness, and to man's greed, where corruption had been hidden under boastful assumption, until men, and kings, and nations, had discovered the vile cheat. So choke full of sin, albeit of a spiritually whorish sort, is it

at last perceived to be, and so utterly changed by declension, by compromise, and by distortion, has it become from what it had been at the outset; and, moreover, it having now, since the rapture of the saints, nothing left in it but a jumble of Paganism, and of Judaism, and of perverted Christianity, though in varied proportions indeed in different climes and sects, that the exhaustion of its resources is shown in this scripture to be absolutely necessary, ere the glory of God can at all shine out, in the rescue of His earthly people. (See chap. xvi. 12.) Further, its destruction must be entire and overwhelming, ere that people's Jewish song of Hallelujah can be once heard. For mark the tenor of the repeated shout of joy in chap. xix. 1—6, is consequent upon the widespread devastation and dismay caused by its fall in chap. xviii. Even its godless preachers and priests, by throwing up their profession of Christianity, some little while ere this, in large numbers, had abandoned it to its fate. See the remarks on the sixth Seal, and on the third and fifth Trumpets. Thus, likewise, do shrewd mariners abandon, ere it be too late, their sinking vessel.

Of the last two Vials, the Holy Ghost has been pleased to enlarge the description of the effect, in ten out of the twenty-one verses of chapter xvi. Yea, moreover, chaps. xvii. and xviii. are also, as we shall soon see, in further continuation of the account of

the same vengeance on Babylon. For chapter xvii. is on one side of the picture of this Babylon, and represents it in all its earthly aggrandisement *just ere* the final blow of judgment descends upon it; whilst chapter xviii. is the obverse view of the same wicked system, *just after* the wrath of God has utterly consumed it. Also again at the close of chapter xvii., her judgment is traced to come from the hands of MEN, still more wicked than herself; but in chapter xviii. her judgment is ascribed to GOD. After which follow, in the opening verses of chapter xix., the reiterated shouts of joy at the execution of her doom. By all this amplification and particularity therefore in the account of her ways and of her end, we may discern the importance attached, in this sacred page, to this full expression of divine displeasure on Babylon.

But let us begin at the beginning. The very manner in which the narration of the closing scene of vengeance is commenced, is ominous in the extreme, and augurs that these awful judgments of God upon His foes were approaching their climax. For we read here, that the temple being opened, seven angels come forth thence, "having the seven last plagues," and that in these plagues "is *filled up* the (hardening) wrath of God." * (Chap. xv. 1—6.) God in His

* Already, in the lecture on chapters xiv.—xv. 5, at page 59 of Vol. II., the relation of chapter xv. 1 to chapter xv. 5 has been commented on. The first verse is partly connected with the

patience had long borne with that apostasy which now at length He was about to judge. But this very unwillingness to smite, itself bodes the awful character of the vengeance to be taken when once the blow descends. So with a volcano, after a very long slumber, when it once begins to vomit forth flame, there is the probability of a great eruption; the greater, the longer the silence had been previously continued. During the interval of perfect grace, whilst the Holy Ghost and the Church of God remain here, it is a throne of grace and mercy only that fills the holiest of all. Throughout this long period, the apostasies of Christendom appear to be unnoticed by Him. But how changed from all this aspect of things is what we read of in the Book of the Revelation. Here in chapter xv. nothing is beheld now in this inner shrine, but these angels with the last plagues. Who can fail to see that the fundamental principles of interpretation of this book, aye, and of many other pages too, of the inspired Word, must all be set aside, ere it can be maintained that now, whilst we are here, these

parenthetic section which is not quite concluded till the end of chapter xv. 5. But that first verse is also obviously connected with verse 6, which is outside the parenthesis. The object of this double link appears to be on purpose to identify the sufferers under the Beast's reign, as we read of them in the parenthesis, with the witnesses for God during the awful process of the hardening judgments of the Vials.

vials of God's wrath can be poured out on the earth. Here too, again, we get another distinct intimation that the Church has reached her heavenly home, previous to the infliction of these judgments. For, as we read in verse 7, it is one of the four living creatures who represent the Church in her heavenly service, that hands these Vials to the seven angels. Thus it is evident that this Church has, at the time of the Vials, begun to reign along with Christ. Likewise when the Lord opened the Seals of the book, these living creatures had, each in succession, participated in that action, by summoning the Anti-christian power into distincter shape, with the cry to it of "Come." And thus it would appear, by this repeated reference to the scene in chapter v., that the Holy Ghost had taken special care to preserve us from the strange and grave mistake of supposing that the Church's place is here on earth at the time of this hardening process.

In the infliction of God's wrath upon His foes under the Vials, there is constantly allusion to Jehovah's deliverance of Israel of old time ; not only to those instalments thereof of which we read in Exodus, but also to all those subsequent ones, as in the book of Judges, and even until they are established in peace under the sceptre of David their king. And as we have seen that the judgments of the Trumpets were in answer to the prayers of His earthly people, so

likewise are those of the Vials also. This is suggested not only from the fact of the seven Vials being themselves the seven subdivisions of the seventh Trumpet, but also from another striking coincidence in the prophecy. By conjoining chapter viii. 3, 4, with chapter v. 8, it would appear that the prayers of Israel are presented to God, not only by their uncreated angelic Priest, but also by the glorified Church; or rather that the Church presents Israel's prayers to the Lamb in chapter v. 8, and He in another character presents those prayers on the altar to God in chapter viii. 3, 4. But those prayers of these saints are there said to be contained in Vials, which are held by the Church. And here in chapter xv., after the divine angel has presented the prayers of His earthly people before God (chap. viii. 3), the Church, in her cherubic character, hands Vials full of plagues to the seven angels, as the executioners of the wrath of God. The coincidence is not verbal only, but true and important, as will be admitted by anyone who accepts the connexion of verses 5 and 6 of chapter viii. with verses 3 and 4 of the same chapter, and as already traced out in the remarks upon that chapter. It is a connexion there shown to be of cause and effect; of cause in chapter viii. 3, 4, in Israel's prayers to God ascending, and of effect in God's answers, in judgments descending on their foes. (See Exodus iii. 7, 9.) And thus we see why

these last plagues are pictured here as contained in Vials.

The plagues of old, executed upon Egypt, waxed successively, as we are all aware, sorer and sorer. There can be, of course, no limit to God's power to punish His foes. And the usual way of His judgments is to follow one after another with measured tread and in increasing severity, in order that we may learn thereby how lothe He is to take vengeance. So likewise, the judgments of the Seals, though much intenser in degree, are not altogether dissimilar to the sorrows that come down on the world even now. Then the judgments of the Trumpets are much sharper than anything that transpires under the Seals, and the very first ones intensify the confusion already produced by the Seals. The first four Trumpets, and the first four Vials, deal in parallel order with the earth, the sea, the rivers, and the light. But under those Trumpets, not yet are *men* caused to suffer, save indirectly. It is only under the last three, which, in consequence, are termed the woe Trumpets, that men themselves personally are afflicted. But under each of all the Vials, men are the objects of the plagues. Also there is now no limitation of the range of the judgments, as there had previously been under the Trumpets, to the third part of the Roman earth. And from such language as we find in chap. xvi. 3, compared with xi. 6, it is

probable that, concurrently with the providential action of the angels, the witnesses of God may be used by Him, as were Moses and Aaron of old, in the public infliction of His judgments, or at least, in the distinct warning of what next is to ensue after each plague.

The repeated mention of "blood," "blood," as the dire effect of the earlier Vials, may point to a time of bloodshed, of misery, and of anarchy, controlled, and yet fomented by the Beast's absolute reign of terror. Often have there been petty tyrants, who in their small domains, or where their iron sway was undisputed, have comported themselves towards those under them with despotic and hideous cruelty. It seems specially in the lawless nature of some to use any power which they possess in an extreme and trample-down manner. And we must remember that it is the righteous will of God that men and Israel should have a taste of that rule which they have desired, in preference to the holy, beautiful, and gentle sway of the Lord Jesus. Men's infidel songs, and their atheistic expectations, and political movements, will yet be responded to *in this world* by the living God. The fourth Vial, if the woe be expressed in the passage in symbolic style, may be in further development of the unexampled severity of the Beast's punishment of the least infraction of his will, on the one hand; and of the agony of those who in spirit are

crushed, as it were, under his iron heel, on the other. For compare what is recorded in chap. vii. 16 of the outcomers from the tribulation of this terrible time. Then the fifth Vial further deepens the general agony, and causes it to surge upwards into the court of the emperor himself, and among his own parasites and friends. Consternation and anguish are upon all, even upon the Beast himself, like as aforetime had been the case in Pharaoh's court, when the plagues at length became so intolerable and wide-reaching, that no one could remain indifferent to their effects.

But now, at the pouring out of the sixth Vial, there ensue two striking effects: one is, the drying up of the mystic Euphrates, in order "that the way of the kings from the east may be prepared;" and the other is a marked change of front on the part of the men on whom the judgment falls. No longer is there with them that abject terror of God, such as they had exhibited at the opening of the sixth Seal: nor is there that callous insensibility, which we are informed they still maintained up to the sixth Trumpet (chap. ix. 20), and indeed up to the effusion of the fourth and fifth Vials. (Chap. xvi. 9—11.) Now, at length, they are determinedly aroused to open hostility against God. Hence we learn the preparations are now commenced, or at least, the daring thought is now certainly conceived, of the concentration of the forces of the

Roman world in Palestine against Israel, yea, and against the Lord Himself, if He should interfere in their behalf. (Compare verses 14 and 16 with xiv. 19). And in verse 15 there is a sound of His own near approach. But an agency specially noted in the prophecy, as that whereby men are to be goaded on to this fearful pitch of folly and impiety, is that of the "three unclean spirits like frogs." * Now in all this direct defiance of "God Almighty," there appears a marked parallel, even if there be not a designed

* As the Beast of chap. xiii. 1 is certainly the Roman emperor of the last days, and as the second Beast of chap. xiii. 11 is the false prophet under him, (see chap. xix. 20); so these "frogs" may represent the loquacious orators of the time, acting in subordination to those their masters who inspire them. They are said to be unclean spirits like frogs, and to 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. By this language it appears to be implied, that there will be all the old Pagan hate against Christ's name (chap. xii. 3, 4), together with the entire mind of the wilful king, as Daniel calls him—of the lawless one, the man of sin, as Paul calls him, and of his chief false prophet or minister: all this will be breathed forth in the discourses of these their agents. The reader must not forget that, with the exception of such as these, the Roman world will possess no other religious teachers at this period. For the hypocritical teachers of Christianity abandon their profession soon after the rapture of the Church. In the word about these unclean spirits urging men on in their hatred of God, there may be a glance at the magicians of Pharaoh of old, Jannes and Jambres, who encouraged that monarch in his haughty attitude towards God.

allusion to the pursuit by Pharaoh and his hosts of the children of Israel, into the dried up bed of the Red Sea. And this very fact enables us readily to apprehend who they are that are here designated as "the kings FROM * the east," whose way is to be prepared for them by the exhaustion of the waters of Euphrates. But inasmuch as this last gathering of the nations at "Armageddon" (ver. 16) "outside

* The reading should be as above, "The kings FROM the East" των βασιλεων των απο ανατολων ηλίου. This translation disposes of the idea that the term "the kings" is in allusion to Cyrus. For he came from the West. Besides which, the parallel is maintained throughout, and, I believe, designedly with Israel's path from Egypt to Canaan. Hence here is the parallel for Israel, with the drying up of the Red Sea and of Jordan of old. I join these two waters, for no long forty years wilderness experience awaits them in the future. Then the fall of Babylon presently, by the action of the seven Trumpets and seven Vials, corresponds with the fall of Jericho. And the gathering of the hosts of the Beast at Armageddon, is in continued parallel with the battles of which we read in the book of Joshua. The last deliverance by the Lord in Rev. xix., will be the antitype of all His previous ones. (See Isa. ix. 4.) I am not sure whether, when it is said after the account of the fall of Babylon, that "the cities of the nations fell," there may not be some reference to such a chapter as Joshua x., or xii. 24: or again in the mention of the "great hail out of heaven" in xvi. 21, to what God had previously done for Israel, as we read in Joshua x. 11. Where the parallel ceases, I dare not say. But it is wonderfully continuous and complete—too complete to be all accidental. (See Vol. I., p. 199.)

the city" (chap. xiv. 20)—now it has been once quite mooted, we shall certainly read of again and again, even until the crisis itself is reached, of the heavenly hosts with their Lord appearing from the clouds against them, so combined and congregated against Him (chap. xix. 19, xvii. 14); therefore for the present it will be advisable for us to pass from this second and ulterior effect of the sixth Vial. And so with undistracted minds, we can diligently ponder the symbolic but significant language of verse 12. Then its connexion with what follows under the seventh Vial, and indeed with the final gathering in the Holy Land of the hosts of Europe against the Lord, will at once be apparent.

We have then to enquire what we are to understand by the drying up of the great river Euphrates *

* To refer this language to the wasting away of the Turkish empire, is a mistake evident from many considerations. It assumes that even now the judgments of the Seals, of the Trumpets, and of the previous Vials, have all been inflicted; and therefore, that the church is to go through the great tribulation, yea, and has been passing through it ever since those Seals were opened. All this view, as we have frequently seen in the course of the exposition, is at variance with the simplest and most fundamental principles of the book. Or, again, Turkey surely would be better represented by the Nile, or by the Danube, than by the Euphrates. And what about Russia, a mightier foe, surely, in the way of Israel's possession of Palestine, than Turkey ever is likely to be?

as the prime effect of the sixth Vial, and to which effect all the previous judgments on the foes of God have, as we have above shown, tended. Now Jerusalem, which should have been God's witness among the nations, had been subdued and despoiled by the metropolis of the ancient world. Babylon's grandeur increased at once on Jerusalem's fall. The main source of its wealth was its great river. The ships of Euphrates brought the riches of the provinces to the capital. (See Jer. li. 13.) But though seemingly impregnable, it was at last overcome. *Through the dried-up bed of its mighty river*, the course of which had been diverted by means of great trenches dug about it, the troops of Cyrus entered the city. By this novel method, she who, on Jerusalem's fall, had towered so high, was herself brought down, though not without divine interposition against it, as we are expressly informed in Isa. xlv. 27 and xlv. 1—3. And one of the first edicts of its conqueror enjoined Jerusalem to be rebuilt, and permitted the Jew to return to the land of his fathers.

Presently, however, Jerusalem was a second time captured. Rome, that had succeeded eventually to the sovereignty of the world, was the instrument of its second overthrow. But in the interim, between its restoration under Cyrus and its latter overthrow under Titus, a new but heavenly witness for God had

proceeded from its midst. So Rome,* its captor and its rival, also at once began to be the centre of a strange religious system. Into this system there was received most of the truth that had originally emanated from Jerusalem; but now, in Rome's hands so adulterated with foreign ingredients, that the result of the whole is Babel, confusion. Whilst God, by this latter witness of a crucified, risen, glorified and coming Lord, points His own chosen ones to a Jerusalem above; this system, extending from its centre Rome, ramifies into all countries and places, and among all peoples. Its foundation is on earth, though it soars high towards heaven. And as in all languages there is admittedly some Hebrew; so in all the sects of CHRISTENDOM there is some or other phase or part of the truth. Yet everywhere this huge system, with all its earthly subdivisions and branches, is in deadly opposition to God, to Christ, to His true people, and to His church. But now, as the true church of God is at once both a woman and a city; so likewise is this false system. Since the one is the bride, the Lamb's wife, or since Jerusalem which is above is its name; so that which is false is the great whore, or

* The four Gentile empires are viewed in Dan. ii. as one single worldly system, in opposition to the earthly kingdom of the Son of God. Hence the name of the first of these empires passes on to the other end of this system, under the fourth empire.

it is represented by the great city, which is the head of the fourth Gentile empire, viz., Rome, (Rev. xvii. 18.) And whilst the one is sustained and thrives on the pure and inexhaustible river of life, which proceeds from the throne of God and from a glorified Christ, (John vii., Rev. xxii.) ; so the corrupt system all around us derives its support from the favour and the countenance of the kings and nations of the earth. Both these parties at present love it, (Rev. xvii. 2) ; the former from the assistance it affords them in the repression of their subjects, the latter from the encouragement it gives them to hold tightly to this world, whilst yet they indulge in the vain hope of obtaining that which is above.

Thus this false woman is in antagonism to both Jerusalems. But when the true Church is taken home, the Lord will remember Zion and His ancient people. And all that which proudly vaunts itself against His cause and earthly people, He will judge. Babylon, that is to say, the anti-christian, or rather the spurious-christian system of which Rome is the centre, (but only the centre), sits on many waters. (Rev. xvii. 1.) These waters, we are informed in the prophecy, represent "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." (Chap. xvii. 15.) Riches, power and grandeur belong to this whore in abundance. She sits a queen, and sees as yet no sorrow

Everywhere the so-called Christian world* is in honor. But the waters are to be "dried up." And from the angel's own explanation of the symbol of the waters, we may perceive what is implied by their exhaustion. Instead of the city Babylon, revert to the other symbol of the prophecy, namely a woman, that is, the whore, and then we have afforded to us the scripture explanation in parallel to the exhaustion or diversion of the waters. Men "shall hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked." (Chap. xvii. 16.) Under the sixth Seal, democracy had burst all the bounds that now restrain it, and had swept away the thrones of Europe. Then those hereditary kings that have hitherto aided her, will be able to aid her no more. These may lament her desolation (chap. xviii. 9); that is all they can do. Also the false priests and teachers of Christianity had likewise under this Seal abandoned their profession, "as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is

* The Christian world! What a contradiction in terms does this language contain. The world, that is, the great foe of God, (James iv. 4; 1 John ii. 15, 16), termed "Christian." It is a proof how generally the Babylonish poison has been drunk, seeing that few start with surprise at such a conjunction of opposite terms. Think of either of the other two enemies of God, the flesh or the devil, receiving the designation, "Christian," e.g., "the Christian flesh." But any one of these phrases is no more absurd or contradictory than the other.

shaken of a mighty wind." But still the system itself is left awhile. But now the populaces, too, become quite wearied of it, and turn from it with loathing. And the elected emperor, or Beast, with his ten confederate kings, glad in this matter to gratify their people's desires, set themselves methodically to work to remove every vestige of the old Roman or Christian worship. All that men in ecclesiastical things would now fain preserve for romance, for taste, for place, for power, for wealth, all are made to disappear.

Then, as it is left naked and desolate, its internal divisions and corruptions become apparent. So when, the seventh Vial is poured out, its immediate effect is that the great city is divided into three parts, and great Babylon comes into remembrance before God. What these three parts will prove to be, I dare not attempt to say. Most certainly, even now, the Babylonish system may be spoken of as thus classified. For we have the Broad Church, the High Church, and the Low Church. Also again we have the Greek Church, the Roman Church, and the Protestant Church, with its many little sects. And if Babylon the Great be the mother of harlots (chap. xvii.5); so by the change of symbol, it follows that her daughters are the cities of the nations—are the pet offspring of nationalities and spurious Christianity—are the localized subdivisions and variations of the one great evil system.

And thus, as Jericho of old was broken up and crumbled away when the trumpet had been blown on six successive days, and when on the seventh day it had been blown seven times; so shall Babylon the great, under the action of the Trumpets and of the Vials, be broken up and disappear, in order that the stumbling-block in the way of Israel's invocation of her Messiah's aid may be removed. Babylon perishes by divine judgment indeed; though still by the instrumentality of the Beast, of the ten kings, and of their peoples; yet the destruction arises from itself, and from its own corruption, even as Jericho perished, Israel only looking on. It would appear as if, in six or seven stages, Babylon perishes. These may be thus specified:—

1. The rapture of the true saints from its midst, in case any at the time of the Lord's return should be found, in disobedience to His call, still therein.

2. The dethronement of the hereditary kings of Europe by the outburst of democracy.

3. The apostasy in large numbers of its unconverted ministers.

4. The diversion in all countries of its ample resources under Vial six.

5. The city or system itself breaking up into fragments under Vial seven.

6. Its final fall, and then its destruction. In chap. xviii. 2 and 21 these two appear to be distinguished.

7. Its centre, or chief city, destroyed by fire.

From the close of the chapter we perceive that the world's sorrows are multiplying, as its sins have been great. God has arisen to judgment, and the thunder-clouds of His wrath have become thicker and thicker. In chap. iv. we had read of "lightnings, and thunders, and voices"—there the storm was just beginning to arise. Next, in chap. viii. 5, we read of "lightnings, and thunders, and voices, *and an earthquake.*" In chap. xi. 19 the language is still further intensified; for there it is, "lightnings, voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail." Here in chap. xvi. 18 we read once more of these voices, thunders, and lightnings, and also of the "earthquake." But now the earthquake is described as "such an one as was not since men were upon the earth; so mighty an earthquake, and so great." And also of the hail, the language is: "A great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great." For God having begun to execute wrath on the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity, He will speak to them in tones louder and sorer, until most righteously His every word and warning, which men have persisted to disregard, shall have been quite fulfilled to the very last letter.

LECTURE XVI.

CHAPS. XVII.—XIX. 6. “BABYLON THE GREAT.”

SINCE it has pleased God to give us a description in full of Babylon the Great, both in her pride and in her doom, it behoves us reverently to attend thereto, and this the more, inasmuch as we have proved in the last lecture, her judgment is a main object of all the Seals, and of all the Trumpets, and of all the Vials. In hearing, and then in heeding the words of this prophecy, so as to be quite separated unto the Lord Jesus from the religious sin which this book shews us must be judged, we shall have that special blessing pronounced in chapter i. 3 and xxii. 7. Now the subject of the sixth and seventh Vials is so peculiarly important, and the effects produced by their effusion are so startling, so contrary to the fond dreams of those who will not implicitly accept God's own picture of the actual condition of the religious world, that the inspired seer pauses on these chapters xvii. and xviii., in order to recount at length and in ample detail, the

divine judgment on the world's huge christianized system, as we behold it everywhere around us, and which He Who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, pronounces to be Babylon. Similarly, He has designated the Roman empire's future head, whom all men shall wonder at, as the Beast; so true is it, that "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." Nor is great Babylon's iniquity alone bared and judged; also "the cities of the nations," or, to change the figure, the daughters of this harlot, to wit, the churches of the various nationalities, with all the minor worldly-religious confederacies founded on compromising the truth of God to the will of men; in short, the Babylonish tree, together with all its branches and ramifications in every direction—all that which, under the name of Christ, instead of being God's separated witness unto men, had become *man's* tool and *man's* creature—all is judged. Thus, these two chapters form a sort of inspired appendix to the judgments of the Vials, and notably of the last two of these.

Now many of the lines of thought that we find in these two chapters have already been of necessity anticipated in the exposition of the earlier chapters of the book. Thus, on chapter xiii. it was shown that this chapter xvii. contributes largely to its explanation; and conversely, chapter xiii. much

assists us in the sure grasp of the teaching of chapter xvii. Also again, whilst in the effusion of the Vials, the destruction of Babylon is the grand effect thereof; here are further set before us, and indeed in most vivid colouring, the cause, the mode, and the agents of that destruction. In chapter xvii., Babylon is beheld in all her worldly grandeur, in all her moral turpitude, and yet in all her imaginary security, ere the vengeance descends upon her; in chapter xviii. we have the same Babylon, but in all her desolation, after the blow has smitten her. In chapter xvii. verse 3, she is beheld seated upon the Beast, or Roman empire; in chapter xvii. 16, she is destroyed by the last great head of this empire, in conjunction with his ten kings. In chapter xvii. her destruction is seen to proceed from the hands of men; in chapter xviii. it is ascribed to the Lord God Almighty. So that it is the historical aspect of her judgment with which we are furnished in chapter xvii.; it is rather the moral and reflective aspect of that judgment in chapter xviii. In chapter xvii. we almost see her doom; in chapter xviii. to xix. 6 we feel the emotions consequent thereon. In chapter xvii., God is addressing our understanding; in chapter xviii., He is speaking to our heart. We shall need now, therefore, only to look at the additional features of this solemn subject, as contained in these supplementary chapters, and which have not already been

elucidated ; and then, in the second place, we shall be prepared to educe some practical reflections for ourselves.

"And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven Vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither ; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore, that sitteth * beside many waters : with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness, and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured Beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." Here at the outset, we are plainly taught, that if we would behold Christendom's sin from heaven's point of view, we must be ourselves separated from that sin, and this world must be found by us a wilderness indeed, and nothing better. It is not whilst in the midst of a darkened atmosphere, that we are most sensible of the impurities which we are inhaling ; but when we come out thence, and look upon the place from a distance. By the action of one of the angels that had the seven last plagues, in directing our eye to the sad spec-

* The Greek is different about the woman's session by the waters, to what we have as to her sitting upon the Beast. In the former case, it is *ἐν* with the genitive ; in the latter, it is *ἐπὶ* with the accusative.

tacle, the close connexion of the wicked doings of this symbolic woman with the Vial judgments themselves is suggested unto us. Here therefore, again, we have additional proof, as was argued at length in the last discourse, that those said judgments are ultimately directed against Babylon's enormities. Whilst, on the other hand, by one of these same seven angels calling our attention to the Bride, the Lamb's wife, in chapter xxi. 9, we perceive her security from any hurt by those scathing judgments, and her separatedness from that mystic woman's sin. It is also hence further evident why the world's huge church system is compared to a woman, and to a city; namely, as in contrast with the Bride, the New Jerusalem. And this fact enables us to cite another link, as existing between this chapter and the seventh Vial with the sixth. For there the wrath descends upon a city, Babylon, beside the waters of Euphrates; here, it is poured upon a woman seated beside the waters. And what that water spoken of as dried up under Vial six, signifies, we here obtain an inspired explanation of. (See xvii. 15.) And whilst the Bride is for Christ, the false church is for the world, and the world, until the time of these hardening judgments arrives, is for her; also her daughters, "the cities of the nations," (chap. xvi. 19), are for those nations and peoples, and those nations and peoples are for the daughters. Still, however, there is a mother, or

a metropolitan city, where this strange and illicit conjunction of the professing church with the world has its centre, and whence the poison of its unhallowed principles and ways flows into all lands. What that metropolis is, we are not left to guess ; we are informed that it is—Rome. For so we read in chapter xvii. 18, "The woman which thou sawest is that great city * which (in John's own day) reigned over the kings of the earth."

2. But having learnt who the woman is, and who are her daughters, it is most important that we well note what that sin is which calls down upon it the vengeance of God. And reader, mark, I beseech you ; it is not the promulgation of the doctrine of transubstantiation, nor of baptismal regeneration. The introduction of such leaven of bad doctrine may be, and is, an inevitable consequence of her sin ; but nothing of this is what we have here branded. Yet they are such matters as these with which Protestant commentators have busied themselves in

* It is remarkable that we have two distinct explanations of the seven heads of the Beast. One, in verse 10, is of the seven forms of government of Rome ; but a second explanation is in verse 9 : "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." Now, as is well known, Rome is built on seven hills. Often in the Latin poets, it is termed the seven-hilled city. These seven hills are, Palatine, Aventine, Capitoline, Quirinal, Viminal, Esquiline, and Tarpeian.

their denunciations of Rome. The sin of Babylon is here spoken of as fornication—of course of a spiritual kind, being committed with rulers and their peoples. Now this term fornication, with its cognate terms, harlotry and whoredom, we encounter several times in these two chapters; and thus these three series of hardening judgments, viz., of Seals, and of Trumpets, and of Vials, are found to be in immediate and necessary consequence of the decline of the professing Church, as traced in the prophetic panorama of the seven churches in Rev. ii. and iii. There, in the third epistle, addressed to the angel of the church at Pergamos, is Nicolaitanism, or Clerisy, as seen in its intimate connexion with the doctrine of Balaam—that is, the union of Church and world. Then in the fourth picture, there is the Roman Church, or Jezebel, teaching Christ's servants to commit fornication; and this condition of things continues with the religious multitude, until at length the Laodicean state is reached, when Christ avouches that He will endure the evil no longer. There the scene closes with a warning from the Lord, of His own imminent rejection of the whole corrupt thing; and here, after the infliction of His three series of judgments, the nations rise up in their fury and hatred of the whore, to reject with loathing her whom they had loved, and the cause of which rejection is in chapter xviii. ascribed to God.

How wonderfully this entire book hangs together.* But then to what an awful conclusion of the present state of things does all its testimony point !

Here, then, is Babylon's great sin, viz : uncleanness of a spiritual sort. By *established* churches, both kings and peoples are courted and dallied with. Perhaps, however, with such there is a greater fondness for royal and aristocratic favours. But with those religious confederacies *not* so petted by the State, the main desire is towards the populace. How wicked all this is seen to be, if we remember what the world is in the sight of God. (See James iv. 4.)

Even in this very chapter, the Beast on which the false church sits, is represented as full of names of blasphemy. (Ver. 3.) Think of the horrible iniquity of the professing spouse of Christ, desiring the friendship and looking for support to such an impious monster ! And although other sins of hers are specified in these chapters, as worldly ease, luxurious magnificence, and even as having in her the blood of all the saints that were slain upon the earth ; yet to this her sin of spiritual fornication, the Lord in this scripture returns again and again in tones of strongest animadversion.

* Of the two great parts of the Book of the Revelation,—the one, "the things that are," and the other, "the things that must be after these things,"—see the connexion as drawn out at the commencement of the discourse on chapter iv.

3. Yet, notwithstanding all this, mark her boldness in her sin. It is not by any means perpetrated in a secret corner. Her name,* her character, she bears upon her brow! She knows no shame. (Chap. xvii. 5.) Her chief sin is unblushingly and constantly defended by appeals to holy Scripture. Her advocates, many of them able men, but "who wax rich through the abundance of her delicacies," are wont to represent that, in her exalted position in the world, she is serving Christ the Lord!

4. So with her cup in her hand, "full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication," she bewitches mankind. To all classes of society she has something to offer, by which they not only bear with her, but even are attracted to her. Here is the cause why so few are awake to her wickedness. The accommodated Christianity all around us, is a positive help, is a stepping-stone, to professors in their worldly schemes. But all this accommodation of herself to men's passions and desires, will only make her judgment the more terrible. That cup of hers in verse 4, shall presently be exchanged for "the cup of the wine of the fierceness" of God's wrath, (chap. xvi. 19); and this she must drink to the dregs.

* To know God's mysteries, we must have the Holy Ghost, (Eph. iii. 5); but such is the success of Satan, through this symbolic woman, that he gets her even to glory in her shame. (Chap. xvii. 5.)

5. So from the wilderness stand-point we can behold this symbolic woman as seated upon the Beast. But we have it explained, that the empire, while she sits upon it, is to be viewed, of course, as at an earlier period than when she is ultimately destroyed by the Beast. This is the special drift of verse 10.* The last great head of the whole Roman world, and embodying in himself the Pagan, Papal, and infidel evil of the old empire, shall turn against her who is so defiled, that the nations were the more corrupted by having to do with her. Hence the last emperor becomes her exterminator. The action of this potentate here, is different to what we have recorded in chapter xiii. There he is engaged in setting up everywhere the worship of himself; here, concurrently, he is trampling out corrupt Christianity. His sin is other than

* Rome has had seven forms of rule, or with the last, namely, the Beast's rule, eight. (Chap. xvii. 10, 11.) Here I could have wished to mention the various forms of government that had obtained in Rome up to John's own day, and to which reference is made in verse 10. But I refrain from this, because it is desirable that the reader should perfectly see that this Scripture can be interpreted without the aids of history. The seer here says that those “kings,” or modes of government, are “seven,” and that five of these had already passed away when he wrote; and that the sixth, to wit, the imperial, as of Cesar's, was then prevailing, and that yet one other form of government was still to appear. And this inspired explanation of the successive governments of Rome is quite sufficient for us here.

this woman's. Her's was pretended devotion to Christ, with real serving of herself; his is open opposition to His name. On chapter ix. it was shown that lost spirits would, in these days, be allowed to come forth out of the bottomless pit, and possess men, and goad them on in their defiance of God; and by the language of chapter xvii. 8, to the effect that the Beast shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, compared with chapter ix. 11, it may be implied that some fierce spirit of old will urge on the imperial head of the resuscitated empire in his terrible work. I say resuscitated empire; for there appears indeed a wonderful combination of idea in verse 8, as if hell carefully prepared for the presentation to the world of the coming man; whilst from chap. xiii. 1, the Beast himself rises out of the sea of democracy, and as if elected by universal suffrage; here, in chapter xvii. 8, he is represented as coming forth out of the bottomless pit, and as reviving* in his person the supreme rule of the entire Roman world. And to this revival of the empire under one future potentate, the ecclesiastical Beast of chapter xiii. 11, calls the rapt attention of the world, (chap. xiii. 14,) and the world yields the required homage and

* The close of verse 8 is badly rendered in our translation. It should read thus:—"The Beast that was and is not, and SHALL BE PRESENT," *παρουσας*. The Roman empire was once under one head. It is not so now; but it shall be ultimately *so again*. (See Note to page 105, and Note to page 109.)

admiration, (chap. xiii. 3.) Christ's true and glorious resurrection it rejects; the resurrection of the empire it will understand and appreciate. And twice in this chapter we are assured of the end of this emperor. "He goes into perdition," (verses 8 and 11,) that is to say, he, as well as his false prophet, or teacher, is hurled into everlasting torment at Christ's appearing. (Chap. xix. 20; xx. 10.)

But though there will yet arise one supreme ruler of the Roman world, who will thus seek his own glory, and do according to his own will, still the empire will be parcelled out under ten kings, acting, as we learn from verse 13, in willing subordination to him. These are, in the symbolic part of the prophecy, represented as the ten horns on the Beast. These come into power "at one time* with the Beast," (verse 12), being elected, probably, by their several peoples, when the Beast is chosen by the entire empire. These co-operate with the Beast in his efforts to rid the world of all its remaining Christianity. (Verse 16.) Even the present rulers of the world, however they may lament, as they will, the utter extirpation of their false systems of Christianity, (chap. xviii. 9), do, nevertheless, in case any such system is not of sufficient aid to them in the maintenance of their sway over their peoples, despise it, and, as in Ireland lately, cast it aside as useless.

* *μὴν ὅραν*, in chap. xvii. 12, denotes that the Beast and his kings come into power simultaneously, or "at one time."

Now when these elected kings have completed this work of theirs, they will next proceed, also in conjunction with their imperial master, to contend with Israel's Great King, when He appears with His heavenly company. (Verse 14.) But this last climax in the impiety of the Gentile rulers we had better reserve until our consideration of chap. xix.

Once more: Babylon's fornication was committed not only with earth's kings, but also with their peoples. There is a particularity as to this two-foldedness in her sin, which is very marked in chap. xvii. 2, and again in chap. xviii. 3. In each passage the plural is used, both of the rulers and of the ruled. Hence it is clear that the sin denounced was not confined to some one country of Christendom; but was practised generally. Moreover, they are "the kings of *the earth*, and the inhabitants of *the earth*," with whom she sins. In each case, some emphasis is thrown on the words, "*the earth*," in order to express that all her actual reliance and all her wealth were to be found *on earth*. Sad indeed it is, that any ecclesiastical system should be reckless as to which of these two sources, kings or peoples, it derived its help from, or should be content to obtain such help now from the one of these, and now from the other. From such Scriptures as Rev. iii., it would appear, indeed, that towards the close of the dispensation, the Laodicean, or democratic element, would be largely reckoned upon by the great body of professors. So,

in the retributive judgment of God, the peoples also, one and all, turn against her. Babylon having used both kings and peoples in turn for herself and against each other, when either of them was disinclined somewhat to her sway; here we find, as is fitting, that she will be ultimately repudiated by both of these parties. So when the ten kings, under their emperor's auspices, decree that all belief of Christianity in their respective dominions shall be illegal, and all its worship shall be finally and for ever prohibited; their several peoples will applaud the movement, and afford their hearty concurrence and co-operation. And speedily every semblance of worldly Christianity throughout the Roman world will have become a thing of the past.

We come now, in the second place, to draw some solemn and practical reflections from all this. From the above it would appear that the fall of Babylon is to be distinguished from her destruction. The same seems implied by a comparison of chapter xviii. 2 with 21. That is to say, her fall proceeds from within; her destruction comes from without. Her degradation of herself is gradual; her destruction is sudden. Worldly Christianity is even now spreading in every direction. There is new energy in each and in all of the evil systems around us. Yea, it is owing to the very corruption within it, that it can spread so easily. For evil principles in its bosom find a correspondence with like ones in the world.

And as it is expanding, so it is ripening, and so it is deteriorating. Thus, in the darkest form of the apostasy, I mean the Roman, new doctrines are being inculcated. The Romish church of to-day is not the same as it was twenty years ago. Its imaginary infallibility, now held to be resident in one single man, could be much more readily made use of by some domineering despot for his own wicked purposes. But further, there is a society in existence, * on purpose to bring together the various ecclesiastical systems of Europe. It aspires and is at work to effect the union of the Church of England with the Church of Rome, by the means, as a middle way, of the Greek Church. And everywhere the maelstrom is widening and engulfing more within its vortex. As some one has said: "The Baptists are going after the Independents, the Independents are going after the Church of England, and the Church of England is going after the Church of Rome." To which we may add that the Church of Rome is certainly tending more and more towards the open apostasy of the last days.

Nor is the wide diffusion of bad doctrine the only ominous feature in the religious movement of the day. Worldliness is making fearful strides in all the sects. How much is done now-a-days, to help

* The society is termed, "The Association for Promoting the Union of Christendom." Also those termed on the Continent, "The old Catholics," are working for much the same end. They seek to combine with themselves the Greek, the Anglican, and others.

on a cause, without more than a passing scruple as to the means that are employed in its behalf. If money only be obtained to build more churches and more chapels, how much the end is made to sanctify. Bazaars, and concerts, and a multitude of agencies are unblushingly advertised everywhere, with the ostensible design of aiding some or other religious cause.* And are not the corrupt motives for all this sometimes seen through, even by the ungodly? And do they never scorn the pious pretension? Is it even now generally believed that all this is practised in simple devotion to their Lord Jesus Christ? Verily there seems even now little more required

* The church, by her separation from the world, was designed to be Christ's witness against the world's sin. Yet behold everywhere the professing church itself inciting men to worldliness. Imagine that at every police station there were affixed printed bills, in which the offer was seriously made to give instruction in stealing, on payment of a small sum. The proceeds to go towards the erection of additional police stations! But what the world would refuse to do, the professing church eagerly and daily does. She denies her distinctive calling, in order that in the world she may spread the more widely. Or look for a moment at Romans xii. There God instructs His people, that if in their assemblies they would not be conformed to this world, but be transformed therefrom, how they should demean themselves before Him. He enumerates there seven distinct gifts, and assumes that for the exercise of each of these there must be ample scope. But who, now-a-days, cares for this instruction, save only a few simple folk, who are everywhere spoken against.

than, on the one hand, the removal to their heavenly home of the godly, faithful in divers degrees to their world-rejected Lord; and, on the other hand, the stripping away of Babylon's flimsy excuses, and the exposure of her hypocrisy and corruption, by the action of the Seals, Trumpets, and Vials, for men to awake up, and to determine to rid themselves of the whore, and of her daughters, all. Then cometh the end! When her fall is at length morally complete, her destruction by the Beast and his ten kings will promptly ensue. (Chap. xvii. 16.)

But now the head-quarters of all this great wickedness may be and undoubtedly is Rome. And whilst the whole of it shall be judged to its remotest end, whether in that religious confederacy which is the least, or in that which is the most scriptural, still the core itself of the ecclesiasticism, the gangrene of all Babylon's evil, shall not escape. I think that, by a blending together of chap. xvii. 18 with the 2nd verse of chap. xviii., it will be seen to be implied that the clerical element in the apostasy has its centre in Rome. By "every unclean and hateful bird," we are to understand, I believe, the clerics.*

* In proof that by birds, in chap. xviii. 2, are meant clerics, see my "Javelin of Phinehas," pages 354—362. The birds find their ease and comfortable places in the great Babylonish tree of Matt. xiii. 32. Throughout Scripture the symbol of birds is used in a bad sense. They can soar a *little* above the earth; still they cannot get far away.

At all events, Rome is to perish by fire, and as some judge from the language of chap. xviii., by volcanic action. Further, since in faithfulness we ought to advance wherever Scripture leads, and only to pause where it ceases to teach us:—inasmuch as there is a "well" to the bottomless pit, (Rev. ix. 1, 2, Greek), and as the tenor of chap. xviii. indicates that Rome is to perish by fire, and even that "her smoke shall go up for ever and ever," (chap. xviii. 9; xix. 3,) it appears a legitimate inference that the mouth of that well, or of the crater, is, or will be, Rome. And like as the site of the destroyed cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah, has been to us a standing record of God's wrath against sin; so the site of Rome to the millennial peoples shall be a monument of man's ungrateful baseness, and of the divine vengeance. (See Rev. xix. 3; and compare Isaiah xxxiv. 9 10, and lxvi. 24. Contrast Jeremiah xxxiii. 10, 11.) If Capernaum was hurled down to hell for its sin; so, with mighty impetus, shall Rome be cast down too. (Matt. xi. 23.) There is a period in a nation's and in an individual's career of wickedness, when the righteous Lord, in hardening vengeance, bids them to "fill up" their guilt. (Matt. xxiii. 32.) And then there is another, a later period, when the voice of omnipotence bids sinners to depart from God into everlasting fire; and when a holy hand presses on from behind their fall. (Rev. xviii. 21.)

Oh! that men would heed God's warning, to come

out of all this wickedness, unto Christ, outside the camp. It is remarkable, that whilst we often in this book read of one crying with a loud voice, as, for instance, in chap. xviii. 2; still this particular call is not said to have been uttered so that men were obliged to hear it; for in verse 4 we only read, "I heard another voice;" but it is not termed "loud," nor is this said to have been uttered by "a strong angel."

The absence of such language just here, whilst elsewhere in this book it is found so frequently, is itself an admonition that the hearing ear is required. If you will not take a single step outside the camp, until every other following step and everything is made perfectly clear to you, you will never come out. Even any light that you may now possess will be withdrawn—will become darkness. (See Jer. xiii. 16, 17.) But once begin to move as God enjoins you, and then your path will open out, and difficulties will be cleared up. As to any evil that you perceive yourself to be associated with, cease from it at any cost—abhor it utterly. In this way are you, and are we all, tested. He that doeth evil hateth the light; He that doeth truth cometh to the light. That light says, "Awake, O sleeper, get up out of dead ones, and Christ shall give you more light." Thus blessing follows on obedience; and the joyful result will be an abundant entrance accorded you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Then praise, consequent upon the fall of Babylon, rises to God from divers companies of saints. All His people are glad. A feeling of relief and of joy is experienced by all at the execution of God's wrath at last on Babylon. In this worship and joy of theirs, they are encouraged by a voice proceeding directly from the throne of God. (Chap. xix. 5.) Likewise in chap. xviii. 20 we read, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and * apostles, and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." Very gracious indeed it is, on God's part, by this repeated injunction to rejoice at Babylon's fall, to testify that He knew how His saints had abhorred that wickedness, and how they had laboured, as it had appeared to them, almost in vain, to expose it and to win men out of it. It was omnipotency at last that had dealt the crushing blow on the accursed system; no other power could have done it. And the united praise of all for this, evidences how all His dealings will be according to our hearts and minds. Whilst there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repented, there is also joy there over Babylon's destruction.

John had marvelled at the woman, and at her

* Between the word ἁγιοι, "holy ones," or saints and apostles, there is properly the word καὶ to be inserted. Then the reading is, "Saints, and apostles, and prophets." Our common standing is our highest one. Hence the word "saints" is put first.

deeds. He had known what the professing church had been at the commencement of her career. He had indeed noted the beginning of the evil springing from her own bosom. (1 John ii. 18, 19.) But that it should come to this pass, that she herself should ultimately become so inimical to the truth, as to be drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, surprised him. The ingratitude and turpitude of religious men, bearing still the name of Christ, the awful success of Satan, the mighty influence of the world, all displayed here so perfectly, caused him to wonder with great admiration or wonderment. Well might he wonder! And here, then, oh, ye who will have it that the church is rapidly winning the world for Christ, here behold the end of that which you admire! for the kings and peoples all to reject it, to loathe it, and to extirpate even the last vestige of it! And in so doing they will be fulfilling the holy retributive will of God. And when the Lord returns to earth, not a single vestige of Christianity will have been left. And this He Himself had warned of. (Matt. v. 13.)

LECTURE XVII.

CHAPTER XIX. 6—21. THE APPEARING OF JESUS CHRIST.

WE come at length to the chapter of this book which gives us an account of the manner of the Lord's own personal and direct intervention in the affairs of this earth. God will "bring" Him back "again into the habitable world." (Heb. i. 6, Greek.) This expression implies that a display of divine power will be requisite for the accomplishment of this purpose. Otherwise, men would no more receive Him on His return, than when He was here before. Indeed, they now desire His presence less than ever. For much have they ripened in their guilt since His first advent. For not to advert to the fact of the world's non-repentance of its awful murder of Him Whom God hath raised again—yea, moreover, of its having kept high festival throughout the eighteen centuries of His absence, only desiring that He will stay away for ever, (Luke xix. 14)—there are also to be remembered, its rejection of the Holy Ghost, its persistent thrusting of God's ser-

vants into a false and antichristian position, and its seduction of the professing church by their means ; and such a vile strumpet has she become, through its kings and peoples, that all men had at last turned from her with abhorrence. Then, as wild beasts roused by the smell of blood, men had dared to make one supreme and determined effort at the stamping out all witness for the rejected Lord Jesus. So, choosing with acclamation ten inferior potentates, again to set up and fill the capsized thrones of the Roman empire, with one superior ruler over them all, these had quickly commenced to carry out the wishes of their subjects. Anon, these, to complete their work, further proceed to the extreme pitch of impiety, by everywhere introducing and establishing the sole worship of this emperor. And it is whilst they are yet making strenuous, energetic, and combined efforts in this direction, the heavens open, and the Lord Jesus at the head of His heavenly saints appears, to the eternal discomfiture of His foes, and to the final deliverance of His people Israel.

As for the whore, Babylon, she had "corrupted the earth with her fornication." (Chap. xix. 2.) She had been a curse, and not a blessing to it. If, in a divine manner, we would do good in the world, we must ourselves be separated from it. Such is the principle laid down in the Word of God, and illustrated by the example of Christ. The issue of Babylon's com-

promises, and of her fornication, and of her worldliness, is not the millenium, but infidelity. Thus it was, for instance, at the time of the French Revolution. And many are the symptoms abroad, that this same tendency is rife now. And the end will be, that this infidelity which she promotes and fosters by her ways, God will use as the means of her punishment. Since the empty profession of nominal Christendom is the greatest hindrance in existence to God's true cause, and the chief furtherance of the infidelity abounding, all of it shall be eventually swept away thereby. The child, when it has waxed a monster, shall rise up against and kill its whorish parent and nurse. And this will be God's doing ! This, by the action of the Seals, and of the Trumpets, and of the Vials, will Omnipotency effect. (Chap. xvii. 17; xviii. 8; xix. 6.)

The chapter upon the consideration of which we have now to enter, evidently consists of two parts. These we may in brief designate as, first, the scene in heaven, or "the marriage supper of the Lamb;" secondly, the scene on earth, or "the supper of the great God."

Now when the joy consequent upon Babylon's fall has been expressed by all around the throne, another theme of joy presents itself to the worshippers. The marriage of the Lamb is something more wondrous and more gladsome still than even God's

judgment of the great whore. And how peculiarly apt is the allusion to this marriage in this place. It was fitting that the pretended, the false bride, should be publicly disowned, ere the true and chaste spouse of Christ could be brought forth, and as such publicly acknowledged. Unto God, indeed, she had been caught up at a period anterior to this. For God begins from His own light and from His own throne. Already, ere this, Christ had received His people to Himself; and where He was they also were. Already had they gazed upon Him, and seen Him as He is—a favour that no creature before had ever enjoyed.* Angels had often seen God. Yea, and to certain beloved and holy men, as Moses and Daniel, there had been vouchsafed some appearance of God. But

* To the above statement it may be as well here to add, that only in Christ can God the Father be seen. As some one has excellently put it, "All that is out of God is from the Father; all that can be seen of God is in the Son; and all that can be felt of God is by the Holy Ghost." It is an error to suppose that God ever will or can be seen apart from Christ. (See notes on chap. i. of Vol. i., p. 39.) "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. i. 19 and ii. 9.) When Philip prayed, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us;" Jesus replied, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father." And then the Lord significantly added, that such a wish as Philip had expressed, could only arise through unbelief,

all this is a widely different thing from beholding God as He is. There is not the slightest hint anywhere in Scripture, that any creature has ever yet beheld God in *all* His beauty, in *all* His glory, and in *all* His fulness, so as He yet shall be seen and only can be seen in the face of Jesus Christ. The first creatures on whom this infinite grace shall be conferred, and on whom, when the scene in this chapter takes place, this grace had already been conferred, are the saints of God. The Bridegroom and the Bride had already met, and gazed with satisfaction and delight upon each other. Though, even then, His joy had exceeded hers. (Heb. i. 9.)

Yes : grace must have its fullest scope, ere aught else can be done. The Bride is prepared in heaven, ere she is manifested in any lower sphere. (Chap. xxi. 2.)

"For," continued He, "believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?" (John xiv.) It is in the face of Jesus Christ that we can behold the glory of God. (2 Cor. iv.) There is the dial-plate, from which we may learn the invisible movements behind in the heart of our God. Whilst it must ever be maintained, at all cost, that in God there are three in one, and one in three ; still, also, equally must we hold fast that God is one. He that knows most of Christ, knows most of God. He is the revealer of God. (See 1 John ii. 13, 14, with i. 1 and v. 20.) See, further, the texts cited by me on Heb. xii. 29 : "Our God ALSO is a consuming fire." Not, God out of Christ is this. There is no God out of Christ. God in Christ is "a consuming fire."

The Father's house precedes, in point of time, the judgment-seat of Christ, and the kingdom of the Son of Man. In the first and highest of these three—the work, the obedience unto death of the Lord Jesus Christ, is alone regarded. In the other two, our works, our response to His infinite grace, will be perfectly measured and accordingly rewarded.* The crowns for service will be diverse, as the services themselves had been different. But the ability to be in such a supreme height of glory—so very near to Himself, and the competency at all to wear such a radiant crown, is only possible through sovereign grace, which, without any works of ours, had made us sons of God and co-heirs with Christ our Lord. As for the crowns, these are to be regarded as in part a token, accompanying and illustrating the word, “Well done,” uttered to the faithful servant; and in part as an evidence to all others of the divine approbation of the wearer. But after all this has thus been righteously and eternally settled, then will He bring forth His Bride as such in public, then will He manifest to the admiring gaze of creation the wondrous work of His hands, on which His Spirit had been silently engaged throughout the long dark night of this dispensation, in fashioning this Bride, this Body, this Temple, for the display of Himself, of His

* See Lincoln's Leaflets, Nos. 5, 6 and 7, on the subjects of the Church, the Rapture, and the Kingdom.

grace, and of His glory for ever. Thus, whilst Christ is conducting those judgments on the world which are to eventuate in the destruction of Babylon, and in the deliverance of the earthly people of God, His Bride is hid, as was Zipporah of old hid for a while in her father's house. But when the hardening judgments have been executed, and when the earthly people have been brought into view, then at length has arrived the time for the wife's appearance likewise on the scene. The heavenly and the earthly families shall be each beheld in their own distinct portion, and each congregated around their one Centre—Christ. Study that beautiful type of the millennial glory, as narrated in full in Exodus xviii.

But now the term which is here used of this, the possessor of His affections, and the partner of His glory, is "Wife of THE LAMB." The expression indicates how He obtained possession of her, how she became united to Him, and moreover, how she was also content to suffer with Him, and to share in His rejection. If He was once a sufferer; so too, after He had borne alone God's wrath due to sins, did she suffer for His sake. (Rom. viii. 36.) His cross she had esteemed greater riches than the world's treasures and honors. Now He expects that we shall be content, aye, and glad to share the reproach cast on Himself. So when He reigns, we shall reign with Him. It is in this way we are to interpret as to the

fine linen being the righteousness, or rather "the righteousnesses," * or righteous actions in detail, of the saints.

The thought here is not at all of ability to stand, or rather to sit, before God. There, indeed, Christ only is our righteousness, and we are made "in Him the righteousness of God." This is the white raiment of chap. iv. 4. But here we have another line of teaching, and one which we must not ignore. Whilst to reign with Christ is only possible for us through infinite grace, and through the blood of Christ; at the same time there will be a close connexion between our identification with Him in His rejection by the world, and our identification with Him in His future glory. (Rom. viii. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 12.) Mark the three clauses, and not one alone, of Rev. xii. 11. Now, it is not the righteousness of God that is here spoken of in chap. xix. 8; but the "righteousness of THE SAINTS." The obedience of Christ is in Scripture generally regarded as a single work, perfect in one single piece from end to end. But our obedience is more fragmentary, and its parts more unconnected. Scripture terms our obedience "works," and here, "righteousnesses." Besides which, how could we, at Christ's appearing, judge

* The reader will please to bear in mind that the word here rendered "righteousness," is NOT the word ordinarily so translated. Here it is *δικαιωματα*, in the *plural*, "righteousnesses."

in others that which persistently, and to the very end, we maintained to be right and good? How can we righteously condemn as evil that with which we ourselves are intimately mixed up? Imagine, for instance, that at the moment of the church's rapture we were enjoying the festivities of a ball-room. If, after all, we are true Christians, we should still be saved and caught up with our brethren. But when, subsequently, the light of THE KINGDOM bursts on the world, with what face could we, in such a case, condemn those pleasure-lovers there? And thus with anything else that is wrong. God shows us grace now, by revealing what is repugnant to His holy will. Then, if we are obedient, we shall separate from it, and in this way testify against it, though in weakness. For our pains we shall probably be derided by those who desire things to remain as they are. But when Christ returns, our judgment of evil will no longer be in weakness. It will be ratified by the Lord at the setting up of His kingdom of righteousness in power. It is in this way we are also to understand the last half of verse 14 in our chapter. Even of the angels executing the divine judgments, it is witnessed that they too are clothed in pure and white linen. (Chap. xv. 6).

Yet here it is expressly taught that all is of grace. For we read, that "to her it was *granted* that she should be arrayed in fine linen." Whilst the places

in the kingdom will be various and of unequal rank, all will be in accordance with the sovereign will of God. (See Matthew xx. 23.) Whatever niche God designs us to fill, that can He fit us for. Man, if he requires any instrument, has to choose that which appears to Him naturally suitable. But God chooses His instrument first, and then Himself renders it suitable for His purpose. Besides which, it must be ever borne in mind that our common position is our highest one. We are all His children together ; all called to the companionship of His Son ; all placed together in His own uncreated light. But even as with the children of a royal family on earth, one may be the colonel of a regiment, another may be the captain of a ship, a third may be the ranger of a forest ; yet, when they come together, they do so on the ground of one common, though exalted parentage. Similarly will it be with the saints of God. One will reign over ten cities, another over five, and so on. (Luke xix). But all the while, the standing as rulers at all is through being sons ; and the competency to reign with Christ is through the possession of divine life ; and, nevertheless, both this position as sons of God, and the possession of this life, are owing to distinguishing mercy, and to the redeeming love of Christ, which lifted us off the dung-hill of this world, to set us among princes, and to cause us to inherit the throne of glory. I

add, that as the Bride is in marked contrast to the Babylonish harlot, so the white dress of the one is in contrast with the finery of the other. (Chap. xvii. 4.) Whence the whore obtained her gay apparel, it is not said ; but the Bride's dress is found for her. All that she is, and all that she has, is of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Two additional indications are furnished us of the exalted state of the Bride. One of these is, that even those who are only invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb, are blessed. And as if the statement were a most important one, it is added, "These are the true sayings of God." Now these, thus "called," cannot be angels ; for such have never departed from God, nor do we ever read of their being "called" by God. On the other hand, to make those sitting down to this marriage supper identical with the Bride herself, would be doing extreme violence to Scripture symbols. Surely it would be a strange marriage feast, where only the Bridegroom and the Bride were present. But in the course of this exposition, we have had abundant evidence that God will save many others besides His church. The confounding 'all the saints of all dispensations with the church, united to Him by the Holy Ghost, is a habit which is only engendered by ignorance of the ways of God, and by our being engrossed with ourselves and with our own salvation, instead of behold-

ing the glory of the Lord. It much resembles the view of the old astronomers, who held that the sun revolves round the earth. God's prime thought even about this very marriage, is not of us, but of "His Son." (Matt. xxii. 2.) Our salvation is not the end of all His counsels. It is, however, inwoven as a part of His grand design of heading up all things in heaven and in earth in Christ. If, instead of making our salvation THE END of all our thoughts, and of all God's too, we take a finished salvation as His free gift, then are we at leisure to take a comprehensive survey of God's purposes, in so far as they are revealed in His Word. Then shall we perceive the peculiar and unique place which the church of God has in His Word; and that it is composed only of those who, by the Holy Ghost sent down personally from heaven, are united to that Risen and Glorified Man up yonder—in other words, only of those who believe in Him during His session at the right hand of God. But God will have very many other saints besides these, and their highest blessing will consist in being invited to the Lamb's marriage supper.

The other hint here afforded of the exalted position of the Bride we have suggested in verse 10. For John is overpowered when he hears about this marriage, remembering, as he must have done, how unworthy they were who are the objects of that love, and Who He is that is designated as the Lamb. Some

there are who unwittingly disparage this great grace, and speak as if it were not to be compared to being members of the body of Christ. These would have it that the Bride being an Old Testament figure, as well as a New Testament one, therefore, in every case the allusion therein is to the grace to be shown to Israel; and that only the Body represents the Church. As if the symbol of the Body, too, were not also found in the Old Testament. But see Isaiah xxv. 19, where note that the words, "together with," are in italics, and must be omitted. Or as if, again, there were not most certainly two Jerusalems, the heavenly and the earthly! But if two Jerusalems, then two Brides, heavenly and earthly likewise. Truly John does not appear to have thought so little of the grace implied in the words, "Bride of the Lamb!" For not once only, but twice, does this embosomed disciple exhibit this great emotion of readiness to worship his angelic informant of the amazing reality. For as he forgets himself in wonderment for a moment, when he hears of the heavenly Bride; so likewise is he lost in amazement, as he descries her "descending from heaven," and "having the glory of God." Such dear brethren appear to forget that Jacob's service was rewarded with two wives; and that the one whom he specially loved he did *not* obtain first. "Which things are an allegory." The earthly and the heavenly shall yet both be the

Lord's ! And when the earthly brethren of the Lord Jesus do at length bow down to Him, they shall find, as in the expressive type the brethren of the patriarch Joseph found before them, that He whom they rejected has, during the period of that rejection, taken one to be nearer to Himself still than they. In each case the rejected one marries an alien, an Egyptian!

The Lord had loved Israel. She, however, loved Him not. She proved unfaithful. Then He, despised in a lower glory, retired, as is His wont (Matt. xi. 20 with 27), to a higher glory. There He had discovered His grace to others. Thus had their hearts been won ! And by them united into one, is His earthly Bride to be "provoked to jealousy." And in this perfect way, even Israel's rejection of Him for a while, God has overruled all to the further display of Christ's glory in another and a higher sphere !

By this figure of a marriage between Christ and the Church, we learn that, however near to Him we are brought, and however like Him we are made, He ever will be the infinite GIVER, and we eternally the RECEIVERS. Joy, and love, and glory shall ever be poured into our hearts from Him by the Holy Ghost. The church will ever be God's inner shrine or temple, from which He will shine out in glory and in blessing to creation. So, with what we receive from Him we shall be made a blessing unto others. (Eph.

ii. 6 ; Rev. xxi. 2, 3 and 11.) Then no good can reach the creature, save through the Church. At present, this idea would be Popish, because God now calls us *close* to Himself in Christ. But then, those to be nearest God have reached their eternal home.

But, secondly, it is time for us to turn to the other side of the picture in our chapter, and to look at the scene presented at this time upon the earth. There the clang of arms of the foe,—there the cry of an oppressed and overwhelmed people are heard. Down, far, far down there below are being marshalled the hosts of Europe under their elected Kings, with the Emperor at their head. On the plains of Palestine, there are they gathered. Already Jerusalem has been taken ; already are the people being led forth as captives, (Zech. xiv. 2.) The triumph of the Beast appears complete. The last feeble witness for a coming Messiah, and against the lawless one, is now silenced. “Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations.” The heavens are opened, and Christ appears in flaming fire, ready to take vengeance. (Consult such Scriptures as 2 Thess. i. 8 ; Psalm l. 3 ; Psalm xcvii. 3 ; and particularly Habak. iii. 4, 5.*) Oh ! what a contrast between

* The reader will do well here to read the account of this appearing of the Lord in Israel's behalf, as it is described vividly in Habak. iii. In verse 3 that Theophany is compared to the rising sun. The entire horizon, from Teman to Mount Paran,

the scene in heaven and the scene on earth—between the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and the supper of the great God. The two halves of this chapter reveal to us in what manner much of the period between the rapture of the church and the appearing of Christ is spent in heaven and on earth ; in heaven, in marriage festivities ; on earth, in hardened sinners gathering against Him and His Jewish people. Here, however, it is apparent that the Lord is in no ways perturbed by His foes' hostile attitude. For lo ! whilst they are engaged in assembling in Immanuel's

is illuminated at the same instant ; so that the light appears as if coming from both those points at once. Then the shout of joy is raised : " Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord," or in the language of the prophet, " God came"—God is coming. But the rejoicers have to pause, for in an instant His glory has covered the heavens. In verse 4 the concentrated brilliance, from which the light had proceeded, comes into distincter view. " The horns," of which mention is here made, are the beams or coruscations of light. In verse 5 there are the attendant ministers of His wrath. In verse 6 the glory comes close to earth. The foot of an incarnate God treads upon it, and it quivers. In verses 8 and 9 the glorious vision is full in view. The prophet can no longer be an unmoved spectator. In verses 10 and 11 all nature trembles before Him. Verse 12 is very like the last half of our chapter xix. And in verse 13 the prophet states the immediate object of the divine interference. Also in Zech. xiv. ; Isaiah xxiv.—xxvii. ; Isaiah xxxiv., xxxv. ; Psalms xcii. to ci., the results to Israel of the Lord's descent are enumerated.

land against Him, He is engaged in celebrating His marriage. What a singular time to choose for this purpose ! Thus does He laugh at them. Is not His way here again perfect ? Surely, however, the judgments of all His heavenly people will be at last rectified, as they look down through the opened heavens at the scene below. For once, when they lived down there, they, some of them, fondly, or rather unbelievably, dreamed that they were mending the world. Now they will understand what a mend it was which thus they made of it. These thought that the world would insensibly glide into the millenium. Now they perceive their error. But let us survey the scene with care, according as the inspired seer has depicted it.

At the effusion of the sixth Vial, diverse effects were observed to follow, (chap. xvi. 12—16.) One of these is the drying up of the mystic Euphrates. This we have already considered. As Babylon wastes away, there disappears the great stumbling-block in the path of a remnant of Israel turning, with such utterances as are found in many of the Psalms, in faith and hope to their Messiah. Such are helped at this time by the ministry of the two witnesses, (chap. xi.) But then, on the other hand, we note the marked change of attitude on the part of the foes of God. Now, at length, they are determinedly aroused to open hostility against Him.

The preparations are commenced, or, at least, the thought is conceived, of the concentration of the forces of the Roman world in Palestine against Israel, and against the Lord Himself, if He should interfere in their behalf. But this ulterior effect of of the sixth Vial, we did not then trace further in our remarks upon the Vials. It seemed advisable to wait to see this last awful thought of the wicked, when it was matured and quite developed. And this final developement we behold here. This further result appears naturally to ensue as consequent on the judgment upon Babylon. Men will desire to extirpate every thought, and Israel's also, of a Messiah appearing from heaven. They have rid themselves of that which had become a great sham ; the true they will confound with it. And why should not similar success crown their efforts a second time. Jehovah made no sign in the former case ; why should He in the latter ? And when once this also has been achieved, will there not follow the comity and brotherhood of all nations, yea, universal concord ? Then unanimous will be the concurrence in the sole worship instituted by the elected rulers of Europe, of their imperial master ; a worship that atheistically is designed to shut out heaven and God, save as these are represented by himself. Nor need it be difficult for any of us to conceive that the men of the nineteenth century

could be easily induced to transfer their admiration, such as it is, from the Creator to a creature. For "God will send them strong delusion, to believe the lie." Besides which, man has ever been prone to idolatry. Throughout even the church period, whilst yet the Holy Ghost is down here, the little antichrists have been many, and the professing people of God have, most of them, loved to have it so. And this "spirit of antichrist," which is in them, will then be no longer hindered in its work. Thus can we understand what is symbolized by one of the three frog-like * spirits proceeding out of the mouth of the false prophet. For clerisy begets prelacy, and prelacy leads to popery, and the head of the ecclesiastical power becomes ultimately the false prophet, (chaps. xiii. 11 ; xix. 20.) Again, the essence of Paganism is to regard the monarch with superstitious awe, as is seen to some extent still in

* Elliott thinks that in this mention of three frog-like spirits there is a glance at France, on whose arms of old were beheld, he says, three frogs. He gives his readers some sketches in proof of this. But first it should be noted that the text says, not three frogs, but three unclean spirits like frogs. Besides which, since he wrote his book, it has been shown that they are toads, and not frogs, represented on the banner of that country. From the grammatical construction of verse 16, the gathering there spoken of is to be connected with the agency of the three unclean spirits. For, as is well known, a

such countries as China and Japan. Also Layard, in his interesting work on Nineveh, remarks that an ever-recurring feature in the traces discovered in the religion of that city, is "the sacred character of the king." So here, in this last form of humanly-devised worship, is the work of the spirit out of the mouth of the dragon,—Paganism afresh inspired by Satan. And once more, there are the Beast's own prestige, and pomp, and glory, as the head of the revived Roman empire, which will all tend mightily to aid him in his designs, (chap. xvi. 13, 14.) Paganism, imperialism, and clericalism are all at this time revived. The last of these three, however, is now without the pretence of service for Christ. All is undisguised hostility to Him, (Psalm ii.) And the teachers of these days, the wiseacres, the eloquent orators, the newspaper-writers, the university

neuter plural noun in Greek takes a verb in the singular number; so that for "he gathered them," it should be translated, "they gathered them." But Hengstenberg and Bengel deny the application of this rule here. In that case, the word "He" will refer to God. But the point is immaterial. For there can be no doubt that in all this both God and Satan will have a hand. As to the comparison of these unclean spirits to frogs, see first note to chap. xvi., vol. ii., p. 90. I think the reference may be to the arrogant and inflated style of the teachers of those days.

men, being filled with these three unclean spirits, will goad men on in their hatred of God, and of all confession of Messiah.

Imagine the glory of this time in the eyes of the men of the world! War almost impossible! For through the hearty co-operation and willing subordination for their own security's sake, of each of the ten elected kings of the Roman world to the Emperor (chap. xvii. 13), any opposition to their respective administrations can be at once put down. For the forces of all Europe can be instantly all moved in that direction. For each individual potentate to stand by the supreme ruler is, as they all recognize, the prudent method of standing severally by each other. And with one single creed throughout the entire length and breadth of all their dominions, the main cause of strife of old, has utterly and for ever disappeared. There remains only that feeble folk in Palestine, who are reported to cherish the thought of heavenly succour. Even the mass of that nation has also accepted the worship of this wilful king. (Matt. xii. 43—45; John v. 43.) These he had assisted to return to their own land, in order that they might see in him their Messiah. And whilst yet engaged in extirpating hollow Christianity from all his realms, he had with these Jews made a covenant. (Dan. ix. 27.) But now that great work of his having been completed, he is incited to

proceed further. His image, the abomination of desolation spoken of in Dan. xii. 11 and Matt. xxiv. 15, he requires to be set up in the holy place of their re-built temple. This becomes a test question with every individual of the restored nation. From more of these than he had expected he encounters opposition. Therefore he will deal a blow once for all in that land, that shall be useful for all men in future well to remember.

Accordingly, the armies of the Roman world are set in motion. Palestine is their watchword, their rallying cry. Thither is assembled the entire chivalry of Europe. The prophetic scriptures abound in allusions to this final gathering of the nations. See for instance, Joel iii. 2; Micah iv. 11, 12; Zech. xiv. ; also the various lines of truth in the Revelation all converge here, as xvi. 14; xvii. 14; xix. 19. In each of these passages we have the identical word "gathered." Also in xiv. 19 and xix. 15, the symbol of gathering of the nations as into a wine-press is added. Then in Isaiah lxiii., we have the Lord Jesus as the Treader of that wine-press.

The Emperor is there in person. For so effectually and thoroughly does he purpose to do his work, that he as God will sit in the temple of God, showing himself as the sole personification of God. His titles in Scripture are many, as "head over a great country," (Ps. cx. 6, Hebrew); "the king," (Isa.

xxx. 33); "the man of the earth," (Ps. x. 18); "the man of sin," (2 Thess. ii.); "the king" that "doeth according to his will," (Dan. xi. 36.) These and other terms, reveal to what a pitch of wickedness he has reached. And elated with his success, he knows and brooks no superior. Neither does he know that it is ever a law in the divine government of the world, that the world-power having served as God's instrument of punishment to wickedness, is then itself the avenger, judged. (See Isa. x. 5—19.) And God is wont to afford man opportunity and time to ripen in his iniquity, that the judgment may fall upon him in the height of his pride. See Ps. lxxiii.; Genesis xi. 5; xv. 16; Rev. xviii. 7; Daniel iv. 30; xi. 45; Ps. xcii. 7.

Behold, then, his troops and his kings assembled under his leadership, together with his chief false teacher, who has accompanied him, all in Immanuel's land. Megiddo * is his head quarters. Jerusalem

* In the passage, (chap. xvi. 16,) where the word "Armageddon" occurs, it is added that the place is so "called in the Hebrew tongue." Now, "Ar" is the Hebrew word for a city. At Megiddo the armies of Canaan, under the command of Sisera, were overthrown. This we find is celebrated in Deborah's song, (Judges v.) Adjacent to this city is a vast plain, to which it is supposed the allusion is here. Clarke in his travels thus speaks of this plain: "This is called, by way of eminence, 'the great plain' in Scripture, and elsewhere, 'the great plain,' or 'field of Esdraelon,' 'the field of Megiddo,' 'the Galilean

is speedily taken. That oft down-trodden people there is powerless, and in his hands. Now in his rage and fury, he is resolved to shed the blood of many. But the time for their deliverance, according as God had promised by His prophets, has at last quite arrived. The book of His promises to that people, we have seen to be spread before Him in chapter x. So these, insignificant as they seem to be, yea, and are, nevertheless are the apple of God's eye. Therefore, their maltreatment amounts to open war with the Lamb! Now will heaven at length respond to man's impiety, and to his daring challenge. At the empty tomb of Christ, the outsentinels of the two forces of heaven and earth confronted each other. But now the sentinels have fallen back! For the battle is imminent, and it is the Lord's alone. And He is ready for the fray. So the heavens are cleft asunder, and the LAMB is descried. Now for the crisis:—"The battle of the great day of God

plain,' which we found one vast meadow covered with the richest pasture. It has been a chosen place for encampment in every contest from the days of Nabuchonodosor, king of Assyria, to the disastrous march of Napoleon Buonaparte into Syria. Jews, Gentiles, Saracens, Christian Crusaders, and anti-Christian Frenchmen, Egyptians, Persians, Druses, Turks and Arabs, warriors of every nation that is under heaven have pitched their tents on the plain of Esdraelon, and have beheld the banners of their nations wet with the dew of Tabor and Hermon."

Almighty." Now for the anti-typical day of Midian. (Isa. ix. 4—6, and xi. 4.) The day of grace to the world is past. Now, in righteousness He doth judge and make war. Peace only shall ensue after He hath in righteousness and power delivered His people from their oppressors, and cleansed His land of its haughty invaders. (Heb. vii. 1, 2.) The turning of the tables on the foes, with their chagrin and disappointment, and dismay, at this moment are vividly set forth in such scriptures as Isa. xxix. 6—8; Zech. ix. 14; xiv. 2, 3; Malachi iv. Now there is no secrecy, no forbearance, nothing but unsparing and utter destruction from His presence. Until now, His delight had been to give life, which no other Potentate could give. The glory of other conquerors consists in the number of their slain. This is His strange work. But it is His work now. So here we have the Vision of the Almighty. Here is the "unveiling," or "the revelation of Jesus Christ" to the world, as Son of Man!

Accompanying Him are seen His companions; for our portion is to be "for ever with the Lord." Therefore at all the after scenes of glory, we are to be present. There is no need for any of us, with great toil and expense, to visit Palestine as it is. We shall all see it, when first it is really worth seeing,—that is, when with our Lord we descend towards the earth. Or, when we read the Old Testament narrative, as

for instance, when Joseph discovered himself to his brethren, we need not wish we had been present, and had observed it all. The greater reality we shall behold! When Christ is at last welcomed by His Jewish brethren, we shall be there! Or again, when our precious, gracious Lord is no longer despised and rejected by any man; but on the contrary, when every knee of men, aye, and of angels too, is bowed to Him, we shall with rapture witness the whole! (Heb. i. 6.) Compulsory on the part of His enemies it may be. (Ps. lxvi. 3.) Still their submission shall be abject. In their prostration they shall lick the dust. (Ps. lxxii. 9, 11.) How all this will gladden our hearts, who are daily grieved at the sneers at His blessed name! But here, however, descending with Him, we are termed "armies." For, chameleon like, we take our changing hue from Him who is nearest to us. When up there but a little before, we had been called His bride; but since He appears as a warrior and on horseback down here, therefore we are seen as "armies," and on horseback likewise. So, further, at the end of His millennial reign, we are still termed "the CAMP of the saints." There can be no question that these armies following Him are His saints. For when, before His intervention in war with His foes had been alluded to, it was added that those with Him were the "called, and chosen, and faithful." (xvii. 14.) And usually when the Lord's

appearing to the world is spoken of, we are said to come, and to "appear with him." (Col. iii. 4; Jude 14; 1 Thess. iii. 13; Zech. xiv. 5.) Hence we perceive the vast difference between His coming *for us* as a Bridegroom, and His appearing *with us* as a Warrior and King. Of His coming for us, there can possibly be no sign given. Such a thing would almost indicate that He somewhat suspected His Bride of unfaithfulness. How could He do this? But there will be many indications of His appearing to the world, (Luke xxi. 25—27.) Likewise, none of the Scripture dates at all relate to His coming to fetch us home. Were He to remain away for ten thousand years longer, the dates in Revelation and elsewhere would be no nearer their termination than they are now. They would not even then have *begun* to be fulfilled. They all concern an earthly people, whose calling will be to a sphere where the sun and moon give light and measure time. Until we are with Himself, all those scripture dates are suspended as to their accomplishment. Because the case of the earthly people will not be taken up by God, until the heavenly people have been brought home to their Father's house.

But now, in the discomfiture of His foes, it would appear from our chapter as if little else were needed than for the Lord to look out, as it were, from His glory, as if His very appearance, His epiphany as it

is called in 2 Thess. ii. 8, (Greek), would itself destroy them. For, on looking down our chapter, we observe a reference to His being seen as seated, and to His eyes, and to His head, and to His vesture about His body, and to His mouth, and to His feet as treading down the wine-press, and to His thigh. But it is also implied that in this wondrous Man there is the Godhead. For thrice, if not four times, there is a glance at His Name, that is to say, at what He actually in manifestation is. First, He is called Faithful and True, (ver. 11). Is this to identify Him with the divine Speaker, judging the churches in iii. 14? And that what He had then warned of has now actually come to pass? For He then had warned the professing body that He was about to reject it. Here, consequent upon His rejection and exposure of it, the nations had rejected it too. Secondly, after hearing of His many crowns, which glance at His *conferred* glory, we learn that He had a Name written, which no one knew but He Himself, (ver. 12.) Here is His own *essential* glory. The language is somewhat similar to what we find in Matt. xi. 27: "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father." For however glorious to men He may be seen; all that He is, none but His Father, and in a sense, His church also, can know. A third reference to His name is found in verse 13: "The Word of God." Similar language is used of Him in the gospel.

There He is telling out the secrets of divine grace and love. Here He is revealed as the Righteous Judge and Executor of divine wrath. Once more, we encounter a glance at Him in a fourth character in ver. 16: "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

With regard to His session upon a white horse in verse 11, the allusion is to the incipient rise of the antichristian opposition in chap. vi., as resulting from His opening of the first Seal. Only now, after all the three series of hardening judgments have been inflicted, that opposition is quite evoked, and those foes of His have been hardened and gathered together as a stool for Him to place His foot upon. His eyes like flame (verse 12, and i. 14) may denote that from His searching, piercing, angry gaze there can be no shelter. As to the crowns, or rather "diadems," upon His brow, these are somewhat in contrast with the dragon's "seven" in chap. xii. 3, and with the Roman Emperor's "ten" in chap. xiii. 1. For these are the only three places where this particular Greek word occurs in this book. Everywhere else it is the laurel crown of the victor. But here, and in these other two places, it is the royal crown, that is signified—the crown of majesty. These many diadems, therefore, are symbolic of the universality of His sway, extending to the whole world. (See Zech. xiv. 9.) In my opinion, there is no thought conveyed by this term of His heavenly glory. For

there, there is no opposition to His will. A prevailing sentiment in the reign of the Lord is of evil to be subdued, and of foes to be subjugated. (1 Cor. xv. 25.) Where there are no foes—where all gladly obey and adore Him, there there is obviously not any scope for the use of His “iron rod” or sceptre, (verse 15.) Again, His vesture is dipped in blood. But the Lord Himself, in Isaiah lxiii., states that it is the blood of His foes that stains His raiment. Concurrently with which explanation, He is also represented in both these Scriptures as the Treader of the wine-press of the wrath of God. (Rev. xiv. 19 ; xix. 15 ; Isaiah lxiii. 8 ; Psalm lxviii. 23.) Likewise there proceeds out of His mouth a sharp sword, wherewith to smite the nations, and to mow them down with the breath of His nostrils. (Ps. xcii. 7.) This is that spirit of His mouth of 2 Thess. ii. 8. This is that breath of the Lord, which, like a stream of brimstone, shall kindle hell. (Isaiah xxx. 33.) As His foes in chap. vi. would prefer to be ground to powder rather than to see His face, which sight is, as we well know, the greatest joy of His saints ; so His breath, which slays the wicked, is our very life. (John xx. 22.) Such is the vast difference between the children of the devil and the children of God. If the Spirit blow on the flesh, He withers it up. (Isaiah xl. 7 ; Exodus xv. 8.) On the other hand, if the Spirit breathe where there is death, He

produces life. (Ezek. xxxvii. 9, 10.) Let us, therefore, ever seek to be nothing, that Christ may be our All. For here we perceive how hardened these His foes must now be, that they should defy Him to His very face. Particularly it should be observed that, though Christ is accompanied in His descent towards the earth by His heavenly saints, and though the whole stone cut out without hands smites the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream upon its ten toes, still the infliction of the wrath of God is expressly here limited to the Lord Jesus. The sword to smite the nations proceeds "out of His mouth." The blood of His foes is upon His vesture. The winepress He treads "alone." It is at a subsequent moment to what we have here, that Israel is sent against their adversaries. (Psalm cxlix. ; Zech. x. 5.) These mighty and judicially hardened ones the Lord Himself, by Himself, disposes of. Zech. xiv. 12 particularises how they shall be slain.

The brief period of the triumph of the Beast and of his confederates is past. Specially himself and his false prophet, to wit, the supreme head of the civil or political power of Roman Europe, as well as the chief ecclesiastical, or religious teacher under him—their time of judgment has arrived. And as if to show in what a condition the world in its greatness is, and to what a worse condition it will yet drift, these two heads thereof are sent, without any

further delay, straight into hell, that is, to "THE lake of fire." (Chap. xix. 20, Greek ; and Isaiah xxx. 33.) Further judgment of these is needless, for it is perfectly clear what they were about. They are caught in the very act of defying God. In these two we have the antitypes of Absalom and Ahithophel. Indeed, all those that worshipped the Beast and his image will presently, that is, after the millenium, be raised with the rest of the wicked dead, and be judged, and cast into hell. This, therefore, will be the doom of all that Beast's confederate kings, and of all his courtiers. But in order to show that each and all of these were, in some small measure, apart from the extremity of wickedness of the Beast and of his false prophet, those others all are not hurled into the lake of fire so soon as these two are. There is a singularity of woe for them, which is, that they are in final torment for a thousand years before any others are. Hence it appears suggested to us, that if the punishment of others is to be shortened on account of less thorough wickedness, that punishment can only be SHORTENED AT THIS END, ere the execution of the wrath begins, and not at some indefinite period afterwards. Oh ! what a contrast between that time in the Beast's history, of which it is recorded, "the whole world wondered after him," with that later period, when the Word is fulfilled, and he is cast alive into the

lake of fire." There rise before the mind at the former moment, the eclat of the populace, together with the admiration and awe of the great, the noble, and the wise. Here we almost witness his imperial pomp, his military parades, and the glory of his vast cavalcades. Then comes the corrective: his wild shriek of horror, when, at Christ's descent, he is taken and cast into the lake of fire. It would seem as if his entire career might be thus epitomised:—

1. The thrones of the hereditary kings of the Roman world, swept away by the rising tide of democracy. So Seal six and first four Trumpets. Then from the surging mass of peoples, he arises the imperial Ruler. (Chap. xiii. 1.)

2. He and his ten confederate kings, elected at the same time as himself, remove all the vestiges of the old worship of Christendom. (Chap. xvii. 12-16.)

3. Ere he commences this work, or whilst engaged thereat, he makes a covenant with the two tribes; many of whom, as if he were the only Messiah they need expect, he restores to their own land. (Dan. ix. 27; John v. 43.)

4. He requires the worship of all his subjects. (Rev. xiii. 8, 16.) In this matter also, he is heartily seconded by his subordinate kings, and by his false teacher. Remark that Darius, who first destroyed Babylon, and then promulgated the infidel decree in Daniel vi. 7, appears to have personally been an amiable man.

5. His covenant with the Jews, which was to have been binding on each side for seven years, he breaks in the midst of this period. And he sets up the abomination of desolation throughout his entire dominions, and also in the restored Jewish temple. (Rev. xiii. 15 ; Matt. xxiv. 15 ; Dan. ix. 27 ; xii. 11.)

6. Encountering unexpected opposition, he leads the hosts of Europe into Palestine, to trample down all insubjection—to read a lesson that all may learn, and to show himself as God, sitting in the temple of God. In the midst of his cruel and insidious work—

7. The Lord interposes. The Beast is taken and cast in hell.

LECTURE XVIII.

CHAP. XX.—XXI. 8. THE IMMEDIATE AND FINAL RESULTS OF CHRIST'S INTERVENTION. THE MILLENNIAL AND ETERNAL STATES.

IT might be of advantage to the reader, ere he approaches the study of this section of the Book of the Revelation, to cast his eye over Psalms xcvi., xcvi., and xcix., or Isaiah xxiv., xxv. and xxvi. From such scriptures as these, he will obtain an inspired view of the actual state of things in the world at the moment of time at which this chapter xx. is commenced. The beast and his chief false teacher have been hurled into everlasting fire. His kings and great men, his puissant armies and other supporters have all been slain by the breath of the Lamb. In hades are these shut up as in prison, throughout the millennial era. (See Is. xxiv. 23.) After which shall they, with the other dead, who are all unsaved, be placed before the Great white throne.

Another enemy also—one who does not figure in this Book of the Revelation, but of whom we read much in the Prophets, has, with all his huge and motley confederated hosts, likewise perished. I mean, of course, the Assyrian Gog, the head of Rosh or Russia, and of Moscow, and of Tobolsk. (See Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix.) This opponent swoops down with his forces upon Palestine, some short while subsequent to Israel's deliverance by the interposition of the Lord of Hosts. For the kingdom of the Lord Jesus will resemble on earth the reign of David His father in this respect, viz.: the foes of His people will be subdued *seriatim*, whilst Israel's glory under His divine and righteous sway will wax greater and greater. (See Zech. ix. 13—16, and Micah v.) But the Holy Ghost in this prophecy of the Revelation enlarges only upon those events which are to transpire upon the platform of the Roman earth. From other scriptures must be supplied the account of those other scenes, which *here* are omitted. Since, however, these other prophecies are not found in the chapter which we have now to consider, therefore, with this brief reference above, we pass them by.

Five subjects are brought before us in our present section. These are, first, the binding of Satan, to verse 3; secondly, a brief account of the millennial reign of Christ, to verse 6; thirdly, the close of this *reign*, as to those then living in the world, to verse

10; fourthly, the close of this reign, as it concerns the dead, to the end of the chapter, ver. 15; then, lastly, a glimpse of the eternal state of things subsequent to that millennial reign, xxi. 1—8. Let us, in the first place, ponder what we are here instructed in, as to the binding of Satan. This imprisonment of man's arch foe is here seen to be a necessary preliminary of Christ's reign in righteousness. Thus will man be tested and exposed, in a manner other than ever he has been tested before.

God's mode of procedure with Satan is like all His other ways, in that it is perfect. Satan is first conquered righteously, ere the hand of power is put forth against him. At the beginning of the Bible narrative, we see that he has access to Paradise (Gen. iii.), and to heaven (Job. i.) Only in heaven, in the presence of God, he cannot be hid, as he was from man in Paradise. There, too, his temptation to sin was after a manner similar to his own first sin. "Ye shall be as gods," was his bait. Likewise in Isa. xiv. 12—14, and in Ezek. xxviii. 18—17, we have a twofold testimony as to the cause of Satan's fall. And to this selfsame snare of Satan himself, the apostle refers in 1 Tim. iii. 6. Wherefore, taking the wrong path of self-exaltation—as the Holy One begins His work in self-abasement, the devil begins to fall. And presently, when the new people for the heavens, redeemed by the blood of the

Lamb, are taken home, he and his angels are cast out thence.* Then, determined, if possible, to retain the sovereignty of the earth, he raises up the Beast, or Roman emperor, out of the democracy. (Chap. xiii.) To him he delegates all his power. But now that emperor has been cast into hell. Likewise, the time has arrived when he himself too must be shut up for a while from the earth, and confined in its interior.† Ultimately released from thence, that he may deceive the millennial nations, he is then cast into hell. Thus his own chosen path of self-exaltation gradually conducts him from a pinnacle of created grandeur, lower and lower still, until he reaches hell. For the Lord Jesus, who was eternally in the form of God, by humbling Himself more and more, down even unto the dust of death, righteously overcomes him. Thus the two paths: on the one hand, of Satan in disobedience, which is also this world's course,‡ and on the other hand, of Christ

* Other hints as to Satan's defeat will be found on chap. xii.; and also on Satan, as the created cherub, in Vol. I. page 91.

† See Vol. I., page 167.

‡ There is a latent thought in Eph. ii. 1—6, which is seldom perceived. The course of this world, in which once we ourselves walked, is contradistinguished from the grace of God's way with us, by which He raised us up and made us sit in the heavenlies in Christ. That is to say, formerly, when we knew not God, we were pursuing the path of self-exaltation, and were led by the prince of this world; but God showed us something better.

in obedience, stand out in perfect contrast to each other. Whilst, by the precious blood of Christ, all the charges of Satan against His friends are righteously quashed. And earth no more shall Satan defile than heaven itself. Now too the earth is the Lord's !

But the time having come to dispossess Satan of all his usurped authority over this world, it is remarkable that, when once the question of righteousness has been fully settled, very little display of power is required. It is not the Lord Himself that now copes with him. Angelic strength is enough for this. Nor are many angels required ; one is ample. Nor does the seer say that it was a mighty angel that bound Satan. Of such angels we have read in earlier chapters of this book. Not so here. Here the language simply is, "an angel"—he laid hold on him ; he bound him ; he cast him into the bottomless pit.* We must beware lest, whilst we do not underrate the power of the tempter, we should overrate it. His chief ability consists in his craft in deceiving souls. Over and over again in this book, is this fact borne witness to, as it is also in this passage—verse 3. Then, as we win victories over him, his wiles and himself are exposed to view.

* See the distinction between the bottomless pit and the lake of fire, or hell, as drawn out on chap. ix.

And surely, as we trample him under foot at last, we shall wonder that we allowed ourselves so oft to sin against our God, bewitched by such a foe. (Ps. lxxiv. 14; Isaiah xxvii. 1; Job xli.) At the last he will be seen to be the most wretched object in creation. Milton speaks of his "reigning in hell!" This is a grave error. God will reign everywhere.

But what is the object of the seal which the angel puts upon him in the place of his imprisonment? Partly, it would appear here suggested, that he may be kept in secure restraint. But there may be a further hint. Once, during the time of the power of darkness, when the heel of Messiah was bruised, Satan succeeded so far as to induce wicked men, not only to put His body into a tomb, not only to place a Roman guard around that tomb, but also to place a great stone against the tomb, and to put their seal upon that stone. Thus would they make assurance doubly sure, to prevent Him, if possible, from rising again. They had, as they thought, got Him down, and they designed to keep Him down. Apparently Satan had won the day. But we know what followed. We know how triumphantly He rose again on the third day. We know what Peter tells us: "It was not possible that He should be holden of death." (Acts ii. 24.) But this victory, great as it was, will presently be followed up further by God. We, too, who are the sons of God, await the redemp-

tion in power of our bodies from the foe. Ultimately, the tables shall be so turned upon that foe, as that he shall be got quite down, be enchained and incarcerated. Then, to complete the reversion of the scene in Matthew xxvii. 66, the seal shall be put upon him in his prison.

At the same time it must not, for a moment, be imagined, because Satan is bound throughout the millenium, that therefore there will be no sin in the world. The contrary is the fact. (See Isaiah lxxv. 20.) This will be abundantly evident when we come to consider the statements contained in the third section of this chapter, in verses 7—10. For the present let it suffice to remark that everyone who knows the plague of his own heart, must be aware that, even if there were no devil to tempt him, as there is, still there remains that in himself which ever inclines him to sin. Thus observe, that not a word of reproach is cast upon Satan by the penitent, in Psalm li., or by Daniel, in his chapter ix. The former only blames himself; and the other only blames his nation with himself. Wherefore and much more, in the world at large, there will be sin present during the entire period of Christ's personal reign. One fundamental idea of a reign, according to God, is the repression of evil. (Gen. ix. 6; Rom. xiii. 1—4.) When there is no evil to be subjugated, and no enemy left to be destroyed, then the kingdom

of the Lord will at once pass into a new and more glorious phase. In the millenium righteousness "*reigns*;" but in the eternal ages, righteousness will find its permanent home, and "*dwell*" in the renewed heavens and earth. (2 Peter iii. 13; Rev. xxi. 3.) For then God will have at last got all His own beautiful and blessed way. Until then He must work, and Christ must reign and triumph over all evil by and bye. But Satan's work at present in the world is not so much to produce sin, as to foster and augment it. He is the mighty architect of evil. By his fell agency, the various schemes of wickedness are conceived, and hatched, and furthered. But then the cohesor of evil will be removed. And without the arts of this mighty builder, the separate grains of ungodliness do not combine. When, at the close of the millenium, he is let out of his temporary prison, the direful consequences thereof will be quickly perceived. But further down in this chapter we shall have more fully to enlarge on these things.

There follows, in the second place, a brief account of the Lord's personal reign. For a much ampler view of the same we must look to the glowing words in the prophets, and to the joyful notes in many of the Psalms. Nor should we except from this list the typical scenes in the historical books, nor even the shadows of this good time which are interspersed

in the Pentateuch. For instance, in Genesis, after the life of *faith* represented by Abraham, *sonship* by Isaac, and *service* by Jacob, the book is appropriately closed with a picture of *rule* according to God, as set forth in the life of Joseph, who erst a sufferer at the hands of his own brethren, and of strangers, is presently brought forth to reign over and to bless them both.

Here, when the time has arrived for the once-slain Lamb to assume earth's sceptre, we perceive that He will not reign alone. The magnates and grandees of His kingdom will be many. These are they who, for His sake, have suffered, ere his glory was unveiled to this world. And here their feeble word in faithfulness, and their brief pang for His cause—behold how all is magnificently rewarded. In chap. xix. we perceived the great ones of the earth struck down at His appearing; here, conversely, are the lowly ones, and the once unknown ones, who bore His reproach, here are they exalted. Here, in short, we behold the faithfulness of the Lord the righteous Judge! In His grace He had promised glorious things to His chosen. Here we perceive that in not one jot or tittle of what He had uttered has He failed them. The several grades also of rank in His kingdom here observable, evidence why so earnest had been His call to confession of His name.

Those on whom His rewards are thus lavished are

arranged into three groups. First, of course, comes the church of God, who are specially distinguished from the other two. Of the two last classes, the language is such as to make it evident that they had only joined Christ's side after the hardening judgments of this book had begun to be fulfilled: in other words, after the church-call was closed. Their presence, however, at all, in this scene, demonstrates that those who suffer unto death for Christ in between the two dispensations, viz: in between the rapture of the church and the appearing of Christ and the church in the heavenly glory, these all shall stand in their own lot at the end of the days. Likewise, in Daniel vii., the saints of the high places possess the kingdom (verse 22) conjointly with Christ, (verse 14); whilst the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom *under* the whole heaven, will be given to the people, (verse 27.)

This first class of enthroned ones, or the church, had been represented by the crowned elders * in

* This link, then, of identification between the first group of saints in chap. xx. 4, with the crowned and enthroned elders in Rev. iv. and v., establishes the position there taken, that those elders represent, not the Old Testament saints, as some have imagined, but the church of God. For from the picture here of these same persons, it is evident that they are those who had suffered with Christ during His rejection.

Rev. iv. and v. Their sitting posture in His presence, both there and here, is surely designed to intimate that to them is the very highest dignity accorded. These thrones, when Daniel had beheld them, were unoccupied. † But to John it is given twice to see,

† Dan. vii. 9. "I beheld till the thrones were *cast down*." Here the authorized translation is faulty. In the commentary of Adam Clarke, the correct rendering is given : "I beheld till the thrones were *SET UP*, and the Ancient of days did sit." It is evident that extreme importance is attached to the posture which the church of God, through grace and blood, has before God, at this time of the display of righteousness, and of uncreated light and glory. Even in the old creation, ere God was fully manifested, the most exalted angels of the four orders mentioned in Col. i. 16, appear to be those on thrones ; whilst contrastedly in the ascending scale of angelic rank in Eph. i. 21, the apostle only distinctly mentions divers classes reaching up to the second class of Col. i. The first class may be comprehended in the next words, "Every name that is named." But here, in Rev. iv. and v., with chap. xx. 4, the church altogether, and every member of it, are all seen to be enthroned. This is the more wonderful when one remembers who these glorified saints had been, and in what light they are now placed. Yet each and all, by omnipotent grace, have been lifted off the dunghill of this world, and caused to inherit the throne of glory. So true is it that

"Could but one soul that trusted in His name,
Be missing there,—the vacant seat, the harp unstrung,
The useless crown—would grieve all heaven,
And there proclaim a disappointed God."

and twice to record (chaps. iv., v., & xx. 4), that the Lord's once poor and afflicted people had, one and all, actually at last reached this wondrous height of bliss and glory! Nor yet are these once despised, but now enthroned ones, to be regarded as silent spectators at this time, or as only in a passive way, reflecting what grace has done for them. On the contrary, "judgment was given them." These words look back to their once feeble testimony to their crucified Lord. For that testimony they had then been pitied and laughed at. Wherever they had been enabled to be on the side of right, and on the side of Christ, could only then be amid constant opposition. Not so now! Every breath of this sort is hushed now! Again, their former judgments of things in this adulterous and sinful generation are repeated; but now it is in power and with effect. Whilst how far they themselves had each of them severally been faithful to Him, they had, ere this moment, learned in the light of His judgment-seat. There, in secret, they had heard the measure of His approval of their service—a service meted by the guage of His cross, and of identification with Himself rejected. (John xii. 26.) There, from His own pierced hand, had they obtained their several crowns and dominions; here, in public, is the full result of their faithfulness to Him seen.

Nor is their sway with and under Christ limited

to this planet. Quite the reverse. But here we are touching upon such wonderful things, that we have need to keep very close to Scripture. There can be no doubt that some rule over the earth will the church have, for listen to the elders' song in Rev. v. 11. When the Lord Jesus has been by God, in full open court in heaven, duly appointed King, and the title deeds of earth's inheritance have been put into His hands, then those elders knowing how perfectly associated with Him they are, at once rapturously exclaim, "We shall reign over the earth." For "unto the angels He hath not put in subjection the habitable world to come." They are superseded when Christ at length assumes the sovereignty.* Still, however, our calling is a heavenly one, even to where our Lord Jesus Christ is now, which is "far above all heavens." Hence, when in the dispensation of the fulness of times, God shall head up the heavenlies and the earthlies both in Christ, the church is the medium by which the heavenlies are thus in Christ headed. (Eph. i. 22.) And in such startling expressions as, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels," there may be more conveyed than meets the ear,—specially if the scriptural signification of the term 'judge' be borne in mind. But let us ponder in the light of the Word of God just one scripture.

* See the remarks on Rev. v.

I refer to Psalm viii. There we read of the dominion of the Son of Man. But in the New Testament application of this Psalm to Christ, the reach of this sway is marvellously, is infinitely enlarged. Yet whilst it is there quoted three times with this amplified explanation put upon it, in each several case we are distinctly, and in words, conjoined with Him therein. Thus in Heb. ii. 8, though not yet do we see all things put under Him, yet already do we see, as a large instalment of this, Jesus crowned there with glory and honor. Still, however, there He is pleased to own us as His "fellows" whom, as the "many sons" He is pledged to bring home to His glory. Likewise, in Eph. i., the Spirit speaking of His supreme exaltation "in the *heavenlies*," thus quotes this Psalm: "He hath put all things under His feet." And after this expansion of the Psalmist's sentiment, it is immediately added, "He gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." And once more, in 1 Cor. xv. 27, 28, these words are again cited. And it is here explained that His kingdom is to extend over all creation, with the sole exception of Him who subjects all unto Him. Most certainly the Psalmist, when he penned his words, had no idea of a rule for the Son of Man so vast as this. But then this rule of Christ is, in the im-

mediate context in Corinthians, connected* with the resurrection of our bodies in incorruption, in glory, in power, and, in brief, as of spiritual bodies, or bodies suitable for our spirits born again of God. For "the first man Adam was made a living soul," but "the last Adam is a quickening Spirit." "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the Heavenly." "We shall be like Him."

A few words will suffice in regard to the other two classes who are to reign at this time with Christ. The first class is of those who suffer after the rapture of the church; but before the rise of the Beast. John records: "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God." Here the allusion is to the martyrs under the fifth Seal. See chap. vi. 9—11, where we read: "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony

* Verse 26 may appear somewhat to jar with the above interpretation; but in the authorized translation, a pronoun is inserted in italics that considerably alters the sense. The passage should read thus: "The last enemy shall be destroyed—death." It does not teach that death shall be destroyed last; but the last enemy that we may have to encounter, viz., death, shall be destroyed, as soon as ever Jesus comes. For, of course, there is no reference in this place to the resurrection of the unjust.

which they held." And they are told to "wait for a little season, until their fellow servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." In other words, they were to wait until those who were to suffer under the Beast's reign in the great tribulation, were slain too. Thus these two parties of martyrs, after the heavenly call was closed, or at least after the church had been caught away and glorified, were to be raised and recompensed together at the Lord's appearing. Accordingly, as we here read, "Those also, whoever they were,* who had not worshipped the Beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands—they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." The first of these two classes had come out at length upon Christ's side, at the time of the confusion in-

* The force of *οἱτινες* is not given in the authorized version. It might be paraphrased thus: "Besides those enthroned ones, 'also whoever.'" There is to be noted a singular addition in the text about the second class of these, to what is recorded of them in the account of the consequences of the fifth Seal. We learn here that these were slain by being beheaded. But above all, the reader will notice how distinctly the first class are marked off from the other two. Thus they alone are said to have judgment given unto them. Of all three classes, however, it is recorded that they lived and reigned, &c. By the expression, "they lived," we must understand, of course, the reunion of their bodies with their souls.

creasing upon the earth, consequent upon the Lamb's opening the Seals of the Book. Then again, presently, from that final break-up of society, which eventuated under the Trumpets, there had arisen the Beast or Roman emperor, and his ten kings. And then others, many, as well an Israelitish remnant, as also "a great multitude that no man could number," had borne witness to their hope in a Messiah coming to reign. (See vii. and xiv.) Their inferior reward, and specially the vastly different character of their blessing from that of the church of God, we have already considered on chap. vii. The main lesson of the passage under consideration clearly is, that not one shall be a loser on account of Christ; that ultimately, righteousness, and all who are upon Christ's side, shall come out triumphant through Him Who loved them.

There are those who think that these two other classes of men in resurrection bodies here enumerated, to wit, those who had suffered unto death for Christ under the fifth Seal, and also those who had been slain by the Beast during the period of the great Tribulation—that both of these classes of martyrs, are destined by the Lord for a place in the heavens, and not upon the earth at all. For, undoubtedly, the heavenly calling is a wider term, and more comprehensive in its range, than is the church of God. It would appear as if such Old

Testament saints as Enoch, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Elijah and others, were all called with a heavenly calling. (See Heb. xi. 13—16.) Certainly all God's ancient saints will be raised at the same time as the church of God. (2 Thess. i. 10.) Why therefore, it is argued, may not these witnesses for Christ, called indeed after the church's rapture, but before the Lord has come down quite to earth, also be intended to fill some lower place in heaven? Behold the starry system above our heads! Observe the various concentric worlds, and planets, and moons, and see how one differs from another in glory.

However: whichever view of the blessing of these two inferior ranks of saints be accepted, this period is the time of Christ's own reign. Of these all it is recorded, they reigned WITH CHRIST. 'Tis He who lifts them up. 'Tis He who is supreme now, both in heaven and on earth. All the various glories of each of these three classes—as well of the church as of those two martyred groups—all proceed solely from Himself. He is the one single Centre of them all. Whatever is ours, is because we belong to Christ. Our very crowns display His matchless worthiness. Since it is our place and portion to be for ever in God's brightest light, therefore we shall most exhibit, and best know the value of Christ's blood, that alone lifted and sustains us there. Nowhere, save in the holiest of all, is the infinite value

of His work and of His merits fully seen ; but there all is estimated in the balance of the sanctuary. Thus, in a most special sense, are we to be to the praise of His glory, who were the pre-trusters in Christ. And on earth likewise, He is Lord of all—"one Lord over all the earth, and His name one ;" "on His head are many diadems ;" He is "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

This His reign is now fully inaugurated by the first resurrection in its entirety—I mean, by the quickening of all those slain after the church's removal. Hence the language of verses 5 and 6. That is to say, the first resurrection is of the righteous and of the holy. None are left in the graves at this time, but the wicked. And since it would appear from Isa. lxx. 20—22, that none but wicked people will die during the millennium, therefore, at its close, death will have none to surrender, except those who will stand before the great white Throne, and who will be cast into hell. How solemn it is that the first resurrection—the resurrection of the righteous, is not contrasted by the Holy Ghost with the second resurrection—that of the wicked. We read here only of the *first* resurrection, and of the second *death*. The summoning of the wicked from their graves is indeed termed a resurrection in John v., to wit, the resurrection of judgment ; but here the language is varied. Reader, mark the alternative,—the resurrec-

tion unto life, which is the first resurrection, or the resurrection to judgment, which is the second-DEATH. Several times over in this chapter, the wicked are still termed dead, even after their resurrection. Such are dead indeed, for ever dead ; dead, that is, to God—dead, though they live.

And this reign of the Lord over the whole earth, we are here positively informed is for the period of a thousand years. These are the “many days” of Isaiah xxiv. 22. The time of this peaceful and beneficent sway of the last Adam seems designedly to correspond with the old sabbath of creation. The probability of this is increased by the apostle’s use of the word, “Sabbath-keeping,” in Heb. iv. 9. Now shall men at last reach that extreme limit, as to length of days, which no patriarch of old ever attained unto. Three of these each lived more than nine hundred years ; but not one saw his thousandth birth-day. But now, “as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and mine elect shall (Hebrew) wear out the work of their hands.” (Isaiah lxxv. 22.) However, it is not the design of the Lord in the Revelation to enter into many details of this reign. But copious information on this thrilling subject will be found in the pages of the Old Testament. Only of the beginning, and of the close of this reign, and of those associated with the Lord therein, do we here read.

As to the objects of this reign, they are evident. The Book of Judges will afford much help to those who have been wont to regard this time as simply a prolonged assize. See, likewise, such scriptures as Psalm lxxii. The Lord will put down all rule and all principality and power. Every foe shall be trampled under foot. Now will be seen what rule according to God is, how perfect and how beautiful ! (1 Tim. vi. 15). In Messiah's day, righteousness shall come to the front, and be in the ascendant and triumph. The millennium is the period of the consolidation of things according to the mind of God. It is a transition time on earth, and placed mid-way between the ages that have preceded it and those that shall follow it. Somewhat of each of these times it partakes. And, then, after the last outbreak, and when all has been, as it, were, stereotyped, eternalized, subjected unto Christ, He will hand up the kingdom unto God. Generally speaking, other kings have parted with their sceptres only under compulsion, or when death has laid themselves low ; but the ever-obedient One hands up a dominion vaster than was ever before possessed. And God will receive the kingdom exactly as the Son surrenders it. Then God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—will be all in all. But here we are anticipating.

But *thirdly* : when one reads of the heavens opened throughout the whole of this period of earth's bless-

ing, and also of the angels ascending and descending to the Son of Man; yea, and moreover, of the wondrous spectacle of the church seen in the same glory with Christ, it may appear strange indeed that any of the inhabitants of the world should remain, at such a time, obstinate and unrepentant. Still more may the statement startle us, that at the close of the millennium a vast multitude of these will easily be drawn away into open antagonism to the Lord by Satan, when he is let out of his prison. Yet this is what is affirmed here will certainly be the case! But let us bear in mind how much even now people become accustomed to, and against which they harden themselves. There is the wondrous story of the cross, and of God's and Christ's love as there displayed,—and there is the proclamation, in thousands of places, of mercy and of everlasting life to all—whoever they are—who believe; and yet with what apparently inadequate results to what might have been expected. The carnal mind ever is enmity against God. That which is born of the flesh, is to the end only flesh still. And in those days children will be born, as now, with wicked hearts, and from their infancy familiarized to the vision of that manifested glory. Now these, unless they are born again of the Spirit, will, by the spectacle of heavenly rule, which they will constantly be habituated to, only be ripened

into ready adepts in sin, and requiring only the arts of the arch-foe to lure them on unto any pitch of daring impiety. (Isaiah xxvi. 10, 11.) So, likewise, Israel of old in the wilderness sinned again and again, notwithstanding the presence of the cloudy pillar in their camp !

From a comparison of our chapter with other parts of God's prophetic Word, it appears to be suggested that the number of those who will then on earth fear God, will be greater or less in any given country, according to its proximity unto, or distance from Palestine, round which, as its centre, the glory will hover. (See Isaiah lx. 19, 20 ; lxii. 4 ; iv. 5, 6.) Thus, as to the Holy Land itself, its inhabitants will be "all righteous." (Isaiah lx. 21.) Liars shall be unable to tarry in the presence of the King. (Psalm ci.) Egypt and Assyria will be favoured nations. (Isaiah xix. 23—25.) And on the other hand, those who in heart remain wicked, will retire further from a country wherein even "every pot shall be holiness to the Lord." (Zech. xiv. 21.) To such ungodly souls absolute consecration to the Lord will be insufferable. So, when at length Satan is let out of his prison, he knows perfectly well what direction to take, in order to find those who will lend a ready ear to his promptings. At once he betakes himself to "the four corners of the earth." (Compare Numbers xi. 1.)

Now this loosing of Satan, that he may tempt the millennial nations, is absolutely necessary. It "must be," (verse 8.) For whilst there will be every inducement to man living on the earth to be godly, inasmuch as everywhere evil will be discountenanced and repressed, and righteousness encouraged and rewarded; still, whatever favour is shown to the creature, what it is, and what is its own actual strength, must be tested. If you have a servant, and he has never robbed you, no praise is due to him if this is through his never having had the opportunity. Therefore of old was Satan permitted to enter Paradise, and now to solicit us to sin. So, likewise, those nations living under Christ's righteous sceptre will be tried. Hitherto man has rejected every display of the divine goodness. Will the beautiful and perfect rule of the Son of Man be any exception to this? Not at all. It also will by many, perhaps by most, be regarded as intolerable. So when a vast rebellion is organized against it, then indeed will the exposure of the creature be complete. He had been tried in the form of simple spirit; he had been tried in the form of spirit and flesh; he had been tried when he possessed the knowledge of good only; he had again been tried with the knowledge of good and evil, amid only evil. And now, finally, at the close of the millennium, he, possessing the knowledge of good and evil, must be tried amid only good. Then by his

disobedience and rebellion, it will be evident that, be the circumstances of his trial what they may, he faileth—he is not good. There is none good but One, for there is none immutable but He. He only IS, that is—GOD. Now, therefore, the preliminary dispensation is complete. Creation has become an everlasting monument, that it is not God, but distinct from Him. And now in redemption can God act for ever Himself, according to His own nature and design.

These rebels are termed Gog and Magog, in obvious allusion to those northern hordes also termed Gog and Magog, that had, at the commencement of Christ's reign, poured down upon Palestine, after the destruction of the Beast. (See Ezek. xxxviii. & xxxix.) Probably the parallel consists in the fact that each of these hosts, as well those at the beginning as those at the close of this time, presume to attack that which is under the manifested protection of God. Only in the former case, Israel is the people against whom the opposition is directed; but in the latter, it is the Church of God. For so I understand the words in verse 9: "The camp of the saints and the beloved city." Or the one clause may refer to the church, which had come down from heaven along with Christ, as His "armies." (xix. 14.) And the latter may describe the earthly city of God, where the heavenly and the earthly glories of this time touch each other. (Heb. xii. 22.) Be this as it may,

similar folly in fighting against God manifestly present, had been displayed once before; for in Exodus xvii. Amalek had dared to cope with a people who were known to have been delivered from Egypt by Omnipotence, and who still had the cloud of glory to guide and protect them on their way. Now, likewise, there is no delay nor measure in the punishment of opponents. Other rulers have often been appalled when general insurrection broke out among those over whom they ruled. Here, too, there rises before the mind's eye a surging mass of advancing rebels, and urged on infuriate by Satan himself. So far as we are informed, he uses no agents in this last gathering of the nations, as he had done previously to the appearing of Christ. (xiii. 2.; xvi. 13.) It is a desperate and determined attempt of Satan to regain earth's sovereignty. He entrusts the matter to no subordinates. The dethroned usurper struggles finally in person to overthrow the rule of the rightful and divinely-appointed King. And these nations, many and confederate at the close of this righteous and peaceful time, even as their namesakes, the former Gog and Magog, had been many and confederate at the beginning, (Ezek. xxxviii. 5, 6,) reckon, probably on the immensity of their hosts as certain to effect or procure some change more according to their wishes in regard to the administration of earth's affairs. They may possibly expect, and their tempter

too, a repetition of the scene on Calvary. But it is immaterial by what impious thought they are swayed and misled. "The battle is the Lord's!" Summarily are they disposed of. Fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them,

And thus this millennial "day" that had dawned so brightly on the earth, and so blessedly for man, ends in disaster.* It had commenced with the twilight of a new and gladsome day, by Christ as the Morning Star, coming for His saints. It had waxed brighter still on earth, when, as the Rising Sun, He had appeared in the midst of all His radiant throng. (Mal. iv.) Then had shone out that morning light—that morning without clouds, which David celebrates in 2 Sam. xxiii. Then had His kingdom been set up in power; and from the heat of this uncreated Sun nothing had escaped. (Ps. xix.) He had judged the living nations according to the attitude which they had assumed towards the Jews, His earthly brethren, when the Roman emperor had persecuted those for their hope in Him. (Matt. xxv. 40.) And He had judged or ruled Israel, according as such scriptures as Isa. xxxiii. 22 had set forth. But in process of time, as

* So ever has it been the case, where aught has been left contingent on man's obedience. Compare with this account the scenes in Gen. iii.; ix.; Judges ii.; 1 Kings xi.; Acts xx. 29, 30; 2 Tim. ii. and iii.

the multitude of the unregenerate again increased, so the knowledge of what He had done for Israel and for the world when He appeared, began to be less generally known, and His goodness less appreciated. Nay more, it even appears from one typical scripture, as if, in this respect, Israel itself began to fail, as the time of His reign wore on. I refer to Num. xxix., and to the gradually diminished number of bullocks there enjoined to be offered upon the successive days of the Feast of Tabernacles. (See verses 14 to 32.) And thus, as there was a sunrise to this "day," and also a period of meridian splendour; so there appears to be a sort of eventide thereto, which would have deepened into night, and that Sun had set again in clouds, as it had done three thousand years before, if ungrateful and rebellious man had been allowed to have his own wicked way. But far otherwise than this is it the case now! For this millennium, as it had been inaugurated by judgment; so judgment closes it. First these apostate nations are judged by fire from heaven; then follows judgment on Satan himself; next there is seen the great white Throne, and earth and heaven fleeing away from Him seated thereon. Then are all the wicked dead placed before that throne, and presently consigned to the lake of fire. After which follows a brief glimpse of the new and eternal state in chap. xxi. 1—8. These solemn realities, following in due order at this time,

contrast indeed with what transpired at the close of the first advent of Christ, and show us what He could have done with His puny foes, had God and He, so willed it.* But love triumphed.

But anyone who desires to obtain a distinct view of the prophetic sequence of events, must grasp the thought that the whole of the millennial period is to be regarded as the Scriptural "day of judgment," being so termed because, in one sense or another, judgment throughout characterises it. The eternal One is in no hurry. Leisurely, and with class after class, does His irrevocable judgment proceed. We may even say that Christ's own work is the first that is publicly judged and publicly rewarded. This is done when God lifts millions of those who once were hell-deserving sinners into His own immediate presence, and by making them all like His own Son, in spirit and in body too, owns them, one and all, as His own dear children. Next there follows Christ's perfect judgment of the works of His servants in the clouds of heaven. Then ensues the judgment of His foes at His appearing, and the judgment of the millennial nations during His reign. After which, at the close of this reign, there is the judgment of these apostates deceived by Satan; next, of Satan himself; and lastly, of all the dead. The orderly mode of procedure in all this should be observed.

* See note on Matt. xii. 20 at Vol. I., page 108.

In this same day of judgment Peter also includes the moment later still, when the heavens are wrapped in flames. For he, speaking of the day of the Lord, testifies that "IN THE WHICH the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." And again, we are to hasten on "the day of God, *wherein* the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved." He does not state at what part of the millennial day this universal conflagration will take place; only that it will be at some time IN IT. But here, from this divinely-traced order of events in this section of the Revelation, we perceive that this disappearance of the present creation is subsequent to the execution of the entire series of judgments. Yet, notwithstanding this fact, the Holy Ghost asserts in the passage just quoted from the second epistle of Peter, that this day also includes the time of transition from the old to the "new heavens and earth." As to the term "day," used of this long and eventful period, by the inspired penman, there is no need that it should stagger any one, for this time is called "the day of the Lord," in contradistinction to what we have termed "man's day," in 1 Cor. iv. 8, (Greek); and again, "the day of judgment," as that which succeeds what we have now, namely, "the day of salvation." * (2 Cor. vi.)

* Compare with the above, the expression, "day of temptation in the wilderness." (Psalm xcv. 8.) But this "day of temptation" lasted no less a time than forty years.

I have only further to add here, that in verse 10 we have the last word of God about the devil and his doom. As he had been confined in the bottomless pit at the beginning of the millennium ; so now at its close, he is cast into the lake of fire. There is an awful fitness in the sovereign arrangement of the holy God, that the devil, and those who, by persistence in sin, had made themselves more and more like him, should spend their eternity together,—and that eternity in a place shut out from all that is good, which they had hated, and in outer darkness, where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth. And of this hell fire, into which those wicked living on the earth were cast when Christ had judged them, the language used is, that it was “*prepared for the devil and his angels.*” But these words seem certainly to imply that he had not *then* been cast into it. And this therefore coincides with the order of events in our chapter, as above I have traced. Likewise it follows, that those same cast into hell in Matt. xxv. 46, are not identical with those raised dead ones first placed before the great white throne, and then hurled into the lake of fire. For this second group are cast into hell *after* the devil ; but those in Matt. xxv. *before* him. In short, the judgment of Matt. xxv. 46, is the judgment of the *living* at the time of Christ’s reign ; but the judgment of Rev. xx. 12, 18, is the judgment of all the

wicked *dead*. Then it is said, that "THEY shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever," (verse 10.) The reader might fail to notice from the authorized translation, that the words, "Shall be tormented for ever and ever," refers not only to Satan, but to the Beast and false prophet likewise, that is to say, to the Roman Emperor and his false teacher too. But insert the word "they," which ought to be in the text, and then you have another proof of the eternity of conscious woe in hell of those who once arrive there. And this sentence, "They shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever," explains what the inspired writer had meant by his language in chapter xvii. 8 and 11. There he had twice said that the Beast goes into perdition. Here you have his own inspired commentary as to what he meant. This "perdition" he assumes to be the same as "torment day and night for ever and ever."

We come now, in the *fourth* place, to ponder what we are taught here as to the judgment of all the wicked dead, or what may be termed the evening judgment of the millennial day. It does not appear to be taught, either here or anywhere else in Scripture, that the full blaze of Christ's own personal and uncreated glory would be all beheld by the men living on the earth during the millennium. His church, indeed, in the glory with Him, sees Him as He is;

but down on the earth,—enough that He is beheld in person, and with His glorified Bride quite associated with Him. To mortal men, that glory of His is only seen in a modified manner,* according as they are able to endure it. Surely we may say of these, even as the Lord said to Moses, they could not live and see it. (Ex. xxxiii. 20.) Why it is necessary to call attention to this, is for the following reason: the Lord Jesus here appears, when rebelled against and rejected in a lower glory by these millennial apostates, to retire, as is His wont,† into a higher glory. That rebellion of their's having been judged, the vail, if so I may express myself, drops from His face, whereby men in flesh on earth had been able to live in the

* Compare the two contrasted statements in Scripture, as to Christ's glory. Where He is seen about to interfere on earth, the language is, "His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." (Rev. i. 16.) But when Paul beheld Him in His heavenly glory, then it is spoken of as "a light above the brightness of the sun." (Acts xxvi. 13.) Likewise, in the account of the eternal scene, to which we shall come a little further on, the One who sits upon this throne is identified with the Maker of the new creation, (chap. xxi. 5); but in Heb. i. 12 this work is attributed to Christ. I mean not to deny here that this is the throne of God. I only maintain that Christ is the sole manifestation of God—that only in Christ can God be seen.

† Matt. xi. 20—27. See how the wicked retreated from His outlook in John viii. There are three scriptures where He, when rejected, is seen to retire from a lower into a higher glory, viz.: Matt. xi. 25; Acts vii. 56, with Heb. i. 3; and here, Rev. xx. 11.

sunlight of His presence, and that tempering of His glory which had continued towards the earth throughout the thousand years, is past. Then, instantly, as in a moment, the earth and the heaven, terror-struck at the full blaze of Deity uncovered before them in His countenance, flee away. In the expressive language of the seer, there is found no place for them wherein to hide from His awful gaze. So, likewise, the throne of His glory of Matt. xxv. now enlarges, or is changed for the great white Throne that John beheld. In all this, the true thought of the passage under consideration, is that God in Christ goes on from one discovery and display of Himself to another and a greater. Still, however, in each case, the same Being is beheld; for only in Him, the Virgin-born, can God be seen. And thus additional significance is perceived in the inspired title of this book—"The Revelation of Jesus Christ." Here is then the way, that is, in successive stages, not indeed to the church, but to the earth, by which God will unveil His Christ. First, He is descried on a white horse, at the head of His heavenly army. Next, He is seated on the throne of David. (Luke i. 32; Matt. xxv. 31.) But presently this throne, glorious as it must be, expands on every side, or rather, gives place and is succeeded by the great white Throne, with the Throne-Sitter filling it, too, with the glory of His presence. If once the statement in John i. 18 be implicitly accepted,

the above interpretation will be seen inevitably to follow. "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath told Him out," (Greek). Then, too, is apparent the full force of those words in Luke, which we have just quoted: "Of His kingdom there shall be no end." The millennial reign of the Son of Man may be past; but only to be followed by a still more blessed state of things, for which it was the preparation, and which it introduced. In one sense, the kingdom of Christ is for a thousand years; in another sense, it is eternal. (Isa. ix. 7; Dan. vii. 14, 27; Luke i. 33.) For that state of things which the Lord Jesus during the millennium is engaged in consolidating, shall never, can never pass away. The throne of God is firmly set for ever upon the final judgment of all evil. Nothing can for a moment at all disturb it. All that is done in judgment throughout the whole of the thousand years, is in order to establish righteousness for ever. And "the zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this."

But then we get another important hint from our chapter. Whilst in John v. we are taught as to the "resurrection" of the wicked, and as to their "coming forth" from their graves; here, on the other hand, we have the earth fleeing away, as well as the heaven; so that the very shelter that covered them is removed. The earth recedes and the dead are left exposed to view. The bottomless pit, or heart

of the earth,* in which their souls had been held, and also the graves which contained their bodies—both are gone. That vision of uncreated glory on the great white Throne had been more than creation could endure. Thus are all these wicked dead left quite uncovered, so that the light of the throne falls quite upon them. By this way of looking at the earth receding ere these are exposed for judgment—and which way seems certainly suggested by the order of the truths stated in verses 11 and 12—we are vividly reminded of His words, that judgment is “His work, His strange work.” (Isaiah xxviii. 21.) He had deferred His glance at these wicked, and at their deeds, until the very last moment almost of this millennial reign of His, when, as it was committed unto Him as the divine Servant of God, to judge everyone, and to give to each his own portion; so, at length, must He deal with these unhappy wretches. It is not said in the Greek that these stand before God or before Him. Every scholar knows better. It is before the throne that they are placed. Beyond a certain extent of the dazzling brightness of that throne they are quite incompetent to come.† In the centre

* See remarks on the bottomless pit on chap. ix.

† See on chap. i., and at the beginning of my remarks on chap. xix., where it is argued that the sight of God as He is seen in Christ is a great blessing. (Matt. v.)

thereof is indeed Himself. But the uncreated effulgence of that throne is enough, and too much, for them to endure, especially as, throughout this scripture, they are again and again termed "dead," even, albeit, they are before the throne in their resurrection bodies. In the grave their beauty has consumed away. (Psalm xlix. 14.) Now, in all the hideousness of their sinful nature, are they raised, and their sin, and their hatred of God for ever identified with themselves, and their bodies formed to endure torments, which erst had dissolved them in a moment. Thus placed in all their moral turpitude before the glory of that throne, they are held up to view, to expose what they were and had been. No wonder that the Psalmist had said, "Sinners shall not stand in the judgment." And again, "O, Lord, when Thou awakest, Thou shalt despise their image." (Psalm i. and lxxiii.) The image of God they have lost, and their own sinful desires and passions are stamped indelibly upon them. And how sublimely awful is the action of God towards them here : held up, first, fully into the light ; and then hurled, as "despised," into everlasting fire.

At the same time, it is evident from the particularity of the account here, that this the last act of judgment will be proceeded with in perfect order, and in absolute thoroughness. That all these are judged

is a proof that all are wicked. For God's judgment of a sinner is equivalent to his damnation. It is impossible that he could answer God one in a thousand matters. (Psalm cxliii. 2.) The resurrection of these sinners had been, as Christ said, "the resurrection of judgment,"* even as that of His saints had been "the resurrection of life."† The alternative now for all men, whilst grace is being shown, is as largely set forth in John v., either Life or Judgment—life now, or judgment before His throne. If we believe in Him, we have everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment at all. We have passed, by faith in Christ, out of the region of death and judgment altogether, even as Noah was carried by the ark from the old world into the new. 'Tis He Himself that has borne for us who believe all that God had to say against our sins. Now we in

* In John v. 22, 24, 27, and 29, the word *κριμα* is differently rendered, now by "judgment," then by "condemnation," and by "damnation." This is to be regretted. It hinders the reader from perceiving that judgment is tantamount to damnation. The English translation actually weakens the force of the passage; even though by stronger language than is warranted, it appears to increase it.

† The reader will remember how, under our second division of this chapter, it was shown that none but the wicked will remain in their graves after the first resurrection, and that none of the righteous will die during the millennium.

Him are beyond judgment, as surely and as entirely as He Himself is. (John v. 24 ; Heb. ix. 28.) But He Himself is yonder with God. Therefore we too are also in Him lifted out of this present scene. It is true indeed that we shall, all of us, be manifested before the "bema," or judgment-seat of Christ. But then this will not take place until we have been glorified and made quite like Himself. Besides which, this judgment is not of our persons, but of our works. It is a judgment that assumes we are God's sons, and only measures how far, in accordance with our standing and calling, we have walked. Like as a man now regards the behaviour of his own children, because their father he is. The apples in his pockets are not for other children, but for them, his own. And in that judgment by the Lord Jesus of all our works, we shall heartily concur. We shall perceive where we failed, and what we allowed to hinder our full obedience to Him that had saved us. And glad shall we be to see all those works of ours which He could not accept burned up, whilst all that He can reward, He will.

But all this is widely different from the judgment of the wicked, of their persons and of their works. They are judged as wicked. Their works are looked at, in additional proof that what they had been in heart and in motive, that also had they been in life. The outcome of their works evidenced that the foun-

tain within was impure. They were not olive berries, that the bramble had produced. And so, whether the look is at what they are and were, or at what they have done, all corresponds together. In the "book," that is, the book of life, their names are not found. Christ never knew them. In the "books" there are their wicked works recorded in plenty. The "book," "the book of life," assumes divine sovereignty; the "books" witness to their own responsibility. And these severally tally with each other. And all that they have done is carefully examined. They themselves now will remember all. It is not natural to forget a thing for ever. Now men may do much which they ignore, and lightly estimating, quickly forget. But even in the intermediate state, they will have ample leisure to remember all. (Luke xvi. 25.) So, when after many days of imprisonment, they are visited by Him who will make searching inquisition of every action of theirs, the recalling of all to mind will, even to themselves, be terribly easy. (Is. xxiv. 21—22.) In vivid reality they will behold how they lived to themselves and to their flesh, and so now reap corruption. For the Lord's way is rather to convince, than to condemn men. For then, convinced, they condemn themselves. (See Luke xix. 22, 23.)

And as verse 12 indicates how exact and searching will be the scrutiny of the life of each; so the next

verse makes it clear, that not one sinner shall escape. Not even the fathomless ocean shall any longer retain its prey, or be a cover, when God's time of judgment has arrived. Many deeds of violence have been perpetrated on the seas' briny waters,—these and their doers must all be looked at now. Within the dark prison walls of the inquisition, ungodly, religious men, have acted even as they listed. In all countries and in all ages—since Cain slew Abel, extending to the time when the Beast, red-handed with deeds of bloody persecution, was stopped in his course by the appearing of Christ—the unrighteous and the lawless, have usually triumphed.

Now all these sinners of every age, with the exception of the Beast himself, who had ere this met his final doom, all are summoned to the divine bar. Death, that is, the grave, renders up every dead body, and hell, that is, hades, the unseen world, yields back again every lost spirit; these spirits are re-united with their bodies, and each and all are judged according to their works. And then, finally, as if to show the impossibility of any escape, it is added, that death and hades are cast or emptied, as to their entire contents, into the lake of fire. Even so, as when one empties a sack, and would do it perfectly, he turns it upside down; and then shakes it well. Thus does God empty hades and the graves, turning them over, and so discharging all contained therein into the lake of fire. There

is a solemn repetition at the close of verse 14 in the ancient Greek manuscripts, which is not found, as it ought to be, in our translation. For verse 14 should read thus : “And death and hades were emptied into *the lake of fire*. *This second death is the lake of fire.*” Those words in the first clause, about the lake of fire, being echoed by the Spirit in the second ; mark how God would have His awful warning ring and ring again in sinners’ ears. Also in chap. xix. 20, instead of “*a lake of fire*,” the Greek has “*THE lake of fire*.” (Compare Isaiah xxx. 33.) And so it comes to pass, that every one, without a single exception, “whosoever is not found written in the book of life, is cast into the lake of fire.” Here, verily, is an whoever, or whosoever, that will not be disregarded. These things are at present held to be myths and old wives’ fables. Scorn and laughter and unbelief will be past then. Yet, indeed, there will be One and One only, who will then laugh, even He who says, “I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh.” This language is uttered by Wisdom, or the Word, that is, Christ, the Lamb. Hence, in the wrath of the Lamb in that day, there will be mingled derisive laughter ! And we are aware how much anguish is connected with the first death. Who can tell how much is involved in the second ? None but He who will then laugh !

LECTURE XIX.

CHAP. XX.—XXI. 8. THE IMMEDIATE AND FINAL
RESULTS OF CHRIST'S INTERVENTION.

CHAP. XXI. 1—8. THE ETERNAL STATE.

WE have yet to ponder briefly the state of things universally prevailing, when once the millennium is quite past, and when all things are finally made new—rearranged and established by Christ, according to the will of the blessed God. The prophetic touches afforded us concerning this remoter vista are very few. They are mainly comprised in the first eight verses of chap. xxi. Enough, however, is revealed for us to learn assuredly that God will yet finally and for ever triumph over all the sin of man, and against all the craft of the foe. Such indeed, to a great extent, are the prime drift and scope of every hint found in these last two chapters. But from xxi. 9 to xxii. 5, the view presented by the inspired seer is first of the glorified church as the intermediate source of blessing

to the world, and in all her conferred bridal beauty as the wife of the Lamb. And this is aptly closed by an account, in the second place, of the Paradise of those days. That is to say, from chap. xxi. 9 to the close of that part of the book which is more strictly prophetic, viz: to chap. xxii. 5, the theme is of the true Adam and His spotless Bride, who had been taken out of His side whilst He slept. Appropriately, too, it is next disclosed that the blessedness of the Paradise of old will be vastly exceeded by the Paradise of God. And it should be noticed that each of these two subjects is introduced by the same expression, "He showed me." (Chap. xxi. 10 with xxii. 1.) This also goes to prove that these two are to be somewhat combined. And both are in evident allusion, by the way of contrast, with the scene in Genesis ii. And thus the curtain falls; God, it is seen, has won the day: where sin had abounded, grace had much more abounded. As sin had reigned in death, so ultimately grace triumphs and reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. v. 20, 21.)

Hence it is certain that, after the eighth verse of chap. xxi., the picture which we behold is not quite eternal, nor yet wholly millennial. It is millennial, indeed; but as in a dissolving view, tending as it were towards another—the eternal one. Still, however, as in chap. xxi. 24 and xxii. 2, it is much

more millennial than eternal. But on the other hand, that the first eight verses of chap. xxi. are a description of post-millennial and eternal times, is also certain from many considerations. Thus the close connection, and the entire continuity of the passage with chap. xx., make this very evident. For in chap. xx. Satan is bound; then follows Christ's millennial reign; then at the close of that reign we read of the loosing of Satan, and the last outbreak in rebellion of wicked men; next we read of their destruction, and of Satan cast into the lake of fire. And lastly, in that chapter we have the vision of the great white Throne, with the passing away of the present heavens and earth, and the judgment of all the dead, unsaved. Then immediately after, in chap. xxi., we read of the new heaven and the new earth. Particularly we are informed, that in the new earth there will be no more sea, (verse 1.) But throughout the millennium there will be the sea. For at its close it surrenders the dead who are in it, and whose bodies had been covered by it, until that hour, fraught with such awful issues, had quite arrived. (Also see Is. lx. 9.) And further, it is remarkable that whilst in the supplementary account of the beautiful sway of the heavenly Bridegroom and Bride from out of a fairer Paradise than of old, and over a tranquilized world, we read of nations no less than three times (chaps. xxi. 24, 26; xxii. 2); here, conversely, where a glance

is afforded us of times beyond that millennium, we read not of "*nations*" as such, but of "*men*." Now whilst there are nations, there are also "*kings*." (Chap. xxi. 24.) But the reign of kings implies the presence of evil, and of its controul by the instrumentality of these. But when all things are subdued, then no longer are there either nations or kings. Instead thereof, with these "*men*" there is "*the tabernacle of God*." This word coincides perfectly with the language of 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28, where we read that at the very end Christ Himself shall, in His manhood nature, be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that GOD may be All in All.

Now the manner in which the new, the eternal state shall be introduced, and by which, as by a broad line, it is in this very scripture markedly separated from the millennium that precedes it, is by the passing away of the present framework of creation, and by the renovation of all things; or, in other words, by the universal conflagration of the heavens and of the earth; whence shall issue that new order of things which shall abide for ever. Yes, "*unshaken*" and for ever it shall continue, because it shall be established upon redemption, and depend for its permanency solely on the goodness of God, and on the worthiness of the Lamb once slain. The beams of the chambers of His glory above, as well as the blessing of the earth beneath, have been set in

the deep waters of death, that rolled over the soul of His beloved Son. Now that God has laid the Foundation, He takes the line and the plummet again into His hands; but now to order and to establish everything, henceforth and for ever. The infinite value of the blood of the cross shall be proclaimed throughout eternity, from every part and in every feature of the new creation; but the old creation, which shall pass away, depended for its continuance on the goodness of the creature. (Contrast Gen. i. 31, with 2 Chron. vii. 3 and Rev. v. 9.) Thus, its corner-stone, as it is termed in Job xxxviii. 6, was a foundation of sand. It was necessary, however, that the creature should be first utterly exposed, in order that all might learn that One only is immutable. But now all things shall depend upon the Rock—Christ. Of the entire new creation, the Son of God is the Corner-stone—the Sure Foundation. Sin has invaded and broken up the creation-rest of God. This will be impossible in the ages to come; because all will be established in death and resurrection, after sin and ruin have wrought their worst and their uttermost. Thus the old creation, as well the heavens as the earth, must be “shaken,” must be “changed,” must “pass away,” must “be on fire,” must “perish.” Not so the new creation; for all of it is to be linked on to the throne of the living God. This resurrection, which is a conse-

quence of redemption, is a mighty secret of our God's. And whilst resurrection is ours in the most blessed sense, it is also creation's hope in another. As there is a regeneration of the soul (Titus iii. 5); so likewise there is a regeneration awaiting this planet.* (Matt. xix. 28). Moreover, "in the dispensation of the fulness of times God will gather together (or head up) all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him." (Eph. i. 10).

Now, in order to this same ultimate and complete end, as well as regards heaven as the earth, it would seem as if in God's own time the whole universe must be affected—rearranged, or changed by a display or displays of divine power. The immensity of creation, indeed, makes this difficult for any one to receive; but God's testimony in His Word is so copious, and withal, so decisive on this point, that to him who allows faith instead of reason to guide his understanding, no alternative is left. In this connexion both terms "heaven" and "the heavens" are used by the Holy Ghost. Many attempt to interpret all such passages as referring only to the lower heavens or atmosphere. But let the reader attentively consider whether this explanation exhausts

* The Greek word *παλιγγενεσία* is only found in the above two Scriptures.

the scope of all the following scriptures : Rev. xx. 11; xxi.; Heb. xii. 26, 27; i. 10—12; Matt. xxiv. 35; 2 Peter iii. 10, 11; also compare Eph. i. 10, 21 with iii. 10; iv. 10 with vi. 12; Job i.; xv. 15; 1 Kings xxii. 21; Heb. ix. 23. The fact is, in every place, beginning downwards from the throne of God, where Jesus our Lord and Head is, will Omnipotence presently work to introduce a new state of things altogether. Only in the very highest heavens, hard by the throne of God, is there now security. The throes and travail of creation shall issue in a far fuller manifestation of divine glory when the goodness of God is to be the sole starting point, than when the goodness of the creature was in some degree the basis. Thus, eternity past will fundamentally differ from that which is to come. In the former, that is to say, in that part thereof during which creature has existed, that creature has been tested, and its goodness exposed; in eternity to come, GOD shall be all in all. The glory of God will shine out in Christ; Christ will ever be the head of the Body the church; and the church will ever be a blessing to creation : *—Divine goodness reaching

* Compare Eph. iii. 21, (Greek), "Glory in the church in Christ Jesus, unto all the generation of the age of ages," with Rev. xxi. 11, (Greek), "The Bride, the Lamb's Wife—having the glory of God, and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, *crystallizing*," beautifying, beatifying creation.

forth to the creature through the church, whilst the church stands in Christ, and Christ is in God for ever. And thus, as our resurrection body is formed out of the old one, and as the potter's vessel when marred, was remade, (Jeremiah xviii. 4); so the new heavens and the new earth are formed from the old; but at the same time, all is firmly and finally established in Christ, and, as it were, in resurrection.

Above I remarked that the passages of Scripture, enlarging on the eternal state itself, are few. They are chiefly, in addition to the one under consideration, 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28; Ephes. ii. 7; 2 Peter iii. 18; and notably Eph. iii. 21, Greek. "To Him (God) be glory in the church in Christ Jesus unto all the generations of the age of ages." Still, however, the language of the verses here in Rev. xxi. 1—8, may be studied with advantage in the light of such other scriptures as those previously quoted. And when the testimony of all are combined and compared with the language found here, the differences as to the condition of things in eternity, from that obtaining in the millennium, become very marked. And then they seem to exhibit clearly to us the design of God in interposing the millennium between the present period and the eternal ages. As, for instance :—

1. Until the Son of God came, there is no mention of the heavens being once opened, except in prophetic vision, (Ezek. i. 1.) But when Jesus was

baptized, "the heavens were opened unto Him," (Matt. iii. 16,) were "cut asunder," (Mark i. 10, Greek); and when he died, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. (Matt. xxvii. 51.) Now, therefore, the heavens are opened to the eye of faith. (Compare Acts x. 11.) Hence, we can now behold the glory of the ascended Lord. (2 Cor. iii. 18.) But in the millennium, the time for the arduous, yet blessed walk by faith, will be past. Therefore at that time the heavens will be visibly opened. (John i. 51; Rev. xix. 11.) And when at length the millennium is over, and when the eternal day is about to dawn, new heavens and a new earth will succeed those which are now. (Rev. xxi. 1.) Again :

2. Whilst Christ is at the right hand of God, the HOLY GHOST is in a peculiar and special manner present here, in the world and in the church. (John xvi.) He has come down expressly to glorify the rejected Lord Jesus Christ. So we in whose hearts He dwells, rejoice to hear that "Christ is All and in All," (Col. iii. 11.) But in a little while, the Lord Jesus will descend from heaven, and the Holy Ghost will lift us up to Him. Then will CHRIST visibly and personally interfere on earth. He will come once more as the Word of God, and as the Revealer of the ways of God. (Rev. xix. 13.) And when under His sway He shall have subdued all things, God Himself will

fill the scene with His glory. Then "the tabernacle of God will be with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, their GOD." (Rev. xxi. 3.) For Christ having delivered up the millennial "kingdom to God, even the Father," "the Son will" then Himself also "be subject to Him that put all things under Him, that God may be All in All." (1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.) Jesus Christ will then as man take the place of subjection unto God in glory, as of old He took the servant's place in grace. (Phil. ii. 7.) As for us, we are now in the kingdom of the Son of His love. (Col. i. 13.) But this very language implies that we are only learners as yet as to obedience. The perfect Servant is our Teacher. But when we have learned our lesson, "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. xiii. 43.) Whilst in eternity, God will through Christ, that divine Servant of His, have obtained all His own holy and gracious way. Until then God is at work: now He is showing grace and forbearance; in the millennium the Lord will show in beautiful rule, righteousness and judgment. Then in after ages His glory will for ever shine out unhindered. Now, the HOLY GHOST is at work in grace; in the millennium, CHRIST will reign and judge, and ultimately, in eternity, God will be all in all.

3. For throughout this present dispensation, righteousness is suffering. See the first epistle of Peter throughout. The righteous and holy One has been rejected, and we who are His are likewise for His sake "killed all the day long." But eventually, righteousness will yet triumph, even when the King appears who "in righteousness" will "judge and make war," (Rev. xix. 11,) that is to say, when at the beginning of the millennium, He doth set up His *reign*. The millennium is the human reign of Christ, —is the day of judgment and of the Lord. It is fitting that He who suffered as man for righteousness and for God, should reign and rule for God. That the One to rule and rectify all things should first have suffered, when "judgment was turned away backward, and justice stood afar off"—this, in God's account, is a supreme qualification for sovereignty in that day. But when at length He has stablished all things in righteousness, then will the whole creation give place and be succeeded by the new heavens and the new earth, wherein righteousness shall permanently "dwell" and find its suitable home for ever. This identical word "dwell," is used in two of the inspired touches of this final scene. In 2 Peter iii. 13, the hint is, of course, of the perfect settlement of righteousness in the new creation; in Rev. xxi. 3, of the for ever undisturbed rest of God therein. Thus in the time struggle between

righteousness and sin, sin is vanquished, the wicked succumb and God wins the day. Now grace and glory, through righteousness, can be displayed without let or hindrance for ever. The agonies and blasphemies of hell will only form, as we shall see just now, a dark back-ground in contrast with the hallelujahs of heaven and the praises of creation. So in the ages which are coming on, God will show out the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness to us through Christ Jesus. His fulness is poured on us. Others are to learn thereby how inexhaustible that fulness is !

4. Then will at last be seen God's great thought, and the crown of all His works—His master-piece! His object He has achieved—He has obtained for Himself a living home of living stones, in which He may dwell, and out of which He may shine forth for ever. The cloud of glory of old was a type of this, and the cherubim of old an anticipation of it. This home of God will not be, as our earthly homes are, quite unconnected with the indweller. Each stone of this temple is a living stone, instinct with divine life from Christ Himself. And the whole of it is built upon Him as its Foundation. And He is the immoveable Rock, because He is the eternal Son of the living God. Thus this home or temple of God will be an unique, a costly, and a wondrous edifice, worthy in all respects of God, its Architect and Indweller.

We shall have more to say upon this subject in the next lecture. Here, now it is adverted to only that we may remark that this tabernacle does not appear to come so close to men during the millennium, as it does subsequently. In the former period He pitches His tent over them;* but when the millennium is past, a great voice is heard: "the tabernacle of God is *with men*." Earthwards the church of God seems in part to resemble a "camp" throughout Christ's reign, as well as also to be the "beloved city," (chap. xx. 9.) So, of old, the full manifestation of God's thought in the rearing and indwelling of His temple was reserved more for the time of Solomon, than for that of David. For God's way is to keep the best till the last!

Those two monarchs of all Israel, to wit, David and Solomon, represent Christ as the millennial King; who will be, first, King of Righteousness; and after that, King of Peace. As the antitype of the one, He is the Queller of all opposition; and, as the antitype of the other, He is the peaceful Ruler of a world at

* (Rev. vii. 15, Greek.) Instead of "dwell among them," read "pitch His tabernacle over them," (*σκηνώσει ἐπ' αὐτοὺς*.) Also see the note on the correct reading of chap. xiii. 6, and on the thought there suggested, when the last "and" is omitted from the translation, as it ought to be. Also observe the order of the two promises in Rev. iii. 5 with 12, and the note thereon in vol. i., page 54.

rest. But the above is not the whole of the truth suggested in this double type of the Lord. For Solomon's reign again represents the millennial as gliding into the eternal state. Let the reader ponder the following texts, and he will perceive how much David's *Son*—not Solomon, but Christ—is eyed in prophetic Scripture. (Compare 2 Sam. vii. 14—16, with Heb. i. 5; again, Psalm cxxxii. 11 with Acts ii. 30; and Isaiah lv. 3 with Acts xiii. 34; also Isaiah ix. 7 and Luke i. 33.) Thus, if the true idea of the reign of Solomon be apprehended, the significance of the fact will be evident, that to him alone was reserved the building of the Temple, and the perfect display to all of the secret purpose of God. For only in so far as things are put right can the unclouded glory of God shine out before men. At present, the church is being builded together for God's habitation by His Spirit. (Eph. ii. 22.) The stones are being cut out of the quarry and moulded for their future destination, ere they are removed thence. (1 Kings vii. 7.) To build the temple of the Lord is the grandest display of His power and glory. (Zech. vi. 13.) But He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it. (Zech. iv. 7.) Then will He rise into His rest, which, even beyond Zion, He pre-eminently desired. (Psalm cxxxii.) So will He rest in His love, and over us all present with Himself He will

rejoice with singing. (Zeph. iii. 17.) Then, in the eternal ages yet to come, His excellency in counsel, and His greatness in His work accomplished, all shall behold. I have further to add that God's church is, I conceive, here termed His Tabernacle, rather than His temple, because God Himself is the Inner Shrine *—is the Holy of Holies thereof. (Chap. xxi. 22.)

But the distinction above suggested between the reigns of David and Solomon is also important from another point of view. David's nobles are characterized as mighty men of valour; whilst, on the other hand, the highest personages in Solomon's kingdom are celebrated as his servants. Those rewards or crowns, conferred upon the overcoming ones by the Lord Jesus at His appearing, shall never wax old, or fade away; for the kingdom only comes to an end in the sense of there remaining no more enemies to subdue, and of nothing further of disorder requiring intervention and cure. (Chap. xxii. 5 and

* *ναος*, not *ιερος*, is the word used in chap. xxi. 22. The latter word denotes all the sacred precincts of the temple; the former is applied only to the holy place. So, again, the head of the woman is the man, and the Head of the man is Christ, and the Head of Christ is God. (1 Cor. xi. 2.) Yet it is wonderful to read, as showing how near to God we are brought, that the overcomers shall each one be made a pillar in this *ναος*, or temple. (Rev. iii. 12.)

Isaiah ix. 7.) But those rewards of the Lord Jesus to His valiant followers are coloured by this eternal kingdom of His. This the term, "crown," used of them, itself implies. There Solomon's attendants minister each according to his own capacity, and God's servants according to theirs. (Chap. xxii. 3.) This variation of capacity may be, and doubtless is, connected closely with their several valorous deeds. (Chap. xxii. 3 with 5.) As we become "strong" and "overcome," so do we grow from babes to young men. (1 John ii.) Obedience is the way to increased knowledge of the ways of God. Thus the capacity of these servants, their intelligence, the diversity in size of the vessels, is another and further matter which will be at once discerned in that day. The two, however, viz., the variety as to their deeds of valour, and the difference of their capacity, must not be separated. 'Tis ever "he who increaseth knowledge" that "increaseth sorrow," and gets into deeper suffering for his Lord. But this subject of the eternal variation of character in the saints of God, we shall have to look at again in the next lecture. Indeed, I think it probable that it was this reference here to the tabernacle of God, that was the cause of the inspired seer being led on to descant in full as to the Bride, the Lamb's wife. But then he has to change the symbol from a temple to a city. Why he does this will be seen in its proper place.

There remain a few other points in the scripture under consideration, which demand a brief remark. It is very striking that here in verse 2, and again in the Appendix in verse 9 and following verses, wherein we obtain a much fuller account of the Bride—in both places she is described as “descending out of heaven from God.” This repetition of the account of her descent from heaven, may be designed either to denote her disappearance from the sight of men whilst the heavens and the earth were wrapped in flame, revealing with Whom she had been securely hidden in that hour of creation’s travail. Or if the other verses of this chapter be viewed as somewhat supplementary, entering more fully into the relation of the Bridegroom and Bride and the Paradise of God, with the world outside; then this language may be in order perfectly to indentify the Bride, even the tabernacle of God in the one account, with the Bride, even the New Jerusalem of the second and fuller account. But whether you look at the Lord in His glory ruling over all *nations*, as the antitype of David; or whether you look at Him as dwelling in His tabernacle among *men* in peace, because of no foes left to be subjugated; in each view the church is His Bride, The former is more vividly sketched in the Appendix, as see verse 24 and chap. xxii. 2; the latter alone is before us in chap. xxi. 2 and 3. And still more blessed is it to observe that in each place the church

is termed a Bride, as if for ever and for ever fresh and unchanging and in youthful beauty.

2. Again : there occurs here in this glimpse of the eternal scene, the expression, " faithful words," * or " sayings." Likewise in chap. xxii. 6, it is found again. There are, I think, seven or eight of these faithful sayings. Perhaps it will be more suitable to quote the entire series when in chap. xxii., we come to the closing words of this book. Suffice it therefore, here to say, that the first of this series of eight, is found in 1 Tim. i. 15 : " This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners ; of whom I am *first*. But for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me *first* Jesus Christ might show forth the whole longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe in Him to life everlasting." And here, in the Revelation, we get the last one or two of these sayings. And thus by the Spirit Himself are the millennial and eternal glories of this book evidently linked on with the first showing of mercy unto sinners by Christ now. And those once great sinners, now believing in Him, are here seen quite at the other end of faith's path. How this divine

* So Peter writes in his second epistle, " We, according to His *promise*, look for new heavens and a new earth." By both John and Peter His pledged word is eyed as we have it in Isaiah lxxv. See again Haggai ii. 6, 7 is appealed to in Heb. xii. 26.

conjunction of the reward according to faith now, with the glory then to be revealed, ought to encourage us to persevere in preaching the Word of Life to others, yea, and to abide in Christ ourselves.

8. It may be for a similar linking on of the end, with the beginning of our faith in Christ, that here, also, in close juxtaposition, we read of the ever new, though old invitation, at the close of ver. 6, with the vast and comprehensive promise in ver. 7. The invitation much resembles the Lord's word in John vii. 37. It is also repeated substantially in xxii. 17. And this repetition in the supplementary part of this book, of what we have in these verses xxi. 1—8, and which are strictly and solely a picture of eternity, tends much to confirm the interpretation given above of the reason of the repeated mention of the descent of the New Jerusalem from heaven. Wonderful, also, here still, in immediate connexion with this old and precious invitation, is the assurance of the Lord that He is the unchangeable One—"Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." The grace that He shows to us when we first come to Him is not radically different to the grace that in the ages yet to come will still be shown to us. And as to God's great promise here, it is surely uttered with the object of encouraging us to overcome now. If He, in His mercy, affords us these dazzling visions of coming glory, it is, as here we see, in order that

He may write underneath the gladdening picture, "All these things are for him that overcomes the present evil around him." But victory over evil is by separation from it. We may indeed, thereby, incur some little loss at present; but what is that in comparison of what we here perceive awaits us? "All things," (Greek "these things") says God, "shall be comprised in the inheritance of the over-comer; whilst as to Myself, I will be his God, and he shall be My son." What could He add more to attract our hearts? Alas, that they should after all be swayed so little thereby!

4. And yet, however, it is one more beautiful and inimitable touch in this account, to hear God solacing—if I may so say reverently, not us, but Himself, when He declares that "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."* As the sympathizing Lord Jesus showed that He grieved over the ravages of death, when He wept at the grave of Lazarus, so now the voice of God is heard soliloquizing—"No more of sorrow, no more of it for ever." Indeed, we ought to notice

* Note that whilst here the making of all things new is ascribed to Him that sits on the throne, in Heb. i. 12 this work is attributed to Christ. Hence again, it is assumed that Christ, the Son of God, is the only manifestation of God. See the suggestion on chap. xx. 11.

how much of these eight verses is made up of direct utterances of our God. Thus, it is suggested that the once pent-up desires of His heart have at length found their full vent. In Genesis i. it is His voice that breaks the silence; and here, He again and again alone is heard.

5. It is another old and precious word of His here: "It is done," similar to the word of the Lord on the cross, "It is finished." So too, when the tabernacle, and again when the temple of old were completed, the Spirit witnessed the same, in this very style of language. (See Exod. xl. 48, and 2 Chron. vii. 11.) Even of the old creation, this word is found in Genesis ii. 1. How much more, therefore, may we look for such language when an order of things so much more stable and blessed is brought forth. For here God Himself is seen in company with His redeemed, and the last Adam along with His true Bride.

6. But not in this way does the curtain fall! Oh, no! The last word is a look out at the impenitent. And it is intensely solemn to bear in mind that this closing utterance as to the doom of the lost is found in that part of this book which, undoubtedly, sets forth the eternity that is to come. Hence we see for certain, that this eternity concerns the lost, as well as the saved. So likewise it is after the millennium is all but over, and when eternity is about

to set in, that the great white Throne of judgment is set, and the wicked are placed before it. To which testimony we must also add, that God's wrath is declared to continue as long as His own life. (Chap. xv. 7.) No wonder, therefore, that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of this living God. And that the torment is conscious torment, (how otherwise could it be torment,) is evident, if proof be needed, from chap. xiv. 11, where not only is it written, that the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever; but it is conjoined with the remark that they HAVE NO REST DAY OR NIGHT! The language seems to be so precise and measured, as if on purpose to preclude all hope. *

The terms that are here used to describe the lost require, perhaps, some of them, a word of explanation. The "cowards" are put first, even those who, through fear of consequences, were afraid, so that they dared not to obey God's call. (Compare John xii. 42, 43, with ii. 23, 24.) But God hath not given unto us the spirit of cowardice. (2 Tim. i. 7.)

* The reader will here recall to mind what had been said of the Beast and his false prophet, viz., that "they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." The "they" is in the original, though it hardly appears in the translation; and thus is explained to us the meaning of perdition or destruction, *απώλεια*, as is used of the same Beast in chap. xvii. 11.

Several of the other words here look at the abominations that had been disclosed by this book. Notably this is the case with the word rendered "whoremongers." It is not at fleshly uncleanness that the word is here directed. The atmosphere of this book must be breathed, if its words are to be truly interpreted. And this word is a glance back at the great whore and at her daughters. My present duty is not to reconcile this strong language with every-day facts; but simply to elicit the teaching of Scripture. Likewise with the term, "liars," no less than three times in these two chapters are we warned as to the final doom of all such. (See chap. xxi. 27; xxii. 15; and xxi. 8.) And in this last cited place, there is an additional word about the "liars," which makes the warning more emphatic: "Sorcerers, idolaters, and ALL liars shall have their part in the lake," etc. Would that these solemn words were more heeded.

Lastly, we are informed that "*the share**" of these wicked shall be in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. This word rendered "share," or "part," is the same as we find in Col. i. 12 used for the *portion* of God's own people: "Giving thanks to the Father who hath made us capable for the share of the inherit-

* μέρος.

ance of the saints in light." Also in Rev. xx. 6 read: "Blessed and holy is he who has a *share* in the first resurrection." Hence, as *our* portion & share is in God's own uncreated light, and in the first resurrection; so the wicked's share and portion is in the lake of fire! Thus all and each have their own eternal portion! And as each class is so fixed in their proper last and long home, so the curtain falls!

LECTURE XX.

CHAP. XXI. 9—XXII. 5. SOME ACCOUNT OF THE BRIDE OF THE LAMB OR LAST ADAM, AND OF THE PARADISE OF GOD.

IT was not fitting that this book of the Revelation should close with scenes of judgment. Storms clear the air. A fearful storm of vengeance on apostate Christendom had been witnessed to be rising up from the divine throne, in chap. iv. 5. And this storm, during the course of the unfolding of the prophecy, had waxed increasingly * terrific, until judgment had been meted out on all. But now, beyond all this, there is discerned the clear azure empyrean. Specially, the harlot and her daughters having been disowned, the true Bride is brought forth at length into view. Thus this section becomes

* See the hint on the rising of this storm in chap. iv., at vol. i., p. 78 ; then trace the indications of its gradual increase, in chaps. vi. 12 ; vii. 1 ; viii. 5 ; xi. 19 ; xvi. 18—21.

an inspired but needed supplement to the entire Book of the Revelation; and, indeed, to the whole Word of God. The vision, of which we here possess this gorgeous and glowing description, is scarcely to be regarded as either wholly millennial, or as wholly post-millennial. Some of its verses, as chaps. xxi. 24, 26, xxii. 2, partake rather of the former aspect; whilst notably such verses as xxii. 3—5, are coloured rather by the latter. And the whole affords us a picture of the church in her bridal beauty and glory, and of her general relation to God's outer creation. But to her—once in glory—a thousand years make but little difference. She is the Lamb's Bride for ever! The scene around her may change from millennial to eternal; but she herself is beheld indissolubly united to Him, the unchangeable One.

And thus, in the last two chapters of the Bible, there is a designed glance back at the first two. For in the opening chapters of Genesis, there is the old creation, and there is its rule delegated to a creature, Adam, who, with his bride formed out of himself whilst he slept, and then given unto him by God, are both beheld in their happy home. Then in all the intermediate chapters up to Revelation xx., man having rebelled against God, and earth's sceptre having, in consequence, fallen from his enfeebled grasp, we witness God in His dealings with His creature, now in grace, or now in judgment. But

here again, in these last two chapters, we learn that God will yet achieve his purpose, when the administration—not of earth only, but of heaven also—is assumed by the glorified Son of Man. And then the blessings of all past dispensations, all which God has now centred and treasured up in His Son, shall be brought forth again, at Christ's appearing.*

There are two main sub-divisions of this section. Two scenes of glory are shown by the angel unto John: the one of these is the Bride, the Lamb's wife; the other is the pure river of water of life, proceeding from the throne, together with the view of the Paradise of God on either side of that river. (Compare chap. xxi. 10 with xxii. 1.) But here how great the contrast between the scene in Genesis and the scene in Revelation. Not only has God not been defeated nor baulked; but the victory over all opposition is complete. Grace has not only won the day; but it has triumphed even where sin had abounded. And the final issue of the protracted struggle is the re-appearance in substance of the scene in Genesis, only in an infinitely more blessed and exalted manner. So much is this the case, that John, who had previously been overpowered with joy and wonder, when he had heard of the Bride,

* See some proofs of this from this very Book of Revelation, cited in vol. i., p. 75, 76.

and of her eternal portion, (chap. xix. 10) was a second time transported with ecstasy beyond himself, when a prophetic vision of the reality was accorded him. What he had heard of in chap. xix. 10. had by no means prepared him for such a sight as that which he was permitted to gaze upon.

“ O blessed Lord, we little dreamed
Of such a morn as this ;
Such rivers of unmingled joy,
Such full unbounded bliss !
And oh ! how sweet the happy thought,
That all we taste or see,
We owe it to the dying Lamb,
We owe it all to Thee.”

Let us look, in the first place, at the former scene shown to John. We find in the New Testament four comparisons of the relationship of the church to her divine Lord ; these of course are, a Temple, a Bride, a Body, and a City. * As to God, she is His House, or Tabernacle, or Temple. As to CHRIST, she is His heavenly Bride. As to the HOLY GHOST, she is the Body of which Christ is the Head, and which, throughout both Head and members, all is permeated by one life and one Spirit. As a body, Christ

* Likewise in the Old Testament a lesson may be learned as to our future place of association with our Lord, from what we there read of the symbolic cherubim, and also of the cloud of glory.

being the divine Head thereof, God is *over* her. As a Bride, God is *with* her. And as a Temple, God is *in* her. These three together, reveal how she is destined to be the living home or palace of the living God in Christ. Now these three comparisons specially represent her position God-wards, whilst the fourth rather marks her standing and place of blessing unto others in God's creation. * But these four must not be too widely dissociated in the mind from each other, otherwise, inadequacy of view, or possibly, even false conceptions, will be the result. They should be combined, as they are, indeed, in this very scripture. Thus, whilst here she is looked at and expatiated upon at length in her character as a City, almost in the same breath she is termed the Bride. Again, in chap. xxi. 3 with ver. 2, a third of these comparisons is added. There, the Tabernacle of God is her designation, in immediate conjunction with the other terms "City" and "Bride." And of this tabernacle God Himself is declared to be the Temple, or innermost part. † (Chap. xxi. 22.) Thus, by change of symbol, we have here represented the entire Body and the Head. For as the Head of the

* A similar combination of terms is to be found in the expression "kings and priests." See the remark on this at vol. i., page 81.

† *ναος*. This word used in Rev. xxi. 22, denotes "the most holy place."

Church is Christ, so the head of Christ is God. (1 Cor. xi. 3.) In the presence of the glory of God Himself, the humbler term is used of the church, and the one which is more suggestive of stability is referred to God. Thus, by this carefully balanced language here, and remarkably harmonizing as it does with the passage just cited in 1 Cor. xi. 3, it is very clearly seen that the church ever remains, of course, a creature. United to her Lord, Who is one with His Father, she may be and is. (John xvii. 21.) Still, however, she is distinct from Him.* But further, from this language it is also evident that every member of this church, and every single atom of this divinely built city, is all brought equally near to God. For "in it" there is "no temple." To every part of it, He is alike near. And the union is so complete between this living temple and its Lord, that everyone now overcoming is constituted a pillar of it. (Rev. iii. 12.) And thus each and all of these four symbols of the church are eyed in this very Scripture.

Moreover, as by two of these comparisons we perceive that the church will ever be the happy *receiver* of God's grace and love, so, likewise, in the other

* This observation will not be deemed unnecessary by those who recall to mind the grave errors on this point into which some have ere now drifted.

two we have it surely revealed that she is even destined to be the *giver* unto others. As the Bride of the Lamb, and as the Tabernacle of God, she is herself enriched and blessed; as Christ's body, filled to overflowing with His Spirit, and as the New Jerusalem, she is herself a blessing unto others. As for the harlot, she was, as the Holy Ghost testifies, an unmitigated curse. She "corrupted the earth." (Chap. xix. 2.) She "made the inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication." (Chap. xvii. 2.) But the Bride, as the New Jerusalem, will be the medium by which God's goodness flowing down through Christ will reach creation. So near is she herself to her Lord, that He is her Life, her Joy, her Portion; but unto creation, she is, as here we see, the depository and the dispenser of His blessing. (Ver. 11.) And we know Who has said that to be a giver is even more delightful than to be a receiver. (Acts xx. 35.) Thus the church is to share in the very joy of God and of Christ. It has not indeed seemed good before our God, to furnish us with any lengthened account of what lies before us. This is well. He would have us wait patiently, hope perfectly, and trust in Him. Glimpses, here and there, however, of the nearing future, we do have afforded us,—quite enough to sustain and to gladden our hearts. But now, limiting our attention to this one scripture, and more particularly to what

we have recorded of the Bride in her character as the New Jerusalem, we may note the following details:—

1. This New Jerusalem is itself the church,—that is to say, it is the company of the saints of God, gathered out of the world during this present dispensation. This fact is evident from the interchange of the figures used concerning it. It is “the Bride the Lamb’s wife.” This Jerusalem is “our mother.” (Gal. iv. 26, Greek. See also Rev. xxii. 19.)

2. This city is the *home* of these saints of His. The thought here may appear somewhat complex when it is conjoined with the preceding. Still it is the truth. Even as a human body is the “house” of a man, (Eccles. xii. 8), and yet is a part of the man himself; so this New Jerusalem is the church of God, and at the same time it is her home. From these very bodies of ours we can perceive, that when God builds us each a present home, in which we dwell, He, unlike other builders, can connect it immediately with ourselves—can make it an integral part of ourselves. (2 Cor. v.) Moreover, as God is in Christ, and we also are in Christ, (Col. ii. 9, 10, Greek); so God is in His church, and we too are in the church. (Acts xiii. 1.) Hence,

3. This Bride, this city, is the home, or house, or “tabernacle” of God. (Rev. xiii. 6; and xxi. 3.) On these passages, speaking of the church as His

tabernacle, we have already remarked. (See also Eph. ii. 22; 1 Tim. iii. 15; Heb. iii. 6.) God is slowly rearing a building, in the course of twenty centuries, which is destined to be in the closest relationship to Himself, and in which He will dwell for ever. Every stone thereof is a living stone, and its life is derived from Himself. Its foundation is His Son, whose blood was the costly price that He paid for its purchase. And when the whole is at length completed, He will flood all and every part of it with His glory, and fill it throughout with Himself. Until redemption was an accomplished fact, His love could not be poured forth freely unto us. But now God in Christ has reached us, and has obtained us peculiarly for Himself. And this tabernacle He will make the outer shrine of Deity.*

4. It is noticeable, that never in the Word is the church spoken of as His palace; but as His "Tabernacle," (Rev. xxi. 3,) or as "His Temple." (Eph. ii. 21.) Possibly the former term might have disclosed its magnificence; but the use of the other word proves that holiness is the prime thought. And accordingly this New Jerusalem is here termed "the *holy city*." And the golden reed to measure it,

* Upon the above thought of the church being God's own home, I have reflected further in a tract, "The Successive Developements of the Temple of God."

and also the gates and walls, of which we will speak presently, all testify of its entire separation from the least defilement. And this very fact shows us how near to God this church is brought, inasmuch as it appears in His own uncreated and unsullied light.

5. This city is the "*New Jerusalem*," * (verse 2.) Since every member of the church is a new creation, and since all sing the new song of the sole worthiness of their Redeemer, it is proper that the entire city should be "new" likewise. If no longer the creature is to be dependent for blessing on its own goodness, but on the goodness of God, then will God come forth in full display as to what He is. Then God has all the field to Himself, in which to display Himself. And if this be the case towards all of His saved creatures, how much more is this to be His way with us the church, who are "the pretrusters in Christ." (Eph. i. 12, Greek.) Since we all are the first to perceive His worthiness, and to stake everything thereon, God in grace will respond wondrously

* The adjective "great" in chap. xxi. 10, should be omitted, as all the critical editors agree. It is Babylon which is "the great city," (chap. xvii. 5.) But the church is a "little, little flock." (Luke xii. 32, Greek.) She seems to display the depth and the height, rather than the length and breadth of God's love. Surely these latter, that multitude that no man can number of Revelation vii., will prove. In contradistinction to Babylon, this Jerusalem is termed "the holy city."

to our hope, and prove to us and to all that our confidence in His Son was not ill-founded. And then His other creatures shall get blessing by means of this New Jerusalem.

6. Accordingly, we read that John descried this city as "descending from heaven," * and as having "the glory of God." For as to the former of these expressions, the church is to reign over the earth, rather than upon it. (Rev. v. 10, Greek.) For the Lord Jesus will so be the one Centre of the entire millennial scene, as in John i. 51, that the angels of God are there seen to be first ascending and then descending unto the Son of Man. Then what language, in describing the church's exalted sphere of blessing, can exceed the brief sentence which we find here, "having the glory of God." So Christ had declared in those memorable words of His to His Father: "The glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them." (John xvii. 22.) And so had He prayed with reference to the sole means whereby we can obtain glory, to wit, by beholding it in Him: "I will that they also whom thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me." For this cause,

* We have already seen in the preceding lecture why it is recorded, twice in this chapter (xxi. 2 and 10,) that this New Jerusalem is seen "descending from heaven."

surely, it in part was that He reserved this petition for the last. And here in Rev. xxi., the church of God is seen in actual and full possession of this given glory.

7. And therefore, what in this inspired description of the New Jerusalem may we, after those glowing words, next expect to hear of? Verily that which immediately follows in this same ver. 11. And the two parts of the account in this verse, therefore, set forth, the one the cause, this other, the effect: "her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, *crystallizing*." * The earlier clause of the verse teaches us how brimful of blessing she herself is; but these other words, that that blessing is running over for the good of others. It is a great pity that the Greek word should have been rendered in our translation, "clear as crystal;" for the point of the passage is utterly lost thereby. The Holy Ghost's word, "*crystallizing*," sets forth that when the time has come for the church to have the glory of God, her use unto others will be to beautify, to beatify, to gladden creation.† Whilst the Being on the throne is said in chap. iv. somewhat to resemble

* *κρυσταλλίζοντι*.

† So the word "blessing," (not "a blessing,") is to be taken actively in 1 Peter v. 9. For compare James iii. 10.

a jasper stone ; this is the likeness of the light, that the church "having the glory of God" will give.

But whilst we thus perceive from the above intimation, what will be her use generally unto creation at large, we learn from after verses here that this light of hers will, unto others, be attempered and varied. Otherwise this "glory of God" beheld upon her, would be far too resplendent and dazzling to be gazed upon or endured. Therefore, only from a distance do men behold the glory of her light. It may be on this account that allusions are here interposed as to the intermediate relationship of Israel between this glorified church, on the one hand, and the outlying world on the other. For of the new people of Israel, am I inclined, for reasons which I will assign in their place, to interpret the symbols of the wall and gates. Remarkably, these are descanted on by the inspired seer, IMMEDIATELY AFTER his statement of the city "having the glory of God," with her light being so bright and crystallizing, and IMMEDIATELY BEFORE the account of the varied colours in her light. The reference made to her light resembling jasper, serves to introduce the parenthesis about the wall and gates ; and then, when the parenthetical explanation is completed, he resumes his description of the city just where he had discontinued this, even by the mention of the jasper again. And in this resumption as to the city, he now at once enlarges on the

diversity of colours in her glory. So, likewise are informed twice that the city, or its streets, are "pure gold, as it were transparent glass." (Ver. 20 and 21.) And this remark we get for the first time just before the enumeration of the jewels or colours, and then again, directly after it. These hints help us in the survey of this glory here. Now, considering the account thereof in a reverential spirit, we may observe—

1. God is Light, and He is the Father of Lights. But in pure, transparent light, there is a trinity of colours. There is the blue, or chemical ray; the yellow, or luminous ray; and the red, or life ray.

2. Jesus, the Son of God, is the Outcome of the Light, Outshining, "the Effulgence of the glory." (Heb. 1:3) And hence, of this city, we read in ver. 23, that it "had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

3. Of the eternal Son of God we may also say that there is no one feature or character specially marked in Him. He is the fine flour of Leviticus ii. There is no unevenness in Him. But the Cross we may compare to a prism, where mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, not only converge, but whence also radiate. As "the Lamb" it is that He enlightens us. Light and Life stream out from Him unto us.

into us. And in this way we become the "children of light." (Eph. v. 8.) We who believe in Him are all the sons of light. (1 Thess. v. 5.) And presently, "in their Father's kingdom, the righteous shall shine out as the sun." (Matt. xiii. 43.) But Christ only is the full manifestation of God. And He is our Fulness. (Col. ii. 10.) Out of His fulness have all we received, grace being shown to us corresponding to all the grace that is in Him. Therefore we are His fulness. (Eph. i. 23.) For we all, in Him and with Him, form but one Body. He needs us. (1 Cor. xii. 21.) He is the Fountain; we are the vessels. And these are first being filled with mercy; and ultimately shall be filled to overflowing with glory. (Rom. ix. 23.) And in this way we may interpret the expressions made use of singularly, both of the Lord Jesus and of others also, that they were "full of the Holy Ghost." (Luke iv. 1, and Acts vii. 55, with John i. 16.)

4. For not indeed in any one of the vessels is all the glory contained; only at most in them altogether. Wherefore this light is more marked in one manner or hue in one vessel and in another, another. Accordingly, whilst we read of the foundations here being severally "jasper," "sapphire," &c., this variety of hue, or of the phases that the light diversely assumes in these several vessels, are explained to the effect that the foundations have "in them

the *names* of the twelve apostles of the Lamb," (ver. 14.) For the term "name," when used in Scripture of God, denotes some or other manifestation of Himself. But where it is used of His people, it looks at their character, either natural or spiritual, or both. And the word being here used in the plural (*names*) comes to be identical in import with the variety of the colours. Thus the symbol and the term serve mutually to illustrate each other.

Now, that there is every possible diversity even of natural character among God's dear saints, none can deny. One is choleric, another is sanguine, another is phlegmatic, and another is melancholic. The one is the noblest, another is the most gentle, another is the most useful, and another has the deepest feeling.

Then there is also infinite variety of spiritual character. Everywhere we see that God loves variety, and not sameness; harmony, rather than unison. And the Word of God inculcates this truth upon us in the most vivid and peremptory manner. (See 1 Cor. xii. 11.) Paul, when regenerated, is not made into another Peter; neither is John made into another, either Paul or Peter. On some souls certain texts of Scripture and certain truths of God have made an impression that they have not produced upon others; whilst some of those others may probably feel the force of their counter truths, more

than the former do. Frequently it will be found, that where Christians get wrong, is not in some position that they strenuously maintain; but which they hold in such a way as to reject its other side. The full truth of God lies never in a one-sided extreme; nor yet in between the two extremes, but in the two extremes. Both of these should be grasped firmly,* and that one's vessel is the larger who can enjoy the most of God's truth, and accordingly receive and approve the most of God's ways. How different is the truth which we find presented in Paul to what we read in Peter! Where in Peter once do we read of the church of God, or of being seated with Christ in the heavenlies? Yet John's line of things is different from either of these; aye, and in advance too. If Paul's theme is grace; John's is the Root of grace. Would that this were more apprehended now-a-days. For some see nothing of church truth; others can see nothing else, nothing beyond it. So in John's third epistle, specially bearing on these last days, there is an ominous hint how he might be cast out by fervid and prejudiced partisans. It is simply unbelief that leads anyone to reject or to despise some other side of truth on the plea of attachment to a more favoured side thereof. That which has come to our own souls in power from God, let us ourselves enjoy; but let us

* See my Leaflet on "Counter Truths of Scripture."

all seek to get a larger and more comprehensive grasp of truth and of Christ's love.

For we are not required to abandon what truth in the school of the Holy Ghost we have learned, in order to embrace the counter truth. It may be that in each soul there is somewhat of another character besides that which is prominently marked in him. It is not possible to tell where, in a rainbow, one colour ends and another begins. If you look at a house from one side, you may probably behold some part of another side, and at all events you are aware it has other sides. So in the New Jerusalem, there is, we see, this variety of name, of colour, or of character. And as we grow in grace, not only is our grasp of truth and of Christ's love more comprehensive; but also the very features which we have learned of divine truth become more vivid to our souls, and our individual character becomes intensified. The colour produced becomes still deeper and richer! Add further, that which we learn from God influences our lives. For by the truth we are sanctified, and then practice gradually becomes easier, and in the end it forms in us habits, and habits form the character, and character is eternal. (Rev. xxii. 11.)

Therefore let us all hail with thankfulness all God's discipline. How much of God, and of His love, and of His ways may be learned upon a sick

bed, or by painful wilderness experiences ! At present, we sometimes wonder or even repine at His dealings with us. But who, once there, would like to have been without those most valuable wilderness lessons. One of these lessons, as well the most necessary as the most salutary, is the lesson of humility.* (See Deut. viii. 3.) For as self sinks, so Christ and God rise in our estimation. And also more generally, "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because God's love is poured out into our hearts by the Holy Ghost, Who is given unto us." And hence it comes to pass that we not only rejoice in hope of the glory of God ; but we rejoice † in tribulations also, and we rejoice in God Himself, through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. v.) Thus, the chiselling of the stone, and its slow moulding for its predestined place yonder, together with the last touches on it by the all-wise Workman, ere it is removed home, these are all of infinite and of eternal value. (James i. 12)

And how much we need each other here and there, 1 Cor. xii. and this Rev. xxi. demonstrate. For we

* Mark how that very long chapter Ezek. xvi. closes. See the sum of all God's dealings with Jerusalem there stated at verse 63.

† It is the same Greek word rendered *rejoice* in verse 2, *glory* in verse 3, and *joy* in verse 11 of Rom. v.

perceive that these jewels actually set off each other. The variety is extremely important. As the wind in an organ, far from tending to produce only one sound, serves to bring out the richest diversity of note ; so the spirit in us severally is in harmonious contrast with the same spirit in others. And Christ needs us, each and all. There in His breastplate these jewels are all beheld varied, glittering and resplendent. There, on Him as the Foundation, these costly stones form one beauteous Temple, one heavenly City. Do not mistake me ! There is no beauty here which is not wholly derived from the Sun ! Without it, all colour and all the beauty thereof had been impossible. It is the glory of God which lightens this Temple,—it is the Lamb Who is its light. 'Tis He, therefore, Who produces and Who brings forth to view the distinctive lustres of the several jewels. But for Him we had been worthless, and sinners dead in sins even now. “ What have we that we have not received ? ”

Once gathered home, as yet we must be, all and each will therefore be conjoined. (John xvii. 22, 23.) But “ one star ” will “ differ from another star in glory.” Still, divers as may be the respective hues of the several jewels, nevertheless, all have been loved with the same love ; all have been washed in the same blood ; all have been born into new life, and sealed by the same Spirit ; all are reclining on

the same Bosom ; all are equally near and dear to God. Then, when all * these jewels are combined, and, as all the various rays of beauty converge, the single and the pure Beam of Light is seen. That is to say, all the Body together, along with the divine Head Himself, form one mystic Christ. (1 Cor.xii.12.)

These colours here, are those not of flowers ; for flowers fade. (Job xiv. 1, 2 ; Ps. ciii. 15 ; Jas. i. 9 ; 1 Peter i. 24.) Yet Solomon, the greatest king of the old creation, was not arrayed as one of these. (Matt. vi. 29.) No, these are the colours of jewels, which are imperishable. They are twelve, to signify that not the least saint, nor the once greatest sinner, nor yet the most tempted and despised one now, can be left out or lost. On earth the perfect number is seven ; but in glory, a higher, a complete perfection is to be reached. It is no longer three joined to four ; or four to three. There the perfect number is twelve ; that is to say, it is the sum of three *multiplied* by four ! God in Christ will, through the church as His tabernacle, dwell in the new creation for ever.

* Even in the old creation, in Eden, the garden of God, "every precious stone was the covering" (rather "the Tabernacle," Heb.) of the anointed angelic cherub. (See note on Ezek. xxviii. 13, 14, at Vol. i., page 91 ; also on the comparison of the Throne-Sitter to jasper and sardine. Vol. i., page 76.)

LECTURE XXI.

CHAP. XXI. 9 TO XXII. 5. SOME ACCOUNT OF THE BRIDE OF THE LAMB OR LAST ADAM, AND OF THE PARADISE OF GOD.

BUT what is signified by the wall and by the gates, of which over and over again we have here such marked mention? To ascertain this we must bear in mind that the city is, as we have seen, the symbol of the church of God in its relation to the outer creation, and especially unto this earth. (Ver. 24, 26.) It follows, therefore, that the wall and the gates have likewise some symbolic import. Moreover, the laws of homogeneity require, that if the builded city itself be a people, then the external wall must represent a people too. And then, this other people's place is between the church and the earth. Thus, a trifold order of grace and blessing is manifested, of which the church gets the innermost or richest share, and the nations or people on the earth, have the outermost place. Now, this remarkably corresponds with what we find from

Scripture is invariably God's way, whenever He dwells among men. That is to say, His glory shines out only from the innermost part of a threefold circle. For instance, we are His temple now—so much so, that our very bodies are indwelt by the Holy Ghost. (1 Cor. vi. 19.) But His operation proceeds from within our spirits, without unto our souls, and even, lastly,* affecting our bodies. (1 Thess. v. 23; so see Rom. viii. 16; Gal. vi. 18.) Ultimately, our very faces, radiant with joy, testify of the glory within us. (Acts vi. 15,) And in this way there is a similarity between ourselves who are His temple now, with His Tabernacle as reared by Moses; and again, with His Temple as built by Solomon, each of which, as we are aware, had a most holy, and then a holy place, and an outer court. And although no man knoweth the Son but the Father, so that only with profound reverence would we ever contemplate the mystery of God manifested in flesh; yet surely we can all perceive that the Tabernacle of old set forth how the Word would in time "pitch His tent among men." (John i. 14, Greek.) The crowds could throng and press Him; but the glory lay deep within, shining out only when so it pleased Him. (Mark v. 31; Luke v. 8.) And

* This passage is often quoted upside down, as if it were written, "body, soul and spirit." The mistake is more serious

this line of thought enables us to note the favour accorded to Adam, who at once, after his creation, was put down within an innermost circle of blessing, to wit, in Paradise, of which the two outer ones were Eden, and then the world. (Gen. ii. 8.) These several cases in varying dispensations, prove that this way of our God which is found here, has been the same from the beginning.

But if by these symbols we have represented to us some intermediate people between the church of God on the one hand, and the nations or men on the earth on the other, can we certainly learn from Scripture who these people are? I think so. There is a third class distinctly specified in 1 Cor. x. 32. And, indeed, there can be no question that to the Jew, or Israelite, in millennial times, there will be such a sort of middle place reserved. Exactly in correspondence with the above is that picture of the millennial glory which we find in Heb. xii. If we

than might be supposed; but how it has wrought mischief I cannot go into here. In 1 Cor. v. 20 the words "and in your spirit which are God's" should be omitted. The verse should properly end with the clause, "Glorify God in your body." I call attention to this, lest it should be supposed that the order in the way of God was unimportant, or that Scripture sometimes traced that order, now in one way, and now in the other. But this is not so; God invariably works from within to without. See Eph. iii. 16, and 2 Cor. iv. 16.

have been lifted up out of the world, then are we there said to have been brought unto *Mount Zion*, and even, as is next mentioned, to the *CITY* of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.* And this interpretation, to which we seem to be necessarily led, viz.: that by the wall and gates we are to understand the priesthood of all Israel, will appear, we trow, much more probable, if we compare the peculiar place of favour which is yet to be granted to that nation, with the evident scope of these parts of the entire symbol.

Now, as the church in the heavenlies will, as God's priests, lead and close the worship of all creation,† so, *on the earth*, Israel is destined in millennial times to be the priests of the Lord. (Isa. lxi. 6.) And this is what would at once have been equally all Israel's place, from the moment of their redemption out of Egypt, had it not been for their own foolish perversity. This is evident from Exodus xix. 6. But they desired to be put under law, and God took them at their word. Then it came to pass that only a single family of that nation was brought near to Him, so as to obtain the priesthood. But the great God never abandons His purpose of blessing,

* See a full exposition of this millennial scene in my Lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews, page 124.

† See Vol. I., page 105.

even though, through man's obstinacy, He may appear to delay it. Hence, as we learn from this passage (Isa. lxi. 6), His original intention will yet be carried out; and therefore the whole period of His ways with Israel, as His earthly people, from their arrival at Mount Sinai until the dawn of the millennial day, may be regarded as one vast parenthesis. Then will He resume His dealings in grace with that nation where, through their unreadiness, He discontinued them. Israel shall yet be to Him His own peculiar people, and for a praise unto Him in the earth. But now, in priesthood, the priest comes between the worshipper and God. So when, as in the inspired account here we perceive will yet be the case, the world at large brings its tribute and its homage towards * the heavenly city, where the King, aye, even where God in glory dwells; and when the nations † walk in the light of this New Jerusalem, Israel's place will be to be the break, or the connecting link, the intermediate circle between the dazzling effulgence of that heavenly city on the one hand,

* Such is the true force of *εἰς* in xxi. 24, 26. The meaning is greatly obscured by the unfortunate rendering "into" in our translation. See Psalm xcvi. 8.

† In the clause of ver. 24, "The nations of them that are saved," the words "of them that are saved" must be omitted, as all the critical editors tell us. Also, instead of their walking "in the light," it should be "by the light": *δια τῆς φωτός*.

and the world at large on the other. But this is precisely what appears to be expressed here in symbolic style. For the general idea of a wall having gates thereto, is to mark off what must not be included or come therein from what may. On the one hand, everything that is unfit to pass those gates of pearl is excluded; whilst whatever ought to be received is admitted, as it is indeed here written, "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." Yet, of course, the worship and the praise of the world shall come in and be acceptable before the King, the Lord of Hosts. The nations themselves shall even come by their representatives annually as far as the *earthly* Jerusalem for this purpose. (Zech. xiv. 16.) Moreover, "the kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him." (Ps. ii. 10, 11.) But the world's homage will require priesthood: its worshippers will need to be instructed as to the blood of Jesus and the holiness of the great King. So, in the way above indicated, that is to say, through Israel, now jealous for His glory and instructed in His statutes, shall the world's tribute and adoration be presented before Him in such a manner as that He, with unsullied majesty, can ac-

cept. And then, ultimately, shall "the world know" that God had sent Christ, and that He had loved us who now, during his rejection here, believe on Him, even as He had loved the Son. For it shall then perceive us to be perfected in oneness and in glory with our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. (John xvii. 21.)

These gates of pearl, * being situated some on each side of this symbolic wall, may be in order to show that those coming from either east or west, or north, or south, are equally welcome to approach (εἰς) "towards" this city. (Compare Luke xiii. 29.) The number three, on each side, may signify how God, as three in one, shall then be known among all nations. And thus, by the church, the world will be learning what a God is our God. By the four square form of this city, we are instructed as to its eternal stability. By the golden reed to measure it, we perceive that its limits are clearly defined. The nations may advance "unto" it. Mount Zion, the highest peak, then, of all the earth, (Isaiah ii. 2), may be

* Some might possibly think, that because the pearl is the church in Matt. xiii. 46, therefore the same is the case with these twelve gates of pearl here. Such might as well argue, that because the jewels on the high priest's breastplate represent the tribes of Israel, in Exodus xxviii., therefore the twelve jewels of this city in Rev. xxi. stand for the same nation here. Then the wall, the exterior of the city, would be the church; and the interior would be Israel. This idea does not need to be refuted.

somewhat locally near to it, i.e., the heavenly city, which is blessing and enriching the earth. But the New Jerusalem, the church herself, as such, is eternally distinct from, and high above all the rest of creation. (Eph. iii. 21, Greek.) Angels are its sentinel guards. Of old, cherubim were stationed beside Paradise, to keep the way of the tree of life. Then were Adam and his children all SHUT OUT, apparently for ever. But now we sprung from the last Adam, Who is a quickening Spirit, are SHUT IN with God and with His Christ for ever. We "shall go no more out." (Rev. iii. 12.) We have been called and introduced to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus. (1 Peter v. 10.) We are to dwell and be at home in "the liberty of the glory of the children of God," and as such abide in the house of the Lord for ever. (Rom. viii. 21, Greek; John viii. 35, 36; Psalm xxiii. 6.) The sight of the bride in her character as the New Jerusalem being shown to the seer by one of the angels who had the seven Vials, illustrates her perfect immunity from those agencies of destruction that had dried up the resources of the harlot, and caused Babylon to perish. There is absolutely nothing in the character of God that is against us—that is not "for us." His grace shall reign through righteousness, to the giving us eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Hence we "shall reign in life by Jesus Christ" for ever. (Rom. v. 17; Rev. xxii. 5.)

And when our Lord has put down all power, and crushed every foe, then, on the final overthrow of evil shall His throne be established. Nor can it ever, ever break forth into God's redeemed creation, until that throne can itself be upset.

We come now to notice, in the *second* place, that other scene to which the angel had directed attention. He had said to John, "I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's wife." Accordingly he had carried him away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and had "*showed* him the holy city, Jerusalem." * For only in the Spirit and up yonder † can we behold Christ's love to us, in associating us with Himself in His heavenly glory. But now, when he had attentively gazed on that soul-ravishing vision, "he *SHOWED*" him also "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," together with a view infinitely transcending that from Pisgah, (Deut. xxxiv. 1), to wit, of the Paradise of God, on either side of this wondrous river. And here, in these opening verses of chap.

* The reader will remember that the adjective, "great," as applied to the holy city, Jerusalem, here should be omitted.

† As John only in the wilderness could perceive the iniquity of Babylon,—only by separation therefrom could he behold the apostacies of Christendom; so, only upon a high mountain, could the holy Jerusalem be beheld. That is to say, the position of John, in each case, is symbolic.

xxii., the continued glance back to the account of the scene in Genesis ii., is evident. But, as in the case of the peerless Bride herself, so all here again is in marked contrast with what we read there. For the throne of God, and the life-giving, life-sustaining river, ever constantly flowing forth from that throne, are the prominent features of the view here. God's throne, in this description, seems to be as the Head of Paradise, and this river to be so situated, if the simile may be continued, as if it were the spinal system thereof. First, the seer's attention is directed to the River of Life; next, to the Tree of Life; afterwards follows the statement as to the absence of all curse from this right-joyous scene, and then, lastly, comes the crowning blessing, that the throne of God and of the Lamb* shall be in it. This may have been implied in verse 1, if so, then its repetition in verse 3 is for emphasis. But the announcement was too grand and too important to be left to mere implication; therefore the distinct assurance to this effect is here vouchsafed to us. Man shall yet be in God's home, and God shall be at home with men. Then the fourth and fifth verses expand this supreme promise from divers points of view. And in this manner, with the richest promise possible enlarged by the Spirit to the very uttermost extent, the prophetic part of this book of the Revelation closes.

* See Vol. i, page 102.

Now, as to the pure River of water of life, the question at once occurs whether we are to understand this literally or spiritually. In my opinion, these two views combined are the full truth of God upon this subject. For first, we may remember that God has revealed to us His purpose, ultimately "to head up all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." Again, some, as the church, for instance, are called by God with a heavenly calling, and blessed with all spiritual blessings; whilst others, again, as Israel, will be called with an earthly call, and blessed largely upon the earth. Thirdly: the river of the Eden of old was both literal and symbolic; literal, as is evident from the face of the account given of it; yet was it symbolic too, as will appear to him who reflects on the fact, that only out of Eden was it parted, being divided into four heads, corresponding with the four views of the Lord Jesus, as presented to us, fallen from our first estate, by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.* Fourthly: throughout the Old Testament, there turns up again and again an allusion to a river of God, which, in some cases, is of literal water. (Ps. xlvii.; Ezek. xlvii., and Zech. xiv. 8.) But, on the other hand, in the New Testament, the frequent mention there of

* There is an underlying connexion of thought with the above in the fact, that the number generally mentioned of the cherubim is four, and in no case is this number exceeded. See some hints as to this on chap. iv., vol. i., page 90.

living water is in undoubted reference to the Holy Ghost. (John iv. and vii.) Therefore we may conclude that this river is both spiritual and literal, even as the call of the Lord is now heavenly, and will presently be an earthly call; and, again, even as both realms, the heavenly and the earthly, shall yet be ruled over by Christ; only in the one case, perhaps, the truth is rather of the one aspect of this river; and in the other case, of the other aspect thereof. Or this may be stated otherwise: the spiritual and the literal view of this river may be regarded in a more or less modified manner, according to the character of the people benefitted by it, whether heavenly or earthly.

But a more important point to observe is, that wherever in the prophetic future we read of the temple of God, there we read of living waters flowing thence. If God in very deed be pleased to vouchsafe His presence in any one spot, good to the creature must necessarily result. Creation itself would be a blank without God. And therefore, when the Lord Jesus was present upon the earth, He could speak in the way that He did to the woman of Samaria, as to His readiness to give living water. (John iv. 10.) And now, if we who believe in the Lord Jesus, are the temple of the Holy Ghost, there must be living water flow out of us, in smaller or larger proportion, according to

the measure of our faith in Him. (John vii. 38; Romans xv. 18.) And whilst the church at large is continued here by her Lord, it is in order that she may in this way prove a blessing to the parched and barren wilderness of this world. (Compare Psalm lxxxiv. 6, with Psalm lxiii. 1.) If God be indeed in us, and among us, His presence will surely make itself felt. (1 Cor. xiv. 25.) So too, in this picture of times millennial ending in eternal, a similar view of the gracious way of our God is afforded us. For here we behold an inexhaustible stream of life and of blessing flowing forth ever fresh from the eternal Giver! What an exalted idea of God, and of His infinite riches, we obtain from all this! And John, as representing the church, is so near the Throne, whence this River rises, that he can behold the very Source and Fountain-head of all this joy!

But if the River of life be both literal and symbolic, so likewise must the Tree of life be. Certainly it was a literal Tree in Eden of old. And as certainly it represented Christ; since He, speaking as Wisdom, who is the Word,* asserts this. (See Proverbs iii. 18, where the allusion to Genesis iii. 22 seems highly probable.) There seems to have been some mysterious connexion between the type and

* Wisdom is the Word unuttered; the Word is Wisdom uttered.

the anti-type, or at least, God may have been pleased in His sovereignty to cause life to be communicable through this tree, since we find that the eating of this tree would have perpetuated even this mortal life of Adam. The fact is, that God does not treat us as if we were all spirit, any more than as if we were all body. In the Lord's Supper now, we do well to "discern the Lord's body;" as well as to know that it is "bread which we break." * That the mention of the Tree here is to be understood literally appears evident, inasmuch as the "leaves of this tree are for the healing or service † of the nations." Though here again the supreme position of those now believing in Christ, is in contrast with the blessing of those nations. For a promise in chapter ii. 7, on which we have already reflected, ‡ guarantees to the overcoming one, that he shall eat of the Tree of life ITSELF, "which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." This is much beyond what is said to be the portion of the nations, either here or in Ezek. xlvii. 12. That this Tree is found not

* Some might profitably remember the same two-foldedness of truth as regards baptism. For some will hear of no other baptism than the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Others, again, hardly even rise in thought beyond the baptism of water.

† εἰς θεραπείαν. On this word, see my leaflet upon the Counter Truths of Scripture, p. 5. See also Ezek. xlvii. 12.

‡ See Vol. i., p.p. 53 and 54.

only on either side of the River, but also in the midst of the street of the New Jerusalem, proves how easy of access to each and all of the inhabitants thereof it will be; whilst its variety of fruits in ample profusion, may hint how the joys of that city will ever be new and full. Nor is it enough, in God's account at this time, for this perennial bliss to be constantly obtainable by effort, however easy. Here, rather, the view is of God bringing forth His exhaustless riches of glory, and those that are His feeding, without any satiety and with fresh delight, ever thereon. The two symbols of River and Tree together, suggest in the *type*, the perfect abundance of the richest and the healthiest food and drink both; and in the *anti-type*, the all-sufficiency of Christ and of the Holy Ghost, to satisfy every desire of every spirit! For surely there too, even to the highest creatures, yea even of the church itself, Christ will still be the Life, as well as He is now, aye, and more so. Then as now, the knowledge of Him and of God in Him will be to the soul as food is now unto the body. And this leads me to make a remark on one more point as to the Tree of life.

In Eden there were two symbolic trees—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life. And these two trees represented, the one, responsibility, and the other, life. Adam chose responsibility. But Christ, taking the sinner's place,

was dealt with by God as the responsible One, and died. Now God gives to us first, life in Christ risen ; afterwards, we are responsible to act according unto that new life given unto us ; but in the glory, responsibility is altogether merged in life. And hence we read not of two trees here, but of one—of life only. The tree of knowledge has been superseded by Him “in Whom all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge are hid.” (Col. ii. 3.) If life and knowledge were once separated, this is not the case any more ; for “this is life eternal, to know God and ” his Son “Jesus Christ.”

Also from the entire earth, the curse, the incubus is lifted. Who can tell how great the difference which this will make ? That which is now a thistle was originally a flower so beautiful, as almost to make a rose to blush. What a change, therefore, when from all the earth the blight is removed ! But here again the allusion is evident to Genesis. God has gained His blessed object. The whole of time is but a single moment, an atom in the ways of the eternal One. During the wondrous march of His providence, and the gradual discovery of Himself, and of the resources in Himself, to meet even man’s guilt, many indeed have fallen, have perished. But at the consummation of all His dealings, it shall be seen that His secret counsel stood. He has not been frustrated. Nay more, here at the end we perceive

something infinitely more wonderful, and more delightful than at the beginning. Not only is there no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb* is there. And as if to preclude all misgiving on our part, as to the greatness of the grace and of the blessing for this New Jerusalem immediately overshadowing the earthly one, it is added, "And they shall see His face." The whole of that celestial city is so illumined and radiant with His presence, that the earthly city Jerusalem, yea, and the entire earth, is flooded with His glory, outshining thence. (Ps. lxxii. 19; Isaiah iv. 5.)

Thus HOME and perfect rest shall be reached at last! But this never will, never can be the case, until the open vision of God is before us. This the Spirit within us causes us to know full well. What a striking and perfect close, therefore, to the prophetic part of this book is this precious and ample promise! Likewise, remarkably, the remainder of the Word of God, apart from the book of the Revelation, is closed in a similar manner. For much the same truth is found at the end of the Epistle of Jude; and again the first book of Psalms, which abounds in allusions to the eyes and face and countenance of God, is also thus concluded, "Thou settest me before Thy face for ever." (Psalm xli. 12.)

* The import of this term, "Throne of God and of the Lamb," is enlarged upon at Vol. i., page 102.

For far more is found in scripture to be implied in this sight of God than we otherwise might have thought. For it is in this way that His glory will be poured into us, and then stream out from us. This truth is taught us in the other half of the fourth verse ; in fact, the two clauses hang together as cause and effect. " They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads." For it is impossible for us to look to Him without benefit accruing to ourselves. There are about seven or eight scriptures in the New Testament, which encourage us to fix our gaze upon the Lord. Invariably, in every instance, blessing is attached to that sight. These eight † scriptures also seem to fit somewhat into pairs. Space prevents me from entering on this line of truth at any length. Suffice it to say, that the removal of sin in John i., and the obtaining of everlasting life in John iii. 14, are connected with this looking unto Him. Again, in 2 Cor. iii. 18, and in Eph. i. 17, 18, there is the sight presented of Christ in glory, in order that sealed saints may gaze thereon and attentively consider Him. And in this way are we transformed from glory to glory even now. In

* On the blessing in Matt. v. 5, see Vol. i., p.p. 27, 28 ; on Israel's sight of Him and result following in Rev. i. 7, see page 33 ; and on the often unneticed force of the prayer in John xvii. 24, that we may " behold His glory," see Vol. II., page 124.

Heb. ii., and in Heb. xii., our eye is again directed to Him, that we may be endued with confidence and strength for our walk down here. Then in 1 John iii., and in Rev. xxii., the final result of this sight of God in Christ is declared. By the expression, "His name," we are, as everywhere else, to understand the manifestation of Himself. God in all His beauty will be seen, and we shall be, as it were, all eyes,* in order that we may behold Him, and drink of His grace and love. And thus, what He is will be seen displayed upon our brow. Men here below may crowd to see any exalted fellow mortal; but nothing results to the seer, except disappointment. So we are prone to forget how far otherwise this is with the sight of Him. Then to others, Christ will only be perceived in living union with His church. And in this way, as we have already proved, will the church be made a blessing to creation. We shall have been brought quite up to where God is, and not only to see as Moses saw, where God had been:—"His back parts." We shall see His face, and His name shall glow on our foreheads. And this word further shows us that there will never, can never be, by any possibility, a frown towards us upon that face which we behold. So far from this, it affords us the absolute certainty of His smile perpetually, and for ever. For the sight of that face perfectly

* See Vol. i., page 87.

transforms us. On us His own likeness is beheld. We are satisfied (Ps. xvii.), and He thus beholding us for whom His soul travailed, will be satisfied too. (Isaiah liii. 11.) Yea, He will greatly rejoice. He will rest in His love, and joy over us with singing. (Zeph. iii. 17.) Such, then, is "the Revelation of Jesus Christ !"

And thus Bride and Bridegroom are mutually satisfied with each other. With entire complacency does each behold the other. There in that New Jerusalem all is unveiled—all is open. There shall be no night there ; no candle or human light—no sun or created light is there ! The presence of God fills the whole scene. And as in our whole nature, we are then incompetent of all jealousy ; so our position is such that we are quite above it. We reign with our Lord for ever. Yet do we with gladness of heart serve Him. For Christ has, by His own example, demonstrated to our admiring spirits what a blessed thing it is to be obedient unto and to serve our God. He has vindicated God, where Adam had by implication impeached Him. These words, therefore, are a promise, and a great one : " His servants shall serve Him." Also remark that those who are His servants now, shall then still be the same. This is taught us in the repetition of the word "serve." For surely it were a diminution of heaven's joy if once there, we were no more to be allowed to serve Him Whom we

so love—if our hearts being brimful, had no outlet provided for their relief. Not so! Then, too, there will follow worship and service; in other words, the church takes her proper place as the twenty-four elders, and as the four cherubim. And though now we serve Him amid difficulties and in shame; yet then in honour and with unmixed joy. And thus in the antitype we have reached to the end of the book of Genesis. For here, as in Joseph there, we have obedience and rule according to God, combined. So, too, whilst David's friends are his mighty men, Solomon's nobles are celebrated, as we have seen,* as his servants. Then in the succeeding ages, God will show out what He is; whilst for us to rest in His love and to behold His face, to serve under Him, and to reign with Him, such is our portion for ever. What an exalted, what a blissful destiny, to be sure! Oh! that our hearts were more moved by it, even now!

* See Lecture XIX., on "The Eternal State."

LECTURE XXII.

CHAP. XXII. 6 TO THE END. THE SEVEN LAST WORDS

WHEN a friend, who loves some family very much, is necessitated to leave each one and all therein for a while, he is wont to utter one parting word, and then another, as if he could scarcely bring himself to say, Good bye. In some such manner may these last few verses of this precious book be regarded by us. Have we not all observed how the closing discourses of the Lord Jesus recorded by John abounded in tenderness, and in love, and in the assurance of His speedy return? And this book, given by Him to His servants after He had personally departed, is obviously designed to remove from us all the false glare of this world, and to encourage us in separation from it, and to gladden our hearts with visions of glory awaiting each victor yonder above this present fading scene. Specially it is the Book of the Revelation, or unveil-

ing of Himself. Here we see how soon and for ever we shall be with our Lord ! As we read it we almost come to be transported in spirit even now into that future though near period when we shall be at length shut in with our God for ever. The glimpses of heaven here are so bright and gorgeous to the eye of our faith, that involuntarily we exclaim, with Peter, " Lord, it is good for us to be here ; " or like Bunyan, after he had described the entrance of Christian into the celestial city, and the loud joy of all the radiant throng at his safe arrival there, the enraptured dreamer touchingly adds : " I wished myself among them." So we, stirred up by the words of this book, cannot refrain from the ardent wish, that our Lord's great promise as to His return might at once, even now, be fulfilled. But inasmuch as He still tarries, therefore it is clearly His will that we, after surveying these visions of judgment and of glory, should continue a little longer to serve Him, and to suffer for His name. He has looked upon us in His love, and said to us, " Go in this thy might." And then, in order that we may lack nothing, but be armed at all points, and strengthened for our conflict, He utters these seven closing words of counsel and of rich encouragement. Nor has he ever thus broken silence since ! Nor will He until has arrived the moment of the shout of the Archangel, and of the trump of

God. What a moment that will be! How full of unmixed joy to us who have waited for Him! Wherefore, let us ponder well these His own final words of leave-taking, ere for eighteen centuries He ceased in this way to address us.

In the *first* place we have to notice the language here of strong encomium of this book. Doubtless the expression, "faithful and true sayings," of verse 6, primarily refers to the glowing account of what God in His grace will yet achieve, as we have it narrated in the verses immediately preceding this. And thus the first of these seven last words links on admirably with the conclusions of the visions of this book; insomuch that verse 6 appears as well to close the prophecy, as also to introduce the Lord's other parting admonitions. Still, however, since the accomplishment of His full purpose, as regards the heavens and the earth, will be in the manner that He has revealed to us in all the previous chapters; therefore we must not too entirely limit the scope of this divine clencher solely to the last few verses. The very shaking of the heavens and of the earth is all, as we learn from Heb. xii. 26, comprehended in that which He has promised.

Here it may be worth while to cite the other passages of Scripture, also termed by the Spirit "faithful sayings." They are these: 1 Tim. i. 15; iii. 1, (see Greek); iv. 8, 9; 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12;

Titus iii. 8, 8; Rev. xxi. 5; and this one, chap. xii. 6. And these are ranged in the Word of God in their proper order. Already on the sixth of these seven, I have called attention * to the delightful fact of the connexion of the first of these seven with these last two that are found in the Revelation. Glory presently is most surely the divine developement of grace, now extended to even the chief of sinners. Accordingly, when once we are forgiven and saved, and in the church of God, it is well if the desire be enkindled in us by the Spirit, to edify and take the oversight of each other. (Heb. xii. 15, Greek, with 1 Tim. iii. 1, Greek.) And walking in lowly obedience we shall increasingly apprehend that, although bodily exercise may be of some little advantage to us in the way of health, it is the godly man who is the really happy man, even now. (1 Tim. iv. 8, 9.) Then we are reminded in the next of these faithful sayings, that identification with the Lord in His rejection has for its concomitant, identification with Him in His glory. (2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.) Then as to that one of this singular cluster, which is found in Titus iii. 8—7, it would appear as if it had been in common use among the saints of that day, as a sort of spiritual song of theirs. But the Holy Ghost not only stamps it with His own approval; but attaches

* Vol. ii., page 214.

to it the important hint, that by its constant affirmation,* those that have believed in God will be rendered careful to maintain good works. Then the two in Revelation, to wit, chap. xxi. 5 and xxii. 6, direct our eye and heart to the happy termination of this mapped-out course. And by these old familiar words here at the close of this book again meeting us, and, as it were greeting us, we are exhorted to hold out unto the end. For the prospect of the glory strengthens us to be patient; † God will not disappoint us. Heaven and earth may pass away; but His word shall not pass away. All shall be fulfilled. And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done.

Here we have a notable contrast to Dan. xii. 8. For to the Jew, indeed, all is hidden till the actual end. But to us who believe in the Lord Jesus, nothing is hidden, except the hour of His return. By being associated with Him and made members of the family of God, we are placed in a position where the secrets of God are made plain to us. (John xv. 15; xvi. 14;

* The above is the meaning of that somewhat obscure verse, Titus iii. 8.

† Col. i. 11. There is wonderful force in the Greek here. "Strengthened with all strength, according to the might of the glory unto all patience."

Eph. i. 9 ; 1 John ii. 20.) And it is His gracious desire that we should be intelligent in His ways, by abiding in His presence, and by doing His will. So from the height on which we stand we can look down on all below. Like as to Abraham of old, so the condition and the impending doom of the spiritual Sodom at our feet are well known to us. We know that God's Son has been crucified, and that the world has done for itself.* Here we have nothing to wait for but the coming of our Lord Jesus, and He, in view of that coming, here significantly charges us to keep His word.

But the vision of the glory still lingers on the memory of the seer. Wherefore, apprehending how real and bright the future was, and how near and how certainly it is reserved for those kept by the power of God, again he is overwhelmed with the reality, as earlier he had been, as it were, beside himself with joy, when only he had heard thereof. (Verse 8 and chap. xix. 10.) God grant that by the energy of His Spirit, through this His own written Word, these things may come so near to our spirits, that we may be daily swayed and moulded thereby.

And thus, by the repeated assurance of God's

* Compare such Scriptures as Heb. i. 1, Greek, "at the last one of these days ;" and Heb. ix. 26, "Now once at the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin." (Compare 1 Peter iv. 7.)

faithfulness as to what He hath promised; and by the revealing unto us His children what He is about* to do; and by the injunction to keep His word patiently till He come; and by the seer's own frank confession as to his overpowering emotions at the amazing and joyful prospect before him and us—by these four ways we are taught the exceeding value of this book. How wonderful, then, its neglect by so many Christians! How much they lose by such unbelief and folly!

In the *second* place there follow, with great appropriateness, divers pledges of the speediness of His return, when, of all of which the vision had proved so soul-transporting to John, we shall be put into everlasting possession. Thus thrice we hear Him saying, "I come quickly," (verses 7, 12, 20.) In verse 7 this word of His forms the basis of an exhortation to keep the sayings of this book. Certainly not then shall we regret if we use this little interval of His absence, first, to ascertain His mind and will, and then obediently and at any cost to follow it out. So in verse 12, He speaks of Himself as our divine Master, coming with His several rewards. These, none of them will be of little value, whether a smile, a word of commendation, or a crown, as the public token of His full approval. Oh, the value of

* For remarks on the word "must," see Vol. i., page 73.

these, who can tell? What joy to us to hear from His own lips that that fond heart of His we have gratified? Do we desire this praise from Him? Then let it never be forgotten that the cross is the test and the guage of all faithful service. Would to God this fact were never lost sight of, *as it often is*, by His chosen. Once more, in verse 20 we again encounter this His great promise. But this third time we have it without any added reference to our obedience, or to His rewards. For beyond everything He assumes that He Himself is the Hope of our hearts.

And besides this thrice repeated gracious pledge of His return "quickly," we also find the word "shortly" in verse 6; and this reminder that "the time is at hand" in verse 10. Likewise, in that other Scripture parallel with these closing words here—in so far as in each of them the setting Himself to reassure our hearts with the Hope of His speedy return, is the prevailing idea; I mean John xvi.; there we have that memorable word, "A little while," seven times over. (Also compare Heb. x. 36, 37, Greek). Thus does He tenderly assume that we never shall, never can be comforted, until we have Him bodily with us. Also it is quite evident that He would have us live in the constant expectation of His advent being imminent;—that with our hand, as it were, on the latch, and our ear intently

listening for His footfall and His shout; He desires to find us. For here, we may almost venture to say, ignorance is bliss! We know not, when we awake in the morning, whether He will not at last have arrived before evening; we lie down on our beds each night, wondering whether, and yet hoping, ere morning dawns, He will have summoned us all into His presence for ever. What a lovely attitude of soul to be in! And this He takes care to tell us, is peculiarly grateful to Him. (Luke xii. 35—38.) Let us therefore distinctly apprehend that we may not allow ourselves to be swayed by natural thoughts as to what sort of service and what state of heart will be owned as acceptable in His sight. Let us each one for himself heed these His own precious hints, so that to His holy will we may be entirely moulded. For

Thirdly, we are reminded by our Lord Jesus, that our characters are forming for eternity. "He that is unjust," says He, "let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." (Verse 11). Whether a soul shall finally regard Him as the Magnet, repelling or attractive, is proved by each several one in time. Those who have persistently in their lives here said to Him, "Depart from us," He will from the throne reply to them, "Depart from Me." (Compare Job xxi. 14 with Matt. xxv. 41.) Or if by grace

they have been drawn to Him for rest, and then desired Him to come to them, to such will He again say, "Come to Me." His old familiar word He will once more repeat. But all men He will presently, ultimately take at their respective word. So that which is being now in course of time formed in us, will be permanently, indelibly stereotyped in us in eternity. Thus sin fits a man as a vessel of wrath for everlasting destruction; even as a barrel, the fuller it is of gunpowder, the fitter it is for mischief and for ruin. But on the other hand, God in his love gives to us eternal life, by begetting in us His own nature. His own holy Word He causes us heartily to receive. And by the sight through faith of Christ our Lord in glory, He unties our affections from this present scene, and fills our souls with heavenly joy and ardent longing. (2 Cor. iii. 18.) And as we surrender ourselves to be swayed by His Word, that new life is correspondingly further developed in us. Let me repeat what was remarked in a preceding discourse, * practice makes habits, habits form the character, and character is eternal. Then we who are His shall, even though we die, wake up after His likeness. (Ps. xvii. 15.) As for the wicked, their remaining beauty will all fade away in the grave. As eternity dawns their image will be

seen to be most loathsome. (Ps. xlix. 14, lxxiii. 20.) So real, therefore, is the connexion between this sowing period now, and that reaping period—eternity. He that sows to the flesh will reap corruption. He that sows to the Spirit will reap life everlasting. Earlier in this book it had been witnessed that the woe of the wicked and the joy of the righteous were alike eternal. But here the sentiment is different, viz: that the individual himself and his character are also eternal. Even were there no heaven and no hell, as there are, still each would remain in eternity that which either he had himself grown to be, or that which grace had been forming him to become. He that is wicked and he that is holy will still, *still*, *still* continue for ever to be. When only this word “still” has lost all its force—when, in fact, it has ceased to be the word of Jesus the Son of the living God, Whose words shall never pass away—then may some radical change take place in eternity as to the individual character that is being matured here and now. But until then, never can there be hope of such a change. This word of the Lord, therefore, seals the nature of each one for ever. Especially observe that this word “still” is uttered by the Lord four times over in immediate connexion with the re-announcement of His own name as the unchangeable One. For, says He in verse 18, “I am Alpha and

Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last." And thus is this "still" of His further intensified. He cannot change. Therefore, if we would be His, and be blessed indeed now when change is yet possible, we must be changed, or be abhorrent to His nature for ever. But if we are changed, then as sure as He lives shall we also live.

There appears to be some distinction designedly drawn of the "unrighteous" or "unjust," from the "filthy," on the one hand; and also of the righteous or "just," from him pronounced "holy," on the other. It may be that the two stronger designations look at the characters of men forming now; and the other two less intensive, of the characters of the men in the millennium. For the grace now being shown forth by God during the present dispensation, is undoubtedly greater than that which He will show to the millennial nations. And the baseness of man in rejecting such grace as is proclaimed whilst Christ continues at the right hand of God, now reaches a more awful extreme than will then be possible. In case the above surmise is correct, then this word "still," as uttered by the Lord four times over, eternalizes the character of all men—one class after another—who have ever lived since He hung upon the cross.

Again: the more probable reading of ver. 14 is, as

well known, "Blessed are they that wash their
eyes, that they may have right," &c. Here the
reference clearly is to vii. 14. The outcomers from
great tribulation are therefore here alluded to
the fourth time; and putting the four passages
together, viz: vii. 14; xiv. with xv. 2; xx. 4; and
Revel. ver. 14, we may arrive at a certain solution of
the difficulty suggested as to the heavenly or earthly
condition of the third rank of those mentioned in xx. 4.
They not only have access to the tree of life, but
the privilege of entering in through the gates
of the city. Of course they form no part of the
Church of God, which is the heavenly city. That is
distinct from all others of God's redeemed through-
out the millennium (Heb. xii. 22, 23) and for ever.
(1 Th. iii. 21, Greek.) Still, however, these washed
ones are allowed, and it is declared to be possible
for them to approach unto it. Those outside are
called "dogs," which word may be compared with
1 Th. iii. 2, where the same epithet is applied to
those who, while knowing nothing of God's worship
by the Spirit, or of joy in Christ, are yet staunch for
ceremonial observances. The other added terms
allude likewise to the great sin bared by the judg-
ments of this book. The "sorcerers" actively aided
bewitching men with Babylon's sorcery, (xviii.)
and the "whoremongers" profited by her
ritual harlotry.

We come now, in the *fourth* place, to look at Christ's first presentation of Himself as the Sum of all the promises of this book, with His Bride's reply thereto, together with His superadded answering word in verses 16 and 17. And here the reader's careful attention is requested as to the exact import of this passage; for it is generally misapprehended, and part of it is misapplied. The Lord declares that He Who had testified these things by His angel to the churches is first the Root and the Offspring of David, and secondly, is the bright and morning Star. Now by the former titles He indicates Himself to be the Blessor and the Hope of Israel. (See Isa. xi. 1.) Also remember, that when a Gentile, a Syrophenician, invoked Him as Son of David, "He answered her not a word." (Matt. xv. 23.) But when, under that same name of His, a Jew implored his mercy, He at once responded to the appeal. (Mark x. 47.) Here then, He the crucified, raised and glorified One, after many centuries have elapsed since He presented Himself to Israel before, now, once again, presents Himself first to that nation. But Israel is silent. No more desire has she for Him glorified than she had for Him when He trod this earth. Therefore He provokes her to jealousy by them which are no people. To such He discovers Himself in a manner outside and far beyond all Jewish expectation. For the distinct calling, the unique place

of the church, with the secret rapture of that church into His immediate presence in heavenly glory, are two truths that necessarily hang together. Therefore that church's blessing must be consummated, ere Israel's mercy is recommenced. Until that period, "blindness in part is happened unto Israel." Any Jew who now believes in Christ, is made by the Holy Ghost into an integral part of the same church of God.

Hence the Lord's second word now is uttered : "I am the Bright and the Morning Star." The Old Testament had been concluded with the promise of His coming, according to Jewish hope, to wit, as the Sun of Righteousness. The remarkable contrast between the close of the two halves of the inspired Word, is evidently full of design. In the prospect in Malachi iv. there is comprised all the hope that had been held out to men throughout the Old Testament times. But in the comparison of Himself to the morning Star, the Lord further directs our thoughts to a period of that same coming indeed, but to an earlier one, and to a glory not earthly, but heavenly in its character. For this Star and this Sun do not rise visibly together. But the Star must shine for a while, ere the sun-light of the kingdom breaks upon the world. (2 Sam. xxiii. 4 and Luke i. 78.) That Star-light is for watchers only; even

for those who look for an early and a heavenly Lord. (Rev. iii. 10.) He promises in chap. ii. 28 to associate such with Himself in introducing the day. (Compare 1 Thess. v. 4, 5.) Those that are satisfied with the darkness of this world, will not be on the look out for Him till He comes. Still it is night, however far advanced that night may be. Also, the weekly act of worship by His own is a supper. Then at length the Star will shine out at a moment neither quite night, nor yet day—a moment later than the one, earlier than the other.

Now, immediately on this His second utterance, is heard a reply from this Bride, and in which His Spirit also joins. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." They who make the whole of this verse 17 to consist of repeated invitations to the sinner, do not understand it. The fact is, many Christians are scarcely awake to the bright hope set before them. Neither do they realize that the Lord is not only waiting till the number of His elect is accomplished; but also until He is invited by His own to return. Of the four invitations contained in this verse, the first two are directed *unto* the Lord, by His church. The other two are *from* the Lord for His people. The reader should observe the word, "say," found in the first two clauses, but not in the last two. We may need to be urged; He does not. The arrangement of this passage is here, as indeed

generally obtains in Scripture, on this wise: God begins from His own point of view. But if we may be allowed for a moment to reverse the order, the connection of the several clauses will perhaps be better perceived. First, then, "whosoever will" is encouraged to "take the water of life freely." Secondly, the soul becoming more thirsty until that thirst is quenched from the fountain, is directed to come to the Lord, Who alone can give that living water. Then in the following invitation, still continuing with the reversed order, the soul having come to the Lord, is addressed at length as one that hears. For after we are saved, after He has given to us eternal life, we are to learn to hearken to His word. (Compare chap. i. 3.) But that word bids us, urges us to invite Him to come. For as His own, we long for Him to return. We would fain behold Him, and be with Him to Whom we owe so much, and Who loves us so much. Nor is this invitation to be addressed to Him by individuals only; on the contrary, He is the Hope of the church as such. She too cries, aye, and the Spirit in her cries, and she in the Spirit cries to the Lord, "Come." The fact that the Spirit unites with her in this earnest cry, proves that, albeit failure and apostasy are everywhere around her; still the Lord has been faithful, who engaged that the other Comforter should abide with us for ever. (Compare Jude

20. *) That the Spirit has not at the time of the utterance of this cry departed, proves that the church is still here when it is made, and that she it is who is here termed the Bride. For the Holy Ghost and the church depart to heaven together. (Gen. xxiv.) The Spirit will lift up the Bride bodily, when once the Bridegroom descends and calls her. And thus in the one single cry, proceeding from the Spirit and the Bride, there is to be noticed the same gracious identification of that divine Agent with the believers, as is found in Rom. viii. 15, 16, and Gal. iv. 6. That the Spirit excites that cry in the Bride, in response to the Lord's whisper about the morning Star, proves how pleasant that invitation of hers is to His heart. It is not irreverent to entreat Him to return. It is not presumptuous; it is comely. For this cry He is waiting. He is intently listening.

Thus the four invitations of verse 17 rise one

* "Praying in the Holy Ghost." The context of this passage in Jude 20 makes it certain that the prayer here contemplated is about the coming of the Lord, or at least looks in that direction. For the clause preceding this one is about *Faith*; and the clause succeeding it, is about *Love*. Doubtless, therefore, the middle one is about the *Hope*. Besides which, all prayer in the Spirit must look ultimately at the Lord's return. Instalments of answers are all that we get until that happy period arrives. And the fuller we are of the Spirit, the more must we desire Him to come.

above the other, beginning from the last. They form a sort of spiritual thermometer. They test how far our affections are set upon things above. And the two last of these invitations being uttered by Himself, are tantamount to a hint from His own lips why He delays His coming. As if He would say, "First come to Me." Then the other two, the first and second invitations, clearly evidence how He would have us long for Him,—aye, and even "say" to Him, Come! Also the picture of the Bride, or the church in her corporate character, calling upon Him to come, represents the highest and most advanced stage of the four. There may be suggested here, also, the further thought, that as the moment of His advent nears, and the light of the morning breaks, her apprehension of her own corporate existence, and of her place as His heavenly Bride, becomes distinct and vivid. So too must Eve have awoken at length to self-consciousness and to the knowledge of Him that had fashioned her. Excellently well, therefore, these two words match: on His part, "I am the Bright and Morning Star;" and her instant ardent language in reply, "Come." * Even

* The above interpretation of verses 16 and 17, as Christ's first presentation of Himself, with His Bride's reply, inviting Him to return, is confirmed, if confirmation were needed, by verse 20, where we find Christ presents Himself a second time, and elicits a similar response.

so, too, the match itself of this mysterious Pair, is a proper, is a becoming match. He is not ashamed of us. (Heb. ii. 11.) And how can we be ashamed before Him, when Himself is our Life, and when we are made like Him ?

The *fifth* closing word of this book in verses 18 and 19 need not long detain us. God's Word is like His way and like Himself. It is perfect. It is given to perfect us, that we may be thoroughly furnished unto ALL good works. We may not add to it nor subtract from it. We may not turn aside either to the right hand or to the left. Our part is first to drink it in, and then to live it out. It is remarkable, that towards the end of each of the three parts of the Old Testament scripture, the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, there is found a caution as to man's behaviour towards the Word of God, not very unlike what we have here. (For compare with these verses Deut. xii. 32, Proverbs xxx. 5, 6, and Mal. iv. 4.) It is not sufficient obedience for us to refrain either from mutilating or interpolating scripture. To deny that such and such a portion of the Word is inspired, or to claim for other than that Word equal attention with itself, doubtless from all this we are dehorted. But the warning extends much further. Very few are they who would copy the example of Jehoiakim, and cut out from the inspired pages that which displeased us. (Jeremiah xxxvi.)

Rather the temptation with us is to qualify some text, or precept, or doctrine, to attempt to neutralize it, by mentally falling back upon some counter truth also revealed; or else by pushing the passage or doctrine to which we lean towards an undue limit. To go beyond the Word is as mischievous both to ourselves and to others, as is the failure heartily to embrace it. And, indeed, when we disproportionately magnify some one point in the written Word, the secret design of our hearts is thus to excuse ourselves in the slighting of some other portion. Oh, we have need to be very careful and very reverent in our handling of this book. We require the armour of righteousness, both on the right hand and on the left. Let us beware of slanting and of bias in every direction.

Next we come, in the *sixth* place, to Christ's second presentation of Himself, with the reply evoked thereby from His waiting people, (ver. 20.) After His testimony, we shall have Himself. For He is the Omega as well as the Alpha. Thus are our hearts drawn, not so much to His promises, as to Himself. Thus are they established, by being directed away from everything, to be left alone with Him. Occupation with Himself is our supreme and final joy. And as the Bride had said to Him Come; and he that has a hearing ear had been enjoined to "say Come;" so here He whispers,

"I likewise SAY." If she had a word for Him, He too has one for her. And that word is precisely the very best word which she could hear: "Surely I come quickly."

"And dost Thou come, O blessed Lord ?

And dost Thou surely come ?

And dost Thou surely quickly come ?

Then I'm almost at home."

Her "amen" in reply is equivalent to, Then I am satisfied. I ask no more. I can want nothing more. He had said, "I, Jesus," (ver. 16.) But she delights to call Him, "LORD Jesus." If He is pleased to call us brethren, such grace on His part only leads, or should lead, to self-abasement on our part. His condescension towards us never can cause irreverence in us, or make us to forget Who He is. The words "even so" ought to be omitted, as all the critical editors admit. Her reply is more chaste and more reverential without it. What she says is, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus !" How becoming and how peaceful is this expression of her desire !

Thus the three-fold assurance of the Lord, "I come quickly," is designed for an admonition to us to see well first to our own obedience and WALK ; secondly, to our WORK ; and thirdly, for our hearts to WATCH for Him. For the first time that He here utters this word, He Himself adds, as if in comment thereon : "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of

the prophecy of this book," (verse 7.) Then the practical application in verse 12, where we have His assurance as to His speedy return a second time, is, "My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." But in this verse 20, where, for the third time, we find this cry, there is nothing added about our *walk*, or our *work*. Here He assumes that He Himself is our Chief Joy. So this cry is for our hearts.

The book closes with the prayer of the writer that, the grace of the* Lord Jesus, of this Lord who had so presented Himself as the coming One, might be with us all. May it indeed be so. Let us see to it that it is so. May our hearts be established in His grace, and cheered with the prospect of His return. AMEN.

* The "our" is to be omitted.

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