

this conflict? This important inquiry is not left unanswered. The first five verses of the following chapter, which should have been numbered as a part of this, complete the chain of this prophecy, and reveal the glorious triumph of the champions of the truth.

NOTE.

“It is a canon of interpretation of frequent use in the exposition of the sacred writings that verbs of action sometimes signify merely the *will* and *endeavor* to do the action in question. Thus in Eze. 24: 13: ‘I have *purified* thee, and thou wast not purged;’ *i. e.*, I have endeavored, used means, been at pains, to purify thee. John 5: 44: ‘How can ye believe which *receive* honor one of another;’ *i. e.*, endeavor to receive. Rom. 2: 4: ‘The goodness of God *leadeth* thee to repentance;’ *i. e.*, endeavors, or tends, to lead thee. Amos 9: 3: ‘Though they be *hid* from my sight in the bottom of the sea;’ *i. e.*, though they aim to be hid. 1 Cor. 10: 33: ‘I *please* all men;’ *i. e.*, endeavor to please. Gal. 5: 4: ‘Whosoever of you are *justified* by the law;’ *i. e.*, seek and endeavor to be justified. Ps. 69: 4: ‘They that *destroy* me are mighty;’ *i. e.*, that endeavor to destroy me. Eng., ‘That *would* destroy me.’ Acts 7: 26: ‘And *set them at one again*;’ *i. e.*, wished and endeavored. Eng., ‘*Would* have set them.’”

Chapter XIV

THE THREE MESSAGES.

VERSE 1. And I looked, and, lo, a lamb stood on the Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. 2. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps. 3. And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders; and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. 4. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. 5. And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God.

It is a pleasing feature of the prophetic word that the people of God are never brought into positions of trial and difficulty and there left. Taking them down into scenes of danger, the voice of prophecy does not there cease, leaving them to guess their fate, in doubt, perhaps despair, as to the final result; but it takes them through to the end, and shows the issue in every conflict. The first five verses of Rev. 14, are an instance of this. The 13th chapter closed,

with the people of God, a small and apparently weak and defenseless company, in deadly conflict with the mightiest powers of earth which the dragon is able to muster to his service. A decree is passed, backed up by the supreme power of the land, that they shall worship the image, and receive the mark, under pain of death if they refuse to comply. What can the people of God do in such a conflict, and in such an extremity? What will become of them? Glance forward with the apostle to the very next scene in the programme, and what do we behold? The very same company standing on Mount Zion with the Lamb,—a victorious company, harping on symphonious harps their triumph in the courts of Heaven. Thus are we assured that when the time of our conflict with the powers of darkness comes, deliverance is not only certain, but will immediately be given, being the next event in our history, the glorious rest after the weary pilgrimage, the glorious consummation of a life of toil, suffering, and ceaseless conflict here.

That the 144,000 here seen on Mount Zion, are the saints who were just before brought to view as objects of the wrath of the beast and his image, several considerations show:—

1. They are identical with those sealed in Rev. 7, who have already been shown to be the righteous who are alive at the second coming of Christ.
2. They are the overcomers in the sixth, or Philadelphia state of the church. See Rev. 3: 11, 12.
3. They are "redeemed from among men," verse

4, an expression which can be applicable only to those who are translated from among the living. Paul labored, if by any means he might attain to a resurrection out from among the dead. Phil. 3: 11. This is the hope of those who sleep in Jesus—a resurrection from the dead. A redemption from among men, from among the living, must mean a different thing, and can mean only one thing, and that is translation. Hence the 144,000 are the living saints who will be translated at the second coming of Christ.

Where is the Mount Zion where this company is seen standing? The Mount Zion above; for the voice of harpers, which no doubt is uttered by these very ones, is heard from Heaven; the same Zion from which the Lord utters his voice when he speaks to his people in close connection with the coming of the Son of man. Joel 3: 16; Heb. 12: 26-28; Rev. 16: 17. A just consideration of the fact that there is a Mount Zion in Heaven, and a Jerusalem above, would be a powerful antidote against the hallucination of the doctrine called "The Age to Come."

A few more particulars only respecting the 144,000, will claim notice in these brief thoughts.

1. They have the name of the Lamb's Father in their foreheads. In chapter 7, they are said to have the seal of God in their foreheads. An important key to an understanding of the seal of God is thus furnished us; for we at once perceive that the Father regards his name as his seal. That com-

mandment of the law which contains God's name is therefore the seal of the law. The Sabbath commandment is the only one which has this; that is, that contains the descriptive title which distinguishes the true God from all false gods. Wherever this was placed, there the Father's name was said to be; Deut. 16: 6; and whoever keeps this commandment has, consequently, the seal of the living God.

2. They sing a new song which no other company is able to learn. In chapter 15: 3, it is called the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb. The song of Moses, as may be seen by reference to Ex. 15, was the song of his experience and deliverance. Such therefore is the song of the 144,000. No others can join in it; for no other company will have had an experience like theirs.

3. They were not defiled with women. A woman is in Scripture the symbol of a church; a virtuous woman representing a pure church, a corrupt woman an apostate church. It is then a characteristic of this company that at the time of their deliverance they are not defiled with, or have no connection with, the fallen churches of the land. Yet we are not to understand that they never had any connection with these churches; for it is only at a certain time that people become defiled by them. In chapter 18: 4, we find a call issued to the people of God while they are in Babylon, to come out, lest they become partakers of her sins. Heeding that call, and leaving her connection, they escape the

defilement of her sins. So of the 144,000. Though some of them may have once had a connection with corrupt churches, they sever that connection when it would have become sin to retain it longer.

4. They follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. We understand that this is spoken of them in their redeemed state. They are the special companions of their glorified Lord in the kingdom. Chap. 7: 17, speaking of the same company, and at the same time, says: "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters."

5. They are "first-fruits" unto God and the Lamb. This term appears to be applied to different ones to denote especial conditions. Christ is the first-fruits as the antitype of the wave-sheaf. The first receivers of the gospel are called in James 1: 18, a kind of first-fruits. So the 144,000 ripening up for the heavenly garner here on earth during the troublous scenes of the last days, being translated to Heaven without seeing death, and occupying a pre-eminent position, are in this sense, we understand, called first-fruits unto God and the Lamb. With this description of the 144,000 triumphant, the line of prophecy commencing with chapter 12, closes.

VERSE 6. And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his Judgment is

come; and worship Him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. 8. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. 9. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; 11; And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. 12. Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

The First Message. Another scene, and another chain of prophetic events, is introduced in these verses. In this and the two following messages, we have what is known as the three angels' messages of Rev. 14. The first angel is called another angel in verse 6, because John had already seen one flying through heaven in a similar manner. Chap. 8: 13. He proclaims the gospel, not a new one, but the everlasting gospel, called in Matt. 24: 14, "the gospel of the kingdom." But while it is the same gospel, there are particular features which constitute the burden of this message, chief among which, as shown in verse 7, is the *nearness* of the kingdom. Says an eminent writer on the prophecies, "The burden of this angel was to be the *same* gospel which had been before proclaimed, but con-

nected with it was the additional motive of the *proximity* of the kingdom. No mere preaching of the gospel without announcing its *proximity* could fulfill this message." This message therefore cannot symbolize the preaching of the gospel by the apostles; for they only reasoned of a judgment to come, indefinitely future. Moreover they cautioned every one against entertaining the idea that the day of Christ was at hand, till after the great papal apostasy, and the predicted career of the Man of Sin, who was, according to other prophecies, to rule for 1260 years, or to 1798. And we may add that the prophecies, upon which this proclamation is based, were closed up and sealed to the same time, 1798. This message cannot be given by any class of people except those who live when the end is just at hand. The Advent proclamation, especially from 1840 to 1844, completely answers to the prophecy, and is the only great religious movement which can be pointed to as its fulfillment. The judgment announced is shown by arguments which the designed brevity of this work will not here admit, to be the Investigative Judgment, which the reader will perceive must take place before the coming of Christ; for when Christ comes it is already decided who of the dead shall be raised, and who of the living are worthy to be changed. That investigative work we believe commenced in the sanctuary above, when this message ceased as a leading proclamation, at the close of the prophetic periods in 1844. On this and the following messages we

are the more brief here, as they are set forth in a separate work published at the REVIEW Office, Battle Creek, Michigan.

The Second Message. The second angel announces the fall of Babylon. What is Babylon? The figure is taken from the ancient city of Babylon; and that received its name from the confusion of tongues which there took place; hence we understand that by this symbol is meant all forms of false and apostate religion,

“Whose creeds are various as her costly towers.”

In other scriptures also this spiritual Babylon is set forth under the symbol of a great city, and in Rev. 16:19 it is presented in three divisions, which we understand to be Paganism, Catholicism, and backslidden Protestantism. The verse before us applies evidently to that division in which the burden of the proclamation of the three messages is found, which is the last-named. It must apply also to that division in which it was possible for a still greater moral declension to take place; which again was the last-named; for Paganism had always been a false religion, and Catholicism always a corrupt one. Rev. 18:12 shows the fall of Babylon to be a moral fall, a giving way to ungodliness and spiritual darkness and deception, which finally calls down from heaven upon the constituent parts of this great city literal judgments of the severest kind. The fall is caused by a rejection of the great truth of the soon-coming of Christ sent forth from Heaven in such majesty and power.

By the wine of wrath (not anger, but intense passion or desire) of her fornication we understand her false doctrines and pernicious errors. Of these she has caused all nations to drink. A message of truth was sent, which, if received, would have healed her of her dissensions, uniting the professed followers of Christ upon the great truth of the soon-coming of the Son of man. But instead of receiving the truth, she clung to her errors, and by spreading them among the nations has stood directly in the way of the advancement of the truth in the earth. Thus having grieved the Spirit of God, that Spirit has been withdrawn, and a moral fall is the result. The spirit and power of genuine Christianity has departed from the professed churches of our land. An abundance of statistics to prove this, may be seen in the work above referred to.

The Third Message. The third angel follows with a message of the most fearful import. From the language in which it is expressed, we understand at once that it is designed to warn men against the worship of the beast and his image, and prepare them for that time when the decree shall be issued enforcing such worship, as noticed in the previous chapter. This is the issue, then, to which the world is to be brought; namely, to refuse the mark of the beast and thus become exposed to the wrath of anti-Christian, earthly powers; or to receive the mark of the beast, and brave the unmixed wrath of God.

The Mark of the Beast. It now becomes a matter of solemn moment to inquire what this mark of the

beast is, against which there is uttered so terrific a warning. No warning more terrible is found in all the Bible. The position against which it is uttered must therefore be a most heinous and Heaven-daring one. And is it possible that the world will never know what this sin is? This is not possible. God does not so deal with his creatures. He does not punish the wicked without their knowing, or having full opportunity to know, for what cause the punishment is inflicted. Hence we argue that this question is not an unfathomable mystery; but that all may know what constitutes the mark of the beast, and how they may avoid receiving it.

The message containing this warning is the last to be given before the revelation of the Lord from heaven; for the next event in this line of prophecy is the coming of one like the Son of man on the great white cloud. And since, as shown on chapters 6 and 7, we have reached the last days, and the coming of Christ is at the door, the time has come for the proclamation of this message; and hence we argue again that the time has come when it should be known what the mark of the beast is. Yet how few ever think on this point! and how much less still is the number of those who have a position which they can offer with any semblance of proof as the truth in the matter!

This subject is so fully discussed in publications issued at the REVIEW Office, that a mere outline is all that need here be presented. The subject of the seal of God is explained at length on Rev. 7, to

which the reader is referred, as the same reasoning will apply largely to the subject before us.

The beast whose mark men are here warned against receiving, is the one brought to view in Rev. 13: 1-10. This we have already shown to be the Papal Roman power, the same as the little horn of Dan. 7: 8. The beast of Rev. 13 was to claim worship from those who dwell upon the earth; the little horn of Dan. 7 was to claim the power to change times and laws; while the Man of Siñ, another name for the same power, was to oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped. If he exalts himself *above* God, he must claim that his laws shall be obeyed in preference to the laws of God. Mark it well; there is absolutely no other way in which he can exalt himself above God.

We are now prepared to inquire for proof that the Papal power has tampered with the law of God, or attempted a change in the ten commandments; and that if the ten commandments are understandingly kept as changed by that power, instead of as originally given by the great Jehovah, then the law-changing power is worshiped instead of the law-making power. Paul has said, "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?" Rom. 6: 16.

It has already been shown that the little horn is identical with the beast against the worship of which the third angel's message warns us. In Dan.

7: 25 it is said of this power, that "he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." The laws here spoken of must be the laws of the Most High, even as the saints connected therewith are the saints of the Most High. Earthly powers have a right to change human laws; but the laws here spoken of are such as this power could only think to change, as a mark of its anti-Christian presumption, but not in reality be able to change. And this change pertains to the moral law of God; for it is a law with which the saints have to do during the 1260 years of Papal supremacy, which period is wholly in this dispensation. The ceremonial law is therefore out of the question.

Then we ask, Who has fulfilled this remarkable prophecy? Who has changed or attempted to change the law of God? To come more directly to the point, Who has changed the Sabbath? And let it be noticed, that it is nowhere in the Scriptures intimated that there would be any change made or attempted, in the law of God, except by this power; therefore whatever change has been made in God's moral code, it has been done by this power. Let those consider well this fact, who claim that the Sabbath was changed by the Lord Jesus or his apostles.

The great change in the law which the church of Rome claims to have made, and which it labors

hardest to impress upon the minds of its disciples, is the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. On this point it is unnecessary to quote from Protestant authors. Roman Catholics themselves admit it; and not only so, but they boast of it as an evidence of the right and power of their church to legislate in divine things. For evidence on these points, the reader is referred to "The Catholic Catechism of the Christian Religion," "Milner's 'End of Controversy,'" "Catholic Christian Instructed," "Abridgment of Christian Doctrine," and "Doctrinal Catechism,"—all Catholic works of standard authority. From the "Abridgment of Christian Doctrine" we give the following question and answer: "Question. How prove you that the church hath power to command feasts and holy days? Answer. By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of; and therefore they fondly contradict themselves, by keeping Sunday strictly, and breaking most other feasts commanded by the same church." And the "Doctrinal Catechism" says: "Question. Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precept? Answer. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her;—she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no scriptural authority."

Here, then, we have the mark of the beast,—a

sabbatic institution put in place of the original institution of Jehovah, and brought forward by the Romish church itself as the badge and token of its power to change the law of the Most High. And he who, with this plain fact before him, shall deliberately yield to the claims of this anti-Christian power, in opposition to the plain requirements of the Creator, will thereby acknowledge the supremacy of the laws of the beast, become a worshiper of the beast instead of the great Jehovah, and receive the mark of the beast instead of the seal of the living God.

It will thus be seen that a person does not have the mark of the beast in the Scripture sense, except by a voluntary obedience to the authority of the beast, with the issue fairly before him. The observance of the first day of the week, under the uncorrected supposition that it is a scriptural requirement, cannot constitute the mark of the beast. God takes into account the light a person has, and the motives from which he acts. He who was the light of the world once said to the Jews, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin." John 15: 22. Hence Christians of past ages who have died in the observance of this institution, unaware of any connection between it and the enactments of the beast, and supposing, the while, that by observing Sunday they were rendering obedience to the requirements of God,—can they be said to have had the mark of the beast? By no means. The

honesty of purpose with which they lived up to the best light they had, will be a guarantee of their acceptance with God. Hence, again, it cannot be said of any at the present time, that they have the mark of the beast. But the true church must not come up to the hour of translation encumbered, however unwittingly, with Papal errors and institutions; and before we come upon the issue brought to view in chapter 13: 15-27, light must be given upon the mark of the beast, and an effectual warning be uttered against its reception. The third angel's message, now in full process of accomplishment before us, is therefore timely and important. It is a summons to the faithful to make speedy preparation for the coming issue.

For a full discussion of the subject of the Sabbath, and a history of its change to the first day of the week, showing the part the Papacy has acted therein, the reader is referred to "The History of the Sabbath," by Eld. J. N. Andrews, issued by the S. D. A. Publishing Association, Battle Creek, Mich.

The Punishment of Beast Worshipers. These shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. When is this torment inflicted? Some apply it at the end of the future one thousand years, Rev. 20: 2. But we do not think it is of necessity located there. Chapter 19: 20 shows that there is at the second coming of Christ, what may be called a lake of fire and brimstone, into which the beast and false prophet are cast *alive*. This can refer only to the

destruction visited upon them at the commencement, not at the end, of the thousand years. Again, there is a remarkable passage in Isaiah to which we are obliged to refer in explanation of the phraseology of the threatening of the third angel, and which unquestionably describes scenes to take place here at the second advent, and in the desolate state of the earth during the thousand years following. That the language in the Revelation was borrowed from this prophecy can hardly fail to be seen. After describing the Lord's anger upon the nations, the great slaughter of their armies, the departing of the heavens as a scroll, etc., it says: "For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it forever and ever." Isa. 34: 8-10. And since there is to be a lake of fire at the end of the thousand years, we can only conclude that the destruction of the living wicked at the commencement, and the final doom of all the ungodly at the end, of this period, are very similar.

Duration of the Punishment. The terms forever and ever cannot here denote eternity. For where is this punishment inflicted? On this earth, or where there is succession of day and night. This is further shown from the passage in Isaiah already re-

ferred to, if that is, as we suppose, the language from which this is borrowed, and applies at the same time. That language is spoken of the land of Idumea. But whether we take this to mean literally the land of Edom, south and east of Judea, or to represent, as we think it does, this whole earth at the time when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion comes, in either case the scene must eventually terminate; for this earth is finally to be made new, cleansed of every stain of sin, every vestige of suffering and decay, and to become the habitation of righteousness and joy throughout eternal ages. The word, *αιων*, here translated "forever," Schrevelius, in his Greek Lexicon, defines thus: "An age; a long period of time; indefinite duration; time, whether longer or shorter." For a discussion of the meaning of this term, see the work, "Man's Nature and Destiny."

The period of the third message is a time of patience with the people of God. Paul and James both give us instruction on this point. Heb. 10: 36; James 5: 7, 8. Meanwhile this waiting company are keeping the commandments of God, the ten commandments, and the faith of Jesus, all the teachings of Christ and his apostles as contained in the New Testament. The true Sabbath as contained in the commandments is thus brought out in vivid contrast with the counterfeit sabbath, the mark of the beast, which finally distinguishes those who reject the third message.

VERSE 13. And I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them. 14. And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 15. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. 16. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

Events grow solemn as we near the end. It is this fact which gives to the third angel's message, now going forth, its unusual degree of solemnity and importance. It is the last warning to go forth prior to the coming of the Son of man. We are fast passing over a line of prophecy which culminates in the revelation of the Lord Jesus from Heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on his foes, and to reward his saints. Not only so, but we have come so near its accomplishment that the very next link in the chain is this crowning and momentous event. And time never rolls back. As the river does not flinch and fly as it approaches the precipice, but bears all floating bodies over with resistless power, and as the seasons never reverse their course, but summer follows in the path of the budding fig-tree, and winter treads close upon the falling leaf, so we are borne onward and onward, whether we will or not, whether prepared or not, to the unavoidable and irreversible crisis. Ah! how little dream the

proud professor or the careless sinner of the doom that is impending! And how hard for even those who know and profess the truth to realize it as it is!

John is commanded by a voice from Heaven to write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; and the response of the Spirit is, "Yea, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." From henceforth must signify from some particular point of time. What point? Evidently from the commencement of the message in connection with which this is spoken. But why are they blessed? There must be some special reason for this. Is it not because they escape the time of fearful peril which the saints are to encounter near the close of their pilgrimage? And while they are blessed in this respect, in common with all the righteous dead, they have an advantage over them in being doubtless that company spoken of in Dan. 12: 1, who are raised to everlasting life at the standing up of Michael. Thus escaping the perils through which the rest of the 144,000 pass, they rise and share with them in their final triumph here, and occupy with them their pre-eminent place in the kingdom.* In this way we understand their works follow them: These works are held in re-

* We understand that all who die in this message help compose the 144,000, inasmuch as just that number is sealed in the sealing work of Rev. 7, which is but another prophecy of the third angel's message. Those who, having had an experience in this work, go down into the grave, are an exception to the general statement that they (the 144,000) come up through great tribulation. The

membrance, to be rewarded at the Judgment; and the persons receive the same recompense they would have had, had they lived and faithfully endured all the perils of the time of trouble.

It will be noticed that in this line of prophecy, three angels precede the Son of man on the white cloud, and three are introduced after that symbol. We understand that literal angels are engaged in the scenes here described. The first three have charge of the three special messages, and may also symbolize a body of religious teachers. The message of the fourth angel we understand to be uttered after the Son of man takes his seat upon the white cloud, having finished his priestly work, but before he appears in the clouds of heaven. As the language is addressed to Him who is seated upon the white cloud, having in his hand a sharp sickle ready to reap, it must denote a message of prayer on the part of the church, after their work is done, and probation has ceased, and nothing remains but for the Lord to appear and take his people to himself. It is doubtless the day-and-night cry, spoken of by our Lord in Luke 18 : 7, 8, in connection with the coming of the Son of man. And this prayer will be answered. The elect will be avenged. He that is seated upon the cloud will thrust in his sickle,

fact that they are raised from the dead does not conflict with the testimony of verse 4, that they are "redeemed from among men," that is from among the living; for they are raised only to mortal life, and receive immortality or redemption by translation just like those of the righteous who have never passed through the grave.

and the saints, under the figure of the wheat of the earth, will be gathered to the heavenly garner.

"And He that sat on the cloud," says the prophecy, "thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." By this language we are carried down past the second advent, with its accompanying scenes of destruction to the wicked and salvation to the righteous. Beyond these scenes we must therefore look for the application of the following verses:—

VERSE 17. And another angel came out of the temple which is in Heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire, and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horses' bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

The last two angels have to do with the wicked—the wicked, most fitly represented by the rich and bloated clusters of the vine of the earth. May it not be that the closing doom of that class, at the end of the thousand years, is here presented, the prophecy thus making a final disposition of both the righteous and the wicked; the righteous clothed with immortality, and safely established in the kingdom, the wicked perishing around the city at the time of its ultimate location upon the earth?

The angel comes out of the temple, where the records are kept, and the punishment is determined. The other angel has power over fire. This may have some connection with the fact that fire is to be the element by which the wicked are at last to be destroyed; although to carry out the figure, the wicked, having been likened to the clusters of the vine of the earth, are said to be cast into the great winepress, which is trodden without the city. And blood comes out of the winepress even to the horses' bridles. We know that the wicked are doomed to be swallowed up at last in a flood of all-devouring flame descending from God out of Heaven. But what preliminary slaughter may take place among the doomed host, we know not. It is not improbable that this language will be literally fulfilled.

As the first four angels of this series denoted a movement on the part of the people of God, the last two may denote the same; for the saints are to have some part to act in meting out and executing the final punishment of the wicked, 1 Cor. 6:2; Ps. 149:9.

Thus closes this chain of prophecy—closes as others close, with the complete triumph of God and Christ over all their foes, and with the glorious salvation that awaits the faithful followers of the Prince of life, forever secured,

Chapter XV.

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES.

VERSE 1. And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. 2. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. 3. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. 4. 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. 5. And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in Heaven was opened; 6; And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. 7. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth forever and ever. 8. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

Thus reads the fifteenth chapter entire. By it we are carried back to a new series of events,

The whole chapter is but an introduction to the most terrific judgments of the Almighty that ever have been, or are to be, visited upon this earth in its present state; namely, the seven last plagues. The most that we here behold is a solemn preparation for the outpouring of these unmixed vials. Verse 5 shows that they transpire subsequently to the last ministration in the sanctuary; for the temple is opened before they are poured out. They are given in charge to seven angels, and these angels are clothed in linen pure and white, a fit emblem of the purity of God's righteousness and justice in the infliction of these judgments. They receive these vials from one of the four beasts. These beasts were decided (see Thoughts on chap. 4,) to be a class of Christ's assistants in his sanctuary work. How appropriate, then, that these should be the ones to deliver to the ministers of vengeance, vials to be poured upon those who have slighted Christ's mercy, abused his long-suffering, heaped contumely upon his name, and crucified him afresh in the treatment of his followers! While the seven angels are performing their fearful mission, the temple is filled with the glory of God, and no man, *οὐδεις*, no one, no being, referring to Christ and his heavenly assistants, can enter therein. This shows that the work of mercy is closed, and there is no ministration in the sanctuary during the infliction of the plagues; hence they are manifestations of the wrath of God, without any mixture of mercy.

But in this scene the people of God are not forgotten. The prophet is permitted to anticipate a little in verses 2-4, and behold them as victors upon the sea of glass as it were mingled with fire, or sparkling and refulgent with the glory of God, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. The sea of glass upon which these victors stand, is the same as that brought to view in chapter 4:6, which was before the throne in Heaven. And as we have no evidence that it has yet changed its location, and the saints are seen upon it, we have here indubitable proof, in connection with chapter 14:1-5, that the saints are taken to Heaven to receive a portion of their reward. Thus, like the bright sun bursting through the midnight cloud, some scene is presented, or some promise given to the humble followers of the Lamb, in every hour of temptation, as if to assure and re-assure them of God's love and care for them, and of the certainty of their final reward. Verily the words of the prophet are among the true sayings of God: "Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him," but, "woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him." Isa. 3:10, 11.

Chapter XVI.

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES POURED OUT.

THIS chapter gives a description of the seven vials of the unmingled wrath of God, and the effects that follow as they are poured upon the earth. Concerning the character and chronology of these plagues, there is a difference of opinion among Bible readers. Our first inquiry, therefore, is, What is the true position on these points? Are they symbolical and mostly fulfilled in the past, as some contend? or are they literal and all future, as others no less confidently affirm? A brief examination of the testimony will, we think, settle conclusively these questions.

VERSE 1. And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. 2. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image.

This description of the very first plague sets us on the track of their chronology; for it is poured out upon those who have the mark of the beast, and who worship his image,—the identical work against

which the third angel warns us. This is conclusive proof that these judgments are not poured out till after this angel closes his work, and that the very class who hear his warning and reject it, are the ones to receive the first drops from the overflowing vials of God's indignation. Now if these plagues are in the past, the image of the beast and his worship are in the past. If these are past, the two-horned beast, which makes this image, and his work, are in the past. If these are past, then the third angel's message, which warns us in reference to this work, is in the past; and if this is past, that is, ages in the past, where this view locates the commencement of the plagues, then the second and first messages, which precede that, are also ages in the past. Then the prophetic periods on which that message is based, especially the 2300 days, ended ages ago. And if this is so, the 70 weeks of Dan. 9 are thrown wholly into the Jewish dispensation, and the great proof of the Messiahship of Christ is destroyed. But it has been shown on chapters 7, 13, and 14, that the first and second messages have been given in our own day; that the third is now in process of accomplishment; that the two-horned beast has come upon the stage of action, and is preparing to act the part assigned him; and that the formation of the image, and the enforcement of the worship are just in the future. And unless all these positions can be overthrown, the seven last plagues must be assigned to the future.

But there are other reasons for locating them in the future and not in the past:—

1. Under the fifth plague, men blaspheme God because of their *sores*, the same sores, of course, caused by the outpouring of the first plague. This shows that these plagues all fall upon the *same generation* of men, some being no doubt swept off by each one, but yet some surviving through the terrible scenes of them all; a fact utterly subversive of the position that they commenced far in the past, and occupy centuries each in their fulfillment; for how then could those who experience the first plague be alive under the fifth?

2. These plagues are the wine of God's wrath without mixture, threatened by the third angel, chap. 14:10; 15:1. Such language cannot be applied to any judgments visited upon the earth while Christ pleads between his Father and our fallen race. Hence we must locate them in the future, when probation shall have closed.

3. Another and more definite testimony as to the commencement and duration of these plagues, is found in chap. 15:8: "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." The temple here introduced is evidently that which is mentioned in chap. 11:19, where it says, "The temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." In other words, we have before us the

heavenly sanctuary. The testimony is, then, that when the seven angels with the seven golden vials receive their commission, the temple is filled with smoke from the glory of God, and no man can enter into the temple, or sanctuary, till they have fulfilled their work; there will therefore be no ministration in the sanctuary during this time; consequently these vials are not poured out till the close of the ministration in the tabernacle above, but immediately follow that event; for Christ is then no longer a mediator; mercy, which has long stayed the hand of vengeance, pleads no more; the servants of God are sealed. What could then be expected but that the "storm of vengeance should fall," and earth be swept with the besom of destruction?

Having now shown the chronology of these judgments, that they are before us in the very near future, treasured up against the day of wrath, we proceed to inquire into their nature, and what will result when the solemn and fearful mandate shall go forth from the temple to the seven angels, saying, "Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth." Here we are called to look into the "armory of the Lord," and behold the "weapons of his indignation." Jer. 50:25. Here are brought forth the treasures of hail, which have been reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war. Job 38:22, 23.

The Vials and their Effects. "And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men

which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image."

We know of no reason why we should not regard this as strictly literal. These plagues are almost identical with those which God inflicted upon the Egyptians as he was about to deliver his people from the yoke of bondage; the literality of which we have never heard called in question. God is now about to crown his people with their final deliverance and redemption, and his judgments will be manifested in a manner no less literal and terrible. What the sore here threatened is, we are not informed. Perhaps it may be similar to the parallel plague which fell upon Egypt. Ex. 9: 8-11.

VERSE 3. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea.

Probably a more infectious and deadly substance can scarcely be conceived of than the blood of a dead man; and the thought that the great bodies of water on the earth, which are doubtless meant by the term sea, will be changed to such a state under this plague, presents a fearful picture. We have here the remarkable fact that the term, living soul, is applied to irrational animals, the fish and living creatures of the sea. This is, we believe, the only instance of such an application in the English version; in the original, however, it occurs frequently; showing that the term, as applied to man in the beginning, Gen. 2: 7, cannot be taken to show that he is endowed with any immaterial and immortal essence.

VERSE 4. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. 5. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. 6. For they have shed the blood of saints, and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. 7. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

Such is the description of the terrible retribution for the "blood of saints," shed by violent hands, which will be given to those who have done, or wished to do, such deeds. And though we can hardly conceive of the horrors of that hour, when the fountains and rivers of water shall be like blood, the justice of God will stand vindicated, his judgments approved. Even the angels are heard exclaiming, Thou art righteous, O Lord, because thou hast judged thus; for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets. Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

It may be asked how the last generation of the wicked can be said to have shed the blood of saints and prophets, since the last generation of saints are not to be slain. A reference to Matt. 23: 34, 35; 1 John 3: 15, will explain. These scriptures show that guilt attaches to motive no less than to action. And no generation ever formed a more determined purpose to give the saints to indiscriminate slaughter than the present one will, not far in the future. See chap. 12: 17; 13: 15. In motive and purpose they do shed the blood of saints and prophets.

It would seem that not one of the human race could survive a long continuance of a plague so terrible as this. We hence conclude that this one may be limited in its duration, as was the similar one on Egypt. Ex. 7: 17-21.

VERSE 8. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. 9. And men were scorched with great heat and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory.

It is worthy of notice that every succeeding plague tends to augment the calamity of the previous ones, and heighten the anguish of the guilty sufferers. We have now a noisome and grievous sore preying upon men, inflaming their blood, and pouring its feverish influence through their veins. In addition to this they have only blood to allay their burning thirst; and, as if to crown all, power is given unto the sun, and he pours upon them a flood of liquid fire, and they are scorched with great heat. Here, as the record runs, their woe first finds utterance in horrid blasphemy.

VERSE 10. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast: and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, 11, And blasphemed the God of Heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

An important fact is established by this testimony: It is, that the plagues do not at once destroy all their victims; for some who were at first smit-

ten with sores, we find still living under the fifth vial, and gnawing their tongues for pain. An illustration of this vial will be found in Ex. 10: 21-23. It is poured upon the seat of the beast, the papacy. The seat of the beast is wherever the papal see is located, which thus far has been, and we think will continue to be, the city of Rome. "His kingdom," probably embraces all those who are subjects of the pope in an ecclesiastical point of view.

As those who place the plagues in the past, have the first five already wholly accomplished, we here pause a moment to inquire where in past ages the judgments here threatened have been fulfilled. Can judgments so terrible be inflicted and nobody know it? Then where is the history of the fulfillment? When did a noisome and grievous sore fall upon a specified and extensive portion of mankind? When did the sea become as the blood of a dead man, and every living soul die in it? When did the fountains and rivers become blood, and people have blood to drink? When did the sun so scorch men with fire as to extort from them curses and blasphemy? And when did the subjects of the beast gnaw their tongues for pain, and at the same time blaspheme God on account of their sores? Interpreters who thus foolishly put such scenes in the past, where a shadow of fulfillment cannot be shown, openly invite the scoffs and ridicule of the skeptic and infidel against God's holy book, and furnish them with potent weapons for their nefarious work. In these

plagues, says Inspiration, is *filled up* the wrath of God; but if they can be fulfilled and nobody know it, who shall henceforth consider his wrath so terrible a thing, or shrink from his judgments when they are threatened?

VERSE 12. And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. 13. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

What is the great river Euphrates, which is the object of this vial? One view is that it is the literal river Euphrates in Asia; the other is, that it is a symbol of the nation occupying the territory through which that river flows. We incline to the latter opinion for the following reasons:—

1. It would be difficult to see what end would be gained by the drying up of the literal river, as that would not offer an obstruction at all serious to the progress of an advancing army. And it should be noticed that the drying up takes place to prepare the way of the *kings* of the East, that is, regular military organizations, and not a promiscuous and

unequipped crowd of men, women, and children, like the children of Israel at the Red Sea or at the Jordan. The Euphrates is only about 1,400 miles in length, or about one-third the size of the Mississippi. Cyrus, without difficulty, turned the whole river from its channel at his siege of Babylon; and notwithstanding the numerous wars that have been carried on along its banks, and the mighty hosts that have crossed and re-crossed its stream, we have never yet read that it had to be once dried up to let them pass.

2. It would be as necessary to dry up the river Tigris as the Euphrates, the source of the former being only fifteen miles from the latter, in the mountains of Armenia, and it running nearly parallel with, and but a short distance from, the latter throughout its whole course. Yet the prophecy says nothing of the Tigris.

3. The *literal* drying up of rivers we understand takes place under the fourth vial, when power is given to the sun to scorch men with fire. Under this plague occur beyond question the scenes of drouth and famine so graphically described by Joel, Chap. 1: 14-20; and as one result of these, it is expressly stated that "*the rivers of waters are dried up.*" The Euphrates will probably be no exception to this; hence, not much would remain to be literally dried up under the sixth vial.

4. These plagues, from the very nature of the case, must be manifestations of wrath and judg-

ments upon men. But if the drying up of the literal Euphrates is all that is brought to view, this plague is not of such a nature, and turns out to be no serious affair, after all.

These objections existing against considering it a literal river, watered by that river, it must be understood figuratively as symbolizing the power holding possession of the territory, which is the Ottoman or Turkish empire.

1. It is so used in other places in the Scriptures. See Isa. 8:7; Rev. 9:14. In this latter text, all must concede that the Euphrates symbolizes the Turkish power; and being the first and only other occurrence of the word in the Revelation, it may well be considered as governing its use in this book.

2. The drying up of the river in this sense would be the consumption of the Turkish empire, accompanied with more or less destruction of its subjects. Thus we should have literal judgments upon men, as the result of this plague, as in the case of all the others.

But, it may be objected to this, that while contending for the literality of the plagues, we nevertheless make one of them a symbol. We answer, No. A power is introduced, it is true, under the sixth vial, in its symbolic form, just as it is under the fifth, where we read of the seat of the beast, which is a well-known symbol; or as we read again in the first plague of the mark of the beast, his image and its worship, which are also symbols. All that we contend for is the literality of the judg-

ments that result from each vial, which are literal in this case, as in all the rest.

Again, it may be asked how the way of the kings of the East will be prepared by the drying up, or consumption, of the Ottoman power. The answer is obvious. For what is the way of these kings to be prepared? Ans. To come up to the great battle. Where is the battle to be fought? At Jerusalem. See Joel and Zephaniah. But Jerusalem is in the hands of the Turks. They hold possession of the land of Palestine and the sacred sepulchers. This is the bone of contention. On these the nations have fixed their covetous and jealous eyes. But though Turkey now possesses them, and others want them, it is nevertheless thought necessary to the tranquillity of Europe that Turkey should be maintained in her position, in order to preserve, what is called, the "balance of power." Her office therefore at present seems to be merely like that of a large distended shell, which, so long as it can be kept from collapsing, serves to separate belligerent and hostile powers. Therefore the allied powers of Europe are pledged to sustain the integrity of the Sultan's throne. By them alone it is now maintained, and when they shall withdraw their hands, and leave it to itself, as we believe they will do under the sixth plague, that symbolic river will be clean dried up, Turkey will be no more, and the way will be all open for the nations to rush to the Holy Land. The kings of the East, the nationalities, powers, and kingdoms lying east of Palestine, will

act a conspicuous part in the matter ; for Joel says in reference to this scene, Let "the heathen" be wakened and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat.

Those who place five of the plagues in the past, and contend that we are now living under the sixth, urge as one of their strongest arguments the fact that the Turkish empire is now wasting away ; which takes place under the sixth vial. We reply, The event that takes place under the sixth vial, is the entire and utter consumption of that power, not its preliminary state of decay, which is all that we now witness. But it is necessary that the empire should for a time grow weak and powerless, in order to its utter dissolution when the plague shall come. This preliminary condition we now behold ; the full end cannot be far in the future.

Another event to be noticed under this plague, is the issuing forth of the three unclean spirits to gather the nations to the great battle. We regard the agency now already abroad in the world, and known as Modern Spiritualism, as the means to be employed in this work. But the question may be asked, how we can think that a work is designated by it, which is already going on, when the spirits are not introduced into the prophecy until the sixth plague, which is still future.

We answer that in this, as in many other things, the agencies which Heaven designs to employ in the accomplishment of certain ends, are being for a while trained to the part which they are to act. Thus before the spirits can have such absolute au-

thority over the race as to gather them to battle against the King of kings and Lord of lords, they must first win their way among the nations of the earth, and cause their teaching to be received as of divine authority, and their word as law. This work they are now doing ; and when they shall have once gained due influence over the nations in question, what fitter instruments could be employed to gather them to so rash and hopeless an enterprise?

To many it may seem incredible that the nations should be willing to engage in such an unequal warfare as to go up to battle against the Lord of hosts ; but it is one province of these spirits of devils to deceive ; for they go forth working miracles, and thereby deceive the kings of the earth that they should believe a lie.

The sources from which these spirits issue, denote that they will work among three great religious divisions of mankind, represented by the dragon, beast, and false prophet, or Paganism, Catholicism, and Protestantism.

But what is the force of the exhortation in verse 15 ? Probation must have closed, and Christ have left his mediatorial position, before the plagues begin to fall. And is there danger of falling after that ? It will be noticed that this warning is spoken in connection with the working of the spirits. We infer, therefore, that it goes back and is applicable from the time these spirits begin to work, to the close of probation ; that by an interchange of tenses, common to the Greek language, the present

tense is put for the past ; as if it had read, Blessed is he that hath watched and kept his garments ; as the shame and nakedness of all who have not done this, will at this time especially appear.

“And he gathered them.” Who are the ones here spoken of, to be gathered ? and what agency is to be used in gathering them ? If the word *them* refers to the kings of verse 14, it is certain that no good agency would be made use of to gather them ; and if the spirits are referred to by the word *he*, why is it in the singular number ? The peculiarity of this construction has led some to read the passage thus : And he [Christ] gathered them [the saints] into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon [the illustrious city, or New Jerusalem]. But this position is untenable. The following criticism, which appeared not long since in a religious magazine, seems to shed the true light upon this passage. The writer says :—

“It seems to me that verse 16 is a continuation of verse 14, and that the antecedent of *αὐτοῖς* [them] is ‘the kings’ mentioned in verse 14. For this latter verse says, ‘Which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather *them*,’ etc., and in verse 16 it says, ‘And *he* gathered *them*.’ Now, in the Greek, ‘a neuter plural regularly takes a verb in the singular.’ (See Sophocles’ Greek Grammar, § 151, 1.) Might not, therefore, the subject of the verb *συνήγαγεν* [gathered,] (verse 16,) be *τα πνεύματα* [the spirits,] of verse 14,

and thus the ‘gathering’ mentioned in the two verses be *one* and the *same* ?

“And if this is to be a gathering of ‘the kings of the earth, and of the whole world,’ will it not be for the purpose mentioned in the text, viz., ‘to gather them to the *battle* of that great day of God Almighty ?’”

In accordance with this criticism we find several translations using the plural instead of the singular pronoun.

Mr. Wakefield in his translation of the New Testament renders this verse thus : “And *the spirits* gathered the kings together at a place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.”

The Syriac Testament reads : “And *they* collected them together in a place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.”

Sawyer’s translation renders it : “And *they* assembled them in the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.”

Mr. Wesley’s version of the New Testament reads : “And *they* gathered them together to the place which is called in the Hebrew, Armageddon.”

Whiting’s translation gives it : “And *they* gathered them into a place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.”

Prof. Stuart of Andover College, a distinguished critic, though not a translator of the Scriptures, render it : “And **THEY** gathered them together,” etc. De Wette, a German translator of the Bible, gives it the same turn as Stuart and the others.

Mr. Albert Barnes, whose Notes on the New Testament are so extensively used, refers to the same grammatical law as suggested by the criticism above quoted, and says, "The authority of De Wette and Prof. Stuart is sufficient to show that the construction which they adopt is authorized by the Greek, as indeed no one can doubt, and perhaps this construction accords better with the context than any other construction proposed." Thus it will be seen that there are weighty reasons for reading the text, "*they* gathered them together," etc., instead of "*he* gathered." And by these authorities it is shown that the persons gathered are the minions of Satan, not saints; that it is the work of the spirits, not of Christ; and that the place of assemblage is not in the New Jerusalem at the marriage supper of the Lamb, but at Armageddon (or Mount Megiddo), "at the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

Mount Megiddo, overlooking the plain in the half tribe of Manasseh, was the place in which Barak and Deborah destroyed Sisera's army, and in which Josiah was routed by Pharaoh Necho.

VERSE 17. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of Heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. 18. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. 19. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell; and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness

of his wrath. 20. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21. And there fell upon men 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.

Thus has inspiration described to us the last judgment which God has appointed to rebellious man in his present state. Some of the plagues we have seen are local in their application; but this one is poured out into the air. The air envelops the whole earth; hence we may conclude that this plague will envelop equally the habitable globe. It will be universal. The air will be tainted.

The gathering of the nations having taken place under the sixth vial, the battle remains to be fought under the seventh; and we here find brought to view the instrumentalities with which God will slay the wicked. At this time it may be said, "The Lord hath opened his armory, and brought forth the weapons of his indignation."

There were voices. Above all will be heard the voice of God. "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake. But the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel." Joel 3:16. See also Jer. 25:30; Heb. 12:26. This will cause the great earthquake such as was not since men were upon the earth.

And thunders and lightnings. Allusion again to the judgments of Egypt. See Ex. 9:23. The

great city is divided into three parts ; that is, the three grand divisions of the false and apostate religion of the world (the great city), Paganism, Catholicism, and backslidden Protestantism, seem to be set apart each to receive its appropriate doom. The cities of the nations fall. Universal desolation spreads over the earth. Every island flees away and the mountains are not found. And great Babylon comes in remembrance before God. Read her judgments more fully in chap. 18.

Some faint idea of the terrible effect of such a scene as is here predicted, may be inferred from the following sketch of a hailstorm on the Bosphorus, by our countryman, the late Commodore Porter, in his "Letters from Constantinople and its Environs," vol. i., p. 44. He says:—

"We had got perhaps a mile and a half on our way, when a cloud, rising in the west, gave indications of approaching rain. In a few minutes we discovered something falling from the heavens with a heavy splash, and with a whitish appearance. I could not conceive what it was, but observing some gulls near, I supposed it to be them darting for fish ; but soon after discovered that they were large balls of ice falling. Immediately we heard a sound like rumbling thunder, or ten thousand carriages rolling furiously over the pavement. The whole Bosphorus was in a foam, as though heaven's artillery had been charged upon us and our frail machine. Our fate seemed inevitable ; our umbrellas were raised to protect us ; the lumps of ice stripped them into rib-

bons. We fortunately had a bullock's hide in the boat, under which we crawled, and saved ourselves from further injury. One man of the three oarsmen had his hand literally smashed ; another was much injured in the shoulder ; Mr. H. received a blow in the leg ; my right hand was somewhat disabled, and all more or less injured.

"It was the most awful and terrific scene I ever witnessed, and God forbid that I ever should be exposed to another ! Balls of ice as large as my two fists fell into the boat, and some of them fell with such violence as certainly to have broken an arm or leg had they struck us in those parts. One of them struck the blade of an oar and split it. The scene lasted perhaps five minutes ; but it was five minutes of the most awful feelings I ever experienced. When it passed over, we found the surrounding hills covered with masses of ice ; I cannot call it hail ; the trees stripped of their leaves and limbs ; and everything looking desolate. The scene was awful, beyond all description !

"I have witnessed repeated earthquakes ; the lightning has played, as it were, about my head ; the wind roared, and the waves at one moment have thrown me to the sky, and the next have sunk me into a deep abyss. I have been in action, and have seen death and destruction around me in every shape of horror ; but I never before had the feeling of awe which seized me on this occasion, and still haunts, and I fear forever will haunt, me. My porter, the boldest of my family, who had ventured an instant

from the door, had been knocked down by a hail-stone, and had they not dragged him in by the heels, would have been battered to death. Two boatmen were killed in the upper part of the village, and I have heard of broken bones in abundance. Imagine to yourself the heavens suddenly frozen over, and as suddenly broken to pieces in irregular masses of from half a pound to a pound weight, and precipitated to the earth."

Reader, if such were the desolating effects of a hail-storm of ice, which discharged stones the size of a man's fist, weighing at most a pound or so, who can depict the consequences of that coming storm in which "EVERY STONE" shall be of the weight of a talent? As sure as God's word is truth, he is thus soon to punish a guilty world. May it be ours, according to the promise, to have "sure dwellings" and "quiet resting places" in that terrific hour. Isa. 32:18, 19.

And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven. This is the last instrumentality brought to bear upon the shelterless heads of the wicked—the bitter dregs of the seventh vial. God has solemnly declared to the wicked, saying, "Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place." Isa. 28:17. See also Isa. 30:30. And he asks Job if he has seen the treasures of the hail, which he has reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war. Job 38:22, 23.

Every stone about the weight of a talent. A talent, according to various authorities, as a weight, is about fifty-seven pounds avoirdupois. What could withstand the force of stones of such an enormous weight falling from heaven? But mankind, at this time, will have no shelter. The cities have fallen in a mighty earthquake, the islands have fled away, and the mountains are not found. Again the wicked give vent to their woe in blasphemy; for the plague of the hail is "exceeding great."

"And there came a great voice out of the temple of Heaven from the throne, saying, It is done!" Thus all is finished. The cup of human guilt has been filled up. The last soul has availed itself of the plan of salvation. The books are closed. The number of the saved is completed. The final period is placed to this world's history. The vials of God's wrath are poured out upon a corrupt generation. The wicked have drunk them to the dregs, and sunk into the realm of death for a thousand years. Reader, where do you wish to be found after that great decision?

But what is the condition of the saints while the "overflowing scourge" is passing over? They are the special subjects of God's protection, without whose notice not a sparrow falls to the ground. Many are the promises which come crowding in to afford them comfort, summarily contained in the beautiful and expressive language of the psalm, which alone we have space to quote:—

Ps. 91:2-10. "I will say of the Lord, he is my

refuge and my fortress ; my God, in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust ; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night ; nor for the arrow that flieth by day ; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand ; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation ; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."



Chapter XVII.

BABYLON—THE MOTHER.

VERSE 1. And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither ; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters ; 2 ; 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. 3. So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness ; and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication : 5 : And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the Earth.

In verse 19 of the preceding chapter, we were informed that "great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." The apostle now takes up more particularly the subject of this Great Babylon ; and in order to a full presentation of it, goes back and gives some of the facts of her past history. That this apostate woman is a symbol of the Roman Catholic church, is generally believed by Protestants,