

THE  
**WORKS**  
OF THE  
**REV. ANDREW FULLER,**  
LATE OF  
KETTERING, IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE;  
IN EIGHT VOLUMES:  
TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,  
A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR,  
BY JOHN RYLAND, D. D.

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—  
1824.

# EXPOSITORY DISCOURSES

ON THE

## APOCALYPSE,

*Interspersed*

WITH

*PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.*

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BY THE LATE

REV. ANDREW FULLER.

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TO THE

***BAPTIST CHURCH OF CHRIST***

**AT KETTERING.**

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DEAR BBETHREN,

**I**T is at your request that these discourses appear in print. When in the course of exposition I first entered on them, it was not from an idea that I at that time sufficiently understood the prophecy, but from a hope that by this means I might understand it better. And now that I have ventured to publish, it is not because I am fully satisfied of having given the true meaning in every instance. There are parts in which I can only say, I have done the best I could. If however, I had not been



satisfied as to the general meaning of the prophecy, or had been conscious of having thrown no new light upon it, I should have felt it to be my duty to withhold my papers from the public eye.

Observing the blessing pronounced on "him that readeth, and on them that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein," I had a desire to enter upon it, accompanied, I think, with some sense of my dependence upon the enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit. The reason also assigned why we should study this part of the Holy Scriptures in particular—that "the time is at hand," seemed to have greater force after a lapse of above seventeen hundred years than it could have at the time of it's being written. I conceived also that the events of the present times, though we should beware of illusive hypothesis founded upon them, yet called for a special attention to prophecy. They might also be expected to

throw some light upon it. Some late writers upon the subject appear to understand many things which earlier ones did not; and there is reason to expect that prophecy will be understood much better in years to come than it is at present.

The method I pursued was, first to read it carefully over, and as I went on to note down what first struck me as the meaning. After reducing these notes into something like a scheme of the prophecy, I examined the best expositors I could procure, and comparing my own first thoughts with theirs, was better able to judge of their justness. Some of them were confirmed, some corrected, and many added to them.

I have dealt but little in quotations, refusing nothing however, from any writer which appeared to me to be just. And as to what appeared otherwise, I have generally passed it over without attempting to refute it; as being rather desirous of giving the

true meaning, than of proving that other men's opinions were founded in mistake.

The exposition of a prophecy, delivered in symbolical language, must be liable to many mistakes. A style so highly figurative furnishes great scope for the imagination, which, unless it be accompanied with a sober and just judgment, will lead us into labyrinths of error. How far I have been enabled to avoid them, and to succeed in throwing light upon any part of the prophecy, it is not for me to decide. This I know, my object has been to obtain it's true meaning, and to communicate it in a manner suited, not to the curious, but to the Christian reader.

The manuscript has lien by me between four aud five years, during which I have frequently re-examined it's contents, and availed myself of any farther light which by reading or reflection has appeared on the subject. During this period several of our

most highly esteemed friends, who joined in the request, are gone the way of all the earth. We shall soon follow them. We have seen enough, amidst all the troubles of our times, to gladden our hearts; and trust that our children will see greater things than these.

I am,

Your affectionate Pastor,

ANDREW FULLER.

*Kettering, March 21, 1815.*

## SCHEME OF THE PROPHECY.

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**T**HE addresses to the seven churches are applicable to all other churches in similar circumstances, in all ages, but not prophetic—The things which the apostle was commanded to write being those which he *had seen*, those which *were*, and those which *should be hereafter*, prove that the prophecy commences, not from the time of the vision, but probably from the ascension of Christ, in like manner as the four monarchies of Daniel commenced from the rising up of the Babylonish empire, many years before the time of the vision..... Chapters i—iii.

The book of SEVEN SEALS contains the whole of the prophecy, the trumpets being only a subdivision of the seventh seal, and the vials of the seventh trumpet.... Chapters iv, v.

The opening of the *first seal*,—on which appeared “a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him; and he went forth conquering and to conquer”—represents the great progress of the gospel in the apostolic age..... Chap. vi. 1, 2.

The opening of the *second seal*—on which there appeared “a red horse, and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another,”—signifies the wars between the Jews and the Romans, who had united in persecuting Christ and his followers.....Chap. vi. 3, 4.

The opening of the *third seal*—on which there appeared “a black horse, and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand, &c.”—denotes a famine, or scarcity approaching to famine, in which the necessities of life would be required to be weighed out with the utmost care, and which was fulfilled during the reigns of the *Antonines*.....Chap. vi. 5, 6.

The opening of the *fourth seal*,—on which there appeared “a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed,”—signifies great mortality, owing to the intrigues and intestine wars in the empire, between the years 193 and 270, which produced famine and pestilence, and by diminishing the number of men gave ascendancy to the beasts of prey.....Chap. vi. 7, 8.

The *fifth seal* was opened, on which were seen “under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them that they should rest [or wait] yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were should be fulfilled.” This

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seal represents the state of the church about the year 270, when it had endured nine out of the ten heathen persecutions, and was about to endure the tenth, under Dioclesian and Maximian, after which God would avenge their cause, by an utter overthrow of their persecutors.....Chap. vi. 9—11.

The opening of the *sixth seal*,—on which appeared “an earthquake,” and as it were a day of judgment,—signified the Revolution of Constantine, when the Pagan empire was overthrown, and the prayers of the souls under the altar were answered.....Chap. vi. 12—17.

The “sealing of the servants of God in their foreheads,” portends danger to the spiritual interests of the church from it's outward prosperity, and distinguishes the faithful from the crowd of nominal Christians that would now be pressing into it.....Chap. vii. 1—8.

This chapter concludes with a vision of the martyrs who had overcome, serving to strengthen the servants of God to encounter new trials.....Chap. vii. 9—17.

The *seventh seal* is opened—A solemn pause ensues—It is then subdivided into SEVEN TRUMPETS, which are put into the hands of seven angels; and the sounding of them is prefaced by “another angel's offering up the prayers of the saints with much incense, filling his censer with fire, and casting it into the earth,” denoting that the judgments to be brought by the trumpets would be in answer to their prayers.....Chap. viii. 1—5.

The sounding of the *first four trumpets*, which affect “the earth, the sea, the fountains of waters, and the sun, moon, and stars,” denote the judgments on the *continental*, the *maritime*, and the *mountainous* parts of the empire, by the invasion of the Northern nations, the issue of which was the eclipse of the *government*, supreme and subordinate. As the seals overthrew the Pagan empire, these overthrow the Christian.....Chap. viii. 6—12.

The sounding of the *fifth*, or *first woe-trumpet*, on which followed “smoke from the bottomless pit, and locusts,” represents Popery as filling the world with infernal darkness, and thus preparing the way for Mahometan delusion and depredation.....Chap. ix. 1—12.

The *sixth*, or *second woe-trumpet*, is complex, relating partly to the “loosing of the four angels in Euphrates,” followed by “an army of horsemen,” and partly to the conduct of “the rest of the men, who were not killed by these plagues,”—the first denoting the rise and ravages of the Turks, by whom the Eastern empire, and with it the Greek church were overthrown; and the last, the idolatries and cruelties of the members of the Western church, who, instead of taking warning from the fate of the Eastern, repented not, but persisted in corrupting the religion of Jesus Christ, and in persecuting his witnesses.....Chap. ix. 20, 21. to Chap. xi. 14.

The vision of the angel with “a little book open,” whose cry was followed by “seven thunders,” refers to the Western, or Papal church, which the prophecy now



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goes some ages back to take up, and which occupies the whole of what follows till the beast and the false prophet are taken, or down to the times of the Millennium.—The “thunders” may probably refer to the same things in the form of a general threatening, which are afterwards particularly disclosed under the vials: for it appears to be of their execution that the angel swears by Him that liveth for ever and ever that there shall be *no delay*; but that in the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he shall begin to sound, (that is, in the times of the pouring out of the vials,) the mystery of God should be finished.” This accounts for the command “not to write them,” as they would be particularized under the vials.....Chap. x.

The eleventh and three following chapters are considered as *three general descriptions* of the false church, chiefly under the 1260 years of Antichristian usurpation, together with the state of the true church during the same period. These general descriptions of course are not confined to the times of this or that trumpet, but comprehend those of the greater part of the trumpets.

The *first general description*, contained in the eleventh chapter, denominates the false church “gentiles,” and the true church “witnesses,” who bear testimony against them. It leaves out of “the temple of God” the place occupied by the former. It represents, by the “slaughter of the witnesses,” the prevalence of the Antichristian party; by their “resurrection and ascension to heaven,” the Protestant Reformation; and by the “earthquake,” in which a tenth part of the city fell, (and which, by the way, marks the termination of the sixth, or second

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woe-trumpet,) the late Revolution in France. By the sounding of the seventh angel, a signal is given of the progress of the gospel. And by the song of the heavenly choir, are intimated the judgments which should be inflicted on the Antichristian party, and the Millennial glory that should follow.....Chap. xi.

The *second general description*, contained in the twelfth chapter, represents the true church prior to the introduction of Antichristian corruptions, as "clothed with the sun, having the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." These corruptions originate in a third part of the stars of heaven being drawn from their orbits by the tail of the dragon, and cast upon the earth; or by the rulers of the church being seduced by the riches and honours of the Roman empire. The dragon having thus prevailed over a part of the Christian church, aims to devour the other. The true church fleeth into the wilderness, where she exists without legal protection or toleration till the Reformation in the sixteenth century, when Michael fights her battles, and the dragon is cast down. Succeeding persecutions are the effect of his defeat.....Chap. xii.

The *third general description*, contained in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters, represents "a beast rising out of the sea, with seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, &c." signifying that secular government by which the false church has been all along supported—namely, The Roman empire under it's last head, after it had been divided into ten independent kingdoms, each of which was a horn of the beast. When Paganism was overthrown, the beast in

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one of its heads was "as it were wounded to death;" but when Christianity became so corrupted as to be paganized, "the deadly wound was healed."...Chap. xiii. 1—10.

Another beast "rose out of the earth, with two horns like a lamb, but who spake as a dragon"—denoting the hierarchy, or false church itself, which is cotemporary, and all along acts in concert with the first or secular beast.... Chap. xiii. 11—18.

During the ravages of these beasts, and in opposition to them and their followers, appears "a Lamb standing upon Mount Sion, and with him 144,000 having his Father's name written in their foreheads. Their victory over Antichristian error and corruption at the Reformation is signified by "the voice of many waters, like thunder, and of harpers harping with their harps." The spirit lately excited to carry the gospel to the Heathen, is thought to be denoted by the evangelical "angel." The diminution and approaching dissolution of the Antichristian power is represented by "another angel following, and saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen!" And the danger of symbolizing and tampering with Antichristianism is suggested by the solemn warnings of "a third angel." Then follows that of which the signal only had been given in the cry of the second angel—namely, the overthrow of Babylon, which is denoted by a harvest and a vintage.".....Chap. xiv.

Three general descriptions having been given, each of which carried us to the end of the 1260 years, the series of the prophecy, from the time of the sounding

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of the seventh, or third woe-trumpet, is now resumed. This trumpet wears a two-fold aspect: it is partly a woe-trumpet, and partly what may be called a jubilee-trumpet. In the first view the SEVEN VIALS are a subdivision of it—in the last it comprehends the Millennium, and all that follows to the end of the prophecy... Chap. xv.

The sounding of the seventh angel is the signal for the commencement of the pouring out of the vials, and is supposed to have taken place within the last five and twenty years. The vials are interpreted on the principle of their resemblance to the trumpets:—namely, the *first*, poured out on the “earth,” is supposed to denote the late wars on the continent, between France and the other continental powers; the *second*, poured upon the “sea,” the wars carrying on in the maritime nations of Spain and Portugal; the *third*, poured upon the “rivers and fountains of waters,” the wars which, if the principle here adopted be just, will ere long befall Italy and Savoy, the countries where was shed in shocking profusion the blood of the Waldenses; the *fourth*, poured upon the “sun,” the oppression of the supreme government, to which the Antichristian church will be subjected at the time; the *fifth*, poured on “the seat of the beast,” such judgments as will either drive him from his den, or render him very miserable in it; the *sixth*, poured on “Euphrates,” and producing the battle of “Armageddon,” partly the overthrow of the Turkish empire, and partly the temporal ruin of the adherents of Popery; the *seventh*, poured into the “air,” the overthrow of the spiritual power of Popery, and of every other species of false religion..... Chap. xvi.

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The three following chapters are considered as *Notes of Illustration*, containing more particular accounts of several subjects which have been already introduced. In the first of them, (Chap. xvii.) the false church is described under the opprobrious name of "the great whore," and the powers which support her, under that of "a beast with seven heads and ten horns." This beast, namely, the Roman empire, "was, and is not, and yet is." When it was Pagan, it existed with all it's beastly properties; when it became Christian, it was supposed to have lost them, and to be a beast no longer; but by the corruptions introduced into Christianity, and which were supported by it, the beast still continued.

The "seven heads" of the beast have a two-fold application.—First, they are said to be "seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth;" referring to the seven hills on which Rome when in it's full extent is well known to have stood, and so pointing out the seat of the hierarchy.—They are also said to be "seven kings," that is, governments, under which the empire had subsisted, did subsist, or would subsist hereafter. The forms under which it had subsisted, but which were passed away at the time of the commencement of the prophecy, were *Kings, Consuls, Dictators, Decemvirs, and Military Tribunes*; the form under which it then subsisted was that of *Emperors*; and that which was "yet to come, and to continue a short space," was the government which succeeded the overthrow of the Emperors, and continued under various changes for about 300 years, till the days of Charlemagne; when a government was established which combined all the nations of Europe in support of the Antichristian hierarchy. This short-lived intermediate power

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might on some accounts be considered as the "seventh" head of the beast, and as such be distinguished from its last head, which in this view would be the "eighth:" but upon the whole it was rather to be considered as belonging to that in which it terminated, and which in this view would be "of the seven."

The "ten horns" are the kingdoms of Europe, which till the Reformation, all united with the empire in supporting the harlot; but which have already begun and will go on to hate her, to eat her flesh, and to burn her with fire.....Chap. xvii.

The second of these *Notes of Illustration*, (contained in the 18th and the first eight verses of the 19th chapter,) is a *sacred ode* sent, as it were from heaven to be sung at the overthrow of the Antichristian church, in which are celebrated not only the "fall of Babylon," but "the marriage of the Lamb;" that is, not only the termination of the reign of the beast, but the introduction of the Millennial reign of Christ, which shall follow upon it.....Chap. xviii. xix. 1—8.

The third and last of these *Notes*, (which begins at the ninth verse of the 19th chapter,) describes the *actual accomplishment* of the fall of Babylon, which the foregoing ode had anticipated. He whose name is the Word of God goes forth "riding upon a white horse," (the appropriate symbol for the success of the gospel,) joined by his faithful followers. This provokes the adherents of the beast and of the false prophet, who gathering together their forces to oppose them, perish in the attempt.....Chap. xix. 9—21.

As the overthrow of the Antichristian hierarchy was celebrated in the preceding ode, under the symbol of "the fall of Babylon," prior to it's actual accomplishment; so was the Millennium under that of "the marriage-supper of the Lamb." This glorious period is now introduced as *actually taking place*. The "beast and the false prophet," or the secular and ecclesiastical powers, being fallen, the Dragon himself is next seized and thrust into a state of confinement.—"Thrones" may denote stations of importance both in the world and in the church, which will now be filled by righteous men: thus "the kingdom is given to the people of the saints of the Most High;" and as the public mind will favour it, righteousness will every where prevail; corruptions, oppressions, wars, tumults, and rebellions will cease from the earth, and all nations feel towards each other as children of the same family.—Now "judgment" is given to the martyrs, inasmuch as the cause for which they were slain is vindicated, and their memory honoured; while "the rest," or the remnant of the Antichristian party, who escaped from the battle in which their leaders were "taken," will be as dead men till the thousand years are ended. To them this glorious period will be a burial, but to the other a "resurrection."

After the Millennium, Satan is loosed for a little season, and makes one more desperate effort to corrupt the world, and to destroy the church.—This brings on the general conflagration—the resurrection of the dead—and the last judgment. . . . . Chap. xx.

After this appear "the new heavens and the new earth," spoken of by Peter, "wherein dwelleth righteousness." The world purified from sin and it's effects, becomes the

everlasting abode of the righteous, who having been raised from the dead, are immortal.—The whole animate and inanimate creation in so far as it has been “made subject to the vanity” of subserving the cause of evil, is emancipated, and possesses that for which it has “travailed in pain,” from the fall of man until now.—No more shall the earth be polluted and desolated by a succession of *beasts*; but lo, “the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them, and be their God!

CONCLUSION.—The present the period of the vials; or that space of time, which begins with the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and ends in the Millennium.—The termination of the 1260 years probably uncertain. A time of persecution to be previously expected.—Great success will attend the preaching of the gospel before the Millennium.—Aspect of the present times.—The Millennial glory.—Concluding reflections on the recent changes in Europe.



## Errata.

Page 18, line 7, *for* born *read* borne;

Page 134, line 9, *for* Demascus *read* Damascus;

Page 208, line 2, *for* of *read* by;

Page 282, line 12, *for* they *read* the;

Page 286, line 24, *for* triumverate *read* triumvirate;

Page 312, line 26, *for* her *read* their.

# EXPOSITORY DISCOURSES,

&c.

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## *DISCOURSE I.*

---

THE INTRODUCTION AND PREPARATORY VISION.

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### CHAP. I.

**I** HAVE lately expressed a wish to enter upon this difficult part of the Holy Scriptures: not because I conceive myself at present equal to the undertaking; but because I think I understand something of it, and hope by going through it in the way of exposition to understand more. I enter on it with fear: but as I shall not attempt to explain that which appears to me of doubtful import, I hope it

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may not be a presumptuous, but a profitable undertaking.\*

*1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: 2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. 3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

The book takes its title it seems from the first verse. All scripture is a revelation in some sense; but this is a disclosure of things to come.

Christ is the great prophet of the church. He it was, as we shall see, that was found worthy to open the sealed book. It is necessary to distinguish between the knowledge of Christ as a divine person, and that which

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\* These Discourses were delivered in the years 1809 and 1810, drawn out in 1811, and have lain by from that time to the present.

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he possesses as the prophet of his church. As divine he knows all things; all things are naked to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do: but as a prophet he receives his messages from the Father, and makes them known to us. In this sense he knew not the day of judgment; that is, it was no part of the revelation which God gave to him to make known to men. As Christ in the character of a prophet has these things revealed to him, so in communicating them after his ascension he made use of an angel. It might have been too much for a mortal man to be admitted directly to converse with him in his glorified state.

The writer introduces himself to the churches in the character of a *witness*, declaring that the things which he was about to communicate were from above—they were “the word of God,” and therefore might be depended upon; “the testimony of Jesus Christ,” on the fulfilment of which he rested the truth of the gospel, and which he himself in vision plainly “saw.”

To induce us to give the most serious attention to the subject, a blessing is pronounced

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on those who “read, and hear, and keep” the words of this prophecy, especially as the time of it’s fulfilment was at hand. I recollect no other part of scripture that is prefaced with such an inducement to read and understand and practically regard it. The prophecy must be of immediate concern to the church of Christ, and requires to be read and heard, not for the gratifying of curiosity, but for the obedience of faith. We must “keep” it, as one engaged in a voyage through dangerous seas keeps his chart, and consults it on all necessary occasions. It is that to the New Testament church which the pillar of the cloud was to the church in the wilderness, guiding, it through the labyrinths of antichristian errors and corruptions. It must not be neglected under a notion of its being hard to be understood. As well might the mariner amidst the rocks neglect his friendly chart under an idea of its being difficult to understand and apply it.

It would seem too from this promise, that the successful study of the prophecy depends not merely on literary attainments, but on a practical regard to the things contained in it. Whatever advantages attach to the former,

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and these are many and great, they will not succeed nor obtain the blessing without the latter.

*4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come: and from the seven spirits which are before his throne: 5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. 7 Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.*

The proconsular Asia had probably been the chief seat of the writer's labours since the death of the apostle Paul. To the churches in this province therefore he was directed to address the prophecy, The benediction is affectionate and appropriate. The periphrasis used of God the Father, "Who is, and who was, and who is to come," is sin-

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gularly appropriate as an introduction to a prophecy concerning the mutability of creatures. The "seven spirits" are the abundant gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Spirit in respect of his abundant gifts and graces. The number seven is not only a well-known symbol of perfection, but corresponds with the number of the churches; and as they represent the whole church, so these describe the Holy Spirit in his rich and abundant influences.

To the blessing from the Father and the Holy Spirit he adds, "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth." By the first of these appellations our Lord accredits the prophecy as being his testimony; and by the last two cheers his suffering followers, by reminding them of his having emerged from death and obtained a complete ascendancy over all his and their enemies.

And now having mentioned the name of Jesus Christ he cannot leave it without adding a sweet doxology on his dying love, and its interesting effects—"Unto him that loved us, and

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washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Nor has he yet taken leave of this subject: Christ's suffering people must be directed to his second coming, when the persecuting Jews who pierced him in his person, and the persecuting Gentiles who were now piercing him in his members, will be called to account. To their just punishment, dreadful as it will be, the servants of God will add their "Amen."

*8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*

The apostle, after expatiating on the glory of Christ in his salutation, now introduces him as speaking himself. That these are his words, and not those of the Father, will appear from comparing them with Chap. i. 1. and xxii. 6—16. It was Jesus Christ, and not the Father, who communicated, through the angel, with his servant John. The Father is sometimes referred to in the prophecy; but, if I mistake not, it is in the third person only: not as speaking, but as spoken of. Jesus



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Christ therefore is "the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty;" and consequently is able to preserve his church, and to execute the punishments denounced in this prophecy against her enemies.

*9 I John who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. 10 I was in the spirit on the Lord's-day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. 12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. 14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as*

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snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. 17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead: and he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: 18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. 19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter, 20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the seven churches.

It was usual for the most eminent prophets to be introduced to their work by an extraordinary vision. Such was the introduction of Isaiah, of Jeremiah, and of Ezekiel;\*

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\* Isa. vi. Jer. i. Ezek. i.

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and such is that of John. Having been banished to the Isle of Patmos by Domitian, for preaching Christ, the spirit of prophecy came upon him on the Lord's-day; when he heard from behind him a great voice as of a trumpet, saying I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and what thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia. Turning to see from whence the voice proceeded, he saw "seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of them one like unto the Son of man." It was from him therefore that the great voice proceeded. In short, he saw the Lord Jesus Christ, who as to his human nature had lived and died on earth, but who as to his divine person, was "the first and the last," standing as the great High Priest over the house of God, in the midst of his churches, clothed with ineffable glory.

The effect of such a vision was more than a frail mortal could sustain. He who when his Lord was upon earth leaned familiarly on his bosom, now "fell at his feet as dead." But, laying his right hand upon him, he said, "Fear not, I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold

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I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." This impressive vision would not only excite in his mind a deep interest in the kingdom of Christ, and so prepare him for what he was to see, and hear, and write; but must have tended greatly to relieve him from those anxieties for his brethren and companions in tribulation from whom he had been separated. All the apostles were dead: he only was left, and they had banished him. Hell and death threatened to swallow up the church. In this situation he is told not to fear, for that his Lord lived, and had the controul of both the invisible and visible world.

Being commanded to write "the things which he *had seen*, the things that *were*, and the things that *should be hereafter*," we may conclude that what he wrote respected not only the future state of the church, from the time of the vision, but the whole gospel dispensation, from the ascension of Christ to the end of the world.

What is said of the "seven stars and seven golden candlesticks," would tend greatly to encourage both the ministers and the churches

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of Christ. There was a golden candlestick in the tabernacle, and in the second temple.\* That was but one candlestick, though it had seven branches; but these are seven candlesticks; agreeing with the different constitutions of the Old and New Testament church, the former being national, and the latter congregational.

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\* Exod. xxv. 31—40. Zech. iv. 2.

## ***DISCOURSE II.***

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### THE EPISTLES TO THE CHURCHES.

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#### CHAP. II. 1—17.

**BEFORE** we enter on these Epistles distinctly, it is proper to make a few general remarks

*First,* Some have considered these churches as prophetically representing the different states of the church at large under the gospel dispensation. There is no doubt but analogies may be found between them: but it appears to me that the hypothesis is unfounded. The church of Ephesus, if designed to represent the whole Christian church in the age of the apostles, might be expected to sustain as high a character at least as any

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that follow; whereas Smyrna in respect of it's purity is manifestly superior to it. Every thing addressed to the latter is in it's praise; which is not the case with the former. But surely it is not true that any age of the church since that of the apostles is to be compared with it, much less that it has excelled it in evangelical purity.

Others, doubting the justness of this hypothesis, have considered the Epistles to the churches as referring to *the then present state of the church*, and the sealed book to that which was *future*. And this they consider as agreeing with the division of the book into "things which the writer *had seen*, things which *were*, and things which *should be hereafter*.\* This is Mr. LOWMAN's view of it. When I entered on these Discourses from the pulpit I adopted this opinion: but before I had proceeded far in the work I was compelled to give it up; the reasons for which will appear when we enter on the opening of the seals, in Chap. vi. under the fifth general remark in Discourse VI.

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\* Chap. i. 19.

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Instead of considering the Epistles to the seven churches, either as prophetic, or as descriptive of the state of the *church at large as it then was*, I should rather consider them as descriptive of *the state of those seven churches as it then was*, and as designed to furnish encouragements, reproofs, warnings, and counsels, to all other churches and Christians, in all future ages, as their cases are found to resemble theirs. The application ought not to be confined to one age more than to another, nor even to collective bodies: every one in every age, that hath an ear to hear, is called to "hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

In applying them to ourselves, we should consider the Great Head of the Church as watching over us, and closely observing the state of our hearts towards him, with all our proceedings, whether good or evil; and inquire, what would be his address to us were he to commission an angel or an apostle to write to us.

*Secondly*, By the Epistles being addressed to the *angels*, we are not to understand them as concerning the pastors only, in distinction



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from the churches, but to consider them as their representatives. That which the Spirit saith in these Epistles is “to the churches.”

*Thirdly,* In every address to the churches Christ assumes a distinct *character*, taken from some one part of the description given of him in the preceeding vision; each of which, if we rightly understand it, will be found to be appropriate to the character or circumstances of the church addressed.

*Fourthly,* Every address begins with *commendation*, provided there be any thing to commend. This shews that Christ knows all, and notices that which is good amongst us as well as that which is evil; nay, that he takes more pleasure in noticing the good than in complaining of the evil—an example worthy of our imitation in dealing with one another. If we wish to reclaim our brethren who have fallen into sin, we must begin by appreciating the good in them, and in candidly commending it, before we reprove them for their faults. Such was the conduct of Paul to the Corinthians, when about to censure them for their abuse of the Lord's supper—“Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember

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me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them unto you."

*Fifthly,* Most of the churches have somewhat on account of which they are *censured* and *admonished*. This is a humbling truth, even of the first and purest churches, how much more of those in our times! If the Son of God, whose eyes are as a flaming fire, were to pronounce our character, would there not be "somewhat against us?" We can see each other's errors and defects; but it were to much more advantage if we could detect our own.

*Finally,* Every epistle concludes with a *promise* to him that overcometh, and an *exhortation* to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. Professing Christians in this world are soldiers enlisted under the banner of Christ. Some have proved deserters; many have been partially overcome; the Captain of the Lord's host here addresses them, holding forth the glory that awaits them who are finally victorious.

1 *Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus, write; These things saith he that holdeth the*

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*seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; 2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not; and hast found them liars: 3 And hast born, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. 4 Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. 6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. 7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches, To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

Ephesus was the metropolis of the Proconsular Asia; and it is probable that all these churches were planted by the labours of the apostle Paul, during his two years' residence at Ephesus, when "all they who

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dwelt in Asia, heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." Acts xix. 10.

The Ephesians appear to have been in a good state when the apostle Paul took leave of their elders at Miletus; but he then gave them to expect a time of trial after his departure, and which by this time seems to have come upon them.

The *character* which our Lord here assumes is taken from Chap. i. 16, 20. and seems to contain both encouragement and warning; which fitly applies to *their* character, as partly commendable, and partly blameable. They had been distinguished by their exertions in promoting the cause of Christ, and their sufferings on account of it. They "worked," yea, they "laboured" for Christ, and when called to encounter persecution, bore it with "patience." They were zealous also in the exercise of a strict and holy discipline, not suffering evil characters and impostors to remain amongst them: and in this course of obedience they had "not fainted." Altogether, this is a high character. Yet even here is something amiss: they had "left their first

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love." We see here, that the Lord looketh at the heart. We may retain our character and respectability among the churches, while yet, as to the state of our minds, Christ hath somewhat against us. To leave our first love is a very common case, so much so that some will give young Christians to expect it as a matter of course: but Christ treats it as a *sin*, and calls on the parties to "repent" of it, yea, and threatens to "remove their candlestick out of it's place except they repented." To decline in our attachments to Christ, his gospel, his ordinances, his people, and his cause, is practically reproaching him: it is saying to those around us, that we have not found that in his religion which we once expected to find. *O my people, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me!*

A declension in love is followed by a degeneracy in good works. If this had not been the case, they would not have been admonished to do their "first works." Either they were neglected, or attended to in a half-hearted manner, different from what they were at the beginning.

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The Lord, to show that he did not find fault with them with pleasure, again commends them as far as they were commendable: they hated the doctrine of the *Nicolaitanes*, which he also hated. Clemens of Alexandria, as quoted by Eusebius, speaks of these as a people who practised a community of wives, living in fornication and adultery. It is thought, and with some probability, that they were the people to whom Peter and Jude refer, the antinomians of the primitive church.

If we have an ear to hear what the Spirit saith unto this church, we shall learn from it, among other things,—that works are the chief test of character; that in serving the Lord in this world there is great occasion for patience under sufferings, and discrimination of characters; and that while justly censuring others, we may decline in spirituality ourselves.

The promise to him that overcometh, is that he shall “eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” That which grew in the earthly paradise became inaccessible by sin; but no flaming sword nor cherubim prevent access to this.

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6 *And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna, write, These things saith the first and the last; which was dead, and is alive;*  
9 *I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich,) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.*  
10 *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*  
11 *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches, He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.*

No mention is made of this church and several others, except in these epistles.—Polycarp, the disciple of John, was pastor of it, and suffered martyrdom. Whether he was the angel here addressed is uncertain; but when he suffered, which was about the year 162, he speaks of himself as having served Christ 86 years, and Irenæus speaks of him as having been ordained Bishop of Smyrna by the apostles. This church seems distinguished by its *persecutions*; all that is said has respect to them.

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The character under which Christ addresses them is taken from Chap. i. 11, 18. "These things saith the first and the last, who was dead, and is alive." The former is expressive of his Godhead, and suggests how vain it is for the enemies of the gospel to oppose him! In the latter he holds up himself as an example of persecution before them, and as an earnest of deliverance from it.

The commendation of their "works" in the midst of tribulation and poverty, (poverty it is likely, arising from their persecutions,) is much to their honour. We see here of what little account worldly wealth is in the estimation of Christ. We hear much of *respectable* congregations, and churches, when little else is meant but that they are numerous or opulent: but the estimation of Christ goes on quite another principle. What a contrast there is between this church and that at Laodicea. They were rich in this world's goods, but poor towards God: these were poor in this world, but rich towards God.

It is intimated that they had not only to contend with Heathens, but *Jews*, who had a synagogue in this city: and it is remarkable



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that in the account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, the Jews are spoken of as being very active in it, and as joining the Heathens in kindling the fire. We see here to what a state of mind that people were left after having rejected Christ: they had been the people of God, but were now no longer such, but blasphemers: their synagogues had been places where God had been worshipped: there our Lord himself attended, and to them the friends of God in Heathen countries had been used to resort; but from hence they became the synagogues of Satan!

They are given to expect more persecutions, but are encouraged to meet them with fortitude. The devil would stir up his agents to imprison some of them for a season, and some of them might expect to die for the name of Christ; but if faithful unto death they are promised a crown of life.

It was about sixty-seven years after this that Polycarp and other members of this church, suffered martyrdom; the account of which is given by Eusebius in a letter from the church of Smyrna. When Polycarp was apprehended by his persecutors, they set him

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on an ass, and brought him to the place of judgment. He was met by some of the magistrates, who took him into their carriage, and tried to persuade him to deny Christ and save his life, but which he resisted. On his approaching the place of execution, the Proconsul, ashamed of putting so aged and venerable a man to death, urged him to blaspheme Christ. It was then that he answered, "Eighty six years I have served him, during all which time he never did me injury; how then can I blaspheme my king and my Saviour?" When further urged, his answer was, "I am a Christian." When threatened with wild beasts, he said, "Bring them forth." When with fire, he reminded them of the eternal fire that awaited the ungodly. His last address to God had more of praise in it than of prayer.

It is a high honour to this persecuted people that nothing is said to them in a way of reproof. To be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in an evil generation," is great, even in respect of our fellow creatures; but to be without rebuke from Christ himself is much greater.

To this suffering church Christ saith, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Let every one that hath an ear hear this language, and be armed by it against the fear of man.

12 *And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; 13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. 14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. 16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth, 17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him*

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*that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*

Pergamos was a city of Mysia, not far from Troas. We find the apostle Paul at this latter city more than once, and that "a door was here opened to him of the Lord, to preach Christ's gospel."\* Here it was that he afterwards commemorated the Lord's death with the disciples; and as he had to wait seven days for their coming together, it would seem as if they had to come from some great distance. The church at Pergamos might therefore be planted about the same time.

The character under which our Lord addresses them is taken from Chap. i. 16. "He that hath the sharp sword with two edges;" and wears a terrible aspect towards a corrupt party amongst them, against whom he threatens to wage war.

Kind and encouraging things however are addressed to the body of them. Christ knew

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\* 2 Cor. ii. 12.

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their "works," and their firm adherence to him under great trials and persecutions, in which one of their number in particular, and probably their pastor, had suffered martyrdom. Pergamos was a city said to be "sacred to the gods:" here therefore we might expect to find the head quarters of idolatry and persecutions; and their standing firm in such a place, and at such times, was much to their honour.

But there were "a few things" amongst them which displeased Christ. Some of the members tampered with idolatry and it's ordinary attendant, fornication; and the rest connived at it. This is called "the doctrine of Balaam" because it was in this way that that wicked prophet drew Israel into sin. They had also some of the "Nicolaitanes" amongst them, whose principles and practices the Lord abhorred.

They are called upon to repent on pain of Christ's displeasure, who threatens, except they repent, to come unto them quickly, and to execute the judgments of his word against them, even against the transgressors themselves, and all who favoured them.

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These warnings and threatenings require our attention, and that of all who are guilty in a greater or less degree of the same evils: nor do the encouragements to them that overcome require it less. The "hidden manna," the "white stone," and the "new name," being promised as the reward of them that overcome, seems to refer to the blessedness and honour of a future state, rather than of the present; though Christians doubtless have a foretaste of them even in this life. The "hidden manna" refers to those who should deny themselves of "eating things sacrificed to idols," and other carnal enjoyments, for Christ's sake; and denotes that there is a feast in reserve for them, which shall infinitely exceed the pleasures of flesh and sense. The Romans in judgment are said to have given their suffrage for condemnation by casting black stones into an urn, and for absolution white stones. White stones are also said to have been given by the Greeks to the conquerors in the Olympic games, with their names upon them, and the value of the prize they won. The application of this is easy.

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## DISCOURSE III.

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THE EPISTLES TO THE CHURCHES CONTINUED.

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CHAP. II. 18—29. CHAP. III.

**AND** unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;  
19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.  
20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. 21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.  
22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and

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*them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. 23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. 24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, As many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. 25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. 26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27 (And he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers:) even as I received of my Father. 28 And I will give him the morning star. 29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

The character under which our Lord addresses this church is taken from Chap. i. 13—15. with this variation: there he is described as “one like unto the Son of man:” but here he is called “The Son of God;” as denoting his divine personality. With



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this agrees what is said of him, that "his eyes were like unto a flame of fire," discerning the secrets of the heart; "and his feet like fine brass" denoting the stability and glory of his proceedings. It is like saying, "All things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom you have to do. Seeing then that ye have a great High-priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, hold fast your profession!"

It is a high commendation that is given of this church, for it's "works, and charity, and service, and patience, and works." Nor is this last word repeated without cause; it denotes their *persevering* and even *abounding* in good works; "the last were more than the first." There are few churches, I fear, of which this can be said. Christ may know our works—and our works: but in most cases the first are more than the last!

Yet with all this excellence, Christ has a few things against them. With all this positive good, there was a mixture of relative evil. "The woman Jezebel," seems to relate to a corrupt part of the church, who though united to God's people, as Jezebel was by

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marrying an Israelitish prince, yet were in heart attached to idolatry, and laboured to seduce others into it. As a corrupt part of the Christian church is described as a harlot, so a corrupt part of a particular church, may be thus designated; and as Jezebel pretended to divine authority, and had her prophets to draw the servants of God into literal and spiritual fornication, so these had a kind of religion which would comport with eating and drinking at idolatrous temples, and so with occasional conformity to idolatry. They had had space to repent; the Lord had long born with them: but his forbearance operated, as it often does, to harden them in their sin. This forbearance however, will not continue always: Jezebel, with her adulterous paramours, will, except they repent, be cast together into a bed of devouring fire; and this for a warning to the churches.

It seems that, like some among the Corinthians, they boasted of their *knowledge*, as being able to distinguish between eating at an idol's temple and worshipping it; (1 Cor. viii. 1.) they spake of their *depths* in knowledge; but Christ calls them "the depths of Satan," and virtually disowns their abettors,

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distinguishing the faithful from them—"Unto you, I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have hold fast till I come."

The promise to them that overcome the temptations of the present life is a final triumph. They shall judge the world of the ungodly: and those who have persecuted them, and set themselves against them, will then fall before them. As a potter's vessel is broken to shivers, so shall they be destroyed; and all this according to the commission which Christ received of his Father.

Nor is this all: Christ will give unto them that overcome "the morning star." As this is one of the names assumed by himself, (Chap, xxii. 16.) it may denote that he himself will be their portion.

The exhortation "He that hath an ear, let him hear," &c. may in this case direct our attention to the following important particulars—That we may be members of a true

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church, and yet not true members of the church; that the mixture of evil characters and evil things which at present are found in Christ's visible kingdom greatly tarnishes its glory, but in the end he will gather them out, and then shall the righteous shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father; that we may have space given us for repentance and yet never repent, which will greatly aggravate our doom; that there is a species of knowledge with which it is our honour and happiness to be unacquainted; finally, that the hope of victory is sufficient to stimulate us under all our conflicts.

*1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. 4 Thou hast a few names even in*

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*Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. 5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. 6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches,*

This church lies under the heavy charge of having "a name to live while it was dead." The address to it is taken from Chap. i. 4, 20. and may be designed to direct them and their pastor where to look for reviving grace. Nothing is said in a way of commendation, except to individuals amongst them. This indicates a bad state indeed. There are not many churches but individuals might be found in them who love the Lord. The "works" which Christ knew appear to be the same as those which he had "not found perfect before God." Though therefore he knew them, he did not approve of them. It is bad for the world to be dead; but for a church to be so is worse: this is salt without savour; which is neither fit for the land nor the dunghill. It is bad for individuals

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to be dead ; but for the body of a church to be so is deplorable. It is implied, that they were not only destitute of spirituality, but had defiled their garments by worldly conformity.

There had been some good amongst them, or they would not have been called to “remember how they had received and heard ;” and some remains of it might continue. As no complaint is made of false doctrine, it is likely they continued orthodox, and kept up the forms of godliness. There seem to have been something of truth, love, and zeal ; but they were like dying embers, ready to expire.

Christ admonished them to awake from their supineness, to take the alarm, and to strengthen the things which remained that were ready to die. This is done by each one beginning with himself, and ending with one another.

The means of recovery from such a state are, “Remembering how we received and heard” the gospel at the first. Call to remembrance the former days, not to get comfort under our declensions, but to recover those views and sensations which we had at the beginning of our Christian course. There

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were many also, who at first had received the gospel with much heart, and had heard it with delight, but who in the course of forty years would be removed by death. Let them call to remembrance the love and zeal of their fathers, and be ashamed of their own declensions. If these admonitions did not awaken them, they are given to understand that Christ will come upon them in an unexpected hour, even as a thief cometh in the night.

The "few names which had not defiled their garments" are highly commended. To walk with God at any time is acceptable to him; and to do this while others around us are corrupt, is more so. This is being faithful among the faithless. They shall walk with Christ in glory, honour, and purity. With this agrees the promise to them that overcome: "They shall be clothed in white raiment; and Christ will not blot out their names from the book of life." The blessed God is represented as keeping a register of his servants, not as elect, or as redeemed, or as called, but as his *professed followers*. When any turn back, their names are blotted out. Hence at the last judgment it is made the rule of

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condemnation. "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Chap. xx. 15. Some were never there, having never professed to be the followers of Jesus, while others who had been there were blotted out: in either case their names would not be found there. Hence also it is the rule of admission into the New Jerusalem. Chap. xxi. 27.

"He that hath an ear to hear let him hear." Let us be aware of judging ourselves by what others think of us. We may have a name to live amongst our brethren, and yet be dead. Our names may be written among the professed followers of Christ, and yet be blotted out when he comes to judgment. But let faithful individuals know, that whatever may be the end of others, Jesus will confess them before his Father, and before his angels.

7 *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy: he that is true; he that hath the key of David; he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth:*  
8 *I know thy works: behold, I have set be-*



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*fore thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.*

*9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, (which say they are Jews, and are not; but do lie;) behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.*

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

*11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*

*12 Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.*

*13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

There is a great difference between this church and the last: there was there nothing to commend; here nothing is censured. The character under which they are addressed is

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taken from Chap. i. 18. and accords with the address itself. "He that was holy, and true" approved of them; and "he that had the keys of David, who opened and no man shut, had "set an open door before them."

The Lord knew and approved of their works, and would make them more and more successful. They were not distinguished by opulence; nor perhaps by any of those things that render a people respectable in the eyes of the world; but of their "little strength," they had made good use; had held fast the truth, and stood firm under persecution, which is of more account in the esteem of Christ than all other things.

This, and most of the primitive churches met with great opposition from the Jewish synagogue, which is here again called "the synagogue of Satan;" whose members having rejected the Messiah, were no longer worthy of the name of Jews. They that say they are what they are not, whether it be Jews or Christians, are commonly the bitterest of persecutors. Their "coming" to them in a way of cringing submission, may refer to

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a state of things in which, a door being opened in a way of success, the Christians should be increased in number and in power; while the Jews, owing to their wars with the Romans, would be glad of their friendship.

The gospel is called "the word of Christ's patience," in respect of what it was to them. The retention of it under a succession of, cruel persecutions required great patience; yet they had kept it, and the Lord promised in return to keep them in a particular time of trial that was coming upon the world. It might be by a renewal of persecution in the empire, or by the prevailing of corruptions in the church. As the Lord punishes sin by giving men up to sin, so he rewards righteousness by preserving them in the paths of it. We have had many of these hours of temptation, and may have many more: blessed are they that are preserved through them!

They are directed to look for the coming of their Lord, and to hold fast truth and true religion, lest their adversaries should wrest it out of their hands, and so deprive them of their reward.

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The promise to them that overcome is, that they shall be "pillars" in the celestial temple; and, unlike those of the Jewish temple, which were removed by the Chaldeans and by the Romans, shall "go no more out." We are not to reckon the future greatness of men according to their talents in this life, but according to the use made of them. Those who have here had but "a little strength," may there become pillars in the temple. The pillars of the church on earth go out and leave it by death; but those of the church above will abide for ever.

The writing upon them of the name of God, and the name of the city of God, the New Jerusalem, and of his own new name, doubtless means as much as this—that they shall be treated as the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, as citizens of the Heavenly Jerusalem, and as those who are redeemed from among men.

It is for us, both as individuals and as churches, to take encouragement from this address to hold that fast which we have, that no man take our crown.

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14 *And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;* 15 *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.* 16 *So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.* 17 *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:* 18 *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.* 19 *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent.* 20 *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* 21 *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.* 22 *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*

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This church appears to have been in the worst state of any of the seven. Sardis, though it had nothing to commend, had a few excellent names: but Laodicea is censured without distinction. Yet even this church is not given up, but *rebuked in love*.

The character under which the Laodiceans are addressed is that of "the Amen, the faithful and true witness." Being lifted up with their riches, they might be tempted to refuse this faithful witness that was borne against them: but however disagreeable, it was "true." Christ is here called, "The beginning of the creation of God." It is true that as to his human nature he was himself created: the name here assumed, however, does not refer to this; but to his being the head (*αρχη*) and first cause of creation. Thus in Col. i. 15. he is called "the first-born of every creature;" not as being himself a creature, but the first cause of creation: "For (it is added,) by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all

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things consist.”\* A message from such a character deserved their serious attention.

Christ knew their works, but could not approve of them: for they were “neither cold nor hot.” They may be said to be cold who have no religion, and pretend to none; and they to be hot, who are zealously engaged in Christ’s work: but these people were neither this nor that. They were not decidedly religious, and yet would not let religion alone.

This state of mind is represented as being peculiarly offensive to Christ. To halt between truth and error, God and the world, is worse in many respects than to be openly irreligious. Corrupt Christianity is more offensive to God than open infidelity. No man thinks the worse of religion for what he sees in the openly profane; but it is otherwise in respect of religious professors. If he that nameth the name of Christ depart not from iniquity, the honour of Christ is affected by his misconduct.

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\* Col. i. 15—17.

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These people appear to have been very proud, and withal very ignorant of themselves. Their opulence seems to have lifted them up. Religion seldom thrives with much worldly prosperity. Men covet such things, and value themselves upon them; but they are commonly snares to their souls. It is a hard thing for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. If these were the "riches" of which they boasted, it shews that the estimate of worldly greatness formed by the faithful and true witness, is very different from that of the generality of men. Of what account is it in his sight to be rich and increased in goods, while as to our spiritual concerns we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked?

Being charged with *blindness*, and counselled to use means to remove it, it would seem however that the riches of which they boasted included those of the mind; and that they were proud of their *knowledge* and *gifts*, as well as of their wealth. Like the Corinthians, "they were full, they were rich, they reigned as kings without the apostles." There is much of this still among professing Christians. One party looks down upon



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another, and values itself for it's superior light; one declaims against pharisaism in the true spirit of a pharisee; another is busy about the mote in his brother's eye, regardless of the beam in his own. The sentence of the faithful and true witness concerning all that are wise and righteous in their own eyes is, Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and knowest it not!

In respect of the *counsel* offered them, they are addressed like sinners in common, who knew not the Saviour. This was probably the case with many of them; and if some had known him, yet being in a backsliding state, the best counsel that could be given them was, that they should come as sinners *immediately* to the Saviour. They are directed to seek the true *riches*, the true *righteousness* and the true *wisdom*, and to deal with Christ for them; not as giving him any valuable consideration for them, (for this as being *poor* they could not,) but as parting with all for them. This is "buying without money and without price." This is the way in which sinners come to Christ at first, and this is the way for backsliders to be restored. The

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child that has been ill taught must begin anew, and go over every rule again.

To reconcile them to this sharp and humbling reproof they are assured that these were not the words of an enemy, but of one that bare them good will. It shews the great forbearance and long-suffering goodness of our Lord, even towards them that have greatly dishonoured him. It also teaches us to put a right construction on divine rebukes, receiving them as the rod of correction to bring us to repentance.

To counsel is added a word of encouragement and of warning.—“Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Here again they seem to be treated rather as sinners, than as Christians. If the common invitations of the gospel be acceptable, they are welcome to them. Jesus stands at their door, and knocks for admission. Do they hear him? and will they open the door and welcome him? If so, he will come in, and be their guest. But if they are so taken up with their present company as not to hear

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him, or at least not to open to him, he will go away, as he did from the jewish temple—"Behold your house is left unto you desolate."

If this serious and tender address did not reclaim them as a body, yet the promise to them that should overcome, that they should "sit down with him in his throne, as he also had overcome, and was set down with his Father in his throne," might encourage individuals to return and hold out to the end.

Let these censures, warnings, and encouragements, addressed to the seven churches in Asia, as a specimen of the whole, be heard and regarded by the churches of Christ, and by every individual member of them, to the end of time.

## DISCOURSE IV.

THE VISION PRECEDING THE BOOK WITH SEVEN SEALS.

### CHAP. IV.

**AFTER** this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard, was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. 2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. 3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. 4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns

of gold. 5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices: And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. 6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind. 7 And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature had a face as a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. 8 And the four living creatures had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. 9 And when those living creatures give glory, and honour, and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, 10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

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The whole of this chapter is introductory to what follows. The scene of the vision is the heavenly world. No where else could it have been with equal propriety. Where, but at the fountain of intelligence and influence, should a creature learn the secrets of futurity? When Ahab's destiny was revealed to Micaiah, the scene of the vision was laid in heaven.\*

A door being opened, the apostle is invited to enter in. Having entered, he immediately finds himself under prophetic inspiration. He was not removed from the earth as to his body: but, as Ezekiel was carried by the Spirit to Jerusalem, and saw what was transacting there, while his body was still in Chaldea, so it was with him; he was still in the Isle of Patmos, while wrapt up by divine inspiration, and introduced into the immediate presence of God,

In this supernatural state of mind he beheld a "throne," and one "sitting upon it," who was the supreme disposer of all the concerns of creatures. Such a sight would

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\* 1 Kings xxii. 19—22,

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impress him with the conviction that whatever should befall the church, or the world, it was all according to his will who ruled in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. Ver. 1, 2,

No description is given of the ever blessed God, only that his glory seemed to resemble the lustre of certain precious stones; and this may allude to the visible glory of the God of Israel as displayed in the temple. A rainbow was also round about the throne, in appearance like an emerald. We know that this from of old, was a sign of peace and good will to men. It may here denote that the glorious majesty of God, which in itself were too much to be endured, would be displayed towards his church in connection with covenant mercy, Ver. 3.

Having spoken of the king eternal, immortal, and invisible, sitting on his throne, he next describes his retinue. Here are twenty-four seats, or subordinate thrones, on which sat twenty-four elders, clothed in white, and with crowns of gold upon their heads. The "lightnings, and thunderings, and voices," may denote not only the awful majesty

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of God, as when he appeared at Sinai, but that from him proceeded all the terrible judgments which would shortly afflict the earth. Besides these there were "seven lamps of fire before the throne," which are said to be "the seven spirits of God;" answering, it may be, to the seven candlesticks, and being as it were a lamp to each candlestick. The light imparted by the churches is all derived from the Holy Spirit. These seven lamps enlighten the world. Ver. 4, 5.

"Before the throne was a sea of glass like unto crystal." This crystal sea, as it was in appearance, but which was so solid that the harpers are afterwards described as standing upon it, may be opposed to the troubled tumultuous sea out of which the beast would rise, and may denote the grandeur and immutability of the divine throne as opposed to the turbulence and uncertainty of earthly thrones. The four living creatures seem to be the same as those described by Ezekiel, and to allude, as they did, to the cherubim in the holy of holies. That which the wheels were to the one, the elders are to the other; connected with them like horses in a chariot, in all their movements. Of the former it is said, "When the living creatures went, the



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wheels went by them; when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, these were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels."\* Of the latter it is said, "When those living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to him that sitteth on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

The living creatures cannot be angels, for both they and the elders are distinguished from them in Chap. vii. 11. where all the angels are said to "stand round about the throne, *and* about the elders and the four living creatures." Besides this, the living creatures and the elders speak of themselves as "redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation." Chap. v. 9. Those who led the worship under the Old Testament might be

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\* Ezek. i. 21.

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meant by the living creatures of Ezekiel; and those who lead the worship under the New Testament may be signified by those of John. They and the elders, like the stars and the candlesticks, appear to be the representatives of Christ's ministers and churches in the heavenly assembly. They are not described as being themselves on earth, or in a state of affliction, but as before the throne of God: as though a number of the spirits of just men made perfect had been chosen of God, to represent in his immediate presence their brethren upon earth, and who, as things should be described which concerned the church, would express the interest they felt in them.

The description of the living creatures as bearing a resemblance to certain animals, and as having each six wings, which wings were "full of eyes within," would naturally express their useful properties, particularly the union of zeal and knowledge; and their unceasing ascriptions of glory to God may denote the tendency of their ministerial labours. The elders were crowned, but they cast their crowns before the throne. Such appear to be the scene and the scenery of this preparatory vision. Ver. 6—11.

## DISCOURSE V.

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### THE BOOK WITH SEVEN SEALS.

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#### CHAP. V.

**AND** I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, *Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?* 3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. 4 And I wept much because no man was found worthy to open, and to read the book, neither to look thereon. 5 And one of the elders saith unto me, *Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.* 6 And I beheld, and

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*lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. 7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. 8 And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures, and four and twenty elders, fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. 11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. 13 And*

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*every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. 14 And the four living creatures said Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.*

That which is here called "a book," must not be supposed to resemble our books, which since the invention of printing have been very different from those of the ancients. Conceive of seven skins of parchment, written upon on one side,\* and rolled up, suppose on wood. At the end of every skin a seal is affixed on the backside, so that the contents of it cannot be read till the seal is opened. This book, or roll, or volume, being "in the right hand

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\* By the punctuation in our translation, it would seem as if they were written upon on both sides; but this would not comport with the contents being secret, which they were till the seals were unloosed. It seems, therefore, that a comma is necessary after the word "within," in verse 1. Several other versions, and some editions of our own, read it, *A book written within, and on the backside sealed with seven seals.*

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of him that sat on the throne," denotes that futurity is known only to God. The proclamation made for one that should be worthy to open the book, shews how desirable it was that the mind of God in regard of futurity, should be revealed, for strengthening the faith and supporting the hope of his church upon earth; and as John had been invited for the very purpose of learning "the things that should be hereafter," things which related to the church of Christ which he had been employed in raising, it must be peculiarly interesting to him. He must needs be anxious to know the things that should befall these his people in the latter days. To see a book therefore which contained them, and yet none in heaven or earth is found worthy to open it, might well make him weep. Ver. 1—4.

This want of a suitable person to open the book is introduced for the purpose of *doing honour to the Lamb*, whose success gives universal joy and satisfaction. The work of making known the mind of God was an honour too high for any mere creature in heaven or on earth: it was given to Christ as the reward of his obedience unto death.

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Ver. 9. The honour of preaching the gospel is represented as being of *grace*: "Unto me, (said Paul,) who am less than the least of all saints is this *grace* given, that I should preach among the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." That which Christ received as the reward of his death, we receive in our measure, of grace, and for his sake; and a great favour it is to be bearers of such good tidings.

One of the elders perceiving the apostle to weep under an apprehension that all must remain unknown, saith unto him, "Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." John was not so unacquainted with the scriptures as to be at any loss who this could mean. Probably however he expected to behold his Lord in some majestic form corresponding to the imagery: but lo, instead of a Lion, he saw a Lamb, a Lamb as it had been slain! yet invested with perfect authority, and possessing perfect knowledge, so as to qualify him for the work: for he had "seven horns, and seven eyes." Ver, 5, 6.

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This glorious personage, in whom are united the majesty of the lion and the gentleness of the Lamb, approaches him that sat upon the throne, and takes the book out of his right hand; denoting on his own part the undertaking of the work, and on that of God his perfect approbation. Ver. 7.

And now the whole church of God by their representatives are described as falling down before the Lamb, and joining in a chorus of praise. "The golden vials full of odours," doubtless allude to those of the priests who offered incense, and denote that the church on earth is ever employed in presenting it's petitions before the throne. They had also "harps" as well as vials, and "sung a new song," denoting the great occasion there now was for joy and praise. . A new song is suited to a new manifestation of mercy. The Lamb is found worthy to take the book, and to open the seals; and they perceive the ground of it to lie in his having redeemed them at the expense of his blood. For this they bless his name, as also for his having made them kings and priests unto God, and given them to expect that however they were



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at present oppressed on earth, they should even there be finally victorious. Ver. 8—10.

Nor could the angels on such an occasion be silent, but must join in the choir: Myriads of myriads, a number that no man could number, unite in ascribing worthiness to the Lamb, and that on the same ground as redeemed men had done, namely; his having been "slain:" a proof this of disinterested affection, both to the Redeemer and the redeemed. He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham: yet angels unite in praising him for his love to men.

In enumerating the things which he was worthy to receive, it is remarkable how they keep their eye on those perfections of which he had *emptied* himself in his humiliation. He did not lay aside any thing pertaining to his *goodness*, but merely what belonged to his greatness. He was no less holy, just, faithful, and merciful when on earth than he is now in heaven: but he emptied himself of "power," as laying aside his authority, and taking upon him the form of a servant;

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of "riches," as becoming poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich; of "wisdom," as making himself of no reputation; of "strength," as becoming weak and subject to death like other men; of "honour," as not appearing in his native divinity, but as a man, and a man of obscure birth, despised of the people; of "glory," as subjecting himself to shame and disgrace; and of "blessing," as receiving not the benedictions so much as the execrations of those among whom he sojourned. The purport of the song is, By how much he hath emptied himself on earth, by so much let him be magnified and exalted in heaven! Ver. 11, 12.

Nor is the song confined to angels; the whole creation joins in praising him that sitteth on the throne, and the Lamb, for ever; while at every pause the representatives of the redeemed add their emphatic "Amen," adoring in humble prostration him that liveth for ever and ever. Ver. 13.

Such an august and affecting representation expresses the sentiments which become the friends of Christ while contemplating that great cause which is carrying on in the

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world, and which the world in a manner overlooks. To this may be added, If such be the glory ascribed to the Saviour whilst events are merely foretold, what will it be when they are actually accomplished, and when they shall be reviewed in the heaven of heavens to all eternity!

## ***DISCOURSE VI.***

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### **THE SEALS OPENED.**

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#### **CHAP. VI.**

**BEFORE** we enter on the opening of the seals, the sounding of the trumpets, or the pouring out of the vials, it will be proper to make a few general remarks,

*First,* The whole series of events here revealed is included in the sealed book. We are not to conceive of the seals as containing one series of events, the trumpets another, and the vials another; but as all being included in the seals: for the seven trumpets are only subdivisions of the seventh seal, and the seven vials of the seventh trumpet,

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*Secondly,* This division into seals, and subdivision into trumpets and vials, appears to be the *only one* which the prophecy requires, or even admits. Not to mention it's division into *chapters*, which are sometimes made in the midst of a subject, the scheme of dividing it into *periods*, which Mr. LOWMAN, and many others have favoured, seems to be merely a work of the imagination. There are doubtless some remarkable periods in the prophecy, such as that of the 1260 years, &c. but to make them *seven* in number, and for this purpose to reckon the day of judgment, and the heavenly state, as periods, is fanciful. It is by the division of the prophecy itself into seals, and the subdivision of the seventh seal into trumpets, and of the seventh trumpet into vials, that we must steer our course.

*Thirdly,* In tracing the events symbolized by the seals, trumpets, and vials, there is no necessity for supposing that every preceding one must be finished before that which follows it can have begun. It is enough if they succeed each other in the manner of the four monarchies predicted in the seventh chapter of Daniel. The Babylonish empire

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was not extinct before that of Persia began; nor that of Persia before that of Macedonia began; nor that of Macedonia before that of Rome began. The latter end of each would be contemporary with the beginning of that which followed: yet upon the whole they succeeded each other *in the empire of the world*: and this was sufficient to justify their being represented in succession. Thus the wars of the *red* horse in this chapter might commence before the conquests of the *white* horse were ended, and continue in part while the events signified by the *black* horse occurred. The beginnings and endings of each might run into the other, while yet upon the whole they were successive. It is on this account that I am not solicitous to determine the year when each begins or ends.

*Fourthly*, So far as the seals, trumpets, or vials respect the world, it is *as connected with the church*. The plan of this prophecy is much the same as that of the Old Testament: it follows religion, and what concerns religion only. Why is there so much said in the scriptures of *Nineveh* and *Babylon* rather than of other heathen cities in those times, but because these powers had to do

with the people of God? Why are the ravages of the four beasts predicted by Daniel, but for the same reason? Had it not been for this, they might have risen and fallen unnoticed by the scriptures, as much as *Carthage*, *Palmyra*, or *Pekin*. It is this that accounts for so much being said by Daniel of Antiochus Epiphanes. It is this that accounts for so much being said by John of the Roman empire, rather than of the other great empires of the earth; for it was here that Christianity would be principally embraced. And as the Roman empire and the profession of Christianity would in the latter ages be in a manner confined to Europe, so the greater part of what respects the world in the latter part of these prophecies is in a manner confined to that quarter of the earth. The scriptures, foreseeing that Europe would be the seat of both the Christian church, and the anti-christian beast and harlot, predict events concerning this part of the world while they overlook the other parts.

Nor must we expect to find *all* the great events even of those parts of the world which are connected with the church. As the

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Old Testament history in respect of the nations connected with Israel, is *select*, so we may expect to find the New Testament prophecy. If some of the mightiest changes in Europe have no place in this prophecy, we are not to consider the omission of them as a defect, but rather take it for granted that God did not judge the introduction of them necessary for his purpose.

*Fifthly*, The commencement of the prophecy is, I apprehend, to be reckoned from the ascension of Christ. It has been common, I am aware, to reckon it from the time of the vision, which is supposed to have been under the reign of Domitian, about the year 95. On this principle Mr. LOWMAN proceeds. Hence he confines the opening of the first seal, on which it is said "there appeared a *white* horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown, and went forth conquering and to conquer," to the success of the gospel *after the year 95, leaving out the whole of that which accompanied the labours of the apostles*. In like manner the opening of the second seal, on which there went forth "a *red* horse, and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace



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from the earth, and that they should kill one another," is confined to those wars between the Jews and Romans which occurred between the years 100 and 138; *leaving out the whole of those which issued in the destruction of Jerusalem.\** But surely it must appear singular that in a prophetic description of the success of the gospel in the early ages the most glorious part of it should be left out; and that in a like description of the wars between the Jews and Romans the most terrible part should be omitted. The reason given by Mr. LOWMAN for its being so, is, "The destruction of Jerusalem *being past* can hardly be supposed to be denoted by a prediction of a judgment to come." Doubtless it is in general true that prophecies are predictions of things to come: in some instances however they may refer to events *the beginnings of which* are already accomplished. There is a remarkable instance of this in the prophecies of Daniel concerning the four monarchies. He speaks of his seeing them all *rise up out of the sea;†*

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\* See LOWMAN'S *History of the First and Second Scals*, pp. 40—42.

† Chap. vii. 1—3.

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yet at the time of the vision the first of them, namely Babylon, had risen, and reigned, and was near it's end; for it was in the first year of Belshazzar, who was it's last king. And why should not the apostle in like manner commence the prophecy with the commencement of the Christian dispensation, though he wrote above sixty years after it? This makes the sealed book to contain a perfect system of New-testament prophecy, from the ascension of Christ to the end of all things. By this we include the success of the apostles in the conquests of the man on the white horse under the first seal, and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in those of the red horse under the second seal. By this too we are furnished with an easy interpretation of the division of the book into "things which the writer *had seen*, things which *were*, and things which should be *hereafter*." He had actually seen the great progress of the gospel from the time of Christ's ascension, and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; he then saw the church struggling under a cruel persecution; and that which should be revealed to him would carry on those struggles till she should rise triumphant

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over all opposition in her New Jerusalem glory.

1 *And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four living creatures, saying, Come, and see. 2 And I saw, and behold, a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering and to conquer.*

There is no doubt of this being meant of the glorious success of the gospel in the early ages of the church, even when it had to encounter the most bloody persecutions. Of this the *white horse* is the appropriate symbol.\* “Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty: with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness: and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.”† I need not shew how truly this accords with historic fact. Suffice it to say, that from the beginning, as the Jews alleged against the apostles, “Jerusalem was

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\* Chap. xix, 11, 12.

† Psa. xlv. 3, 4.

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*filled* with their doctrine." It was foretold that before the destruction of that city, the gospel should be preached in all the world.\* Paul himself preached it, and that fully, "from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum:" and, as he says in behalf of himself and his fellow-labourers, "God always caused them to triumph in every place." The Cæsars set themselves against it; yet in spite of all their efforts, there were, even in Paul's time, saints in Cæsar's household.

The epistles of Pliny and Tiberianus, Governors of Asia Minor and Syria, to Trajan the Emperor, within ten or twelve years after the banishment of John to the Isle of Patmos, furnish a striking and unexceptionable proof of the progress of the gospel in those times. By the amazing number of persons who avowed themselves Christians, and so exposed themselves to death, they were moved with compassion, and wrote to know what they were to do with them. "The number is so great, (says Pliny,) as to call for the most serious deliberation. Informations are pouring in against multitudes, of every age, of

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\* Matt. xxiv, 14.

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“all orders, and of both sexes: and more  
“will be impeached; for the contagion of  
“this superstition hath spread, not only  
“through cities, but villages, and hath even  
“reached the farm-houses.” He also speaks  
of the temples as having been almost desolate,  
the sacred solemnities [of idolatry] as having  
been intermitted, and the sacrificial victims  
as finding but few purchasers. “I am quite  
“wearied, (says Tiberianus,) with punishing  
“and destroying the Galileans.”

*3 And when he had opened the second seal,  
I heard the second living creature say, Come  
and see. 4 And there went out another horse  
that was red: and power was given to him  
that sat thereon to take peace from the earth;  
and that they should kill one another: and  
there was given unto him a great sword.*

This and the two following seals relate to  
the judgments of God upon the churches’  
enemies. Great and terrible wars are as  
naturally suggested by the symbol of a *red*  
horse, as the success of the gospel was by a  
white one. The wars particularly alluded  
to, appear to be those between the Jews and  
Romans, who having united in persecuting

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the church, as well as in crucifying it's head, were now permitted to "kill one another." It is well known that in the reign of *Vespasian*, the Jews having rebelled against the Romans, Jerusalem was taken and destroyed, the temple reduced to ashes, and an immense number slain.\* Forty or fifty years after this, in the reign of *Trajan*, the Jews in Egypt and in Cyprus rebelled, and are said to have slain with great marks of cruelty, *four hundred and sixty thousand men*; yet the Jews were every where subdued: a far greater number, therefore, must have been slain amongst themselves. Soon after this, in the reign of *Hadrian*, the Jews who were left in Palestine after the destruction of their metropolis, were drawn into a new rebellion, by adhering to a pretended messiah, whose name was *Barchocab*. In these wars, besides what were lost on the side of the Romans, the Jews are said to have had a thousand cities and fortresses destroyed, with the slaughter of above *five hundred and eighty thousand men*. The Jews

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\* Mr. LOWMAN, from *Usher's Annals*, says, "A million and a half according to some, according to others two millions, besides what were slain on the side of the Romans."

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having employed the Roman power to crucify the Lord of Glory, God employed it to destroy them and their city. Their carnal policy told them that if they let him alone, all men would believe on him, and the Romans would come and take away both their place and nation. Whether guilty or not guilty, it was judged expedient that he should die, and that the whole nation should not perish. The whole nation however *did* perish, and that by means of the Romans. Such was the result of that policy which was employed against the Lord, and against his Christ: and thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel,—“And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined,” Chap ix. 26.

## **DISCOURSE VII.**

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### THE OPENING OF THE SEALS CONTINUED.

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#### CHAP. VI.

**AND** when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, *Cóme, and see. And I beheld, and lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. 6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.*

A *black* horse is the symbol for famine, or of a scarcity approaching to famine, by which the necessities of life required to be dealt out by weight and measure, and special



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orders to be given that nothing should be wasted.\* Such appears to have been the state of things in the Roman empire for a long time, during the reigns of the *Antonines*. It was in reference to these, among other calamities, that *Tertullian* speaks, representing the Heathens as ascribing them to the Christians, because they taught men to despise the gods.†

The “measure” here referred to is the chœnix, which contained the ordinary allowance of corn to a man for a day; and as the price of a measure of wheat in those times was a Roman “penny,” which was the amount of a day’s wages, it follows that for a poor man to have lived on wheaten bread would have required all his labour, without any thing for other necessities, or even bread for his family!

*7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature*

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\* See Lam. v. 10. Lev. xxvi. 26.

† *Apology, Chap. XL.*      LOWMAN’S *History of the Third Seal*, p. 46.

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*say, Come and see. 8 And I looked, and behold, a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him. And power was given unto them, over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth*

The *pale* horse was the symbol of great *mortality*, by various means: particularly by the sword, by hunger, by pestilence, and by the beasts of the earth. The facts were, that between the years 193 and 270, that is, in less than eighty years, there were more than twenty emperors, and at one time thirty pretenders to the throne. It is said also there were thirty usurpers, who raised wars for themselves in different parts of the empire. Such a state of things is sufficient to account for all that is here predicted: for intestine wars must needs produce famine and pestilence, and by destroying men, give an ascendancy to the beasts of prey. In this manner the enemies of the gospel were visited, who continued, with but little intermission, to persecute the church of God.

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In understanding the symbols of the *white*, the *red*, the *black*, and the *pale* horses of the success of the gospel, and the judgments of God on it's enemies, there is sufficient unity of design. They all bear a relation to the church, and to the Jews and Romans only as persecuting it.

*9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.*

A view of an altar, and the sacrifices that had been made upon it, fitly represent the numerous martyrdoms which had been made at the time under the Heathen emperors. The "souls under the altar,"

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are the departed spirits of those Christians who had fallen in the arduous contest, which are supposed to cry aloud for retribution. The "white robes" denote the heavenly honours conferred upon them. The answer to their appeal, in which they are encouraged to expect a retribution "after a little season, and when the number of their fellow-servants and brethren, who should be killed as they were, [by the hands of Paganism,] should be fulfilled," determines the period to which the vision refers. It is supposed that they had suffered under *nine* of the ten persecutions, and had only to wait for the completion of their number under the *tenth*, which being accomplished, God would take vengeance on their persecutors. The opening of this seal therefore would refer to about the year, 270, when the ninth persecution was past, and the tenth under *Dioclesian* and *Maximian* was approaching; and which is said to have been more extensive and bloody than any which had gone before it. Its professed object was nothing less than the utter extirpation of Christianity. The places for Christian worship were every where demolished, bibles destroyed, and an immense number of Christians put to death. "It

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were endless and almost incredible, (says *Echard*,) to enumerate the variety of sufferers and torments: they were scourged to death, had their flesh torn off with pincers, and mangled with broken pots; were cast to lions, tygers, and other wild beasts; were burnt, beheaded, crucified, thrown into the sea, torn in pieces by the distorted boughs of trees, roasted by gentle fires, and holes made in their bodies for melted lead to be poured into their bowels. This persecution lasted ten years under *Dioclesian* and some of his successors; and the number of Christians who suffered death and punishment made them conclude that they had completed their work: and in an ancient inscription they tell the world *that they had effaced the name and superstition of the Christians, and had restored and propagated the worship of the gods.* But they were so much deceived, that this hastened the destruction of Paganism.”\*

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\* *Roman History*, Vol II. p. 550. Eusebius in the VIIIth book of his *Ecclesiastical History* gives a particular account of this persecution, of which he was an eye witness.

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This was the first persecution that reached Britain, then a Roman colony, in which *Alban* suffered, and great numbers after him. "Our stories record, (says Fox the martyrologist,) that all Christianity almost in the whole Island was destroyed, the churches subverted, all books of scripture burned, and many of the faithful, both men and women, slain."

12 *And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;*  
13 *And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind.*  
14 *And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.* 15 *And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains;* 16 *And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the*

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*Lamb: 71 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*

An "earthquake" is the appropriate symbol of a revolution; and an earthquake accompanied with an eclipse of the sun and moon, and what was more than an eclipse, the "falling of the stars to the earth," as though nature itself were dissolved, denotes, I conceive, the overthrow of the *Pagan* empire by the arms of Constantine. The ruling powers of the world are that to the common people which the sun and moon and stars are to the earth: hence great changes in nations are expressed by God's "shaking the heavens and the earth;" and sometimes by the very imagery here used, "All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment." Isa. xxxiv. 4, 5. The revolution that took place in the time of Constantine was not of a civil, so much as of a religious character. The government was

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still imperial, and the difference between one emperor and another would be of little or no account. But it was an eclipse of those powers which had so long endeavoured to crush the cause of Christ. It is language applicable to the last judgment: and was to them actually a day of judgment in miniature. The bloody enemies of Christ must now have felt, whether they would or not, that they had incurred the wrath of the Lamb. Now the number of the martyrs under the Pagan persecutions is compleated, and the prayers of the souls under the altar are answered.



## DISCOURSE VIII.

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THE SEALING OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD.

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### CHAP. VII.

**AND** after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the winds should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. 2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. 4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed, an hundred and forty and four thousand, of all the tribes of the

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*children of Israel. 5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. 6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. 7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. 8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.*

This chapter is a continuation of the sixth seal; and bears a relation to the great revolution which had taken place by the accession of a Christian Emperor. Considering what the church had had to encounter under a succession of Heathens, this event would appear to be most auspicious. Christians would now look forward to times of peace, happiness, and prosperity. And true it is, that during the life of this Emperor, there was not only a season of peace, but considerable accessions to the Christian profession.

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On this account, it seems, Mr. LOWMAN and others have been led to interpret this sealing of the servants of God in their foreheads, of the numerous *conversions* made in those times to the Christian faith. But sealing denotes, not conversion, but the *preservation* of those who are converted. Those who were sealed did not by this *become* the servants of God, but are supposed to be such already. Instead of signifying the enlargement of the church, the object is to prevent it from being utterly swept away. It portends danger no less than the striking of the door-posts of the Israelites when the destroying angel should pass through the land; or than the marking of those who "sighed and cried" when Jerusalem was to be destroyed by the Chaldeans. It was for the *preservation* of a seed for God amidst a flood of corruption. Hence when these evils had actually deluged the church, we find the sealed servants of God standing in triumph upon Mount Sion.\* God seeth not as man seeth: that which man is apt to think a great acquisition, God often knows to be a great temptation.

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\* Chap. xiv. 13.

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It is remarkable, that, instead of a congratulation of the church on it's recent victory, by the striking up of the heavenly choir, (as is usual in the prophecy when new and glorious events occur,) the choir on this occasion is mute. It is described, indeed, as a day of judgment to the persecuting Heathens, and in itself doubtless afforded matter of thankfulness to Christians; but had they known what would arise out of it, the joy of that day would have been turned into mourning.

From this time men were ripe for such speculations as those of *Arius*, who argued, *that if Christ was begotten of the Father, there must have been a time when he was not*; and for all the intrigues, wars, and persecutions, which on both sides by turns were practised. From this time our Lord's doctrine of the new birth seems in a manner to have been laid aside, and conversion to Christianity was little more than being baptized, or consenting to wear the Christian badge. From this time conversions were mostly produced by authority, or by the hope of worldly advantage, or by exhortations addressed to kings that they should convert their subjects. From this time the glory of

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the church seems to have been placed more in splendid edifices and pompous ceremonies, than in conformity to it's head. In short, from this time she became a courtier, and laying aside her own simple garb, appeared in a dress more befitting the mother of harlots than the bride of Christ. "What she gained in outward splendour and prosperity, (says Mr. FABER,) she lost in purity of manners and doctrine. The holy simplicity of primitive Christianity was no more; and the heresy of *Arius* introduced a succession of crimes disgraceful alike to humanity and religion."\*

Doubtless there were hypocrites, and merely nominal Christians in all ages of the church; but they were never before so designated as they now are. "The servants of God" are from this time distinguished from "the men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads." This distinction might not take place immediately after the accession of Constantine, but from that time the seeds of it were sown. The alliance between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities described in the xiii<sup>th</sup> and xvi<sup>th</sup> chapters by a woman riding on a beast,

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\* See MOSHEIM'S *Account of the Fourth Century*.

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originated here. Here therefore we must look for the grand origin of that apostasy which the apostle Paul foretold, and which succeeding ages witnessed. If the account given of the state of things by MOSHEIM be just, it requires a great stretch of charity to believe that what was called the catholic church even in the fourth century was the church of Christ. Christ certainly had a people at that time, but they seem to have consisted of *individuals* rather than of that visible community which called itself the church. They were "the servants of God whom he sealed in their foreheads."

These ideas will be confirmed by attending to the manner in which the sealing of the servants of God is introduced. Four angels are seen "standing on the four corners of the earth." Angels are the executioners of the divine providence. Their number answering to the four quarters of the earth may express its extending over the whole world. Their "holding the winds" would denote that they were commissioned of God to afflict the earth with evils, or to withhold them, according to his will. The short period in which they held back the winds seems to refer to

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that season of tranquility which the church enjoyed on the government's becoming Christian, and before the temptations of its new situation had had time to operate. Ver. 1, 2. But as the principal part of the commission of the four angles was to "hurt the earth and the sea," they stand ready, only waiting till the *greater* angel has sealed the servants of God, ere they execute it.

The "winds" which were to be let loose upon the earth and the sea, were *spiritual*, rather than temporal judgments, and would principally grow out of the new order of things: namely, errors, superstitions, corruptions, divisions, and a conformity to the manners and habits of the world. These were the winds which in the end swept away the great body of nominal Christians into the gulphs of Popery and Mahometanism. Ver. 3.

And as many of the symbols in the prophecy are taken from the *Jewish* temple, so the servants of God are symbolized by a certain number for an uncertain, taken from the twelve tribes of Israel. The Christian church being now the true "Israel of God," were to the apostate Christians

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what Israel was to an apostate world; namely, God's witnesses. Ver. 4—8.

9 *After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;* 10 *And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.* 11 *And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four living creatures, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God.* 12 *Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.* 13 *And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?* 14 *And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* 14 *Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on*



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*the throne shall dwell among them. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

After the sealing of God's servants is accomplished, the saints and martyrs of Jesus who during the preceding persecutions had overcome, and been received into glory, joining with the whole heavenly chorus, engage in a triumphant song of praise to God and to the Lamb. The reason of their being here introduced seems to be that the sealed servants of God, who were yet on earth, and had to pass through a series of trials, might by a view of their happy end be strengthened to follow their example. As great numbers would be against them in this world, they are directed to view the numbers of friends which they have in heaven; who not only look back to their own deliverance, and ascribe it to God, but seem to look down to their brethren upon earth, and to say, "Hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering!"

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The view of such a holy and happy assembly is supposed to excite in the apostle emotions of admiration and joy. On this one of the elders asks him what he conceives them to be; and whence they could come. It would seem as if they must be pure celestial beings, whose whole existence had been filled up with righteousness and blessedness. He does not presume however to say what he thought they were, whether men or angels, nor to offer any opinion as to whence they came; but modestly refers it to his instructor to inform him. The answer is, in effect, that they are men, men who were lately upon earth, exposed to great tribulations, but who had come out of them. And as to their "white robes," they had been once impure, but were washed and made white, not in their own blood; though that in innumerable instances had been shed, but "in the blood of the Lamb." It was as believing in his death that they were justified and sanctified; and having lived by faith on him, they were without fault "before the throne of God."

Still more to stimulate the servants of God in this world to persevere, he adds, "And

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he that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes!"

## DISCOURSE IX.

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THE SUBDIVISION OF THE SEVENTH SEAL INTO  
SEVEN TRUMPETS.

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### · CHAP. VIII.

*AND* when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. 3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand. 5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of

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*the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. 6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound.*

We are now come to the opening of the last of the seven seals, and which is longer, and includes far more than the preceding six. They have reached but little beyond three hundred years; whereas this will reach from thence to the end of all things.

“Silence in heaven about the space of half an hour” seems to denote a solemn pause preparatory to other events. It is like saying, “And now prepare thee for another scene!” This scene is, “the appearance of seven angels standing before God, to whom were given seven trumpets.” As nothing is said on the opening of the seventh seal but what follows under the trumpets, the latter must be considered as a subdivision of the former.

But prior to the sounding of the trumpets, “another angel” comes forward, and stands at the altar, “having a golden censer, to whom much incense is given, that he should

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offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar before the throne." There were two altars belonging to the temple-worship; one for sacrifice, called "the altar of burnt-offering," and the other for burning incense, called "the golden altar before the throne." The allusion here is to the last. Our great High-priest, having offered himself without spot to God, passed into the heavens, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us. Through him our prayers ascend with acceptance before God.

The "prayers" here referred to appear to have a special relation to the events about to be predicted by the sounding of the trumpets. The events would occur in answer to those prayers; which might be so many intercessions for the success of Christ's cause, and against that of its adversaries. Heathen Rome was overthrown in answer to the prayers of the souls under the altar, and Christian Rome may fall in the same manner. Should it be objected that in the latter there would be less to pray against, it may be answered, that those who, under the name of Christians, corrupted and debased Christianity, modelling it to their fleshly

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minds, and converting it into an engine of state policy, might incur more of the divine displeasure than those who, under the name of Heathens, openly opposed it. For the persecutions of Pagan Rome the persecutors only were punished, having their power taken from them, and given to the Christians; but for the corruptions of Christian Rome we shall see the empire itself dissolved, and divided amongst the barbarians.

The symbolical language under which these events are represented is that of the angel taking the censer, filling it with fire of the altar, and casting it into the earth; on which follow voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. "Fire" cast into the earth by an angel would be the precursor of dreadful wars; and an "*earthquake*" is the well-known symbol of a revolution, or such an overturning in matters of government as should introduce a new order of things. Such were the events which distinguished the times between Constantine and Augustulus, especially those between the years 400 and 476. Whatever virtues attached to Constantine, or his successors, and whatever obligations the Christians were under for the protection afforded

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them by their government, yet the system which from those times was adopted, proved ruinous both to the church and to the empire. The corruptions of the former, as we have seen already, required the servants of God to be sealed in their foreheads; and the calamities of the latter we shall see described under the sounding of the first four trumpets.

*7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. 8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood; 9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. 10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; 11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.*



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12 *And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.*

The fulfilment of these predictions must, according to the chronological series of the prophecy, be looked for in the fourth or fifth centuries. They are the same things, particularly described, as those which followed the fire cast by the angel into the earth. Moreover, as the seals went to destroy the empire as Pagan, the trumpets will go to overturn it as Christian. Both issue in an "earthquake,"\* the ordinary symbol of a revolution.

The Roman empire, as being now the seat of Christianity, is here considered as a world of itself; having not only it's earth, it's sea, and it's rivers, but it's sun, and moon, and stars. By the *earth* we may understand those parts of the empire which were *continental*, as Gaul and the southern parts of Germany. On these fell the effects of the *first* trumpet, burning

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\* Chap. vi. 12. with viii. 5.

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up the trees and the grass, or destroying great numbers among the middle and lower orders of men. By the *sea* we may understand those parts of the empire which were *maritime*, such as Spain, Portugal, and the lower parts of Italy. On these fell the effects of the *second* trumpet, turning the waters into blood, and destroying whatever was in them. By the *rivers and fountains of waters* may be understood the *mountainous* parts of the empire, as Upper Italy, and the countries about the Alps; at no great distance from which rise the Loire, the Po, the Rhine, the Rhone, and the Danube. On these fell the effects of the *third* trumpet, imparting to their streams a mortal bitterness. By the *sun moon and stars* we may understand the governing powers, supreme and subordinate. On these fell the *fourth* trumpet, smiting them with darkness, or with a general eclipse. Finally, By a *third part* only being affected at once, may be meant, not only that the events should take place by several successive calamities; but that the effect of the whole would not be to *destroy* the western empire, but merely to *subvert* it. The empire was to continue, though under another form, namely, as composed of the ten kingdoms. Mr. CUNINGHAM very properly remarks the

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difference between the effects of the trumpets, which refer to the *subversion* of the empire, and those of the vials, which refer to it's *final dissolution*. The first are partial, the last total.\*

Whether the events pertaining to each trumpet can be exactly ascertained, or not, thus much is certain, that the ravages of the Goths, the Vandals, and the Huns, were that to the empire which a terrible hail-storm, accompanied with thunder and lightning, is to the "trees and the fields;" which a burning mountain, thrown into the sea, would be to the waters; and which a blazing meteor that should fall upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and imbitter them, would be to a country; while the effects of these successive ravages on the government would resemble a great though not a total eclipse of the heavenly bodies.

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\* *Dissertation*, pp. 80, 81.

*Appendix to Discourse IX. containing a Sketch  
of the History of the First Four Trumpets.*

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In the Northern and North-eastern parts of Europe, bordering on the Baltic and the Euxine Seas, there were many barbarous nations which were never subdued by the Roman arms: such were the Saxons, the Visigoths, the Ostrogoths, the Vandals, the Burgundians, the Huns, the Alans, &c, and who were often associated in their enterprises. About the year 376, during the reign of the Eastern Emperor Valens, the Goths having been driven from their own country by the Huns and Alans a body of not less than 200,000 of them, besides women and children, under *Alavivus* and *Fritigern*, two of their chiefs, obtained permission to settle in Thrace, a province of the Roman empire. To the imprudence of admitting such a body of hostile emigrants, were added several instances of injurious treatment after their arrival. These first produced resistance, and that a battle, in which the Romans were defeated, and the emperor lost his life. By the prudent and energetic measures of Theodosius the great, who succeeded Valens, the Gothic emigrants were so

far subjugated, as to be rendered serviceable to the empire. But after his death, the jealousies between Rufinus and Stilicho, ministers of state at Constantinople and Rome, under Arcadius and Honorius the Emperors, afforded them opportunity to renew their hostilities.

*Alaric*, an Arian Christian, the successor of Fritigern, had been in the Roman service for several years, having commanded a body of his countrymen in the wars of Theodosius: but thinking himself not sufficiently rewarded by that prince, and perceiving as he thought a fair opportunity, he was disposed to carve for himself. To this he is said to have been encouraged by Rufinus, principal ruler under Arcadius at Constantinople, whose duty it was to oppose him. Marching his army into Macedonia and Thessaly, he laid waste the country as he went. Through the treachery of Rufinus the straits of Thermopylæ were left unguarded, and so opened a free passage for him into Greece; where the villages were plundered and burnt, the males who were capable of bearing arms massacred, and the females led captive. His successes obtained for him a command in the eastern

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empire, which having improved to the strengthening of his own army, he resolved to invade that of the west. Having laid waste Epirus and Pannonia, he in 402 entered Italy. Italy however was for this time delivered from his depredations. The Romans under Stilicho, after twice defeating him, suffered him to quit the country, with the remnant of his army.

In 406 another vast army, composed of Goths, Huns, Vandals, Suevi, Burgundians, Alani, &c. under *Radagaisus*, a heathen, attempted the invasion of Italy. The number of fighting men is said to have been 200,000, besides slaves, women, and children, who are reckoned to have amounted to as many more. But neither were they successful. *Radagaisus* was defeated and slain, and a great part of his army either perished, or were sold for slaves.

But though the capital of the western empire was by these events once more saved, yet it's provinces were reduced to desolation. Gaul was at this time invaded by the *Vandals*, the *Suevi*, the *Alani*, and the *Burgundians*, who, with the remains of

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Radagaisus's army, destroyed all before them. "On the last day of the year, (says *Gibbon*,) when the waters of the Rhine were probably frozen, they entered without opposition the defenceless provinces of Gaul. This memorable passage of the Suevi, the Vandals, the Alani, and the Burgundians, *who never afterwards retreated*, may be considered as the fall of the Roman empire in the countries beyond the Alps; and the barriers which had so long separated the savage and the civilized nations of the earth, were from that fatal moment levelled with the ground.—The banks of the Rhine were crowned, like those of the Tyber, with elegant houses, and well cultivated farms. This scene of peace and plenty was suddenly changed into a desert; and the prospect of the smoking ruins could alone distinguish the solitude of nature from the desolation of man. The flourishing city of Mentz was surprised and destroyed; and many thousand Christians were inhumanly massacred in the church. Worms perished after a long and obstinate siege; Strasburgh, Spire, Rheims, Tournay, Arras, and Amiens, experienced the cruel oppression of the German yoke; and the consuming flames of war spread from the banks of the Rhine

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over the seventeen provinces of Gaul. That rich and extensive country, as far as the ocean, the Alps, and the Pyrennees, was delivered to the barbarians, who drove before them in a promiscuous crowd, the bishop, the senator, and the virgin, laden with the spoils of their houses and altars.”\*

Thus far events appear to answer to the “hail and fire mingled with blood” under the *first* trumpet, which, as they are said to be on the *earth*, correspond with the calamities which in those times were brought upon the *continental* parts of the empire.

Alaric, the king of the Visigoths, had made peace with the Emperor Honorius, and been made Master General of the Roman armies in Illyricum. In the invasion of Radagaisus he took no part, but was attentive to the recruiting of his own army. In 408 he made large demands on the Roman Government, accompanied with intimations of what would follow if they were not complied with. Stilicho persuaded the senate to comply with them, and four thousand pounds of gold were pro-

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\* *Decline of Roman Empire, Chap. XXX.*



mised him under the name of a subsidy. But before the promise was fulfilled, Stilicho was disgraced and slain. Of the measures of his successors, Alaric is said to have had just cause of complaint. The result was, he determined again to invade Italy. Passing over the Alps he pillaged the cities of Aquileia, Altinum, Concordia, and Cremona, which yielded to his arms; increased his forces by the accession of 30,000 auxiliaries; and without opposition marched to the gates of Rome. Here, encompassing the city, he reduced it to a state of famine, of which many thousands died. To this succeeded a destructive pestilence. At length the siege was raised on a large sum of money being paid him: but his terms of peace being rejected by Honorius, who had shut himself up in Ravenna, Rome was a second time besieged. After this it was taken, and for three days given up to the plunder of the besiegers. Vast numbers of the Romans were slain, not only by the Goths, but by their own slaves, 40,000 of whom being liberated, fell upon their masters.

About ten months before this terrible calamity on Rome and the lower parts of Italy,

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by the Goths, Spain and Portugal were invaded by the *Vandals*, the *Suevi*, and the *Alani*. These nations had already desolated Gaul, from whence passing over the Pyrennees they conquered the peninsula. *Echard* says, "The Vandals took Galicia, where they settled; the Suevi pushed their conquests farther; and the Alani fixed themselves in Portugal and Andalusia. From these barbarians, (he adds,) descended the ancient kings of Spain."

The calamities of this invasion are thus described by *Gibbon* from a Spanish Historian. "The barbarians exercised their indiscriminate cruelty on the fortunes of the Romans and Spaniards, and ravaged with equal fury the cities and the open country. The progress of famine reduced the miserable inhabitants to feed on the flesh of their fellow-creatures: and even the wild beasts that multiplied without controul in the desert were exasperated, by the taste of blood and the impatience of hunger, boldly to attack and devour their human prey. Pestilence soon appeared, the inseperable companion of famine; a large proportion of the people was swept away; and the groans of the dying excited only the

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envy of their surviving friends. At length, the barbarians, satiated with carnage and rapine, and afflicted by the contagious evils which they themselves had introduced, fixed their permanent seats in the depopulated country.\*

These events seem to answer to the "burning mountain cast into the sea," causing a third part of it to become blood, and destroying a third part of all which were in it, as described under the *second* trumpet. If *Ætna* or *Vesuvius* had literally been thrown into the ocean, it could hardly have produced a greater effervescence among the waters than these things produced among the nations. The *sea* would also have a special reference to these calamities being brought upon the *maritime* parts of the empire.

After this the empire received another mighty shock from the *Scythians*, or *Huns*, a heathen nation, more barbarous and cruel than either the *Goths* or *Vandals*. *Attila*, their king and commander, was distinguished

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\* *Gibbon's Roman History, Chap. XXXI.*

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by his ferocity; affecting to be called "the scourge of God," and declaring that "the grass would never grow upon those places where his horse had trodden!" About 441, he fell upon the eastern empire, where, bearing down all before him, the country was in a manner destroyed by fire and sword. *Gibbon* says, "The whole breadth of Europe as it extends above five hundred miles, from the Euxine to the Adriatic, was at once invaded and occupied, and desolated by him." The government at Constantinople, after seventy cities had been rased to the ground, was compelled ignominiously to purchase his retreat.

In the year 450 Attila again declared war against both the eastern and western empires. He was defeated in Gaul with a loss, (says *Echard*,) of 170,000 men; yet in the following year he invaded Italy with a larger army than that with which he had entered Gaul. *Aquileia*, after a siege of three months, was taken, and so effectually destroyed that the succeeding generation could scarcely discover it's ruins. After this *Verona*, *Mantua*, *Padua*, and many other cities, shared the same fate; the men were slain, the women

ravished, and the places reduced to ashes. These devastations however, were confined to those parts of Italy which border on the Alps. Attila threatened Rome, but was induced, partly by fear of the Roman army, partly by the remonstrances of his own, and partly by the embassy of Leo the Roman Pontiff, to forego the attempt, and returning into his own country, he shortly after ended his days.

This surely must be the “great star burning as it were a lamp;” which followed the sounding of the *third* trumpet and which shooting like a fiery meteor from east to west, and falling upon the rivers and fountains of waters, impregnated the streams with a mortal bitterness. If the rivers and fountains denote, as has been supposed, the *mountainous* parts of the empire, whence they have their origin, the facts have a remarkable coincidence with the prediction.

As to the remainder of the History, every thing from this time went to *eclipse* the imperial government. Africa, Spain, Britain, the greatest part of Gaul, Germany, and Illyricum, are said to have been dismembered

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from the empire; the court was full of intrigues and murders; Valentinian the Emperor ravished the wife of Maximus, one of his senators; Maximus in return got Valentinian murdered, usurped his throne, and compelled Eudoxia the Empress to marry him; Eudoxia in hatred to the usurper invited *Genseric* the Vandal to come over from Africa and revenge the death of Valentinian; Genseric prepared to invade Italy; Maximus on hearing it, instead of taking measures for repelling him, sunk into despondency; the senators stoned him to death, and threw his body into the Tiber; Genseric entered Rome without opposition, and gave it up to be sacked and plundered by his soldiers for fourteen days. From hence, as Bishop Newton observes, "the western empire struggled hard, and gasped as it were for breath through eight short and turbulent reigns, for the space of twenty years, and at length expired in the year 476 under Momyllus, or Augustulus, as he was named in derision, being a diminutive of Augustus."

After this Odoacer, king of the Ostrogoths invaded the country, and siezed the government, which he held however, not as head

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of the western empire, but merely as *King of Italy*. There were indeed a senate and council after this, but they had only the shadow of authority.

Thus it was, I conceive, that the eclipse of the sun moon and stars, as described under the *fourth* trumpet, was accomplished. It may be thought that these events *had too slight a relation to the church of Christ* to become the subject of prophecy: two things however, may be alleged in answer. *First*; They were necessary for the accomplishment of other prophecies, particularly Dan. vii. 7, 8. 2 Thes. ii. 7. Hereby a way was made for the beast to have "ten horns," as after the overthrow of the empire it was divided into so many independent kingdoms, which with little variation continue to this day. Hereby also a way was made for the "little horn" of Daniel's fourth beast, or the papal anti-christ to come up amongst them; or, as the apostle expresses it, for the man of sin to be revealed. "The mystery of iniquity hath already begun to work, (saith he,) only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way: and then shall that wicked (one) be revealed," While the

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imperial authority continued there was not sufficient scope for ecclesiastical ambition; but when this was removed, the other soon appeared in it's true character. The Goths, embracing the *religion* of the conquered Romans, the clergy became objects of superstitious veneration amongst a barbarous people, and of which they availed themselves to the establishing of their spiritual authority. From hence the See of Rome made no scruple of setting up for supremacy.

*Secondly,* In these judgments upon the empire we perceive the Divine displeasure for it's having corrupted the Christian religion, and transformed it into an engine of state. The wars of the Assyrians and Babylonians were the scourges of God on those who had corrupted the true religion; and such were those of the Goths, the Vandals, and the Huns, on the Christian governments of the fourth and fifth centuries.



## DISCOURSE X.

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THE FIRST WOE-TRUMPET; OR THE SMOKE AND  
LOCUSTS.

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CHAP. VIII. 13. IX. 1—12.

AS the first four trumpets were connected in their objects, so are the last three. The last verse of the eighth chapter is introductory to them.

13 *And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound!*

“This solemn denunciation seems to be  
“introduced for the purpose of drawing our

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“attention to the great importance of the  
“events which were to happen under the  
“last three trumpets. It serves also as a  
“chronological mark to shew that these three  
“trumpets are all posterior to the first four,  
“not only in order, but in time; and that  
“they belong to a new series of events.”\* The  
most distinguishing plagues which were to  
befal the church and the world are designated  
by them. The first two seem to refer to  
the prevalence of Popery and Mahometanism,  
and the last to those vials of wrath which  
should effect their overthrow.

1 *And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw  
a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and  
to him was given the key of the bottomless  
pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit,  
and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as  
the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun  
and the air were darkened by reason of the  
smoke of the pit. 3 And there came out of  
the smoke locusts upon the earth; and unto  
them was given power, as the scorpions of  
the earth have power. 4 And it was com-*

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\* Cuninghame's *Dissertation*, p. 84.

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manded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. 5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man. 6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. 7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. 8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. 9 And they had breast-plates as it were breast-plates of iron: and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. 10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. 11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. 12 One

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*woe is past; and behold there come two woes more hereafter.*

The fifth or first woe-trumpet is short, but awfully impressive. Looking at this dreadful irruption of darkness and desolation, we perceive the necessity there was for "sealing the servants of God in their foreheads," that they might be preserved amidst these trying times. These are the "winds," which those ministers of vengeance to whom it was given to hurt the earth, (Chap. vii. 1, 2.) at length let loose upon it. The professing Christian world being exceedingly corrupt, it became necessary to try them. The "sealed" servants of God would endure the trial; but "those men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads" would be carried away and perish,

That the locusts refer to the ravaging hordes of Saracens, who, with Mahomet at their head, subdued and destroyed the eastern part of Christendom, seems to be generally admitted; and some have considered the "smoke" as denoting his false doctrine, and the "star" which fell from heaven to the

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earth as meaning himself. But on the most mature consideration, I concur with those expositors, who, while admitting the locusts to be Mahomet's destructive hordes of Saracens, yet understand the smoke of *Popish* darkness, which was preparatory to the other, and the fallen star of the fallen Bishop of Rome.\* If the fourth trumpet refer to the subversion of the imperial government under Augustulus, it may be presumed that the fifth would refer to things not very distant from it, and probably rising out of it: but the appearance of Mahomet was 130 years after this event, and seems to have no immediate connexion with it. On the other hand, there is a connexion between the subversion of the imperial government and "the revelation of the man of sin." It was the imperial authority which "let" or hindered him, and which when "taken out of the way," made room for his

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\* It is true, that that part of the prophecy which treats *directly* of the great papal community is yet in reserve: but as in a history of any nation frequent mention requires to be made of other nations; so in a prophecy of the ravages of Mahometanism, mention may require to be made of Popery, as preparing it's way.

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appearing.† Thus the eclipse under the fourth trumpet prepared the way for the irruption of darkness under the fifth. The mystery of iniquity had long been at work; but now it burst forth as the smoke of a great furnace, impeding the light of the gospel, and darkening the moral atmosphere of the Christian world.

With this also agrees the application of "the fallen star" to the Pope or Bishop of Rome. It comports with the symbolical style of the book that a prophetic person should denote not an individual, but a succession of individuals in an official character. The Bishop of Rome was once a star in the Christian firmament; but abandoning the doctrine and spirit of a Christian minister, and setting up for worldly domination, he "fell from heaven unto the earth," and thus became a fit agent for "opening the bottomless pit." The Bishop of Meaux acknowledges that "Hell does not open of itself: it is always some false doctor that opens it."

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† 2 Thes. ii. 4—8.

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The *darkness* of Popery is not only of infernal origin, but brings with it a state of mind prepared for the grossest delusions. Intercepting the light of truth, it darkened the world with it's doctrines. It changed the truth of God into a lie, and, like old Heathenism, "worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever, Amen!" Wherefore God gave them up to Mahometan imposture, depredation, and ruin. As the smoke brought forth the locusts, (though both proceeded from the pit,) so Popery brought forth Mahometanism.\* But for the one, the other could not have prevailed as it did where the light of the gospel had once appeared. The Roman Catholics have made great noise about the keys; and truly a key has been given them, "the key of the bottomless pit"!

As to the *locusts* they are described chiefly by their *depredations*. The wrath of God is less directed against them than against that out of which they came. They were

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\* See Mr. CUNINGHAME'S *Dissertation on the Trumpets*, Chap. VI.

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indeed *from beneath*, and so was the conquering system of Assyria and Babylon; but as these powers were the rod of God's anger against a nation which had corrupted the true religion, it is not till they in their turn are punished that much is said of their crimes. And thus the destructive hordes of Saracens that laid waste a great part of the eastern world are described as executing a commission, not against "grass or green things, or trees," like ordinary locusts; but, "against the men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads"—that is, against the corrupters of Christianity. Ver. 4. There was a *direction* given to their successes very much like that which has of late years been given to those on the continent of Europe against the Papal countries. The Christianity of the Greek church, whose patriarch resided at Constantinople, was in a great degree absorbed by them.

It is observable, however, that the men against whom their commission was directed were not to be *killed*, but tormented for a certain time. They doubtless did kill great numbers *individually* considered; but with all



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their ravages they only harrassed those countries where corrupted Christianity prevailed. They were not able to destroy either the Greek or the Latin churches.

The *time* in which they should harrass them is limited to "five months," which probably alludes to the usual season for the ravages of the natural locusts. It has been thought to intend so many prophetic days, or years. Five months, reckoning thirty days to a month, and each day a year, would be 150 years; and this was the period in which the Saracen arms are said to have prevailed. They began about 612. After the death of Mahomet, they continued, though with some interruptions, to carry on their conquests. In 713 they entered Spain, which in a few years was subjugated to them; and passing the Pyrenees, they entered France, which was then said to be the only rampart of Christianity. They advanced as to a certain victory, whereupon ensued one of the bloodiest battles that the world had ever seen. Of the Saracens there were 400,000 men, besides women and children, who came with them, designing to settle in France, and no doubt

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to extirpate Christianity from Europe. *Three hundred and seventy thousand* of them are said to have been slain, including their General. This battle was fought by *Charles Martel*, the grandfather of Charlemagne, in 734, and put a stop to the progress of the Saracen arms in Europe. About 762, after the "five months" of years which were given them to continue had elapsed, they ceased to extend their conquests by settling peaceably in the countries which they had conquered, and so ceased to ravage as locusts.

The *description* given of these locusts (ver. 7—10.) answers to most of the peculiarities of the Saracen armies; as their use of cavalry; their turbans, resembling crowns, in which they gloried; the union of fierceness and effeminacy in their character; the impenetrability of their forces; the rapidity of their conquests; and their carrying with them the sting of a deadly imposture.

Finally, This fearful army is described as having "a king over them, even the angel of the bottomless pit," from whence they came, and "whose name in the Hebrew

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tongue is *Abaddon*, but in the Greek, *Apollyon*." This would seem to be Mahomet and his successors, or Satan as working by them. The genius of Mahometanism is to *destroy* the lives as well as the souls of men.

After this we are told, "One woe is past: and behold there come two woes more hereafter." By the term "hereafter," it seems to be intimated that the second woe would not follow very soon after the first, but that a considerable lapse of time would intervene betwixt them. In this respect the language differs from the introduction of the third woe, in Chap. xi. 14. where it is said, "The second woe is past, and behold the third woe cometh *quickly*."

## DISCOURSE XI.

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THE SECOND WOE-TRUMPET; OR THE ARMY OF  
HORSEMEN.

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CHAP. IX. 13—21,

*AND the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God, 14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. 15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. 16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. 17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breast-plates of fire, and of*

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*jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone. 18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. 19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. 20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. 21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.*

We here enter on the sixth, or second woe-trumpet, which embracing different contemporary events, may be expected to require several discourses. That part of it which we are now upon contains a description of the revival of the Mahometan desolations by the *Turks*, in the thirteenth and following centuries. It will be recollected that the

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second woe was not to come quickly, but "hereafter." Such was the fact. Several centuries elapsed between the ravages of the Saracens and those of the Turks. But as the desolations wrought by the followers of Mahomet, whether Saracens or Turks, would be less injurious to the cause of Christ than the abominations of Popery, there is not only much less said of them than of the other, but what is said is finished before the other is particularly begun, that the thread of the principal subject might not be broken. There is no reason to think that the Turkish wars would have occupied a place in scripture-prophecy, but for their being the appointed means of crushing a corrupt part of the Christian church. For these reasons I question the propriety of calling the Mahometan power *the eastern Anti-christ*. There is no doubt of it's being *opposed* to Christ, and the same may be said of Heathenism: but *nothing is called Anti-christ in the scriptures which makes no profession of being on the side of Christ*. If there were an eastern anti-christ, it was that community which the Mahometans destroyed, namely, "the men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads."!

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The leading facts corresponding with this part of the prophecy were as follows.—The Turks, a people who in the ninth century had migrated from the neighbourhood of Mount Caucasus, and settled in Armenia Major, by the eleventh century became formidable to their neighbours. They consisted of *four* Sultanies, the seats of which were at *Bagdad*, *Demascus*, *Aleppo*, and *Iconium*; all in the neighbourhood of the Euphrates. Their principal struggles were with the eastern Roman empire, or the Christians of the Greek church. For about two centuries their ambition was restrained, partly it may be by the European crusades, or what were called *the holy wars*, for the recovery of Jerusalem: but the disasters which attended these undertakings inducing the European princes at length to relinquish them, they were then at liberty to pursue their objects. In 1281 they obtained a decided victory over the eastern Christians; and in 1299 a new empire was founded by *Othman*, composed of the four Turkish Sultanies, which still subsists, and is called after his name, the *Ottoman* empire. During the fourteenth century their successes continued. In the middle of the fifteenth, (1453,) Constantinople was

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taken, the eastern Roman empire fell, and with it the Greek church, neither of which, except in the religion of the latter being embraced by the Russians, has since lifted up it's head.

The "four angels" then denote the four Turkish governments near the Euphrates. These are called angels, as being *messengers* of wrath, commissioned to destroy the corrupt Christians of the East. The "loosing" of them refers to the removal of those obstructions which for a time impeded their progress. The "voice" which ordered them to be loosed proceeding from the "four horns of the golden altar," signifies that these judgments, like those in Chap. viii. 3—5. would be in answer to the prayers of the saints: or, perhaps, as Bp. Newton says, "intimating that the sins of men must have been very great, when the altar, which was their sanctuary and protection, called aloud for vengeance." Their continuance "for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year," reckoning by prophetic time, includes 391 years; which beginning from 1281, the year of their first victory over the eastern Roman empire, extends to 1672, the year of their last victory over the Poles;



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from which period they have been sinking into such disorder and imbecility as forebode their ruin. Their armies being described as "horsemen," answers to the numerous cavalry of the Turks. The number of them, consisting of "myriads of myriads," shews the vast armies which they brought into the field. "Breast-plates of fire, of jacinth, and of brimstone," may denote the glittering harness with which the horses were caparisoned. Their "heads being as the heads of lions," is expressive of their strength and fierceness. "Fire, and smoke, and brimstone, issuing out of their mouths," seems to allude to the use of gunpowder in war, which began about this period. Great guns were used in the taking of Constantinople in 1453. The symbol is expressive of what a body of horsemen, fighting with fire-arms, would appear to a distant spectator, who had never before seen or heard of any thing of the kind.

There is one remarkable difference between the *locusts* and the *horsemen*: the former were not commissioned to *kill*, but merely to *torment*; whereas of the latter it is said, "By these were the third part of men *killed*, even by the fire, and by the smoke, and

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by the brimstone which issued out of their mouths." They both, doubtless, killed men as individuals; but the latter only were permitted to kill those *political bodies* to which the prophecy refers. The eastern Roman empire, and the Greek church as connected with it, fell not by the Saracens of the eighth, but by the Turks of the fifteenth century. Finally, Their "power was in their *mouth*, and in their *tails*." Now as the fire and smoke and brimstone are said to issue from the former, they would seem to denote their artillery; and as in respect of the latter they resemble the locusts, these are the destructive *principles* which they propagate by the sword in common with the Saracens. Mahometanism was that to the Christian church in the east, which Assyria and Babylon were to Samaria and Jerusalem. It's first appearance in the seventh and eighth centuries was a judgment upon them for having corrupted the Christian doctrine and worship; but as a body it went only to "torment" them, not to "kill" them. It said, *Repent, or I will remove thy candlestick out of his place!* But they repented not. It's last appearance therefore, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries carried the threatening into execution. The candlestick of the eastern

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church was removed, and her children were killed with death!

But that which is the most remarkable is, the effect, or rather the want of effect which these terrible judgments had on those who survived them. “*The rest of the men,* (that is of the men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads,) who were not killed by these plagues, repented not.” As those that were killed were the eastern Roman empire, with the Greek church as connected with it; so those that were not killed were the western Roman empire, with the Latin church. These two churches were as *Aholah* and *Aholibah*. The fall of the one ought to have been a warning to the other: but it was not. They persisted in their image-worship, which was only the old idolatry of the Pagans under a new form: nor were they behind them in their murderous persecutions, their foul impostures, their filthy intrigues, and their fraudulent impositions. And though soon after the overthrow of the Greek church, the Reformation began, yet they reformed not. The Council of Trent, which was called on this occasion, sat eighteen years, and at last left things as it found them. Babylon was not to be healed!

## ***DISCOURSE XII.***

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INTRODUCTION TO THE WESTERN OR PAPAL  
APOSTACY.

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### CHAP. X.

**T**HE eastern church, as connected with the Roman empire, being slain, the remainder of the prophecy may be expected to concern the *western*, or, “the rest of the men, who were not killed by these plagues,” This it does; so much of it however, as brings us to the taking of the beast and of the false prophet, and so to the commencement of the Millennium. The corruptions of the western church have been intimated before; as by the sealing of the servants of God in their foreheads, Chap. vii.; by the judgments inflicted on the western empire under the first four trumpets, Chap. viii.; and by the cloud of

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smoke from the bottomless pit: but now the prophecy treats directly and exclusively of them. Nor is it surprising that the apostacy of this church should occupy so large a part of the prophecy,\* inasmuch as both for it's duration and mischievous effects, there is nothing equal to it under the gospel dispensation. The period allotted for it's continuance is no less than 1260 years; during which the holy city is trodden under foot, the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, the true church fleeth into the wilderness, and the saints of the Most High are persecuted to death by a ferocious and cruel beast. This apostate church was, no doubt, *the man of sin* foretold by Paul; and notwithstanding what has been advanced against it by a late respectable writer, I have no doubt of it's being the *Antichrist* which the Christians in John's time had *heard should come*.†

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\* From the beginning of Chap. x. to the end of Chap. xix.

† This appears to be evidently made out by Mr. Scott, in his notes on 2 Thes. ii. 3—12. and 1 John ii. 18. As to it's being a character of Antichrist that he “denieth the Father and the Son,” (ver. 22.) it is of the Antichrists *already come* that this is spoken, who had professed

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Before we enter upon this subject it will be proper to give the outlines of the ten chapters in which it is contained. Chap. x. I consider as merely introductory. Chap. xi. gives a general representation of this corrupt and persecuting power, with the state of the church of Christ under it, during the 1260 years. Chap. xii. gives a second, and Chap. xiii. and xiv. a third general representation of it during the same period. Chap. xv. and xvi. give a more particular account of that part of the subject which commences at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and contains

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Christianity, and whose apostacy consisted not in a disavowal of the name of Christ, but of certain Christian doctrines, which included a *virtual* denial of Jesus being the Christ, as that also was a virtual denial of the Father. Had these "forerunners of Antichrist," as Mr. Scott very properly calls them, been avowed infidels, they could not have been *seducers* to the churches of Christ; (ver. 26.) a name given to false teachers. Such were those *deceivers* in 2 John 7. who, by denying the real humanity of Christ, denied his being come in the flesh. But if a *virtual* denial of the Father and the Son rendered those who were *already come* Antichrists, there is no reason why it should not do the same of *him that should come*. It is not probable that John would have allowed "the man of sin" to acknowledge either the Father or the Son, while he usurped the place of both.

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a subdivision of that trumpet into seven vials, the pouring out of which brings us down to the Millennium. The xviith, xviiiith, and xixth Chapters contain what in modern publications we should call *notes of illustration*, giving particular accounts of things which before had only been generally intimated.

We are not to expect the events relating to the western church to follow the conclusion of those of the eastern, *in order of time*. In tracing the issue of the one, we were led almost down to the times of the Reformation; but in taking up the other we must expect to go many centuries back again. It is in prophecy as it is in history, when describing cotemporary events: the writer having gone through one series, returns and takes up the other. It is thus in the history of Judah and Israel in the Second Book of Kings; with this difference, that in carrying on those histories together, the writer went through only a single reign of one of them ere he returned to the other; whereas in this the overthrow of the eastern church is completed before the account of the western is begun. The former brought us down to the fifteenth

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century; the latter, when tracing the origin of things, may glance at events as early as the fourth.

*1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. 2 And he had in his hand a little book open, and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, 3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. 4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. 5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, 6 And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: 7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of*



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*God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. 8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go, and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea; and upon the earth. 9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up: and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. 10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. 11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.*

The "mighty angel" appears by his description to be the Son of God himself, and this may indicate the importance of the vision. His being "clothed with a cloud" may express the concealment of his designs, and the hiding of his power. He could have crushed this great conspiracy at the outset, but he did not. The "rainbow on his head" is the sign of peace, or of covenant mercy, and may here denote that whatever

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evils might be permitted in order to try the church, yet there should not be such a deluge as to destroy it. His countenance being compared to "the sun," and his feet to "pillars of fire," may intimate, that neither is his glory tarnished, nor his majesty diminished, by all the corruptions which are introduced under his name. Finally, His "coming down from heaven" seems to denote a change of scene. The Lamb's company stand upon Mount Sion; but the harlot sitteth upon the waters, and the beast riseth out of the sea. Thus as the subject respects the same apostate community, the scene is the earth, and the angel descends from heaven to disclose it.

The "little book" which the angel held open in his hand relates doubtless to the western apostacy. It has been thought to be a kind of *Appendix*, or *Codicil* to the sealed book, and a part of what follows to be *chapters* of it. But this seems too much: for if so, it would not properly belong to the sealed book, whereas all that pertains to the apostacy, and to the state of the church to the end of the world, belongs to the trumpets, which trumpets are a subdivision

of the seventh seal. It is not therefore any thing *added* to the sealed book but a marked division of it, a book as it were within a book.—The Angel's setting his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth," would express his absolute dominion over both. His "crying with a loud voice as when a lion roareth" was awfully preparatory to the seven thunders which immediately uttered their voices. On hearing them, John was about to write, but is told by a voice from heaven to "seal up the things which the thunders uttered, and write them not." The thunders then were not mere sounds, but certain "things," which, though they were not at present to be disclosed, yet in due time should be fulfilled. Their fulfilment too was an object of such importance, and lay so near the angel's heart, that with the utmost indignation he "swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever that *there should be no delay*; but that in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he should begin to sound, they should be accomplished.\*

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\* Whether οτι χρόνος ουκ εσται ετι be rendered, as in our version, *that there should be time no longer*; or more literally, as by Mr. DAUBUZ and others, *that the time*

From these considerations it appears plain that the seven thunders relate to the same "things" as those which are afterwards disclosed under the seven vials. They both

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*shall not be yet*; or, as Dr. GILL says the words will bear to be rendered, *that there should be delay no longer*; the meaning cannot be that time itself should then be at an end. Nor does it seem to be an object of sufficient importance for an oath, that the time for the seven thunders to be executed *should not be yet*. It is not their not being yet, but their being at the appointed time; not the protraction, but the accomplishment *notwithstanding the protraction*, to which the angel swears. There is a manifest reference in the passage to Dan. xii. 7. "And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and an half, and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." It was of the Papal Antichrist, of whom Antiochus Epiphanes was a type, that the man clothed in linen spake, and of him speaks the angel to John. As the former predicts his fall, so does the latter; and as Antiochus had been permitted to scatter the power of the holy people for a time, times, and half a time, so should Antichrist be permitted to scatter the church of Christ for the same prophetic period, reckoning a year for a day, that is, for the space of 1260 years. See *Prideaux's Connection*, Part II, Book III, at the close.

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express the wrath of God against the Papal Antichrist; the one describes it only in general, and that in the form of *threatenings*, the other descends to particulars, and describes it as *actually executing*. The thunders being introduced before the prophetic account of the apostacy, may denote the displeasure of God against it from it's very beginning, and tend to support the faith and patience of the church under it.

The forbidding the apostle to write, and commanding him to eat the book seems like saying,—‘The apostacy is not yet ripe. The wrath of God against it will be deferred for the present. Under the sounding of the seventh angel he will pour forth the vials of his indignation upon it. At present, therefore, write it not; but receive a general impression of things by eating the book!’ The allusion doubtless is to Ezek. iii. 1—3. and denotes that he must understand and digest it's contents. The book, he was told, would be sweet in his mouth, but bitter in his belly. The same desire of understanding the future state of the church which made him weep when no one was found worthy to open the sealed book, must make him

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rejoice when an open book was put into his hand, with a direction to eat it: but when he came to digest it, and to perceive the corruptions and persecutions that should prevail, and for so long a period retard the progress of the gospel, it would be grievous to him.

To teach him that what he had now seen and done was designed only as a general impression, preparatory to what should follow, he is given to understand that he must go over the ground "again," writing prophecies which respect many "peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

## ***DISCOURSE XIII.***

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THE FIRST GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PAPAL  
APOSTACY, AND OF THE STATE OF THE CHURCH  
UNDER IT.

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### CHAP. XI. &c.

**I** CONCEIVE with Mr. LOWMAN, that the following chapters contain three general descriptions of the Papal Antichrist, and of the state of the church under it; only he confines them to the xith, xiith, and xiiith Chapters, whereas it appears to me that the xiiiith and xivth should not be divided, but considered as containing between them the third general description. The reasons for considering these four chapters not as one continued prophecy, but as general representations of the events of the same period, are the following.—

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*First,* The events foretold by the slaughter and resurrection of the witnesses in Chap. xi.; by the flight of the woman into the wilderness, and the victory over the dragon in Chap. xii.; with the ravages of the beasts, and the triumph of the Lamb's company in Chapters xiii. and xiv. are the same.—

*Secondly,* These representations are not confined to one or two trumpets, but comprehend the times of the greater part of them. Some of the things represented, particularly those at the beginning of Chap. xii. in which the origin of the apostacy is traced, appear to go back to the times of the first four trumpets, namely, to the fourth and fifth centuries: others, particularly those at the close of Chapters xi. and xiv. which describe the overthrow of the apostate church, go forward to the times of the last trumpet, and even of the last vials, into which that trumpet is subdivided. This will be evident by comparing Chapter xi. 19. with Chap. xvi. 18. In both mention is made of "lightenings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail;" both therefore manifestly refer to the same events.—

*Thirdly,* In each of these descriptions there



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is a reference to the 1260 years, the period which in prophecy marks the duration of the Antichristian power. So long were the witnesses to prophecy in sackcloth, so long the woman to be in the wilderness, and so long the beast to make war with the saints. It is therefore to the events of this period that these Chapters relate; containing an account of the rise, the reign, and the overthrow of the Papal Antichrist.

It could scarcely be expected that so long a period, embracing such multifarious characters and events, events too which so deeply interest the church of God, should be passed over without particular notice. The sacred writer is as it were made to pause, and to give us several distinct views of the subject according to the different lights in which he beheld it. I only add, if these Chapters do really comprehend the events of the 1260 years, we might almost presume, in going over them, to meet with something under each description relating to so distinguished an event as the *Reformation*, and must certainly have thrice to cross the meridian of our own times.

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The first of these general descriptions, which we now enter upon, does not appear to trace the origin of the apostacy, but to take it up from the time in which things were so matured, that in taking the measurement of God's temple, the Papal community was ordered to be left out, as not belonging to it.

*1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. 2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not: for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.*

The language no doubt is Jewish, but the doctrine, worship, and worshippers of the *Christian* church are intended. Christianity, having become the religion of the state, abounded with converts; but such would be their character, and such the kind of religion they would introduce, that the extent of the church would require to be contracted. The outer court, containing the body of the worshippers, must be left out. That which

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had been known by the name of the Catholic Church must be given up as idolaters; and thus the profanation of the temple by Antiochus would be acted over again.\*

*3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days clothed in sackcloth. 4 These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the*

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\* "Our Reformers, (says Mr. FABER,) never thought of unchurching the Church of Rome, though they freely declared it to have *erred*. Hence while they rejected it's abominations, they did not scruple to derive from it their line of episcopal and sacerdotal ordination." Vol II. p. 3. Note.

The English Reformers might allow the Church of Rome to be a true church of Christ; but do the scriptures support them in this concession? The Church of Rome was once a part of God's temple; but from hence it is left out of the measurement. Instead of being "the holy city," it is a body of idolators who tread it underfoot. It is not Zion, but Babylon. Some of God's people might be found in her, but they are commanded to come out of her. She is not the bride, the Lamb's wife, but the mother of harlots. Finally, If the Church of Rome continued to be a church of Christ, what must that church be who fled from her persecutions into the wilderness?

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*God of the earth. 5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. 6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.*

The import of these verses is, that during the long period of Papal corruption and persecution, God would have his faithful witnesses who should bear testimony against it, though it were in sackcloth. As in the language of the prophecy a king denotes not an individual monarch, but a succession of kings, or a kingdom, so by "two witnesses" we are doubtless to understand not two individual witnesses, but a competent succession of them. This is manifest from their continuing through the long period of 1260 years, which can only be true of a succession of men. Some have supposed them to be the Old and New Testaments, others the Old and New Testament churches; but I see no reason why they should not be understood of the faithful servants of Christ

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who *during this period* would bear witness for the truth. It is of the *true church* as opposed to the *false* that the other general descriptions speak; namely, of the woman and her seed who fled into the wilderness, and of the Lamb's company as opposed to that of the beast: I conclude therefore that such are the two witnesses in this.

Moreover, The correspondence of 1260 days, in which they should prophesy, with the "time, times, and the dividing of time," in Daniel, (Chap. vii. 25.) not only determines the general application of the prophecy, but the parties concerned in both to be the same. In the latter end of the fourth or Roman government, according to Daniel, a little horn should grow up among the ten horns, that should "*wear out the saints of the Most High*, until a time, times, and the dividing of time." According to John, the witnesses during the same period should prophesy in sackcloth, and be persecuted and slain. The *witnesses* of John, therefore, and the *saints* of Daniel are the same.

These two witnesses are said to be "the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks,

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standing before the God of the earth." The olive-trees and the candlestick of Zechariah, to which there is a manifest reference, were not the same. The former supplied the latter, or the two sides of the bowl of it, with oil. The candlestick seems to have signified the church, and the olive-trees the prophets of God who were with the builders, helping them. *Ezra v. 2.* Corresponding with this, the olive-trees of John are faithful ministers, and the candlesticks Christian churches. The same prophesying which bears witness against the corruptions of Antichrist, supplies the friends of Christ as with fresh oil, and enables them to shine as lights in the world. Both the olive-trees and the candlesticks in different ways are witnesses to the truth.

The "fire that proceedeth out of their mouth" denotes the divine threatenings to which those who reject their testimony are exposed. In this way all who have perseveringly set themselves against the truth of God, have been slain by it; not only as incurring the wrath to come, but spiritual judgments even in this life: such are blindness

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of mind and hardness of heart, the most awful and sure presages of eternal death.

Their having “power to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, to turn waters into blood, and to smite the earth with plagues as often as they will,” denotes the influence of prayer when presented in faith and in conformity to the will of God. There is a reference, no doubt, to the prayer of Elijah against apostate Israel, which prayer was answered with a dearth: but without any thing properly miraculous, the prayers of God’s suffering servants may draw down both temporal and spiritual judgments on persecuting nations. The terrible things which God is now in righteousness inflicting on the nations, may be in answer to the prayers of his servants of former ages, who century after century have been crying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth!” Such cries enter the ears of the Lord of Hosts, and must be answered.

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*Appendix to Discourse XIII.*

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The history of the witnesses prior to the eleventh and twelfth centuries is difficult to be traced, owing to the want of materials: and during those centuries, almost all the accounts that we have of them are from the pens of their persecutors, who have not failed to transmit their memory to posterity in the most odious colours. That some who in church-history are deemed heretics were really such, need not be questioned: but let any serious Christian read the church-history of MOSHEIM; and unless he can find a portion of true religion under the article of "heresies and heretics that disturbed the peace of the church during this century," it is difficult to say where he is to look for it. After the utmost search through other parts, he may ask, *Where is wisdom, and where is the place of understanding?*

There is little doubt but that all through these dark ages there were many thousands who stood aloof from the corruptions of the



times, and bore practical testimony against them; and who, notwithstanding some errors, were much nearer the truth and true religion than those who have reproached them as heretics.

There is reason to believe that amongst the *Novatians*, the *Paulicians*, the *Cathari*, the *Paterines*, and others who separated from the Catholic Church, and were cruelly persecuted by it, there were a great number of faithful witnesses for the truth in those days.

We should not, like Bishop NEWTON, confine the witnesses to councils, princes, and eminent men, who in their day bore testimony against error and superstition. They will be found, I doubt not, in great numbers amongst those who were unknown, and consequently unnoticed, by historians. God hath chosen the *things that are not* to bring to nought the things that are. Let a church-history of our own times be written on the principles of that of MOSHEIM, and the great body of the most faithful witnesses would have no place in it.

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The history of the witnesses will be principally found in that of the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*, who for a succession of centuries spread themselves over almost every nation in Europe, and in innumerable instances bore testimony, at the expence of their lives, against the corruptions of the Antichristian party.

*John Paul Perrin*, a French Protestant, of the city of Lyons, who early in the seventeenth century wrote the history of these churches, traces their origin to *Peter Waldo*, who was also a citizen of Lyons. Waldo, as we shall see presently, was not the father of the Waldenses; but he was an excellent man. About the year 1160 he began to bear testimony against the Papal corruptions. The Archbishop of Lyons being informed of his proceedings, sought to apprehend him; but Waldo having many friends in the city, was concealed there for about three years. After this, he was driven from Lyons, and it is said that he retired into Dauphine in the South of France, and afterwards into Picardy in the North; and that his followers spread themselves, not only in Piedmont,

Provence, Languedoc, &c. but in almost all the nations of Europe.

Waldo translated, or procured to be translated, the Scriptures into the French language; by means of which his followers disseminated the truth over a great part of Europe.

In *Piedmont*, whither some of his followers were driven, churches were planted, which though exposed to innumerable oppressions and persecutions from their princes, who were stirred up by the priests, yet continued to bear witness to the truth, not only till the Reformation, but for a considerable time after it. In *Picardy*, whither Waldo himself retired, the houses of three hundred gentlemen who adhered to him were razed to the ground, and several walled towns were destroyed. Being driven from thence, he and his followers retired into *Flanders*, where great numbers of them were burnt to death. From thence many fled into *Germany*, particularly into *Alsace*, and the country along the Rhine, where the Bishop of *Mayence* caused to be burnt thirty-five burgesses in

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one fire, and eighteen in another, who with great constancy suffered death. At *Strasburg* eighty were burnt at the instance of the Bishop of the place. They were scattered through the whole kingdom of *France*. From the year 1206, when the inquisition was established, to 1228, such multitudes were seized, particularly in France, that even the Bishops declared to the monks inquisitors, that "the expence of supporting them would be more than could be defrayed, and that there would not be found lime and stone sufficient to build prisons which should contain them!" A hundred and fourteen were burnt alive at one time in Paris. In 1223 they had goodly churches in *Bulgaria*, *Croatia*, *Dalmatia*, and *Hungary*; and notwithstanding the persecutions in Germany, one of their martyrs assured his persecutors in the year 1315, that there were then 80,000 of the same mind in the country. In *Bohemia*, a colony of Waldenses settled and planted churches 240 years before the time of Huss. Another colony went from Dauphine about 1370, and settled in *Calabria*, where they were defended by their landlords against the priests till 1560, when they were extirminated by the Papal soldiery. In

*England*, during the reign of Henry II. namely, from 1174 to 1189, they were persecuted under the name of *Publicans*. About 1315, LOLLARD, who was seven years afterwards burnt to death at Cologne, came over to England, and taught many, who from thence were called *Lollards*, and were persecuted without mercy. Soon after the death of Lollard the same doctrines were taught by *Wickliff*, whose followers also for a century and a half, down to the Reformation, were burnt in great numbers.

*Perrin*, as has been observed, traces the origin of the Waldenses and Albigenses to PETER WALDO: yet there are several things even in his History which prove their existence LONG BEFORE THE TIME OF WALDO. He quotes *Reynerius* the inquisitor, who wrote within sixty years after Waldo, as saying of the Waldenses that "they had resisted the church of Rome *for a long time*." He quotes a Waldensian poem, called *The Noble Lesson*, which poem appears by its contents to have been written about the year 1100, that is, forty or fifty years at least before the appearance of Waldo. He quotes *Claudius Rubis*, who, in his *History of*

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*Lyons*, says of the Waldenses in a way of reproach, that "being retired unto the Alps, at their departure from Lyons, they became *like the rest of the people of that country, besom-riders,*" or sorcerers. There must then have been a people among the Alps who were reproached as sorcerers, before the disciples of Waldo went and joined them. Finally, In *Perrin's History of the Albigenses* he says, They received the belief of the Waldenses soon after the departure of Waldo from Lyons, that is, soon after 1160, and yet that the instruments who were employed in this work were *Peter of Bruis, Henry, Joseph, Esperon, and Arnold Holt*. But *Peter of Bruis* began to preach against the corruptions of Popery in 1110, and was burnt in 1130, and *Henry* was soon after imprisoned at Rome; all before the times of Waldo. There must therefore have been a body of these faithful witnesses from an early period, probably from the times in which the Christian church began to be overspread with corruptions.

In the spring of 1655, a most horrible massacre of the Waldenses was perpetrated in the dominions of the Duke of Savoy. On

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this occasion Sir Samuel Morland going over as Envoy from the Protector Cromwell to the Court of Savoy, was charged, as he says, by Archbishop Usher, before he left England, to make the most diligent inquiry into the antiquity of the Waldenses.\* Having finished his business at Turin, and retired to Geneva, he was requested by Secretary Thurloe to

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\* It was on occasion of this horrible massacre that MILTON wrote the following sonnet:—

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones,  
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold;  
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,  
When all our fathers worshipp'd stocks and stones,  
Forget not: in thy book record their groans,  
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold  
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that roll'd  
Mother and infant down the rocks. Their moans  
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they  
To heaven. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow  
O'er all th' Italian fields, where still doth sway  
A triple tyrant; that from these may grow  
A hundred fold, who having learn'd thy way,  
Early may fly the Babylonian woe!

Not only did the English Government interfere with the Court of Turin in behalf of the remnant of these persecuted people, but a collection was made for them through the nation, which amounted to nearly £40,000. (a prodigious sum in those times,) and which was sent to them by Sir Samuel Morland.

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write his *History of the Evangelical Churches of the Vallies of Piedmont*. In this history, Sir Samuel, besides relating many things of the Waldenses since the days of *Perrin*, and narrating the particulars of the late massacre, makes it appear that these churches remained united with all other Christian churches so long as they retained the true religion; but when the church of Rome departed from it they began to depart from her; and that the followers of *Peter Waldo*, who about 1165 fled from the South of France into the valleys of Piedmont, were not the first Waldenses, but rather that they joined themselves to those their faithful brethren who had been there long before them.

The learned Dr. ALLIX, a French Protestant who took refuge in England on the revocation of the edict of Nantes, largely establishes the same thing, in his *Remarks on the Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of Piedmont and of the Country of the Albigenses*. He has proved that these people from their situation in the valleys, and not from Waldo, were denominated *Wallenses*, or the *Vaudois*—that though not free from a portion of the general corruption,



yet they continued to maintain the leading principles of what is now called the Protestant religion—that before the year 1026 a body of men in Italy connected with *Gundulfus* believed contrary to the opinions of the church of Rome, condemned it's errors, and sent their brethren into divers places to oppose themselves to the superstitions that reigned throughout the west—that in the same century another body of the Christians of Italy, denominated *Paterines*, and whose principles were much the same with those who were afterwards called Waldenses, separated from the church of Rome—that soon after the year 1100, it was said, “If a man loves those that desire to love God, and Jesus Christ, if he will neither curse, nor swear, nor lie, nor whore, nor kill, nor deceive his neighbour, nor avenge himself of his enemies, they presently say, He is a *Vaudès*, he deserves to be punished; and by lies and forging are found to take away from him what he has got by his lawful industry”—that about 1160 many of the followers of Peter Waldo retired into the valleys of Piedmont, and there joined the Vaudois—that Waldo himself being condemned as a heretic, it was common for the Papists to call all religious people Waldenses,

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hoping thereby to fix a stigma upon them, and to represent them as a sect but newly risen up—and that from this time to the Reformation, a period of between three and four hundred years, the Waldenses were persecuted with but little intermission; partly by armies sent to destroy them, and partly by the horrid process of the inquisition; which persecutions they bore with unparallelled constancy.

Similar remarks are made by Dr. ALLIX on the churches of the *Albigenses*, so called from *Albi*, a city in the South of France. He has proved that these churches continued for many centuries independent of the Pope—that about the middle of the eleventh century *Berengarius* of 'Tours opposed the doctrines of the Romish church, and was charged by it's adherents with having corrupted almost all the French, Italians, and English—that early in the twelfth, namely, about the year 1110, *Peter of Bruis*, and after him *Henry*, taught the same doctrines, for which the first was burnt, and the other died in prison—that in the fourth canon of the Council of Tours, held in the year 1163, it is said, "In the country about Thoulouse there sprang up *long ago* a damnable heresy, which by little

and little, like a canker, spreading itself to the neighbouring places in Gascoin, hath already infected many other provinces"—that between 1137 and 1180 Languedoc was so full of the disciples of *Peter of Bruis* and *Henry*, that the Archbishop of Narbonne, writing to Lewis VII. king of France, complains as follows—"My Lord the king, We are extremely pressed with many calamities, among which there is one that most of all affects us, which is, that the catholic faith is extremely shaken in this our diocese, and St. Peter's boat is so violently tossed by the waves that it is in great danger of sinking!"

From the whole it appears that in the early ages of the Papal apostacy, before the introduction of image-worship, transubstantiation, and other gross departures from the faith, the opposition of the faithful would be less decided than in later times. Other Christian churches, while they preserved their independency, might not go the same lengths as that of Rome; but neither might they at once separate from it, nor probably be clear of a participation in it's corruptions. The opposition to it might be expected also to be chiefly from individuals rather than from

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churches, and which appears to have been the fact.

The famous CLAUDE, Bishop of Turin, in the ninth century, though he preached the doctrine of Christ in great purity, and boldly opposed almost all the errors of Popery; yet does not appear to have so separated from the church of Rome as to form independent churches. The principles however which he taught led to this issue, and were acted upon after his death. His preaching and writings contributed greatly to the spread of true religion in the Valleys of Piedmont.

From the fourth to the tenth century but little is said of the Waldenses in history: yet as *Reynerius*, who wrote about the year 1230, speaks of the Vaudois as “a sect of the *longest standing*;” and as the Council of Tours about 70 years before this, speaks of the same heresy as having “sprung up *long ago*;” we may conclude even from the acknowledgements of the adversaries that God was not without his witnesses in those dark ages. MILTON also in the sonnet before quoted, represents the Vaudois, or people of the Valleys, as having “kept God’s truth so

pure of old, when all our fathers worshipp'd stocks and stones." He must therefore have considered them as having preserved the purity of Christianity *while our Saxon ancestors were yet heathens*. After the tenth century, when iniquity was at the full, the opposition was more decided. For 500 years, during the most murderous wars and persecutions, the *Pa-terines*, the *Petrobrussians*, the *Waldenses*, the *Albigenses*, the *Lollards*, the *Wickliffites*, &c. maintained their ground. Nor were they contented to bear witness to the truth in their own countries, but employed missionaries to almost all the nations of Europe; and this notwithstanding each missionary could expect nothing less than martyrdom for his reward!

Nor were their labours unproductive. The numbers who espoused their principles in the South of France only were such that a crusade of 500,000 men was sent against them. It was by this army of bloody-minded fanatics that the city of *Beziers* was taken, and the inhabitants without distinction, men, women, and children, to the number of 60,000, were put to the sword!

## DISCOURSE XIV.

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THE FIRST GENERAL DESCRIPTION CONTINUED:  
OR THE SLAUGHTER AND RESURRECTION OF THE  
WITNESSES, WITH THE FALLING OF A TENTH  
PART OF THE CITY.

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CHAP. XI. 7—14.

*AND* when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. 9 And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

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10 *And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.* 11 *And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them; and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them which saw them.* 12 *And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them.*

If the testimony of the witnesses be the same as their prophesying in sackcloth, it must continue through the whole of the 1260 years. But it does not appear that the beast at the termination of that period, will be able to “overcome and kill them,” seeing he himself will then be slain, and his body given to the burning flame. Several commentators therefore have rendered it, *while they shall perform, or be about to finish* their testimony, &c. And with this agrees the account which represents the beast and his party at the time of the slaying of the witnesses as being in the plenitude of their power.

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The *slaughter* of the witnesses would not, according to the usual style of the prophecy, denote their being put to death as individuals, but silenced and crushed as witnessing bodies. It was thus, as we have seen, that the Eastern empire and the Greek church as connected with it, were *killed* by the Turkish horsemen. Chap. ix. 18.

Of the *beast* that shall kill them no mention is made before; but we shall hear much of him hereafter. Suffice it at present to say, it is the same as Daniel's fourth beast, (Chap. vii.) and as that which is described by John, in Chap. xiii. 1—8. of this book, as having "seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns:" it is *the Roman empire under it's last form, as divided into ten independent kingdoms*. There he is described as rising out of the sea; here, out of the abyss, or bottomless pit: the one, as Mr. FABER remarks, may denote his political, and the other his spiritual origin.

The witnesses were to be killed *in the great city*, which "spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was cru-



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cified." We shall have occasion more than once to notice an Antichristian *city* as opposed to the church of Christ, just as the great harlot is opposed to the bride the Lamb's wife. It will be proper therefore to fix the meaning at the outset. If the prophecy had related to Old Testament times, when God chose a literal city in which to build his temple, a literal city might have been properly opposed to it. When Zion was his dwelling-place, Babylon was it's adversary. But as the true church under the gospel is not confined to place, neither is the false church. The New Testament Zion does not consist of material buildings, but is a community scattered among the nations; and such is the New Testament Babylon. The "great city" therefore means Rome, not in respect of it's buildings, nor the inhabitants within it's walls, nor as a political empire, the symbol of which is *the beast*; but as the head of the Antichristian community. This city, or community of nations under one ecclesiastical head, was a Sodom for it's filthiness, an Egypt for it's idolatry and persecution, and a Jerusalem for it's malignant hatred of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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The dead bodies of the witnesses were to lie in the street of the great city *unburied*: that is, being silenced and crushed throughout Christendom, they would for a time be treated with the utmost indignity and reproach, as those are who are denied the ordinary decencies of burial. Nor would these indignities be inflicted by the highest orders only; but "peoples, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations," that is, the body of the inhabitants of Christendom, would take a part in them. While insulting the witnesses, they would make merry on their own account, as being no longer tormented with their testimony.

Such is the description given of the witnesses, and of the treatment which they would receive, both from the ruling powers and the common people. The question is, What are the facts which correspond with it? It is thought by some that both the slaughter and the resurrection of the witnesses are yet to be fulfilled. If so, it is vain to look for corresponding facts in *past* events. This was the opinion of Bishop NEWTON, of Dr. GILL, and of other expositors of note. I cannot but consider this as a mistake. In the Bishop it appears to have been founded on the

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supposition of *the time of the dead that they should be judged*, spoken of in ver. 18. referring to the last judgment, or “the consummation of all things;” but which manifestly refers to the avenging of the martyrs by the judgments to be inflicted on the Papal power, under the seven vials, antecedent to the Millennium. (Compare Chap. xi. 18, 19. with Chap. xvi. 12—21.) Dr. GILL speaks of the war by which the witnesses are slain as being “the last war of the beast:”\* but the last war of the beast is that in which he and the false prophet will be taken; and in which the followers of Christ, instead of being killed, shall be victorious over their enemies. Chap. xix. 20.† It is remarkable too, that both the slaughter and resurrection of the witnesses, together with the falling of a tenth part of the city, are introduced before the termination of the sixth, or second woe-trumpet. I question therefore whether these prophecies can refer to events of so late a date as this hypothesis requires.

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\* On Chap, xi. 8.

† See PRESIDENT EDWARDS, on *Agreement in Extraordinary Prayer*, Part III. p. 100.

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The time in which the witnesses are slain, and their bodies lie unburied, appears to be a time in which the beast is in the height of his power, or as PRESIDENT EDWARDS says, "In which the true church of Christ is lowest of all, most of all prevailed against by Antichrist, and nearest to an utter extinction; a time in which there is left the least visibility of the church of Christ yet subsisting in the world, and the least remains of any thing appertaining to true religion whence a revival of it could be expected."\* It is true, we know not what is before us; but if such a state of things as this should return after what has occurred in Europe within the last 300 years, it will, as Mr. EDWARDS I think has proved, be contrary to all God's usual methods of proceeding. I cannot therefore but think with him that the persecution and slaughter of the witnesses *preceded the Reformation.*

After the suppression of the Bohemians, for nearly a hundred years, true religion was in a manner crushed. The enemy continued without resistance to "wear out

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\* *On Agreement in Prayer, &c.* p. 92.

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the saints of the Most High." Not a *society* or *body* of Christians was to be found which dared to oppose the general corruption. The Popish party considered the heretics as suppressed, and congratulated each other on so happy an event. The security that they felt was manifest by the barefaced manner in which they sold their pardons and indulgences at the time when Luther's indignation was first kindled against them.

Whether the "three days and a half" during which the witnesses should lie unburied, denote three years and a half, and refer to a particular period of that duration, or only to a short space of oppression, in allusion to the "three times and a half," as being a kind of 1260 years in miniature, I am not able to determine; nor have I seen any thing on the subject relating to a particular period which afforded me satisfaction. However this may be, if the slaying of the witnesses refer to the times immediately preceding the Reformation, their resurrection and ascension to heaven must denote the Reformation itself, and the placing, by Divine Providence, of the parties concerned in it out of the reach of their enemies. The resurrection, as it

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were, of the Waldenses, the Wickliffites, and other reputed heretics, in the persons of Luther and his cotemporaries, with the rapid progress made by them in various nations nearly at the same time, would cause great fear to fall upon their adversaries; and the security in which they were placed by the secession of those nations from the See of Rome was equal to their being taken up to heaven in a cloud, where those who thirsted for their blood could only look after them with malignity and envy.

13 *And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

After the resurrection of the witnesses, and before the sounding of the seventh, or third woe-trumpet, follows an *earthquake*, and a tenth part of the city falls. In the earthquake are slain of men, (or names of men,) 7000, and the remnant are affrighted, and give glory to the God of heaven. If the meaning of this passage can be clearly as-

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certained, it will determine the time of the sounding of the seventh angel, and serve as a medium by which to judge of several other things.

The "earthquake" must, I conceive, denote a *revolution*, as this is the appropriate and well-known symbol of such an event. The "city" is doubtless the same as that which in the 8th verse is "spiritually called Sodom and Egypt;" that is, the Romish Church, or the Apocalyptic Babylon. By "a tenth part" of it, must be understood a considerable portion of it, and very probably a part belonging to one of the ten horns, or kingdoms into which the empire under it's Papal form was to be divided. By "the names of men," Dr. GOODWIN and others have understood, *titles* or *orders* of men, and supposed that the revolution signified by the earthquake would destroy them. Or if the phrase denote, as some have understood it, *men of name*, it would signify the destruction made among the higher orders, and which would of course be accompanied with great slaughter among the common people. "The remnant that were affrighted and gave glory to God," would denote those of the same community

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who escaped, and whose fears would forebode other examples of the divine justice.

What event is there during the 1260 years of Antichristian usurpation which answers to these characters? It has been understood of the fall of the Greek Church in 1453, when Constantinople was taken by the Turks: but that event has been described in the vision of the horsemen, Chap. ix; and it is the Western or Latin church that occupies the whole of these chapters. It were much better to understand it of the falling off of the Northern nations from the See of Rome, which was an immediate consequence of the Reformation. It's being "in the same hour" with the resurrection of the witnesses would favour this interpretation, but in several other particulars it does not agree. No reason can be given why the seceding Northern nations should be called "a *tenth* part of the city;" nor do any events which attended the Reformation appear to correspond with the slaughter of "7000 names of men." If the tenth part of the city fell as early as the Reformation, the seventh angel must have sounded his trumpet "quickly" after it; and this some writers, who believed the former, have very



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consistently maintained, conceiving also that the Millennium commenced, or would commence, towards the middle of the eighteenth century. But surely we must allow that events have contradicted this explication. The character of the seventh trumpet is, that under it, the kingdoms of this world were to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ: but the nations which have fallen off from the Papal See have not answered to this description, but have rather sunk into formality, and irreligion. And as to the Millennium, one of it's characters is, that the beast and the false prophet shall first have gone into perdition, and Satan be bound; but neither of these has taken place. It is also in the Millennium, if ever, that we are to look for the cessation of war, and the universal prevalence of true religion, both among Jews and Gentiles, neither of which has yet come to pass.

All things considered, I know of no event that seems to correspond so well with the prophecy as *the late Revolution in France*. Thus it has been understood by some of the ablest expositors, and that for ages prior to the event. A writer in the *Eclectic Review*

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has collected no less than ten of them who have referred to this event, and that long before it occurred, and several of them in commenting on the passage. Among these are the names of Dr. THOMAS GOODWIN, and VITRINGA. Dr. GOODWIN, who wrote in 1639, says, "By the tenth part of the city, I understand, as Mr. Brightman before me, some one tenth part of Europe." "I think it probable that France may be this country; and that in this *revolution* men will be deprived of their *names* and *titles*, which are to be rooted out for ever, and condemned to perpetual forgetfulness." "France may have the honour to have the last great stroke in the ruining of Rome. And this figurative earthquake, though happening only in one country, may extend it's effects to others, so that a great shaking of states, as well political as ecclesiastical, may be intended."

VITRINGA, who wrote in 1719, asks, "What can be more suitable than to understand here by the *tenth part of the city* some illustrious kingdom, which, being under the dominion of Rome with respect to religion, was of distinguished rank among the ten

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kingdoms, and had hitherto defended the Romish superstitions? It is here said in a figurative sense, that it would *fall*, since by means of those mighty commotions by which it was to be shaken, it would be torn from the body of the Antichristian empire." "*France* may be the forum of the great city." "*The earthquake* in this tenth part of the city is an event which history must illustrate. It is not perfectly clear from the prophecy of what kind these commotions are; whether warlike, such as are wont to shake the world, and subvert the existing government, or whether they are such as arise on a sudden from the insurrection of a nation that has been long oppressed: the words of the prophecy appear to favour the latter sense. In the predicted catastrophe some thousands will undoubtedly perish *distinguished by their elevated dignities or nobility of birth.*"

*Eclectic Review, for February, 1814.*

Dr. GILL in 1748, speaking of the *earthquake*, says, "Something yet to come is here intended;" and "I rather think the kingdom of *France* is meant, the last of the *ten* kingdoms which rose up out of the ruins of the Roman

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empire." And in his note on Chap. xiii. 18. he speaks of the destruction of Antichrist as "quickly following the downfall of the kingdom of *France*, as the *tenth* part of the city, which should fall a little before the third woe came on."

The Revolution in France has been truly a moral earthquake, which has shaken the Papal world to it's centre. One of the *ten* kingdoms which composed it, and that the principal one, has so fallen as at present to be rather a scourge than a support to it. If by *names of men* be meant *titles*, they were abolished: or if *men of name*, the slaughter predicted of them certainly corresponds with the calamities which befel the princes, the nobles, and the priests, during that awful period; and as the fall of a few thousands of great men would involve that of an immense number of the common people, such has been the effect in this instance. Whether the remaining adherents to the Papal cause have given "glory to God" in the manner they ought, or not, they have felt his hand, and by their fear and dismay have been compelled to yield a sort of involuntary acknowledgement of his justice,

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The only objection that I feel to this application of the prophecy is, that it is said to be "in the same hour" as that in which the witnesses ascended into heaven, which, if understood of that legal security that from the Reformation was afforded to the Protestants against Popish persecution, may seem to be at too great a distance for such a mode of expression. It is however not only under the same trumpet, but *during the period in which the witnesses continue to enjoy that security to which they were then introduced* that this event has occurred. Instead of the great Babylonish city recovering itself so as to renew it's persecutions against the witnesses, it is itself smitten of God as by an earthquake and in a measure overthrown. If the opinions, of GOODWIN, VITRINGA, and GILL be correct, and if the events which have of late years occurred be the accomplishment of them, the last of these writers must have been mistaken, in supposing the slaying of the witnesses to be something future: for the fall of the city is placed *after* the slaying and rising again of the witnesses. If therefore the one be now past, so is the other.

## DISCOURSE XV.

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THE FIRST GENERAL DESCRIPTION CONCLUDED: OR  
THE SOUNDING OF THE SEVENTH ANGEL.

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CHAP. XI. 14—19.

*THE second woe is past; and behold, the third woe cometh quickly. 15 And the seventh angel sounded: and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. 16 And the four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. 18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the*

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*dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great ; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. 19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament : and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.*

After the great earthquake, we hear, as it were, the cry of the watchman, telling us the hour of the night—"The second woe is past, and behold the third woe cometh quickly!" When the first woe was past, the second and third woes were to come *hereafter* ; but between the two last there would be but a short space. As things should approach to a crisis, events would occur in more rapid succession.

This *second* woe, as it introduced the Turkish horsemen, (Chap. ix. 13—19.) must have commenced about 1281, and, (if the falling of a tenth part of the city has been rightly interpreted,) ended about 1791. It's having commenced with the introduction of

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the Turks does not prove that it comprehended them only, nor that it must needs end with the passing away of their empire. On the contrary, the accomplishment of their overthrow seems to be reserved for the sixth vial of the third woe-trumpet, which will be poured upon the Euphrates, near the times of the Millennium.

But it may be asked, How is it that the sounding of the trumpets should be introduced in this place? If this and the three following chapters contain *general descriptions* of the Papal apostacy, *including the times of various trumpets, but not divided by them*, how is it that in the midst of one of these descriptions mention should be made of the second woe ending, and of the third woe coming quickly? I answer, Though these general descriptions are not divided by trumpets, yet as they comprehend the times of the trumpets, each of them might have been so, and for our information one of them actually is so. And as the termination of the sixth, and the sounding of the seventh trumpet forms an era in the church of Christ, it is here marked with peculiar emphasis. It is from this era, as we shall find, that after these three general



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descriptions are given, the series of the prophecy is resumed, and the vials are introduced.

But if the sounding of the seventh angel form an era in the Christian church, it requires that we pause, and pay particular attention to it.

The events of this trumpet were anticipated by the angel, at the distance probably of more than a thousand years, when he forbade the seven thunders to be written—"The days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he should begin to sound," are marked as the period when the great designs of heaven, foretold in prophecy, should be accomplished. Chap. x.

The contents of this trumpet are of deeper interest than any that have preceded it, both to the enemies of the church and to the church itself. It wears a two-fold aspect. Towards the enemies of the church it is a *woe*-trumpet, and a signal of mighty vengeance: towards the church itself it is a harbinger of joy, a kind of *jubilee*-trumpet, announcing the year of enlargement; for when

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the "seventh angel sounded, there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever!" Under the *first* of these aspects it includes the seven last plagues, which are but so many subdivisions of it, and which are, I conceive, the execution of the seven thunders in Chap. x. These thunders, it is observable, are not only referred to "the days of the voice of the seventh angel," but to those in which he should "*begin* to sound," that is, to the early part of them. Under the *last* aspect, it comprehends all the success of the gospel previous to, and during the Millennium, with all the glorious results of it as described in the remainder of the prophecy. We are not to consider it, however, under either of these aspects as being *more than a signal of things which are to follow*. As the vengeance will not all be poured forth at once, so neither will the kingdoms of this world at once become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ: but from the sounding of this trumpet both shall have a commencement, and both be singularly progressive under it.

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With respect to the *time*, if the application of the “earthquake and the falling of a tenth part of the city” to events which have occurred within the last twenty years, be just, there can be little if any doubt of the seventh angel’s having sounded his trumpet within that period, and of the whole of these verses containing a general view of the state of things from our times to the commencement of the Millennium.

On this occasion the heavenly chorus strikes up. The four and twenty elders who sit before God on their seats, fall upon their faces and worship God. This heavenly chorus is not introduced on ordinary occasions. Things must therefore be pending of deep interest to the church of God. By the matter of the song we may learn something of what they are. Corresponding with the two-fold aspect of the seventh trumpet, those who have destroyed the earth are to be destroyed, and those who have suffered for Christ are to be rewarded.

The character under which the Most High is praised, “The Lord God Almighty, who is, and was, and is to come,” seems to imply

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that he could have suppressed the power of his enemies at any time; that though for wise reasons he had not for ages past exerted his strength, yet now he was about to "take unto him his great power, and to reign;" and that all this is the result of his immutable counsels.

The "anger" of the nations had been great both against God and his servants, opposing him, and persecuting them with unrelenting cruelty: but now *his* wrath is come; now the blood of the martyrs of past ages shall be avenged; \* now their labours and sufferings shall produce their effects; from the seed which has been sown during a succession of centuries in tears and blood, a harvest of joy will spring up; finally, those who by persecutions, corruptions, and unjust wars, have destroyed the earth, shall now be themselves destroyed.

Under the image of opening the heavenly temple, seems to be set forth the glorious state of the church when these judgments shall be executed upon her enemies. As the

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\* Chap. xviii. 20.

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temple was polluted and shut up under certain idolatrous reigns, and opened in times of reformation, so the gospel temple has been treated under the reign of Antichrist, and so it shall be restored at or towards the end of the 1260 years. "The ark of the testament being seen," implies the removal of the vail; and as it was not to be seen in the second temple, but only in the first, it's being seen here would seem to denote the *restoration* of pure primitive Christianity, as it was taught, believed, and practised, when the gospel temple was first erected. "The lightnings, voices, thunderings, earthquake, and hail," are the same things which are described under the seventh vial. Chap. xvi. 18—21. Both refer to the same events; only this is general, and that more particular: and as there the language seems to refer to the efficacy of the gospel, and of the spiritual judgments on those who reject it, purifying the moral atmosphere of the world, such appears to be it's meaning here.

## ***DISCOURSE XVI.***

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**THE SECOND GENERAL DESCRIPTION: OR THE GREAT  
RED DRAGON, AND THE WOMAN FLYING INTO THE  
WILDERNESS.**

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**CHAP. XII. 1—6.**

**T**HE first general description, it has been observed, took up the apostacy at the time when things were so matured that the Catholic church was ordered to be left out of God's temple, as not belonging to it: but this appears to trace it to it's origin. Here we go back to an early period of history; possibly as far as to the fourth century, and to the times of some of the first trumpets. At a time when the church was in danger of being lost in superstition and worldly conformity, it was natural for the faithful to feel anxious for the cause of Christ. For their

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encouragement, the church is described in vision as bearing a *seed* which should be preserved by the special care of heaven, through all these evil times, and become in the end victorious over the whole earth. Such appears to be the scope of this second general description.

*1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: 2 And she, being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. 3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. 4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven; and did cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. 5 And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. 6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three-score days.*

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Prior to the introduction of Antichristian corruptions, the church is described as “a woman clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars;” denoting the plenitude of gospel light which compassed her as a garment; her superiority to the Jewish dispensation; and, in consequence of her adherence to the doctrine and examples of the apostles, her triumph over ten successive persecutions.

The woman is said to be “with child, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered;” denoting, it may be, the earnest desires of the true church after the increase of believers. Such has always been its character. Worldly men who have taken upon them the Christian name, have invariably been employed in compassing selfish objects. But true Christians have at all times been distinguished by a desire to extend the kingdom of Christ.

The following description, by EUSEBIUS, of the labours of the immediate successors of the apostles, is doubtless applicable to the church so long as it adhered to their doctrine



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and example. “They built up those churches  
“ the foundations of which were laid by  
“ the apostles, promoting greatly the doctrine  
“ of the gospel, and scattering the salutary  
“ seed of the kingdom of heaven at large  
“ over the whole world.—Travelling abroad,  
“ they performed the work of evangelists to  
“ those who as yet had not heard the word  
“ of faith, being very ambitious to preach  
“ Christ, and to deliver the books of the divine  
“ gospels. And these persons having only  
“ laid the foundation of faith in remote and  
“ barbarous places, and constituted other pas-  
“ tors, committed to them the culture of  
“ those they had perfectly introduced to the  
“ faith, departing again to other regions and  
“ nations, accompanied with the grace and  
“ co-operation of God.” Lib. III. c. 37.

While the woman is thus in labour, “behold  
a great red dragon, having seven heads and  
ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads,  
whose tail drew the third part of the stars  
of heaven, and did cast them to the earth,  
stands before her, ready to devour her child  
as soon as it was born.” The dragon is in  
ver. 9. expressly called “the Devil and Satan,  
who deceiveth the whole world,” and all that

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is said of him in the remainder of the prophecy agrees with this in it's literal application: but by his having the heads and horns of the Roman beast, is intimated that it was under this form, or by means of this government, that he did what he did in the present instance.

As the woman is not an individual, but the society of the faithful, so neither is the man-child an individual, but the woman's *seed*, which in ver. 17th is explained of them who "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." It was this seed that the dragon aimed by persecution and corruption to destroy. This child was *born to rule*; not however at present: for if so, there had been no need of his being caught up to the throne of God, nor for his mother's flying into the wilderness for 1260 years. It is at the termination of that period that the man-child, or the seed of the church shall rule; and this accords with Dan. vii. 27. "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." Nor need it be objected

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that the sceptre of this government is a rod of iron: for such the kingdom of Christ must ever be to the ungodly.

There are two marks by which the times referred to in this vision may, if I mistake not, be ascertained. One is the 1260 days, or years, which being the appropriate number of the reign of the Papal Antichrist, proves it to have no reference to the times of Paganism. The other is, that the ten horns are not upon the beast, but upon the dragon, and the crowns are not as yet upon them, but upon 'the seven heads. When the horns are spoken of in reference to the times following the overthrow of the empire by the northern nations, and of it's becoming ten independent kingdoms, they are described as being upon the beast, and as having crowns upon them. Chap. xiii. 1. This indicates that the introduction of the vision contained in the first five verses of this chapter, though it does not go so far back as to the days of Paganism, yet neither does it go so far forward as to the times of Popery; but to *those which were intermediate and preparatory*, namely, the fourth and fifth centuries, in which

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Christianity became exceedingly corrupt, and a connexion was introduced between the secular and ecclesiastical powers, which issued in what is exhibited in Chap. xvii. a woman riding upon a scarlet-coloured beast! I do not suppose that the 1260 years of the reign of Antichrist are to be reckoned from the time when these corruptions began. Antichrist did not commence his reign from his birth; but from thence his way was preparing. It is of what was done *prior* to the woman's flight into the wilderness for 1260 years that these verses speak. By the accession of Constantine, the beast was "as it were wounded to death;" and this may be the reason why no mention is made of him. Under the Christian emperors the beast for some time would lie apparently dead: the dragon however, "that old serpent the Devil and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world" knew how even *at that time* to make use of the pomp and power of the empire to serve his purposes.

It is in the corruptions of the fourth and fifth centuries that we are to look for the origin of Popery. It was by the influx of

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worldly power and glory into the church that Satan first séduced a great part of those who had shone like stars in the Christian firmament, and, (alluding perhaps to his having originally drawn into apostacy a great part of the angels of heaven,) cast them to the earth. But, perceiving, notwithstanding what had been done as to a number of the *leaders* of the church, that a large body of the faithful were still intent on not only preserving but extending the Redeemer's kingdom, the dragon aims to destroy the fruits of their labours. When he saw that the bait of worldly pomp and power had so far succeeded as to draw the principal men into his net, it was doubtless his object to make a full end of the church of Christ. But he was disappointed. The woman "brought forth a man-child, who in the end would rule all nations as with a rod of iron."

By the woman's flying into the wilderness, seems to be meant her retiring into obscurity, where she would exist without legal protection, in some such manner as David did when he fled from the persecutions of Saul, and without any other defence than that which

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was afforded by the shielding providence of God. In this way the true church existed in all the nations of Europe from the time that Popery first obtained the ascendancy, and during the long period of it's domination. Wherever this religion prevailed, all those Christians who refused to yield to it's corruptions were driven into obscurity. It was thus not only in those countries bordering upon Italy, but in others at the greatest distance. It is thought by some to have been thus with the *British Churches* in Wales, with the *Culdees* in Scotland and Ireland, and probably with every other body of Christians where this influence extended. Many of them were so pursued by persecution, that if they had any communion with each other, it was in a secret way. If they met to worship God, it must be in the night, in woods, or mountains, or caves of the earth. So little visibility belonged to the church in this state, that it requires some attention to ascertain where it was to be found. To the question however, "Where was your church before Luther?" we may answer, IN THE WILDERNESS, where prophecy has placed her, and whither those who ask

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the question had driven her. If one place was more distinguished than another as affording a shelter to the faithful, *it was among the mountains and valleys of the Alps.*

It may be difficult to decide upon the time when the woman fled into the wilderness. This however we know, that very soon after the revolution by the accession of Constantine, corruptions in doctrine, divisions, intrigues persecutions, and a flood of superstition, overspread the Catholic Church.\*

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\*We may see into what a gulph of superstitious imposture the Catholic Church was sunk within fifty years after the death of Constantine, by the following story, taken from Dr. ALLIX. *Sulpicius Severus*, who lived early in the fifth century, wrote *The Life of a St. Martin of Tours*, who had lived in the latter part of the fourth. In writing this life, Sulpicius speaks of a certain altar, which the popular superstition had rendered famous, because some martyr was pretended to have been buried in the place. "St. Martin not being able to make any certain discovery of the name of the martyr, and the circumstances of his sufferings, and being loth absolutely to doubt the truth of it, thought fit himself to go to this famous sepulchre in company of some of his brethren. Being come to the place he earnestly begged of God to reveal to him the

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In such a state of things true Christians must not only be offended, but must become offensive to others, and so be persecuted, and compelled to retire as into the wilderness.

The ancient *Vaudois*, are said to "date their origin from the beginning of the fourth century; when one Leo at the great revolution in religion under Constantine the Great, opposed the innovations of Sylvester,

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name and merit of the martyr. After this, turning himself towards the left, he saw standing a hideous ghost. They command him to declare himself. The ghost obeys, tells his name, confesses that he had been executed for robbery, that it was only the error of the people that caused him to be canonized, that he was in nothing like the martyrs, they were in glory, whereas he was in pain. The good St. Martin being troubled to hear this account, caused the altar to be carried to another place, and so, (says his biographer,) delivered the people from a superstitious error."

The same *Sulpicius Severus*, though a monk himself, yet speaking of the monks of his time, says, "They do almost all things in such a manner, that you would not so much think they had repented for their former crimes, as that afterwards they had repented of their repentance!"



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Bishop of Rome." This agrees with what was said of *Rainerius*, a monk inquisitor of the thirteenth century, that they were the most pernicious of all sects, for three reasons. 1. "Because it is the *most ancient*. Some aver their existence (says he) from the days of Sylvester, others from the very times of the apostles. 2 .Because it is so *universal*: for there is hardly a country into which this sect has not crept. 3. Because all others render themselves detestable by their blasphemies; but this has a great *appearance of godliness*, living a righteous life before men, believing right concerning God, confessing all the articles of the creed, only hating and reviling the Church of Rome.

## DISCOURSE XVII.

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THE SECOND GENERAL DESCRIPTION CONTINUED :  
OR THE WAR BETWEEN MICHAEL AND THE  
DRAGON.

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CHAP. XII. 7—17.

*AND there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice, saying in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the*

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*accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony: and they loved not their lives unto the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.*

The dragon, having driven the true church into the wilderness, is supposed to have carried things in his own way among the rest. At a certain period however during her 1260 years residence in the wilderness, Michael her Prince espouses her cause, and makes war upon the dragon.

There is no doubt a reference in this part of the prophecy to what was predicted in Dan. x. 13—21. xii. 1. Michael is there described not only as standing up for the people of God under Persian oppression, but as fighting the battles of the church in later ages, even during the “time, times, and half a time,” or during the dominion of Antichrist.

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The account given of Michael agrees not with the character of a created angel, but with that of Messiah the Prince, who defends his church against the dragon "that old serpent the Devil." Each has his angels, who perhaps are the visible agents in the war. But before we determine the application of this part of the vision, it will be proper to notice a few of it's general characters.

*First,* The scene is laid in "heaven." Yet in this heaven there is supposed till now to have been a place found for the dragon. It could not therefore be in the church above, where there has been no place for him since he "left his first estate." But in the church below there has. The latter therefore must have been the scene of the present contest.

*Secondly,* The war is made by Michael on the dragon, and not by the dragon on Michael. This intimates that it must have been at a time when the dragon possessed such a plenitude of power in what was called the Christian church, that his object was not to extend so much as to retain it.

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*Thirdly*, Whatever of worldly power and policy might accompany the war, the war itself was *spiritual*. It was a war between truth and error, righteousness and unrighteousness: for the victors “overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.”

*Fourthly*, It is supposed that in this great struggle many of Michael’s adherents would lose their lives, but that nevertheless they would overcome. The cause of truth and righteousness would prevail, and those who suffered for Christ’s sake would bear such a testimony for truth, and obtain such a victory over the world, as to be more than conquerors.

Such are the characters of the war: to what event during the 1260 years of Anti-christian usurpation does it apply? I can conceive of none but *the Reformation in the sixteenth century*. Satan as ruling by means of Rome was then attacked, and cast out of those nations where the Reformation prevailed; which nations being the seat of Christ’s visible kingdom are accounted as

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“heaven,” while those which still cleave to the apostacy are “the earth.”

A song of the heavenly host is introduced on this occasion: for the “loud voice” (ver. 10.) does not appear to be that of an individual, but of a multitude, who join as with one voice in a shout of joy and praise. It fits the lips of the holy army of martyrs before the throne, who feeling for their brethren upon earth, rejoice in their having obtained a portion of relief. As Satan accused Job, and obtained permission of God to persecute him, so by the agency of the Bishop of Rome, he had from century to century accused and persecuted the saints of the Most High. But now were come “salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren (say they) is cast down, that accused them to our God day and night.” The Reformation was at once a pledge of Antchrist’s consumption, and of the increase of the Redeemer’s kingdom.

The weapons by which the victory was obtained are celebrated by the heavenly host,

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and are worthy of our special attention. Some of the followers of Christ among the Albigenses, the Bohemians, and the Reformers, thought it necessary to take arms, and fight for their religion: but it has proved, I believe, in almost every instance, that where a body of Christians have taken the sword to defend themselves against *persecution*, they as a body have perished by the sword. Whatever of this spirit there might be amongst the Reformers, it was not by this, but by "the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony," that they overcame,

The "heavens" from which the dragon is cast out are called upon to rejoice, while a woe is pronounced upon the inhabitants of "the earth and of the sea," or those *continental* and *maritime* nations where he still dwelleth, and to which his influence is in one sense confined. The power of Satan in this way being reduced to narrower limits, would be the more mischievous within those limits. He would consider the Reformation as only a first step towards the overthrow of a system, by which under the Christian name he had deceived mankind with equal facility as by the delusions of Heathenism.

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Knowing therefore that his time was short, he would be the more assiduous in improving it. The denunciation wears a terrible aspect towards those nations which, notwithstanding all the light of the Reformation, still cleave to the apostacy. It may be equal to saying, 'Woe unto you Austria, France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy; for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time!' From this language it might be expected, that in those countries which rejected the Reformation, Popery would operate so as either, by producing it's proper effect, to lead it's votaries into downright infidelity, or by rivetting the delusion, to render them more and more the dupes of imposture. And thus it has actually operated: the nations which still cleave to it are nearly divided into two classes, the deceivers and the deceived; the former of which appear to be the destined instruments of heaven in destroying the latter, and so of executing the vials of God's displeasure upon them.

13 *And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child.* 14 *And*



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*to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place: where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood, after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

The wrath of the dragon for having been cast out of heaven is directed against not only the spiritual welfare of his own subjects, but the lives of those Christians who were situated within his territories. The friends of Christ in Popish countries have since the Reformation been persecuted with increased violence. In the ordinary measures of legal process, persecution has indeed diminished; it has in a manner been shamed out of countenance by the prevalence of tolerant principles: but the more it has been

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restrained in this way, the more violent have been it's ebullitions in a way of occasional outrage. Of this the massacre of Paris in 1572, the cruelties in the valleys of Piedmont in 1655, and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, are horrible examples.

From the times of the Reformation the church of Christ had in a manner come out of the wilderness. Having obtained a degree of legal protection in several nations, it's members were not obliged as heretofore to retire into woods and mountains and caves, nor to have recourse to midnight assemblies for the purpose of hearing the gospel: but after these renewed persecutions the woman is obliged to fly *a second time* into the wilderness, as to her wonted place of refuge. Such has been the state of the Protestants in all Popish countries; such has been their state in France from the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 to the Revolution in 1789, though of late they were treated with less severity than formerly, being allowed to meet in the day time, only under military inspection. Nor was it in *Popish* countries only that the wrath of the dragon vented itself. A portion of the poison of a persecuting

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spirit was found among Protestants, even in our own country, from the Reformation to the Revolution of 1688. If one place was more distinguished than another as affording a shelter for the woman at the time of this her *second flight*, I suspect it was *North America*, where the church of Christ has been nourished, and may continue to be nourished, during the remainder of the 1260 years. And as to those parts of the church which still exist in a state of insecurity, the serpent has not been suffered to make a full end of them; they are nourished by the word of God, and shall doubtless survive the reign of Antichristian corruption and persecution.

The flood of waters cast after the woman by the dragon, and the war made on the remnant of her seed, referring, as it appears to the latter end of the 1260 years, may be something *yet to come*. It is not impossible that persecution may yet be revived. The Antichristian cause can hardly be supposed to expire without some deadly struggles. Indeed it is in the very act of "making war on him that sitteth upon the horse, and his army," that the "beast and the false

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prophet will be taken;" and which seems to be the same war which is here made with the "remnant of the woman's seed."

Should a flood of persecution yet be in reserve for the church of Christ, it may be the last effort of an expiring foe; and from that the *earth* will preserve her by swallowing it up; it may be in some such way as the invasion of the Philistines preserved David, or as political struggles have often been favourable to Christians, by furnishing those who wished to persecute them with other employment. The dragon, provoked by his want of success against the woman, may vent his malice on the remnant of her seed that are within his reach: but his time is short. His agents "the beast and the false prophet," will soon be taken; and the Angel, with a great chain in his hand, shall next lay hold of *him*, and cast him into the bottomless pit.

## DISCOURSE XVIII.

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THE THIRD GENERAL DESCRIPTION: OR THE BEAST  
WITH SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS.

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CHAP. XIII. 1—10.

*AND I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads, and ten horns; and upon his horns ten crowns; and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power and his seat, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads, as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. 4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped*

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*the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? 5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations, 8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. 9 If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10 He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity: He that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience, and the faith of the saints.*

The apostle, in vision, standing as upon the sea shore, sees “a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.” A beast rising out of the sea is an empire opposed to God

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and his Christ, rising out of the perturbed state of things in the world.

The description given of this beast leaves no doubt of it's being the same as the fourth beast in the seventh chapter of Daniel, namely, *the Roman Empire*; with only a few circumstantial differences. Daniel viewed it in it's *whole duration*, whereas John describes it with special reference to it's *last* or *Papal form*; Daniel says nothing of it's heads, which John does; and lastly, Daniel speaks merely of the ten horns pertaining to the beast, but John describes them as having "crowns," which shews that the times referred to are those in which the western empire would be overthrown, and out of it arise ten independent kingdoms.

This seven-headed and ten-horned beast does not appear to be the Pope, or Popedom, nor the Church of Rome; but *that secular power which has supported the Church of Rome through the whole of her corrupt and bloody progress*. The beast is not the harlot, but that on which the harlot rides. That which has been denominated *The Holy Roman Empire*, of which sometimes a French

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and sometimes a German monarch has been the head, seems to be the government principally intended, as being the great supporter of that church. It is not this government, however, *exclusive* of that of the other European nations, but merely as a *principal* amongst them. The ten horns were not distinct from the beast, but constituent parts of it. Europe, prior to the Reformation, was a family of nations, united in respect of religion by one ecclesiastical head. As nations they were independent, and often engaged in war with one another; but *in supporting the church* they were united. The beast is indeed distinguished from its horns, as any other beast may be, while yet the horns are constituent parts of it. The ten horns are said to “agree and to give their kingdom to the beast: (Chap. xvii. 17.) that is, they united with the emperor in supporting the church. Things were so managed indeed by the church that the rulers of every nation in Christendom were in a manner compelled to unite in her support. “All the civil powers were obliged by the Council of Lateran, to take an oath, on pain of ecclesiastical censures, that they would en-



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deavour to exterminate all who were declared heretics by the church out of their dominions; and if any prince or ruler refused to do so, after admonition, it was to be certified to the Pope, who should declare all his subjects absolved from their allegiance, and any Catholic was free to sieze his dominions." Such was this monstrous beast, and such the means used by his rider to guide and govern him.

Of the heads and horns of the beast we shall have occasion to speak hereafter more particularly. At present we may observe, he is described as possessing the properties of the first three of Daniel's four beasts, a leopard, a bear, and a lion, each ferocious and destructive: and whereas the dragon is said to have given him his authority, the government, though professedly Christian, was under the influence of the wicked one. After the empire became Christian, the dragon for a while seemed to take the work of seducing and persecuting men into his own hand; (Chap. xii. 1—6.) but he is now contented to transfer it to the beast as a kind of deputy under him. Ver. 2.

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“I saw one of his heads, (continues the apostle) as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast.” To understand this, we must know what is meant by the *heads* of the beast, and this we must learn from Chap. xvii. 7—11. They are there said to be “seven mountains on which the woman sitteth, and seven kings, five of which are fallen, one is, and the other is not yet come.” It was not one of the seven mountains that was “as it were wounded to death,” but one of the seven kings, or governments, or forms of government, under which Rome existed. These, according to *Tacitus*, the Roman Historian, were *Kings*, *Consuls*, *Dictators*, *Decemvirs*, *Military Tribunes*, and *Emperors*; five of which forms of government had passed away at the time of the prophecy; the sixth, namely that of *Emperors*, then was, and the other was not yet come. The wound which the beast is said to have received in one of his heads was so serious, that he was for a time considered as dead; yet was he not dead in reality, but merely “as it were wounded to death:” for after this he revived and lived and reigned to the wonder of the world. Hence the language in

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Chap. xvii. 8. "And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder—when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and *yet is!*"

There are two interpretations of this part of the prophecy, on which good commentators have been divided. One is, that the sword by which the beast was wounded was that of the Northern nations in the fifth century, by which Rome under it's sixth, or imperial head, was overthrown; but by means of Popery the wound was healed, and she who had been given up for lost became in a new form the mistress of the Western world. The other is, that the deadly wound was caused by the sword of CONSTANTINE, who having in different engagements defeated his Pagan colleagues, subverted the ancient religion of the empire, so that for a few years the beast was as it were dead; but that when under the influence of corruption it again became idolatrous and persecuting, the beast revived, and the world wondered after him.

Till of late I have preferred the first of these interpretations; but upon a closer examination of the prophecy I am inclined to

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think the last to be the meaning. It does not seem likely that so extraordinary a change in the empire, and one that so deeply interested the church of God, should be overlooked, while one which is much more ordinary, and of but small account to religion, should be held up to view. It seems also, notwithstanding the corruptions introduced under the first Christian emperors, it were too much to suppose that the empire continued to be the *same* beast as it was in the times of Paganism, or that the difference was so small as not to require any kind of notice in the page of prophecy.

That the species of Christianity introduced in the times of Constantine was injurious to the church is allowed even by those who approve of national religious establishments; yet the prophecy may be very applicable to the event. Supposing this to be it's true meaning, there is no countenance given by it to that partial and corrupt system which at that time was introduced. On the contrary, there is a strong intimation conveyed in those saving terms "as it were," that the beast, though stunned, was not slain. He was not wounded to death, but merely *as*

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*it were* wounded to death. As soon as circumstances favoured his recovery, the wound was healed, and the beast resumed his wonted vigour. Ver. 3.

“They worshipped the dragon and the beast.” The homage of the world is generally paid to success, though it be in the worst of causes. Those powers which raised and supported the Antichristian harlot, being successful, receive the homage of the nations called Christian, though in paying it they sink into the old idolatry under a new name, and in reality worship the wicked one. Ver. 4.

The “great things” spoken by this secular beast may refer to that spirit which gives not God the glory of success, but like Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar, arrogates every thing to self. Its “blasphemies” relate to words and assumptions more immediately directed *against God*, and his cause. The charge of blasphemy was preferred against all the *heads* of the beast, (Ver. 1.) though most of them were Pagan, and of course unacquainted with the true God. The blasphemies referred to therefore must be not

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merely his speeches directly uttered against the Great Supreme, but his *arrogating and assuming that which exclusively belongs to him*. This charge is repeated and enlarged upon in ver. 6. where also it is followed with "making war upon the saints." If God had been within the reach of the beast, he would have made war with him; but as he was not, his hatred against him was discovered in making war upon his people. A species of practical blasphemy seems to constitute the principle from which all persecution proceeds; for it is no other than usurping the throne of God in the mind of man? This principle has been common through all those Pagan and Papal governments which have come in contact with the church of God? Nay, Is it not exceedingly prevalent in almost all the governments now in being? It is rare, very rare, for those who occupy the supreme place in civil affairs, to respect the claims of conscience and of God. Had these claims been properly respected, it had never entered the minds of the rulers of any nation that all the people within certain geographical boundaries, should be compelled to worship God in a given way!

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The blasphemies of this beast are directed not only against the "name," but against "the tabernacle of God, and them that dwell in heaven," or his celestial attendants. The very saints and angels before the throne are by him represented as rebels against God, by receiving that homage which is due to him, and participating in their abominations. The church of God on earth, relatively considered, or as being his "tabernacle," possesses a sacred character. If any man destroy or defile it, as Antiochus did that of the Jews, him will God destroy. What then must be the guilt contracted by those persecuting powers who, under the pretence of extirpating heresy, have reproached the living God, and done every thing in their power to drive the religion of the bible out of the world!

The time allotted for the continuance of this beast is "forty and two months." A day being here put for a year, it is the same period as the "thousand two hundred and threescore days" in which the witnesses were to prophesy in sackcloth, and the woman to continue in the wilderness.

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The war which it was “given him to make with the saints,” is the same as that which he is said to have made against the witnesses. Chap. xi. 7. It is that continued series of persecutions which during that part of the 1260 years which has already elapsed, he has been carrying on against the followers of Christ.

As the beast had assumed the place of God, so the multitude consented to treat him as the sovereign lord of conscience, and to be of that religion which he required. In describing this unworthy compliance, however, the Holy Spirit takes care to except “those whose names were written in the Lamb’s book of life;” thus branding the idolators with the black mark of reprobation. Such language wears a terrible aspect towards those who enter into the abominations of Antichrist, and persevere therein; but a pleasing one towards the chosen of God, who in the worst of times maintain their allegiance to Christ. Ver. 8.

The account of this secular beast, (which from it’s character of supporting the Popish Hierarchy may be denominated Papal,) here



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closes with a few words by way of solemn warning.—“If any man have an ear let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and faith of the saints.” The persecutor shall soon be persecuted, and the destroyer destroyed; and this not only in the world to come, but even in this world. Meanwhile, let the saints know that this is the season for the trial of their patience, and of their faith; the one to bear up under the persecutions of their enemies, and the other to keep in view the crown of life before them. Ver. 9, 10.

## DISCOURSE XIX.

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THE THIRD GENERAL DESCRIPTION CONTINUED: OR  
THE BEAST WITH TWO HORNS LIKE A LAMB.

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CHAP. XIII. 11—18.

*AND I beheld another beast, coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell*

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*on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword and did live. 15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.*

The former of these beasts we have considered as designed to symbolize the Roman empire under it's last head, or that secular government which, in connexion with the ten horns or kingdoms of Europe, supported Popery through all it's foul and bloody deeds: but here arises another beast, diverse from the former, yet acting in concert with him. Daniel, when describing the fourth or Roman beast, speaks of a *little horn* which should grow up as it were insensibly among the ten horns, and displace three of them. John says nothing of this little horn of Daniel, and Daniel is equally silent about this second beast of John: but from the character given to them both they appear to be one and the same, namely, *that ecclesiastical power which was to co-exist with the secular, and both assist and be assisted by it.*

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This beast is described as “rising out of the earth,” in which particular it is distinguished from the other, which “rose out of the sea.” For a beast to rise out of the sea is for an empire to rise out of the perturbed state of things in the world, and such was the empire before described: but for one to rise from the *earth* is for a power to grow up insensibly, like a weed in a garden, out of the established order of things. Such was Popery.

“And he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.” This perfectly answers to that affectation of Christian meekness, accompanied in reality by the spirit and doctrine of the Wicked One. On one occasion it can be *the servant of servants*; on another the deposer of kings, and disposer of empires.

“He exerciseth all the power of the first beast, before, or in the sight of him;” “He is, (says Bishop NEWTON,) the prime minister, adviser, and mover, of the first or secular beast. He holdeth *imperium in imperio*, an empire within an empire; claimeth a temporal authority as well as a spiritual; hath not

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only the principal direction of the temporal powers, but often, engageth them in his service, and enforceth his canons and decrees with the sword of the civil magistrate."

"He causeth men to worship the first beast." As the secular authority invested the ecclesiastical with power and riches and honours, so in return, the ecclesiastical, by consenting that Christianity should become an engine of state policy, and conscience itself be subjected to it's interests, transferred that homage to man which was due only to the eternal God. It is this ecclesiastical influence that has constituted the European nations a continuation of the old Roman empire. It is the only bond which for ages has held them together, so as to render them one great Antichristian beast. Ver. 12.

He is next described by his pretended miracles. He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh (or seemeth to make) "fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." This part of his character answers

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to what was foretold by the apostle of the man of sin that he should come with "signs and lying wonders." All these impositions of "the false prophet" as he is elsewhere called,\* being wrought *in the sight of the first beast*, and in that of the people, were to ingratiate himself with them, and to persuade them that he was, as is said of the sorcerer, "the great power of God." While therefore he was professing to honour magistracy, he was labouring to subject it to himself.

To shew his devotion to the secular beast, he directs the people to make an image to him; which being done, he, after his manner, endues it with life, and speech, and great authority: but all is "deceit;" for the object is not to exalt the secular beast, but himself.

This making of an *image* to the beast seems to allude to the heathen practice of making images to their deities. The gods themselves were supposed to be invisible. The same deity had images made to him

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\* Chap. xvi. 13, 14.

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in divers places. The design of making an image to a god would be to acknowledge him as *their* deity, and to give a visibility and an establishment to his worship. To “make an image to the beast whose deadly wound was healed” would therefore be to give visibility and authority to his worship; or to require implicit obedience to his commands in whose reign *Paganism was revived under the name of Catholic Christianity!* It is as guarantee of this system that the first beast is designated by the *healing of his deadly wound*, and that the second beast exerts all his influence in his favour.

It has been observed that while the secular beast is said to make war upon the saints, the ecclesiastical is only said to “*cause them to be killed.*” The Council of Lateran decreed not to put heretics to death, but to deliver them over to the secular power to be killed! “The inquisitors, (says BURNET,) on this occasion, with a disgusting affectation of lamb-like meekness, are wont to beseech the civil magistrates to shew mercy to those whom they themselves have given up to be consigned to the flames!” Ver. 15.

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16 *And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:.*  
17 *And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.* 18 *Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.*

Such was to be the growing influence of this last beast, that he could "cause" all ranks and degrees of men to enlist under the banners of the first, to receive like soldiers his mark and number, and so to be aiding and assisting in the execution of his measures. Such has actually been the conduct of the Roman hierarchy; so that the common rights of men have been suspended on condition of their receiving the Papal badge. Such, in fine, is the nature of the alliance established by this system between the ecclesiastical and the secular powers: each plays into the other's hands: the church consents that religion shall be an engine of state policy, and in return the state supports the church in all her corrupt proceedings.



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Respecting the “mark” and the “name” of the beast, it is opposed, I conceive, to the seal of God on the foreheads of his servants. Chap. vii. And as the *seal* and *name* of God on the forehead appear to be the same (Compare Chap. vii. 3. with Chap. xiv. 1.); so may the *mark* and the *name* of the beast. Both are thought to allude to the ancient practice of marking servants and soldiers with their owner’s name, in their forehead or in their hand.

I cannot pretend to be certain what is meant by the “*name* of the beast.” It may be observed, however, that as the beast here evidently means the *secular*, and not the ecclesiastical power, there is a name given to him in the prophecy. He is called, *The beast that was, and is not, and yet is.* (Chap. xvii. 8, 11.); the meaning of which I conceive to be, The government that existed in all it’s beastly properties as Pagan, that appeared to have lost them as Christian, but that in supporting a corrupted Christianity resumed them. In other words, it is *Paganism revived under the form of Catholic Christianity.* Now as names are signs of character, to have this name or mark of

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the beast would be the same thing as being openly of this character, or religion.

As to the "number of his name," I have nothing to offer which is fully satisfactory to my own mind. It is something which requires "wisdom and understanding to count it;" and yet by it's being "the number of a man," it would seem not to surpass human comprehension. It may be a name whose numerals amount to 666, as the Greek word *λατεινος*, or other words in which this number has been found: but as this appears to be merely conjecture, I leave it undecided.

## ***DISCOURSE XX.***

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THE THIRD GENERAL DESCRIPTION CONTINUED : OR  
THE LAMB'S COMPANY.

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CHAP. XIV. 1—5.

UNLESS we consider the whole of the fourteenth chapter as a continuation of the thirteenth, we cannot be said to have a third general view of the rise, reign, and overthrow of Popery; for the whole of the *thirteenth* chapter is taken up with a description of it's rise and reign, and nothing is said in it of it's downfal. Nor is any thing said of the state of the church of Christ during these "forty and two months," save that the beasts "made war" with it's members and "caused them to be killed." But if the *fourteenth* chapter be considered as a continuation of the subject, we have then a complete view

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of it, and a most animating description of the state of the church of Christ during the "forty and two months" or 1260 years, in beautiful opposition to the beasts and their followers.

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

The first of the beasts was a monster, having seven heads and ten horns; a compound of the leopard, the bear, and the lion. And as to the last, though in respect of it's horns it was *like a lamb*, yet it had nothing of the lamb in it's nature. What a charming contrast is here; not only between the kingdom of heaven, and the kingdoms of this world, but between a compound of hypocrisy and malignity, and the religion of Jesus Christ. There was something *like a lamb*: but lo, here *is a Lamb!*

One of the beasts is described as rising out of the *sea*, and the other out of the *earth*; but the Lamb as standing upon a *mountain*. "Standing" is a reigning posture.

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Dan. xi. 3. He had been slain, but now "stands up, and rules with great dominion." It also denotes that the party is not only unvanquished, but triumphant. It might have been supposed that from the rising up of these beasts the Lamb should have found no place to exercise his government among men: but he stands his ground, and has his followers, as the beasts have theirs. His kingdom was never overturned even in the most corrupt ages.

The place on which he stood was "Mount Sion." This is his proper ground, as much as Babylon was of the other. In his church even upon earth, and amidst the sharpest persecutions, the Lamb standeth upon the mount Sion.

The company said to be with him are the same that were sealed in Chap. vii. This sealing was prior to the Papal apostacy, and contained an assurance that God would preserve himself a people under it; and lo, after all the ravages of the beasts, here we find them; not in Babylon, but with the Lamb in Sion. The followers of the beast were designated by his mark and the number

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of his name; and the followers of the Lamb "have his Father's name written in their foreheads." These are the same with the two witnesses, and the woman that fled into the wilderness: they denote the Israel of God; and were that to an apostate church which the twelve tribes who served God day and night were to an apostate world.

In reviewing the dark ages of Popery, we are apt to think there could have been but few who claved to the truth in those times: but if the Christian world were again put to such a test of their sincerity, it were well if the number of the faithful proved greater than in those days. "MEDE, (says Bishop NEWTON,) hath observed from good authorities, that in the war with the Waldenses and Albigenses there perished in France alone *a million*; from the first institution of the Jesuits to the year 1480, that is, in little more than thirty years, *nine hundred thousand*. In the Netherlands alone the Duke of Alva boasted that within a few years he had dispatched to the amount of *thirty-six thousand*, and those all by the hand of the common executioner. In the

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space of scarce thirty years the inquisition destroyed by various kinds of tortures *one hundred and fifty thousand*. Saunders himself a Popish writer, confesses that *an innumerable multitude* of Lollards and Sacramentarians, were burnt throughout all Europe; who yet he says were not put to death by the Pope and Bishops, but by the civil magistrates." That is, the secular beast did the work, and the ecclesiastical only "caused" it! These, and many more whose names will appear another day, composed the company who stood with the Lamb.

*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 living creatures, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth.*

But hark! A sound is heard—It is from a great distance—It is like the roaring of the sea, or the rolling of thunder—It is the sound of a multitude—There is music—It

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seems like a *new* song—It is the moving of God's host!—What can be the meaning? If I mistake not, this is a description of the same event which is signified in the first general view by the resurrection of the witnesses, and in the second by the victory of Michael and his angels over the Dragon and his angels; that is to say, *The Reformation of the sixteenth century*. The song intimates that something has occurred which furnishes matter for rejoicing. A *new* song commonly supposes a new or recent deliverance; and to what event during the 1260 years can this be applied, unless it be to the Reformation? It was then that the army of the Lamb felt it's ground, and gloriously triumphed. That which at a distance was only "as it were" a new song, on drawing nearer proved to be one in reality, and one that none but the redeemed could unite in. The joy attending the Reformation would be confined to the faithful. As to worldly men who engaged in it, they would rejoice only as their temporal interests were promoted by it: and as to the devotees of the beasts, they would deplore the dangers of the church: but they who had been reclaimed from the apostacy of their species, and preserved from that of pro-



fessing Christians, would enter into the spirit of it. In them it was the triumph of faith. The blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony would be the burden of the song.

*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.*

The Lamb's company are here particularly characterized. *First*, By the things from which they had been preserved; namely, *spiritual fornication and adultery*, into which the generality of professing Christians had fallen. *Secondly*, By the course they had pursued. They followed the Lamb whithersoever he went: in his doctrine, worship, afflictions, spirit, and conduct, he was their example. *Thirdly*, By the distinguished blessings conferred upon them. They were "redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb." They

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were the travail of his soul, in which he was satisfied. In them appeared the efficacy of his death ; while others, though calling themselves Christians, still continued under the worst of bondage. And as in the law of the first-fruits a part was accepted for the whole ; so when that which called itself the church apostatized, those who continued faithful were accepted as the Christian church, or reckoned as the Lord's portion. *Fourthly*, By their sincerity and purity. "In their mouth was found no guile ; for they were without fault before the throne of God." While the followers of the beasts were trimming and worshipping, as their worldly interests required, these were upright before God in all their conversation.

Such is the contrast between the beast and the blasphemies of his worshippers on the one hand, and the Lamb and the praises of his followers on the other.

## DISCOURSE XXI.

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THE THIRD GENERAL DESCRIPTION CONCLUDED:  
OR THE MESSAGES OF THE THREE ANGELS, THE  
HARVEST, AND THE VINTAGE.

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CHAP. XIV. 6—20.

**I**F the foregoing application of the new song of the Lamb's company to the *Reformation* in the sixteenth century be just, it may be expected that what follows will relate to events subsequent to that distinguished era.

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*

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*him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*

I am aware that this commission of the flying angel has been generally understood as addressed to Papal idolaters, and the passage of course applied to the evangelical labours of the Reformers. The fall of Babylon and the warnings against worshipping the beast and his image which follow, may have led to this application. There are other things, however, which have led me to consider "the angel flying in the midst of heaven" as sent to Pagan rather than to Papal idolaters.

It is true, we are in danger of magnifying the events of our own times, and of expecting to find things occupying a conspicuous place in prophecy which upon the great chart of the divine proceedings may have no place, or at most be only as a speck. I have not sought however for any thing which might be applied to the events of present times, nor interpreted the passage in any other than what appears to be it's most natural meaning.

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There are four characters pertaining to the prophecy, some of which appear to be inapplicable to the evangelical labours of the Reformers, but which are all applicable to the attempts to evangelize the Heathen. 1. The parties to whom the message is sent are not merely the nations of Europe, but EVERY NATION, AND KINDRED, AND TONGUE, AND PEOPLE. 2. The message itself seems to intimate that they had hitherto read only the book of nature, and that without learning from it so much as WHO MADE THE HEAVENS, AND THE EARTH, AND THE SEA, AND THE FOUNTAINS OF WATERS. 3. It is supposed that when the spread of the gospel should be attempted in good earnest, and in a humble dependence upon God, *difficulties* which before seemed insuperable would subside. The church has long felt too much like the unbelieving Israelites in respect of going up to possess the promised land. Giants have seemed in the way, and walls reaching up to heaven: but when the work is attempted in the name of Christ, it is like *an angel flying in the midst of heaven*, whose course none are able to arrest. 4. The *tone* in which the nations are addressed is solemn

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and imperious. "The hour of his judgment is come!" There was something resembling this when the gospel was first announced. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.—The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, &c."\* The kingdom of the Messiah was then at hand, but now it draws near in it's most extended form; and those nations and governments that will not bow to him shall be dashed in pieces as a potter's vessel! It is now coming to this, that "All they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul:"—which as our poet expresses it, is equal to saying—

And all the kindreds of the earth  
Shall worship, or shall die!

The desire which has been kindled of late years to carry the gospel among the Heathen does not appear to be an object unworthy of a place in prophecy. It has engaged the

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\* Matt. iii. 2. Acts xvii. 30, 31.

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attention of a larger portion of the Christian church, and excited more earnest prayer and disinterested exertion, than perhaps any thing which has occurred since the Reformation. Nor ought we to consider what has hitherto been done as any thing more than the commencement of the angel's flight. It has indeed for it's *object* the evangelizing of "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people"; but at present this is far from being accomplished. We have seen enough, however, to convince us with what ease the great God, by touching the hearts of a few individuals, can accomplish it.

*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.*

This is the first time that mention is made of *Babylon*. The allusion doubtless is to old Babylon, by which the church was formerly oppressed; and to the predictions of her fall as given by the prophets:\* but the Babylon here referred to doubtless is

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\* Isa. xxi. 9. Jer. li. 8.

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Rome, considered as the head of that great Antichristian community which has corrupted the religion of Christ, and persecuted his followers.

There may be no such immediate connexion between the preaching of the everlasting gospel to the Heathen world and the fall of Antichristian Babylon, as that the latter should be the effect of the former: but it may comport with the wisdom of God to render it a concomitant. When the servants of Christ lay themselves out for his name in one way, it is not unusual with him to promote the same general object in another. If we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, temporal blessings are added unto us; and thus if we lay ourselves out in extending his cause among the Heathen, he may at the same time, by his providence, be working in another quarter the overthrow of that which is opposed to it.

The cry of the angel does not denote that Babylon would be *immediately* and *entirely* destroyed at this time; for if so, the warnings of the third angel, which follow, would be unnecessary. Besides, it is by the *harvest*



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and the *vintage*, towards the close of the chapter, that the overthrow will be effected. But the church is here called upon to *expect* it, and to observe the course of events, as preparing the way for it.

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 for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. 12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. 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 labours; and their works do follow them.*

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This is the language of solemn warning. It is addressed to all whom it concerns, good and bad, especially to those who live at the time here referred to; the time immediately preceding the fall of the Antichristian power, and so looks with a severe aspect on those who persevere in their attachment to it, notwithstanding the light which will have been diffused in the world. They who at *any period* surrender their consciences to human authority, and fully imbibe the Antichristian system will incur the wrath of God: but they who do this in the face of that light which by this time will be spread through the world, will incur greater degrees of the divine displeasure than those who have been carried away with it in darker ages. The 12th and 13th verses would seem to portend a time of *persecution* prior to the final overthrow of the Antichristian power; a time which may be as the last struggles of the beast. This is the flood cast out of the mouth of the dragon after the woman; (Chap. xii. 15.) the gathering together of the "kings of the earth and of the whole world to the battle of the great day of God Almighty; (Chap. xvi. 14.) and the *war* made by the beast

and the kings against him who sat upon the horse, and against his army." Chap. xix. 19.

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.* 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 wine-press of the wrath of God.* 20 *And the wine-press was trodden without the city,*

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*and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.*

The angels have delivered their messages, and now the Lord himself appears. He comes as it were to judgment, and to the Antichristian party a terrible judgment it will be. Under the symbols of a *harvest* and a *vintage*, is predicted its utter overthrow. Whatever distinction there may be between the one and the other, both I doubt not refer to that series of calamities which is reserved to destroy the beast and his adherents. They refer to the same things which have been noticed from Chap. xi. 18. when the wrath of God was come, and the time of the dead that they should be avenged, and those destroyed who had long destroyed the earth. This being a general description of events which will be more particularly set forth under the pouring out of the vials, we shall find them again under "the battle of Armageddon, or the great day of God Almighty"; (Chap. xvi.) also in the "supper of the Great God," to which the fowls are invited, and in which "the beast and the false prophet are taken." Chap. xix.

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One thing is remarkable in both the harvest and the vintage, they indicate that the Papal abominations shall be *ripe, fully ripe*. There is a tendency to maturity in both good and evil, in individuals and communities, and even in the world itself. Popery matured is infidelity. To this it tends, and here it will probably land the great body of it's adherents. I see no solid ground for Mr. FABER's hypothesis of an *infidel king*, any more than of an *infidel Antichrist*. The historical exposition of the xith chapter of Daniel by PRIDEAUX (*Connection Part II. Book II, III.*) appearing to me to be the true one: but I have no doubt that infidelity is, and will be, the distinguishing feature of the last times. What is said of the "scoffers of the last times" is indeed descriptive of what we daily witness; but it is only of individuals that these things are spoken. Infidelity does not appear to be symbolized in the scriptures, either by a *beast*, a *horn*, or a *king*: it is merely the Papal beast grown old, or Popery as having produced it's proper fruits, which fruits may be the appointed means of it's destruction.

## **DISCOURSE XXII.**

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### **INTRODUCTION TO THE VIALS.**

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#### **CHAP. XV.**

*AND I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, 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 marvellous 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*

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*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 living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever 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.*

Three general descriptions having been given of the Antichristian power, each of which carried us to the end of the 1260 years, the series of the prophecy *from the time of the sounding of the seventh trumpet* is now resumed. This trumpet, it has been observed before, wears a two-fold aspect. It is partly a woe-trumpet, and partly the harbinger of joy. The seven vials are a part of it, and answer to the former view. The

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other part comprehends the success of the gospel preparatory to the Millennium, the Millennium itself, and all that follows to the end of the prophecy, and answers to the latter view. At present we are to consider it as a woe-trumpet, or as comprehending the seven vials; which, containing a *more particular* account of the judgments already hinted at towards the end of the general descriptions, will, like them, bring us to the close of the 1260 years.

The angels with the vials are called “a sign in heaven, great and marvellous,” because the judgments which follow are signal and fearful, and the times very eventful, so as deeply to interest the church of God.

The seven vials are denominated “the seven *last plagues, in which will be filled up the wrath of God.*” This supposes that in various instances God had already poured forth his wrath upon these Antichristian powers, but that this should be the FINISHING BLOW. Hence it follows that we are not to consider these vials as including *all* those plagues which at different periods have been poured upon the Antichristian party, but merely



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*those which shall bring it to it's end.* As the vials are a subdivision of the third and last woe-trumpet, they could not begin to be poured out till that trumpet was sounded: and as they are emphatically called the seven *last* plagues, they must refer to the latter end of the 1260 years. In short, they are the particulars of what was signified under the general representations by God's wrath being come, and the time of the dead that they should be avenged—and by the harvest and the vintage. Chapters xi. and xiv.

All those expositions of the vials, therefore, which suppose them to have been pouring out at different periods from the beginning of the 1260 years appear to me to be founded in mistake. The farthest point to which we can look back for the commencement of these calamities may be found to be within the last five and twenty years. Ver. 1.

The “sea of glass mingled with fire” is the same which is said in Chap. iv. 6. to have been before the throne. It is opposed, I conceive, to that perturbed element from which the beast arose; and describes the pure, calm, and triumphant state of those who

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have overcome. The striking up of the heavenly choir on this occasion was to express the great good that should arise from these evils. The song they sing is that of "Moses and the Lamb." As the song of Moses at the Red Sea magnified the victory of the Lord over the Egyptians, so this song will celebrate the triumph of the Lamb and of his followers over enemies of a similar character. If the works of God in redeeming his people from the long and hard bondage of Egypt were "great and marvellous" much more so would they be in delivering his saints from the long and hard bondage of "that great city which is spiritually called Egypt;" and if his "ways were just and true" in the former instance, they would be still more manifestly so in the latter. Ver. 2, 3.

It is not in malignity towards any creature, but in love to God, whose honour had for so long a time been trampled under foot, that these heavenly minds rejoice; not for the evil considered as evil, but for the good that should arise from it. Hence, anticipating the righteousness which the world shall learn when these judgments are abroad in the earth, they triumphantly ask, "Who shall not

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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." By this language we are given to expect that *the judgments on the Antichristian powers, in connexion with the preaching of the gospel, will contribute to the universal spread of true religion over the face of the earth..* Ver. 4.

As the throne of the God of Israel was in the holy of holies, so his throne in heaven is described as in his temple; and as when the High-priest entered into the former once a year he saw the ark of the testimony, so the heavenly temple being opened, the apostle looked, and saw the seven angels come out from before the throne, as having received their commissions. They are described as "clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles." Nothing could better express the state of their *minds* in executing the divine displeasure. God had sometimes employed evil angels to execute his will, even towards his own people, as in the case of Job, and in such instances they have been certain to discover their malignity. But when good angels execute

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the divine will, though it be upon his worst enemies, they have no malignant bitterness, but are influenced purely by the love of God and righteousness. Ver. 5, 6.

Next to the description of the messengers follows the delivering to them their respective messages; and this was from the hand of one of the four living creatures who represented redeemed men. God does not usually employ his people in this world to overthrow either corrupt churches or Anti-christian governments. This is a kind of work not suited to them. They must however have some concern in it. Their prayers for deliverance are answered by terrible things in righteousness upon their persecutors; and to all the judgments of God they must add their cordial *Amen*. Ver. 7.

The effect of the delivery of these messages is described as "filling the temple with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power, so that no man could enter it." "This cloud, (says Dr. GUYSE,) appeared like a thick smoke, awfully glorious, which was a symbol of the divine vengeance, (Psa. xviii. 8.) as going forth from the presence of

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the Lord, and to be executed by the glory of his power, in the destruction of Antichrist; even as the cloud on the tabernacle was of his dreadful judgment upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and the murmuring Israelites; (Numb. xvi. 19, 42.) and as Moses could not enter into the tabernacle, nor the priests stand to minister in the temple, while the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord, (Exod. xl. 35. 1 Kings viii. 11.) so no one could enter into this heavenly temple to intercede for the preventing of these greivous calamities upon the beast: none were suffered to do this, that judgment might have it's free course, till all the seven punishments to be inflicted by the ministry of the seven angels, were fully executed in their order."

## ***DISCOURSE XXIII.***

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ON THE VIALS.

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CHAP. XVI. 1—9.

**I** ENTER upon this part of the subject with diffidence, because I consider the events predicted as mostly future; and the exposition of unfulfilled prophecy, especially when couched under symbolical language, is rarely accurate. When in looking at a symbol we compare it with facts, we can judge of the one as being designed to predict the other: but in looking at the symbols without the facts, we can seldom make much out in explaining them. Nor does it appear to have been the design of prophecy to enable us to foresee things with any considerable degree of precision; but to keep up a general hope before the ac-

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complishment, and to strengthen our faith after it.

*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.*

Before entering on particulars, I shall offer two or three general remarks—

*First,* Some of these “plagues,” and it may be the greater part of them, will consist in *wars* between the nations of Christendom. Such is doubtless the meaning of those in which mention is made of “blood,” and of the “battle of Armageddon, the great day of God Almighty.” It is thus that the nations which have shed the blood of his saints will have blood given them to drink!

*Secondly,* As the grand design of these wars is the destruction of the Antichristian hierarchy, they may be expected to have a *providential direction* given to them, causing them to bear more especially upon that object. If this remark be just, it furnishes a presumption that the vials have been pouring

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out for the last twenty years. As a fire kindled in a city has a direction given to it's ravages, by the wind, or by some other means; so Providence has caused the desolations of the Continent to bear principally, though not entirely, upon the Papal cause.

*Thirdly*, The resemblances between the vials and the trumpets may throw more light upon the subject than any other medium of which we are in possession. It is a fact very remarkable that the seven trumpets have each a point of resemblance with the seven vials.—For example, The first trumpet affected *the earth*; and so does the first vial.\* The second trumpet turned *the sea into blood*; and the second vial was poured out upon *the sea*, which became *as the blood of a dead man*.† The third trumpet affected *the rivers and fountains of water*; and so does the third vial.‡ The fourth trumpet respected *the sun*; and the fourth vial does the same.§ The fifth trumpet was followed by *darkness and pain*; and such were the effects of the

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\* Compare Chap. viii. 7. with xvi. 2. † Chap. viii. 8. with xvi. 3. ‡ Chap. viii. 10, 11. with xvi. 4. § Chap. viii. 12. with xvi. 8, 9.



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fifth vial.\* The sixth trumpet was complex, relating partly to the depredations of the Euphratean horsemen in the East, and partly to the idolatries and persecutions of the beast and his associates in the West; and so is the sixth vial; relating partly to the Euphratean waters being dried up, and partly to the battle of Armageddon, by which the cause of the beasts will be ruined.† Finally, The seventh trumpet presents a *closing scene*; and so does the seventh vial.‡ These resemblances cannot be accidental. Though they refer to events, therefore, more than a thousand years distant from each other, yet there must be some important points of likeness between them; and as the trumpets are all, except the last, fulfilled, we may by means of them form some judgment of the vials which yet may be unfulfilled.

It was on this principle that Dr. GILL seems to have proceeded in expounding the vials. “The first vial, (says he,) will be poured out upon *the earth*, and designs those

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\* Compare Chap. ix. 1, 3. with xvi. 10. † Chap. ix. 14—xi. 14. with xvi. 12—16. ‡ Chap. xi. 15. with xvi. 17.

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Popish countries which are upon the *continent*, as France and Germany, especially the latter: and as the first trumpet brought the Goths into Germany, so the first vial will bring great distress upon the Popish party in the empire.—The second vial will be poured upon *the sea*, and may intend the *maritime* powers belonging to the church of Rome, particularly Spain and Portugal: and as the second trumpet brought the Vandals into these places, so this vial will affect the same, and bring wars and desolations into them.—The third vial will be poured out upon *the rivers and fountains of waters*, which may point to those places adjacent to Rome, as Italy and Savoy: and as the third trumpet brought the Huns into those parts, so this vial will bring in large armies hither, which will cause much bloodshed, and a great revolution in church and state.”\*

This comment on the vials founded upon their analogy with the trumpets bids fair, in my judgment, to be the true one; especially

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\* Sermon on *The glory of the Church in the latter day*, pp. 12—15.

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that on the first three which<sup>a</sup> has just been quoted.

The Docter adds—"As yet I take it none of them are poured out, though some great and learned men have thought otherwise. As yet there have been no such devastations on the Continent, as in France and Germany, as to produce the above effects; nor in the countries of Spain, Portugal, &c." This was doubtless the case in 1752, the year in which the Sermon from which the above extract is made was printed, but this is more than can be said in 1810!

*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 worshipped his image.*

If by the "earth" be meant "the continent, as France and Germany, especially the latter," (and I know of no interpretation more natural,) we have certainly seen a succession of evils falling upon the men who "had the mark of the beast," first in France, and

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after that in Germany, grievous as the most "noisome sores," and like them indicative of a state of corruption and approaching dissolution.

*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.*

If this vial respect the Papal *maritime* nations, particularly Spain and Portugal, (and here also I know of no interpretation more natural) we have seen a commencement of things in those countries, but have not yet seen the issue. What it will be God knoweth. Whether this or that political party prevail, it will be a plague, and a plague that will tend to accomplish the ruin of the Antichristian cause.

There is a circumstance of additional horror in this vial, which was not in it's corresponding trumpet: the blood into which this "sea" would be turned is described as stagnant, "as the blood of a dead man;" as though such a quantity should be shed as not only to tinge, but to congeal the

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ocean, turning it as it were into a putrid mass!

*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.*

If the rivers and fountains of waters denote "Italy and Savoy," these countries may be expected to be the scene of the next great convulsions which shall agitate Europe. And if it be so, it may be a just retribution for the blood of the Waldenses, which was there shed in shocking profusion for many successive centuries.

The responsive language of the angels on this occasion accords with such an interpretation, and is exceedingly impressive. It

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shews in what light the persecution of the faithful is viewed in heaven. This sin implies such a hatred of God and his image, as would, if he were within reach, dethrone and kill him! Unjust war is a great sin: it is murder on an extended scale: yet it is not to be named in comparison of persecution for Christ's sake. The one is destroying God's natural image; but the other is aimed at his moral image. In the former "the potsherd striveth with the potsherds of the earth: but in the latter man striveth with his Maker! This was the sin which crowned the wicked life of Herod the Tetrarch, who to all his other crimes "added this *above all*, that he shut up John in prison!" Blood shed in persecution of God's servants hath a cry which must sooner or later be heard. The persecutions of former ages may be forgotten by men: but he "who is, and was, and shall be" will not forget them. The judgments of our own times are examples of this: all Europe, previous to the Reformation, was stained with the blood of the martyrs; and since that memorable era, France and Germany, and Spain, and Portugal, and Italy, have been deeply engaged in that impious practice. Is it surprising then that all Europe

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in measure, and those nations in particular which have persisted in it, should be made to drink the bloody draught? While we feel, and ought to feel, for suffering humanity, it is not for us to join with the merchants of the earth in their wailings; but rather with the angels in heaven, saying, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, because thou hast judged thus!"

*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.*

In discoursing upon the trumpets it was observed, that the Roman empire, then become the seat of Christianity, was considered as a world of itself; having not only it's *earth*, it's *sea*, and it's *rivers*, but it's *sun*, and *moon*, and *stars*; symbols of it's supreme and subordinate governments.\* When the sun was eclipsed on the sounding of the fourth

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\* Chap. viii. 6—12. p. 104.

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trumpet it signified the fall of the imperial authority: but the fourth vial, though poured upon the sun, yet unlike it's corresponding trumpet, does not terminate upon it, but upon the people on whom it shines. The sun here, instead of being eclipsed, or having it's power diminished, has it increased. It's heat is rendered more intense, so as to become a plague to those who are under it's influence.

By the "sun," is undoubtedly to be understood the supreme secular government of what is called *the Holy Roman Empire*, which is denominated *the beast*, and distinguished by it's carrying or supporting the harlot. It's scorching heat cannot be understood of the persecution of the faithful; for they would not "blaspheme" under it. It would seem therefore to be the galling tyranny by which the adherents of the beast will be oppressed; while yet they repent not of their deeds.



## DISCOURSE XXIV.

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THE VIALS CONTINUED.

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CHAP. XVI. 10—21.

*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.*

By the “beast” we have all along understood that secular government which at the head of the other European governments has supported the *Papal Antichrist*. This certainly has not been the imperial government of France, but of Germany, to which therefore the character of *the beast* belongs. The station from which his influence and

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authority proceeds will be his "seat," or throne, or we may say his *den*. And that which the swellings of Jordan were to the lions which made their dens amongst the thickets growing upon it's margin,\* that will this plague be to him, causing him, if not to quit his den with howlings, yet to be very miserable in it. This is intimated by his "kingdom being full of darkness," and by their gnawing their tongues for pain." The supporters of the Papal cause will be confounded. Darkness and anguish will come upon them. Yet being given up, like Pharaoh, to hardness of heart, they will continue to blaspheme the God of heaven, and will not repent of their deeds. These blasphemies and this perseverance in impenitence are sure signs of it's being the determination of Heaven to destroy them. Individuals may repent and escape; but as a community they are appointed to utter destruction.

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*

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\* Jer. xlix. 19.

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*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 they gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.*

This vial, so far as respects the *temporal* dominion of Christ's enemies, possesses a final character; and seems partly to respect the overthrow of the Turkish power, signified by the "drying up of the waters of the Euphrates," and partly that of the Papal, signified by the battle of "Armageddon," or of that "great day of God Almighty."

With regard to the first, as the sixth trumpet respected the rise of the Turkish power to punish the Eastern church, so the sixth vial seems to denote it's overthrow,

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along with that of the Western church. The drying up of waters fitly expresses that diminution of strength and defence in a nation which issues in destruction. Thus when God would destroy Babylon, he saith, "A drought is upon her waters, and they shall be dried up—I will dry up her sea, and will make her springs dry. And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment and an hissing, without an inhabitant."\* "The kings of the east" may denote those who shall be employed in overthrowing this power, as the armies of Cyrus and Darius, on the waters of the Euphrates being diverted, were employed in overthrowing Babylon.

I have expressed a doubt whether either the doctrines or the wars of Mahomet would have had a place in this prophecy but for their relation to the Christian church;† and I think it questionable whether the downfall of the Turks would have been noticed but on the same account. This was the reason of so much being said of old Babylon. She might have risen and

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\* Jer. l. 38. li. 36, 37.    † On Chap. ix. 13—21.

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fallen unnoticed by the prophets, if she had had nothing to do with Jerusalem. But though she was an instrument in God's hand in purging that corrupted city, yet seeing she "meant not so," but set herself against God himself, it required that she should in the end be overthrown, and that her overthrow should be marked in prophecy. In like manner, though Mahomet and his followers were instruments in punishing a corrupt part of the Christian church, yet seeing they meant not so, but set themselves against Christ himself, they also shall be overthrown, and their overthrow is marked in prophecy.

With regard to the second part of this vial, or that which respects the *Papal* powers, this is the most tremendous. This is the last struggle of the beast and his adherents, and which will issue in their utter overthrow. This is "the great day of God Almighty;" the same as the *harvest* and the *vintage* in Chap. xiv. and the "taking of the beast and the false prophet" in Chap. xix.

Preparatory to this great day we have *The mustering of the forces*—"Three unclean

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spirits like frogs," are described as going forth amongst the nations to gather them together; one from the mouth of the dragon, another from that of the beast, and another from that of the false prophet. These *spirits* may denote the corrupt *principles* which shall be disseminated in the *earth*, tending to deceive and to destroy mankind. As the *dragon* is described as the grand mover of all these mischiefs, as he is not said to be taken with the beast and the false prophet in Chap. xix. and is denominated "that old serpent the Devil and Satan;" I consider him as a being of a different order from either of them. And as the unclean spirit which proceeded from the dragon may be supposed to correspond with his character, it may be a spirit of *diabolical malignity against God and true religion*.—The *beast* being understood of the last head of the Roman empire, the great supporter of Popery, the unclean spirit proceeding out of his mouth may be *that which assumes the place of God in the consciences of men, and converts Christianity into an engine of state policy*.—The *false prophet*, though designated by a new name, appears to be the same power that was represented in Chap. xiii.

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by the two-horned beast, and in 2 Thes. ii. 3. by "the man of sin." This is evident from the character of each being the same. The coming of the man of sin was to be with "signs and lying wonders." The two-horned beast "deceived them that dwell on the earth by means of his miracles;" and amongst the operations of the three evil spirits mention is made of "miracles," which seem to pertain to the false prophet. The man of sin, the two-horned beast, and the false prophet, therefore are the same, namely, the Papal hierarchy, or the community of which the Pope is the head. The evil spirit proceeding out of his mouth may be that of *blind zeal, and religious imposture.*

These three evil spirits, discordant as they may be in some respects, will be united in their opposition to true religion. Hence in the great battle wherein the beast and the false prophet are taken, (Chap. xix.) (and which, as has been observed, is the same as this at Armageddon) the whole triumverate is engaged "against him that sat on the horse, and against his army." It shall be a character of these times that both the friends and enemies of Christ will be

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nearer together than they have been wont to be: irreligion and false religion will unite their standards, and fight with neither small nor great, but with Christ and his adherents. Where men agree in the grand out lines of false doctrine, and conceive themselves to meet in their political interests they can easily overlook other differences.

It seems as if a spirit of infatuation, like that in Pharaoh and his host at the Red Sea, would possess the enemies of Christ prior to this their last overthrow. The kings of the earth are gathered together, partly by hatred of God and religion, (the spirit of the dragon,) partly by the desire of subjugating both to political purposes, (the spirit of the beast,) and partly by blind zeal and religious imposture, (the spirit of the false prophet,) and being assembled, will direct all their force against God and his cause. In what particular mode their hostility will be manifested, and by what means Christ will prevail against them, is too much for us to determine. The first may be by direct persecution, or if by war, it will be one whose object shall be to exterminate the true religion; and the last may be by



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turning their hearts one against another. Though they have been gathered together, and have unitedly engaged in this notable enterprise, yet finding it unsuccessful, they may fall out with one another. The spirit of the dragon may prevail over that of the beast and that of the false prophet, and he may think to govern the world without them. The Antichristian kings also perceiving how things are going, may be for joining the strongest side. But if so, they will find themselves deceived. The next vial will purify the world of their baleful influences, and the Angel with a great chain in his hand stands ready to lay hold on the dragon himself and to cast him into the bottomless pit.

The warning language addressed to the faithful (ver. 15.) seems to intimate that these important events will come upon men unexpectedly, and that many will be stripped by them of their professions and prospects. Blessed are they whose religion will stand the test of such times of trial.

*17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great*

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*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.*

As the sixth vial has issued in the overthrow of the temporal power of Antichrist, the seventh seems to respect it's *spiritual* dominion, or the hold which it has on the minds of men.\*

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\* That these are very distinct we need go no farther than Ireland for proof. Popery has there long existed not

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The moral atmosphere of the world has long been polluted by false religion, from which it seems to be the object of this vial to cleanse it as by a thunder-storm, which thunder-storm produces a great earthquake, and this the falling to pieces of the great Antichristian city, and other cities with it. The face of the world from hence becomes changed, and the wrath of God pursues, as by a terrible hail-storm, the men who repent not of their deeds.

Nor may this purification of the moral atmosphere be confined to Christendom, but extend to the whole earth. Paganism, Mahometanism, apostate Judaism, and every thing which stands opposed to the truth shall now be driven out of the world. An "earthquake" is the well-known symbol of a revolution; and so great and mighty a revolution of religious principle, may well justify the description given of it. And now a voice out of the temple of heaven even

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only without the aid of temporal power, but in a manner against it: yet there are few, if any countries where it has faster hold of the minds of men.

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from the throne of God is heard, saying  
IT IS DONE! The threatening of the angel  
in Chap. x. 7. is accomplished—the 1260  
years are ended—THE MYSTERY OF GOD IS  
FINISHED!

As this vial seems to be wholly of a  
*spiritual* nature, the “thunders and lightnings  
and earthquake and hail” do not seem to  
refer to wars, or to any other temporal  
calamities, but it may be to the effects of  
truth, and to those *spiritual judgments* which  
will fall on them who continue to reject it.  
The *body* of Antichrist, as I may say, will  
be destroyed by the temporal sword, as  
described under the preceding vial; but the  
“spirit of Christ’s mouth” shall destroy his  
*spirit*. Such from the beginning was the  
doom passed upon that Wicked One; and  
such is the punishment of those who escape  
in the great battle wherein the beast and false  
prophet shall be taken, but who repent not  
of their deeds: they shall be “slain with  
the sword of him that sat upon the horse,  
which sword proceedeth out of his mouth.”  
Chap. xix. 21.

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The city being "divided into three parts," as by an earthquake, denotes, I think, the breaking up of the Papal system; and what "the cities of the nations" which fall with it can be understood to mean but those worldly establishments of religion which have symbolized with Popery, not only in worship and ceremonies, but in an *alliance with the kingdoms of this world*, I cannot conceive. To understand "the great city" of the Roman *empire*, and "the cities of the nations" of *particular states*, neither comports with the meaning of the terms in other parts of the prophecy, nor with the *spiritual* judgments denoted by this vial. "The great city" is mentioned in several other places in the prophecy—as in Chap. xi. 8. "Their dead bodies shall lie in the streets of *the great city*, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."—And in Chap. xiv. 8. "Babylon is fallen, *that great city*."—And in Chap. xviii. 10. 21. "Alas, *that great city*, Babylon."—"Thus with violence shall *that great city* Babylon be thrown down." In none of these passages does it appear

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to mean the *empire*, but the *church* of Rome. The empire is symbolized by a *beast*, from which *the great city* is distinguished. Chap. xi. 7, 8. But if "the great city" mean the Church of Rome, even "great Babylon who now comes in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath," "the cities of the nations" must mean those ecclesiastical communities which have symbolized with her.

## ***DISCOURSE XXV.***

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THE GREAT HARLOT, AND THE BEAST THAT  
CARRIETH HER.

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### CHAP. XVII.

**H**AVING gone through the vials, we have arrived at the commencement of the Millennium. Indeed we descended to this period in each of the three general descriptions, and in the pouring out of the vials have only retraced the latter part of the ground more particularly. All that remains between this and the 20th chapter would in modern publications be called *notes of illustration*. No new subject is introduced, but mere enlargement on what has already been announced. We have heard much of the beast in the 13th chapter; but in the 17th we have a still more particular account of him, and of the woman that

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sitteth upon him, without which we should not have been able to understand the other. We had a hint given us of the fall of Babylon in the 14th chapter; but in the 18th and part of the 19th we have a triumphant ode, sent as it were from heaven, to be sung on the occasion. Finally, We have been given to expect in the 14th chapter, that prior to the overthrow of the Antichristian cause the gospel would be making progress; but in the 19th we see the word of God going forth, riding upon a white horse, and the Antichristian powers destroyed in the very act of opposing him.

The first of these *illustrative notes*, as we shall call them, is contained in the 17th chapter; and respects the leading characters of the Antichristian party.

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 judgement 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*



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*fornication. 3 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. 4 And the woman was arrayed in purple, and scarlet colour, 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. 6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.*

The object of this vision was not to gratify curiosity, but to shew the justice of those plagues which were, or were about to be inflicted.

The opprobrious name given to the woman determines it's reference to a corrupt and false church, as opposed to "the bride the Lamb's wife." Her "sitting upon many waters," and which are said to be "peoples

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and multitudes and nations and tongues," (Ver. 15.) prove that this corrupt and false church would not be confined to a single city, or nation, but would extend over a number of nations. The "kings of the earth that have committed fornication with her," are all those governments which are or have been within the pale of her communion, and which till the Reformation included the whole of Western Europe, "the great Gothic family," as they have been denominated. It is this their idolatrous communion with her that is called fornication. Those who have been "made drunk with the wine of her fornication" are those who have drunk into her doctrines, worship, spirit, and practices, and have become as it were intoxicated by them.

To have a view of this harlot, the apostle is carried in vision "into the wilderness." She was represented before as sitting upon many waters; but as she is now to be described as riding upon a beast, it is proper that it should be upon the earth. Though the imagery however is changed, yet the meaning may be much the same: for a wilderness, no less than many waters, signifies

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peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. Hence the nations into which Judah was carried captive are called "the wilderness of the people."\* For the apostle to be carried into the wilderness may be equal to his being placed in the midst of the nations of Europe, say in London, Paris, Madrid, or Vienna, at a time when Papal Rome was in all her glory.

Being in the wilderness he sees a woman sitting upon a beast, which beast was caparisoned with scarlet trappings, full of the names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. This beast is manifestly the same as that which is described in the 13th chapter as "rising out of the sea," and is no other than *the Roman empire under it's last head, or form of government, or that which has been known in history as the Western, or Holy Roman Empire, in connexion with the kingdoms of Europe, which are it's ten horns.* It is this government which has given the title of *emperor*, sometimes to a king of one nation, and sometimes of another; but whoever has

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\* Ezek. xx. 35.

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possessed it, he has been considered as the grand supporter of the Papal hierarchy

It is said that the ancient Pagan emperors were wont to be dressed in "scarlet" in times of war; a fit attire then for a bloody period, and now for a bloody persecuting government. It's "names of blasphemy" express it's impious and Antichristian character; assuming the throne of God in the minds and consciences of men.

The "purple and scarlet, and gold, and precious stones, and pearls" with which the woman was arrayed, allude no doubt to the attire of an harlot of no ordinary rank. The design is to describe her as being of the world, and seeking the things of the world, or as contriving by her meretricious ornaments to dazzle the eyes of her beholders. It is by that ceremonious pomp, splendour, and will-worship, which have often been defended under the name of *decency*, and deemed necessary, both to gratify the taste of the polite and to excite the admiration of the vulgar, that false religion makes it's way. The "golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication"

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are her corrupt principles and idolatrous practices, recommended by her seducing emoluments. The "name on her forehead" is thought to allude to the ancient practice of harlots, who not only used to put their names on their doors, but some of them upon their foreheads. It is expressive not only of the general character of the Antichristian church, but of her impudence; practising day by day the foulest and filthiest impostures, and yet calling herself the Holy Catholic Church, and denying salvation to all without her pale! The name of "mystery" was given to this apostacy by Paul as well as John, and with this very proper exposition, "The mystery of iniquity." The system is full of "the depths of Satan," which it is an honour not to know.—She is farther denominated "Babylon the great." Here we see that the apocalyptic Babylon and the harlot are the same: it is Rome, as an Antichristian community extending over many nations. What Babylon was to the Old Testament church she is to the New; and such will be her end.—Finally, She is denominated "The mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." There are other corrupt churches as well as that of Rome;

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but she is the principal, and the parent of them, the harlot of harlots. Not only by "forbidding to marry" does she open the flood-gates to illicit commerce between the sexes, and even to unnatural crimes, but sells indulgences and pardons in the name of Jesus Christ!

To complete the character of this mother of harlots she is described as making others intoxicated, and as being herself "drunken with the blood of the saints!" Persecution is the crowning sin of the greatest sinners.

The apostle having beheld her, "wondered with great admiration," as well he might. So much wickedness, be it committed by whom it might, was wonderful; but who could have thought that this was a picture of what would be called *The Holy Catholic Church, in whose pale only was salvation!!!* The Christian Church was an object dear to him: what then must be his feelings to be told that it should come to this!

*7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.*

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The answer of the angel is designed to allay the admiration of the apostle; and this it does by accounting for what had been seen. When Hazael wondered at his own predicted cruelties, and scarcely thought them possible, he was told in answer, "The Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria." This was answer sufficient; and that of the angel resembles it. The character of the woman is accounted for by her alliance with the beast. Let the Christian church consider this, and tremble at such alliances!

8 *The beast that thou sawest, was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.* 9 *And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.* 10 *And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.* 11 *And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.*

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Having given an account of the woman, the angel proceeds to describe "the beast that carrieth her." This no doubt is the Roman empire, described as the "beast that was, and is not, and yet is." Prior to the overthrow of Paganism by Constantine, it *was*—it was that idolatrous, blasphemous, persecuting power which Daniel had foretold. From that period, professing to become a Christian government, the properties of the beast were as it were laid aside, and it *was not*. Such was it's character from the days of Constantine to the revelation of the man of sin. It might have been denominated *the beast that was, and is not; or the late Pagan, but now Christian empire*. But notwithstanding this his profession of Christianity, his origin is "the bottomless pit," and his end "perdition." He may deceive the blinded multitude with his pretences of being *not* that which he once was; but, as the angel informs the apostle, he *yet is*. He had indeed "a wound by a sword," which was thought at the time to be mortal, but it did not prove so. The corruptions of Christianity healed it, and all the properties of the beast revived in their wonted vigour.



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The angel proceeds to inform the apostle more particularly concerning the "seven heads" of the beast, and intimates that in understanding this subject there will be employment for "wisdom." They are said first to be "seven mountains on which the woman sitteth." This determines the seat of the hierarchy to be Rome, well known as standing, when in it's full extent, upon seven hills. They are also said to be "seven kings," or forms of government, under which the empire had subsisted, did subsist, or would hereafter subsist. The forms which had subsisted, (as has been observed on Chap. xiii.) were *Kings, Consuls, Dictators, Decemvirs, and Military Tribunes*; the form which subsisted at the time of the commencement of the prophecy was that of *Emperors*; and that which was yet to come, and to "continue a short space," seems to be that non-descript government which succeeded the overthrow of the Emperors, and continued in divers forms for about three hundred years, till the establishment of that government which from the days of Charlemagne to the Reformation, a space of above seven hundred years, combined all the nations of Europe in support of the Antichristian hierarchy.

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This short-lived intermediate power might on some accounts be considered as the "seventh" head of the beast, and as such be distinguished from it's last head, which in this view would be the "eighth:" but upon the whole it was rather to be considered as belonging to that in which it merged, and which in this view would be the seventh, or "of the seven."

There is an apparent difficulty in this *last head* of the Roman government being described as *the beast that was and is not*, as though the changes here alluded to were peculiar to that last head, when in fact they respect the beast under different heads. The answer I conceive to be this—The beast it is true *was* under his first five heads, and *was not* under his sixth; but till the last stages of his existence this description could not be applied to him, or become as it were *his proper name*. From thence he would be known as *the beast which was and is not*, or as the no longer Pagan, but Christian empire.

12 *And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour*

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*with the beast. 13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. 14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. 15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. 16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. 17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. 18 And the woman which thou sawest, is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.*

In every description of the Roman beast, whether by Daniel or John, the ten horns are a distinguished part of it. "Ten kings," in the language of prophecy are ten kingdoms, or governments. They were not kingdoms at the time of the vision: hence the kings are said to have "received no kingdom as yet;"

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but on the overturning of the empire by the Goths in the fifth century, those nations which had before been dependent provinces, together with others that were without it's jurisdiction, became independent kingdoms ; and having embraced the religion of Rome, in process of time united in supporting it.

The reign of these kings is said to be “one (or *the same*) hour with the beast;” that is, with the last head of the Roman empire. They had overturned the empire in it's preceding head or form ; but by agreeing together in religion they established it under a new form : and being of the same mind with the beast in this his new form *as to supporting the church*, they unanimously “gave their power and strength and kingdoms to him,” for this end. They did not subject their kingdoms to him as a secular power, for then had they not been independent ; their only connexion with him would be ecclesiastical, or in his supporting the harlot. That this was the only bond of union between them is manifest from the result of things : when their love should be turned into hatred, they are not said to hate the beast, but the whore ; it was the whore therefore, and not the beast, that was

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the object of their attachment. While he, caparisoned in scarlet, should carry her through all her filthy and bloody courses, they would be with him, holding up his trappings, or lending their authority to enforce his measures.

Such was actually the conduct of all the governments of Christendom prior to the Reformation, and such has been the conduct of many of them since. It is thus that they are said to have made "war with the Lamb." Their proceedings with respect to religion have been Antichristian. All that has been done for more than a thousand years in invading the rights of conscience has been assuming his throne; and all the cruel edicts against what they call heresy and heretics, with all the bloody executions of them, have been in direct hostility against his kingdom. But the Lamb shall overcome them." Whosoever shall gather together against him will fall for his sake. They may ask, who is like unto the beast, and who is able to make war with him? But the Lamb is "Lord of lords, and King of kings," and must prevail. His army, too, is a select band, "called, and chosen, and faithful," who following their

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leader are certain to be victorious. The overthrow of the governments of Christendom does not respect them as *monarchical* in distinction from republican, (for one of Daniel's "kingdoms" was a republic,) but as *Anti-christian*. Those governments that "make war with the Lamb," whatever be their form, the "Lamb will overcome them.

In the progress of this war it is intimated that the kings who have supported the harlot shall have their hearts turned to "hate" her, and so shall be instruments in her destruction. The hierarchy will become as odious in the eyes of the nations as a wrinkled prostitute is in the eyes of her paramours. This is the way in which the Antichristian church is doomed to fall. It will not be from the increase of religious people who withdraw from her communion, as she has always apprehended; but from those who have been her companions in sin, and who, when nothing more is to be expected from her, shall turn against her and destroy her. It is not by Protestantism, nor by Methodism, (as serious Christianity is now called amongst us,) but by Infidelity, that false religion will be overthrown.

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It may seem strange that the powers which supported the Antichristian harlot should be the instruments employed in destroying her; but so it is appointed of heaven. God, who saw the end from the beginning, intended for wise ends to permit the apostasy, and so to order it that the governments of Europe should for a time unite in supporting it. But it is only for a time: when the purposes and prophecies of God are fulfilled, he will cause a spirit of discord to separate these workers of iniquity, so that they shall destroy one another.

Finally, That no doubt might be left as to what was signified by the woman, she is called "that great city which reigned" at the time of the vision, "over the kings," or kingdoms, "of the earth." This was equal to saying, It is ROME, considered as the seat of an Antichristian hierarchy, which in the latter part of her empire shall prevail, but which, like all her other forms, shall go into perdition.

## **DISCOURSE XXVI.**

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THE FALL OF BABYLON, AND THE MARRIAGE OF  
THE LAMB.

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CHAP. XVIII. XIX. 1—10.

**AND** after these things, I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, *Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.* 3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. 4 And I heard another voice from heaven,



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saying, *Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. 5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double, according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double. 7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. 8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. 9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, 10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgement come. 11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth her merchandise any more: 12 The merchandise of gold*

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*and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, 13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincence, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. 14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of these things which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off, for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! 17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every ship-master, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, 18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! 19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried,*

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*weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea, by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. 20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. 21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. 22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; 23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.*

This is another note of illustration; a sacred ode much resembling that on the fall of old

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Babylon.\* That which old Babylon was to Zion, the Roman hierarchy has been to the Christian church; and the end of the one shall correspond with that of the other.

Her fall being *sudden*, and accomplished by the "strong arm of him that judgeth her," seems to relate to her *political* overthrow, as predicted by "the harvest and the vintage," Chap. xiv. by the "battle of Armageddon," Chap. xvi. and by "the supper of the great God," Chap. xix. And as the city to be destroyed does not consist of material buildings, but is a community extending over many nations; so the fire by which it is consumed will doubtless be such as is suited to the object. The events of *war* may be that to the Antichristian cause which fire is to a city.

I shall barely *notice the contents* of the song, and *remark on a few of it's parts*. An angel descends from heaven and proclaims the important event; and while he pronounces the doom of the criminal, states withal what have been her crimes. Ver. 1—3. Another voice

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\* Isa. xiv. 4—23. xx. 9.

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is heard from heaven addressed to the people of God who have in different ways and degrees been connected with her, to come out of her as Lot escaped from Sodom, lest being partakers of her sins, they receive also of her plagues. Ver. 4. This second voice also confirms the charges exhibited against her by the first; and reiterates her doom. Ver. 5—8. A description is given of her overthrow under the image of a city on fire. Ver. 9—13. Those who have been seduced by her wiles shall be filled with astonishment at beholding her fearful end. Ver. 9—13. The criminal herself is tauntingly addressed, as having lost all that her heart had been set upon. Ver. 14. Interested men make great lamentations on account of her. Ver. 15—19. Apostles, prophets, and martyrs are called upon to rejoice over her. Ver. 20. Her fall is compared to the sinking of a great millstone cast into the sea. Ver. 21. Her desolations are described by the loss of all her enjoyments. Ver. 22—24. Great interest is excited in heaven by her overthrow, Chap. xix. 1—6. A general joy pervades the church of God both in heaven and earth, and the Millennium quickly follows. Ver. 7—9.

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The song concludes with an account of the effect of the vision on the apostle towards his informant. Ver. 10.

By the language in Chap. xviii. 6, 7. it may seem as if the servants of God would be the executioners of his wrath upon this corrupt community: but their being called to "reward her as she rewarded them" may only denote that the judgments inflicted upon her will be according to their testimony, and in answer to their prayers. It was thus that the two witnesses inflicted plagues upon their enemies. Chap. xi. 5, 6. The visible agents employed in the work will be the governments of Christendom which will "hate the whore, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."

That which will greatly contribute to the fearfulness of her overthrow will be her *previous security*. She saith in her heart, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." If she had been "the bride, the Lamb's wife," she could not have been more secure; so much the greater therefore will be her fall.

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The events which to a political eye seem to occur only from the chances of war, are here described as the process of the *Judge* of heaven and earth. The power which will be exerted will be that of a judge over a condemned malefactor, at whose command the officers of justice proceed to execution. Power is the only thing that she has respected; and by the strong arm of power she shall be brought down! Ver. 8.

We have heard of the hearts of the kings being turned to hate the whore; yet we find here kings *lamenting her overthrow*. The kings or kingdoms of Europe may then be what they now are, divided into parties. One party, and that the successful, will from interested considerations, hate and set themselves against her; another party, from similar considerations, will espouse her cause, and these proving unsuccessful, will lament over her. Ver. 10.

The kings are joined in their lamentations by the “merchants,” and who seem to be those who have made a trade of religion; which, however it may include many amongst

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the laity, must refer more immediately to the mercenary part of the clergy.

The most notable article in the list of her commodities is "the souls of men." There is doubtless an allusion to Ezek. xxvii. 13. but "the persons of men" can there mean only slaves, whereas "the souls of men" are here distinguished from slaves. Tyre dealt only in men's bodies, but Rome in their souls. I know not what else to make of the sale of indulgences and pardons; of the buying and selling of church livings; of confessions, prayers for the dead, and of every other mean of extorting money from the ignorant.

That which will excite the most doleful lamentations among the adherents of the Anti-christian church will cause the friends of Christ to shout for joy. The marks of desolation are recounted with triumph. The sounds of music, the bustle of craftsmen, the grinding of the millstone, the light of a candle, and the joyful salutations of the bridegroom and the bride, are all ceased, and succeeded by the awful stillness of death. And if any ask, Wherefore hath the Lord done this?



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What meaneth the heat of this great anger? the answer is, "In her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."

The first ten verses of the nineteenth chapter, which are a part of the sacred ode, describe the effect of the fall of Babylon on the friends of God both in heaven and earth.

*1 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God: 2 For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. 3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. 4 And the four and twenty elders, and the four living creatures, fell down and worshiped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. 5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. 6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and*

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*as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. 7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*

The heavenly host with one voice raises the shout of "ALLELUIA! Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God, for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said ALLELUIA! and her smoke rose up for ever and ever." What a contrast between this and the whining lamentations of the merchants!

The punishment of every community *as such* requires to be in this world: when therefore her smoke is said to "rise up for ever and ever," the allusion may be to a city consumed by fire; and the meaning is, that it

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shall never be rebuilt, but it's overthrow like that of Sodom, shall be set forth for an everlasting monument of the divine displeasure.

After this a voice is heard out of the throne, saying, "Praise our God all ye his servants, and ye that fear him both small and great." The theme is acceptable to him that sitteth upon the throne, and must be encored. In answer to this call of the angel, the servants of God both in heaven and earth are described as in a state of delightful agitation. With one voice they renew the song, and expatiate on the subject. The sound of their voices is as that of an immense multitude of people, or as the roaring of the sea, or as continued peals of thunder, saying "ALLELUIA; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" God had always been omnipotent, and had always reigned; but while his enemies were suffered to prevail on earth he did not *appear* to reign in that part of his empire as he now will. Now his right hand and his holy arm will have gotten him the victory!

But the song is not yet finished: it is added, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour

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to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." The Lamb and his wife are fitly introduced in opposition to the harlot and her paramours; namely, the beast and the kings of the earth. The fall of the one is the signal for the glorious appearance of the other. Such was the taking away of the dominion of the *little horn* to the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven being given to the people of the saints of the most High. (Dan. vii. 26, 27.) This marriage of the Lamb I conceive is the Millennium itself. Both this and the fall of Babylon, which precedes it, are here introduced by way of anticipation. They each come into the song of heaven previously to their being actually accomplished on earth. The account of the one follows in the remainder of this chapter, where the beast and the false prophet are taken; and that of the other in the first six verses of the chapter following.

The accession of believers to Christ at any period is represented by the espousal of a chaste virgin to her husband; and the whole

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gospel dispensation is described as a marriage supper. What an espousal then, and what a supper will that be, when Jews and Gentiles, from every nation under heaven, shall be brought to believe in him! The appearance of the Christian church has not been such of late ages as might have been expected of one that had Christ for her head. She has been not only scattered by persecution, but her beauty greatly tarnished by errors, corruptions, and divisions, so as scarcely to sustain a *visible* character: but when believers all over the world shall have purified their souls by obeying the truth; when they are what they were in the days of pentecost, “of one heart and of one soul;” and when there is nothing but distance of situation to hinder their being united in one body; then will “the bride have made herself ready.”

The church is described as being *active* in putting on her robes of glory, but they are ready *prepared* for her. To her was “*granted* that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white.” Reference may be had to the wedding garments provided according to the representation in the parable, at the expence

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of the bridegroom. It is said to be "the righteousness of the saints;" yet as it respects the saints, not individually but collectively: and at the Millennial period, it would seem to denote a *justification* of the church from all things which have stood against her, analogous to that of an individual believer on his first espousal to Christ. As the perdition of the Antichristian community is described in language alluding to that of individual unbelievers, (Ver. 3, 20.) so the glory bestowed on the church at this period alludes to that which is conferred on individual believers when they are "washed, and justified, and sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Thus the church in the days of Zerubbabel, when she had been polluted among the Heathen, is represented by Joshua the high priest "clothed with filthy garments," and her justification by the "taking away of his filthy garments and clothing him with change of raiment." Thus also the glory of the church at another period is expressed in language applicable at all times to individual believers—"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of sal-

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vation, and hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth with jewels." (Isa. lxi. 10.) Christ's salvation will then be to her as a beautiful garment, and his righteousness as an ornamental robe.

*9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.*

A blessing was pronounced by our Lord on those who saw and heard the things which were then to be seen and heard, and a still greater blessing is in reserve for those who shall see and partake of the good here predicted. The most glorious things spoken of the church of God will then be accomplished. The success of the gospel in different parts of the world during the period of the vials will then meet as a confluence of rivers near the ocean. The tides of mercy and judgment towards Jews and Gentiles will now find their level in the salvation of both. "In times past we believed not God, but obtained mercy through their unbelief;" now "through our mercy they

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also shall have obtained mercy." Rom. xi. 30, 31. In former ages God blessed the eastern parts of the world; of late ages the western; but now the kingdom of Christ like a returning tide shall spread over both west and east. Isa. lx. 1—11. "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred, and five and thirty days!" Dan. xii. 12.

These predictions respecting the overthrow of Babylon, and the establishment of the church are attested by the angel as "the true sayings of God." Such an attestation would tend to strengthen the faith and hope of believers, who might otherwise during the long reign of the Antichristian beasts be tempted to think that God had forgotten to be gracious, and would be favourable to his church no more.

Here I consider the sacred ode on the fall of Babylon and the marriage of the Lamb as closing, with only a few words of the apostle concerning his informant.

10 *And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that*



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*have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

The angel here spoken of seems to be him whose voice was heard out of the throne, calling for a repetition of the song. Ver. 5. John probably supposed him to be the Son of God himself, who had more than once in his visions appeared as an angel, and whom he was in the habit of worshipping. But the angel refuses his adoration on the ground of his being merely a servant, the fellow-servant of him and of his brethren, who had the testimony of Jesus. *They* testified of things concerning him which were accomplished; as of his birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and the way of salvation by him: *he* revealed prophecies which as yet were unaccomplished. Yet their work was much the same: the theme of their testimony contained the spirit or substance of what he had imparted for prophecy. They were therefore fellow-labourers in the same cause, and must not worship one another, but God. Christ himself is not an object of worship considered as man, but as God only. That he is God as well as man, and as such an object of divine worship,

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this circumstance of the angel's refusal fully evinces. We see in his conduct what we see in that of Paul and Barnabas at Iconium; and every creature who fears God must follow the example. If Jesus therefore were not God, he ought on all occasions to have refused divine worship, and certainly would have done so. His never having done this, is sufficient proof of his divinity. Nor can it be justly alleged that the worship paid to Christ was mere civil respect; for then the same might be said of John's worshipping the angel, and which he might have done without being repulsed. We learn therefore from this circumstance that Jesus is not only the theme of the gospel ministry, and the spirit or substance of prophecy; but that he is truly and properly divine.

## **DISCOURSE XXVII.**

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THE TAKING OF THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET,  
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CHAP. XIX. 11—21.

**AND** I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called *Faithful and True*, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 *His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns: and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself:* 13 *And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called, The Word of God.* 14 *And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.* 15 *And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule*

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*them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. 17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come, and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. 19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.*

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When the Israelites, full of fearful apprehension from the pursuit of their enemies, cried out for fear, Moses said unto them, "Fear not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see no more for ever!" In going over these last ten chapters we have seen and heard much of the beast, and the false prophet, and of the mischiefs which they have wrought upon the earth: but this is the last account that we shall have of them. By the prophecies in these verses they are buried in oblivion, so that the church in after times shall know of them only as we know of Pharaoh and his host, namely, as matters of history.

In cases wherein the parties have been assured of victory it has not been unusual for a battle to be preceded by a song of triumph. It was thus when Jehoshaphat went forth against his enemies: singers were first appointed to praise the Lord, and then the army was led on to the engagement.\* And thus our Lord, when about to engage the powers of darkness, being certain of victory,

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\* 2 Chron. xx.

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exclaimed, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out!—Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him!"\* It is thus, I conceive, that the prophecy, having anticipated the victory over Babylon in a song of triumph, proceeds to describe the battle. The scene of the song was in heaven; but the battle in which the event will actually occur is upon earth. It is the same as that before described under the sixth vial, namely, the battle of Armageddon; "the great day of God Almighty,"—"the supper of the great God!"

Observe the preparations for it.—"Heaven is opened, a white horse is seen, and he that sat upon it is called faithful and true, who in righteousness doth judge and make war." We can be at no loss in deciding who this great warrior is. He is doubtless the same that is addressed in *Psa. xlv. 3, 4.* "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty: and in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth, and meek-

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\* *John xii. 31. xiii. 31.*

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ness, and righteousness: and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.”—I may add, He is the same that is described in the first six verses of the sixty-third chapter of Isaiah; and what is here predicted by John not only alludes to that prophecy, but appears to refer to the same event. His coming up from Edom with garments stained with the blood of his enemies appears to be justly paraphrased by Dr. Watts:—

“I lift my banner (saith the Lord),  
Where Antichrist has stood;  
The city of my gospel-foes  
Shall be a field of blood.

My heart hath studied just revenge,  
And now the day appears;  
The day of my redeem’d is come,  
To wipe away their tears.

Slaughter, and my devouring sword,  
Shall walk the streets around;  
Babel shall reel beneath my stroke,  
And stagger to the ground.”

It may be thought that this *bloody* representation is unsuitable to the character of the *Prince of Peace*; and that the battle

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between him and his army on the one side, and that of the beast and kings on the other, is contrary to the genius of the gospel dispensation. To solve this difficulty, let it be observed, that the war here described is of *two kinds*, and Christ sustains a two-fold character in conducting it. The first is *spiritual*; and this he undertakes as the "head of the church." In this character he rides upon a *white* horse, and the armies of heaven follow him upon *white* horses; fitly representing the great efforts that shall be making at the very period of Babylon's overthrow, to spread the gospel over the whole earth. The second is *providential*; and this he undertakes as "head over all things to the church." In this character he is "clothed with a vesture dipt in *blood*." In making war in his *spiritual* character, he does not wait to be attacked by his enemies: he goes forth in this respect conquering and to conquer. But in so far as the war is of a *providential* character, the enemies are the aggressors. The beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies, "gather together to make war against him and his army." Ver. 19. The idea conveyed by this language



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is, that while he who sitteth upon the white horse and his army are going forth to spread the everlasting gospel in the world, the beast and his allies will gather together to oppose it's progress, and will perish in the attempt.

There is no necessity for supposing the armies of Christ will have literally to fight with those of the beast and the kings: but while they are following him in spreading the gospel, *He*, as King of kings and Lord of lords," may work the utter overthrow of their adversaries, by setting them at variance *with one another*. We have seen this accomplished in part already in the antipathies and wars which have raged between Infidelity and Popery; and such may be the progress of things, till, like two furious beasts of prey, they shall both be destroyed. The account itself agrees with this supposition: for though the armies of the beast are said to have gathered together against *the armies* of him that sat upon the horse, yet there is no mention of any being engaged in their overthrow but *he himself*. It is *he* that "smites the nations," "treads the wine-press," and has his "vesture dipt in blood." It is re-

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markable, too, that in the corresponding prophecy of Isa. lxiii. 1—5. he is said to have “trodden the wine-press ALONE, and of the people THERE WAS NONE WITH HIM.”

These remarks may suffice for the general meaning of the prophecy. Let us now attend to a few of the particulars.

It is a joyful sight to see the Son of God riding forth upon the white horse. He will not wait for the fall of the Antichristian powers ere he extends his spiritual kingdom. The flight of the evangelical angel was prior to the fall of Babylon; such is still the order of things; and it is in opposing this great and good work that the enemies of the gospel will bring destruction upon themselves.

The character given to this divine warrior must not be overlooked. He is “faithful and true,” as performing all his engagements to God, and fulfilling all his promises to men. “In righteousness he doth judge and make war.” The cause in which he is engaged is just, and all his measures are in harmony

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with it. "His eyes were as a flame of fire," burning with holy indignation against his enemies. "And on his head were many crowns," denoting his great power, and numerous conquests. "And he had a name written that no man knew but he himself;" for after all that is known of the glory of his character it passeth knowledge. The "vesture dipt in blood" refers to what has been said of the destruction of his enemies by means of wars kindled by their own malignity. "His name is called the Word of God," as being that divine person whose office it is to reveal the mind of God to men, and whose victories are accomplished by means of the gospel. "The armies of heaven on white horses" are the friends of Christ who go forth in their respective stations, and lay themselves out to promote his kingdom. "The sharp sword that goeth out of his mouth," is his truth, which is not only the means of saving believers, but of punishing unbelievers. By his word they shall be judged at the last day, and his threatenings will fall upon them even in the present world. Those who are not destroyed by his judgments on the Antichristian party, will be

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despoiled of their power, and ruled as with a rod of iron. "And he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God"—The vine of the earth being ripe for destruction, like grapes cast into a press, he will tread them in his anger, and trample them in his fury. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**" In this there is something especially appropriate, as it respects those kings who have opposed his gospel, and lorded it over the consciences of his subjects. He has long sustained this name in right, but henceforward he will sustain it in fact.

And now comes on the decisive battle, *the battle of Armageddon, the great day of God Almighty, the supper of the great God!* Terrible things in righteousness have occurred in our times; but by the strong language used to express this event it seems as if it would surpass every thing which has gone before it. It is unlikely that it should consist of a single battle, but rather of a war, or succession of battles, though doubtless one must be the last. It is proclaimed by an

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“angel standing in the sun,” whose voice would of course be heard from the rising to the going down thereof. The mode in which he announces it is by an invitation to the fowls of heaven to come as to a supper, to feast upon the carcasses of all ranks and degrees of men who shall be found on the Antichristian side. The beast, and the kings of the earth who make common cause with him, being gathered together with their armies to make war against him that sitteth upon the horse, and against his army, will now be utterly overthrown. Those powers which shall be found supporting the Papal hierarchy together with “the false prophet,” or the hierarchy itself, after a corrupt and bloody reign of 1260 years, will be “taken and cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone.”

It was remarked on Chapter xvii. 7. that the corruption of the church is ascribed to her alliance with the secular beast; and it is no less remarkable that the overthrow of the secular beast is ascribed to it's alliance with the church. It was “because of the great words that the *little horn* spake against

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the Most High that the beast on whose head it grew should be slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame." Dan. vii. 11. Let governments consider this, and tremble at such alliances.

It is true that neither political nor ecclesiastical bodies as such, can be literally cast into a place of torment, as individual unbelievers that compose them will be: they may however be cast into perdition so as never to rise any more, which may be the whole of what is intended. As the Christian church in her Millennial glory is described in language applicable to individual believers, (Ver. 8.) so the Antichristian church is represented as a hardened sinner, arrested in a course of wickedness, and sent to his own place.

*Finally,* It is supposed that after this terrible overthrow there will be a remnant, like the scattered remains of a defeated army, who shall still be on the side of Antichrist: but they shall be "slain by the sword of him that sitteth upon the horse, which sword proceedeth out of his mouth." As the battle

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above described is the same as that of Armageddon under the sixth vial, so "the sword proceeding out of Christ's mouth" corresponds with the spiritual judgments under the seventh vial. They who have escaped the temporal calamities of the former, will, except they repent, fall under the spiritual judgments of the latter. The threatenings of Christ's word will overtake them. Their hearts will fail within them, as did the heart of Nabal when told of the words of David. Like him they will be smitten of God and die; and having no successors to stand up in their place, their cause will die with them.

## **DISCOURSE XXVIII.**

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ON THE MILLENNIUM.

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CHAP. XX. 1—6.

*AND I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.*

We have seen the taking of the beast and the false prophet, and in that the fall of Babylon: but the principal mover in the



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confederacy is *the dragon*, and of him no mention was made in the battle before described. From hence, though he had not been expressly called "that old serpent the Devil and Satan," we might have presumed that he was not of an order of beings to be crushed by the hand of man. His being in one place described as "a great *red* dragon with the *seven heads and ten horns* of the Roman beast, (Chap. xii. 3.) can therefore only respect the form under which he at that time acted out his mischievous designs.

This great red dragon that had formerly been cast out of heaven is supposed to be yet on earth; and after the taking of his agents, the beast and the false prophet, is about to rally his scattered forces, and to engage in new schemes against the Lord and against his Christ. If he be not bound, all the success against the other will signify but little; for he will not be at a loss how to deceive the world, and to engage them anew in some Antichristian enterprise.

But who is able to bind him? The hand of man cannot take him. Lo, "an angel comes down from heaven, having the key of

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the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand, and lays hold on him and binds him a thousand years!" The apprehension and imprisonment of this enemy will complete the victory.

There can be no doubt who this angel is, for we know who hath the "keys of hell and of death." To him it appertaineth, after having been manifested to destroy his works, to arrest him in his course, and to set bounds to his operations. The hand of man could not take him; but the hand of Christ can lay fast hold of him.

The dragon being cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up, and a seal set upon him to prevent his deceiving the nations for a thousand years, the kingdom of Christ shall now be established over the whole earth.

Various questions have arisen concerning this Millennial state, both as to it's nature and duration. With respect to the latter, the "thousand years" require, I think, in this instance to be taken literally; for if understood of so many years as there are *days* in this period, the duration of the world would greatly

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exceed what we are elsewhere given to expect. The apotles seem to have considered themselves as having passed the meridian of time, and as drawing on towards the close of it. Such appears to be the import of the following passages:—God hath in these *last days* spoken to us by his Son.—But now once *in the end of the world* hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself—“The *end of all things is at hand*—The coming of the Lord draweth nigh—Behold the judge standeth before the door—He that testifieth these things saith, Surely *I come quickly!*” Heb. i. 1. ix. 26. 1 Pet. iv. 7. James v. 8, 9. Rev. xxii. 20. But if the thousand years were reckoned a day for a year, we are at present but upon the threshold of time: the last judgment must in this case be at a distance of hundreds of thousands of years.

A question of more importance is that which respects the *nature* of this Millennial reign of Christ, whether it be *spiritual* or *personal*.\* Those who favour the first, con-

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\* I say nothing of a third class, which might be denominated *political*, and which in the delirium that prevailed a few years since, made the *dragon* to be

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sider it as a time in which the gospel will be spread over the whole earth, and cordially embraced both by Jews and Gentiles; when those prophecies will be fulfilled which speak of the cessation of wars; of the stone cut out without hands becoming a great mountain, and filling the whole earth; of the little leaven leavening *the whole lump*; of the knowledge of the Lord covering the earth as the waters cover the sea; of the first dominion coming to Zion; and of the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, being given to the people of the saints of the Most High.

Those, on the other hand, who plead for a *personal* reign of Christ upon earth, consider the Millennium as a state of *immortality*, a state subsequent to the general conflagration, wherein the righteous, being raised from their graves, shall live and reign with Christ a

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“monarchy in general,” the *Millennial thrones* (Chap. xx. 4.) seats of magisterial authority to which *the people* were exalted, and *the new heavens and the new earth* the results of the American and French Revolutions! Such are the effects of interpreting prophecy with the view of establishing a political hypothesis.

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thousand years; after which the wicked dead being raised, the general judgment shall follow.

Whatever respect I feel for some who have maintained the latter hypothesis, I find insurmountable objections to the hypothesis itself.

*First,* The idea of a personal reign appears to me nearly to *exclude that of a spiritual one, by leaving little or no place for it.*—It is clear that the pouring out of the seven vials is principally for the purpose of destroying the Antichristian system, and that when this is accomplished, the Millennium follows. No sooner are the beast and the false prophet taken under the sixth vial, and the world, (like the temple after being polluted by Antiochus,) purified from its abominations by the seventh, than the dragon is bound for a thousand years. If then this thousand years reign be personal, the second coming of Christ must immediately succeed the ruin of Antichrist. But if so, how, or when, are all those prophecies to be fulfilled which describe the prosperity of the church in the latter days? How are wars to cease in the

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earth, and peace succeed to it, when as soon as the troubles of the earth are destroyed, the world will be at an end? On this principle Antichrist will reign till the heavens are no more. The end of the 1260 years will be the end of time, and the church will have no existence upon the present earth but "in the wilderness." Instead of the stone, after breaking in pieces the image, "becoming a great mountain, and filling the whole earth," no sooner is the image broken to pieces, than the earth itself shall be burnt up. And on the destruction of the little horn, (Dan. vii. 26, 27.) instead of "the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven being given to the people of the saints of the Most High," no sooner shall that horn be broken than the whole earth will be destroyed with it!

*Secondly,* The idea of a personal reign represents Christ's second coming at a thousand years' distance from the last judgment; whereas the scripture speaks of the one as *immediately following the other, and as being the grand object of it.* "The Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on

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them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be *punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*; WHEN HE SHALL COME TO BE GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS, *and to be admired in all them that believe IN THAT DAY.*" 2 Thes. i. 7—10. "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints *to execute judgment upon all, &c.*" Jude 14. "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead *at his appearing and kingdom.*" 2 Tim. iv. 1.

*Thirdly*, The idea of a personal reign represents believers as raised to a state of immortality a thousand years before the close of Christ's mediatorial kingdom; whereas the scripture represents the one as immediately succeeding the other. Speaking of the resurrection, the apostle says "Christ the first fruits, and afterwards they that are Christ's *at his coming.* THEN *cometh the end* when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power; for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy

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that shall be destroyed is death." 1 Cor. xv. 23—28. Now the resurrection of the saints will itself be the destruction of death. If therefore the end *then* cometh, there is no place for a personal reign of a thousand years between them. Besides, If death be the *last* enemy, and this enemy be destroyed in the resurrection, how can there be a Gog and Magog army to be destroyed a thousand years after it?

*Fourthly*, Those who consider the Millennial reign as personal, *confine the last resurrection and the final judgment, as described in the latter part of the chapter, to the wicked*: but there is nothing in that account of the resurrection which requires it to be limited to them. The sea is said to give up *the dead* which were in it; and death and hell (or the grave) to give up *the dead* which were in them; which language equally applies to the righteous and the wicked: and as to the last judgment, which immediately follows, had it been confined to the wicked, it would not have been said, "*Whosoever* was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire," since on this principle they could *none of them* be found written in it.



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If the last judgment, as described in Chap. xx. 11—15 do not include that of the righteous as well as the wicked, there is no proof from this account of their being judged at all. The scriptures, however, are very express, that “we must *all* appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and give account of the deeds done in the body;” and that “God will bring every work into judgment, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

*Fifthly,* The account of Satan’s being loosed after a thousand years’ restraint, and going forth to deceive the nations, and to gather together the armies of Gog and Magog, *does not comport with a state of immortality, or with the condition of men after their resurrection.* Wicked men may rise, indeed, with the same enmity against God and religion as they possessed at death: but as to their being able to collect together, and to encompass the church of God in hope of destroying it, the idea is gross and inadmissible. The sea and the grave will give up their dead, not to become followers of Satan in a new enterprise, but to be judged every man according to his works. Ver. 13.

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*Finally*, To represent the Millennium, which precedes the last judgment, as a state of immortality, is to confound it with the New Jerusalem which follows it. The latter is indeed a state of immortality: for "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away:"\* but this language itself implies that till after the final judgment it shall not be so.

For these reasons, as well as from the figurative language of almost the whole of the prophecy, I cannot think that the Millennium is to be understood of a personal reign of Christ, in a state of immortality; but of that glorious *rest* which the church will enjoy after the destruction of her Antichristian enemies. Under this view, therefore, I shall now attend to the description given of it.

*4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the*

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\* Chap. xxi. 4.

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*beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

These thrones correspond with the account in Dan. vii. where after the power of the little horn is broken, it follows, "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, was given to the people of the saints of the Most High." Stations of importance both in the world and in the church, will be filled by righteous men. Righteousness therefore will flow as a river, and corruption and violence will recede before it. The public mind will favour this course of things. Thus it is that wars and oppressions, and all other disorders, will in a great measure subside. Every thing being done on Christian principles, Christ will reign. "God's way will be known upon

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earth, and his saving health among all nations. The peoples shall be glad and sing for joy, for the Lord will judge them righteously." Psalm lxvii.

The "judgment given unto them, and to the souls that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus," denotes that God will now vindicate their characters, and avenge their wrongs. This appears to be the meaning in Chap. xi. 18. and xviii. 20. The vengeance poured upon the Antichristian party is in the first of these passages called *judging the dead*, because it vindicates them and the cause in which they suffered, and avenges them on their adversaries. Thus it will be during the Millennium. The cause in which the martyrs have suffered will then triumph: and while the names of their persecutors will rot in execration, their labours will be in request, and their characters embalmed in the memory of mankind. It is thus, I conceive that the martyrs will "live and reign with Christ a thousand years."

The Antichristian party, on the other hand called "the rest of the dead," or the "remnant" that escaped from the battle in which "the

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beast and the false prophet were taken, were slain with the sword of him that sat on the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth." In other words, they will become as dead men during the whole of the Millennial period. They would die *as a body* in that that they had no successors to stand up in their place, and *as individuals*, if any remained, would be unable to impede the progress of the gospel. After this their leader being let loose, and permitted to make one more desperate effort, they will then "live again" though it will be but for a short season.

"This (adds the sacred writer) is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." Those who consider the reign of Christ personal, understand this of the resurrection of the bodies of the righteous which they suppose will be a thousand years before that of the wicked. A "*first* resurrection" doubtless implies a second, as much as a "second death" implies a first: but as the first and second deaths are different in their nature, so may

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the first and second resurrection. I question if there be any proof of the corporeal resurrection of the righteous being prior in order of time to that of the wicked. The only passage that I recollect to have seen alleged for it, is, 1 Thes. iv. 16. "And the dead in Christ shall rise *first*." It is not however, in respect of the resurrection of the wicked that they are said to rise *first*, but of the change of the living saints: for it follows, "*Then* we who are alive, and remain, shall be caught up, &c." The context says nothing of the wicked, or of their resurrection. The resurrection of the righteous being mentioned *alone*, or without that of the wicked, does not prove that the one will be prior to the other. If it proves any thing concerning the wicked, it would seem to be that there will be no resurrection of them: but knowing from other scriptures that there will be a resurrection, "both of the just and the unjust," we do not draw this inference; nor have we any ground for drawing the other,

The "first resurrection" appears to me to be no other than *the Millennium itself*, to

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which all that is said of it will apply. During this glorious period, the church will have it's Pauls and Peters and Johns over again. Men will be raised up who will go forth in the spirit and power of those worthies, as much as John the Baptist did in the spirit and power of Elias. Thus the apostles and martyrs will, as it were, be raised from their graves, and live again upon the earth.

The *blessedness* pronounced upon him that hath a part in it, is expressive of the happiness of those times. The idea is the same as that in Chap. xix. 9. "Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb:"—and that in Dan. xii. 12. "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days!" Each of these passages refers to the same period. If a blessing was pronounced on those who saw the early part of gospel times, much more on those who shall enjoy the latter. It were not enough however to *exist* in those times: to be blessed we must have "a part" in all that is going on; and in order to this we must be "holy." Otherwise, God might work a work in our days which we

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should not believe, but despise it, and wonder, and perish !

The *first* resurrection supposes a second, and which seems to be that of the just and the unjust. In this the wicked shall be raised to die a second death ; but over the followers of Christ the second death shall have no power. As a pledge of their victory, they are already made priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign in spiritual prosperity from generation to generation, for the space of a thousand years.



## DISCOURSE XXIX.

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THE FALLING AWAY, THE END OF THE WORLD,  
THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, AND THE  
LAST JUDGMENT.

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CHAP. XX. 7—15.

*AND when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*

It seems almost incredible, after so long and glorious a season of grace, that Satan should so recover his influence in the world, as that the number of his adherents should become “as the sand of the sea!” Yet thus

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it is. What is ordinarily called the religion of a people becomes a sort of national habit, to which they are attached from generation to generation. But it is not thus with true religion. There is nothing in it suited to the temper of mind with which men are born into the world. If therefore the Holy Spirit be aggrieved, and withdraw his influence but from one generation, it will be like that which succeeded the times of Joshua, that "knew not the Lord." If in such a state of things Satan be permitted to ply with his temptations, he is certain to be successful.

"The four quarters of the earth" prior to this must have been evangelized by the gospel; but the dragon being let loose deceives them; not by any new superstition, like that of Popery; for as to the beast and the false prophet, they will long since have gone to perdition. It may be by a persecuting infidelity, the spirit inspired by the dragon himself, that this last effort will be made. Having seen so much of Christianity in the world, the hearts of the wicked will rise against it, and be so far "deceived" by the Wicked One as to imagine themselves capable of extirpating it from the earth.

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The name given to the enemies of Christ is borrowed from the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of Ezekiel, where mention is made of Gog and Magog. It does not appear however that the prophecy of Ezekiel and John refer to the same period; but that the language is merely allusive. Ezekiel's Gog and Magog seem to refer to a combination among the nations against the house of Israel, *soon after their restoration to their own land and their conversion to Christ*, and which will be prior to, or at the commencement of the Millennium: but the Gog and Magog army of John is "after the thousand years are expired." The meaning may be, that like as the nations will combine against restored and converted Israel, so will the whole world of the ungodly combine to exterminate Christianity from the earth: and as the one would issue in the utter overthrow of the assailants, so would the other.

9 *And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.* 10 *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone,*

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*where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

As there is nothing in the account which intervenes between this and the resurrection of the dead, the "fire that cometh down from God out of heaven" may be no other than the general conflagration itself, spoken of by the apostles Peter and Paul—"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.—The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. iii. 10. 2 Thes. i. 8.

And now the grand mover of all the mischief which has taken place in the world, is not merely bound for a season as before, but cast into perdition, where his agents, the beast and the false prophet are. There is no mention of *their* being "tormented," because they as political bodies were incapable of

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it; but of *him* it is said he "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Perdition to them will be oblivion; but to him a state of everlasting punishment.

11 *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them.* 12 *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.* 13 *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.* 14 *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.* 15 *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

A more impressive description of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment, is scarcely in the power of language. The words are simple, but the sentiments ex-

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ceedingly sublime. "The language is so plain, (says Mr. BLACKWELL,) as not to need, and so majestic and grand as to exceed, commentary or paraphrase." But it is not for us to stand admiring the language till we overlook the event itself.

Lo, the dead, both "small and great, stand before God!" Young and old, rich and poor, all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. None are so insignificant as to be overlooked; none so mighty as to escape: the governors and the governed, the parent and the child, the master and the servant, the oppressor and the oppressed, the preacher and the hearer, all must give an account of themselves to God!

Men, owing to the imperfection of their knowledge, and of their memories, make use of "books:" but God's infinite knowledge requires no such assistance. It is merely in allusion to human proceedings that this is spoken. His memory is itself the book from which he will judge the world.

Believing sinners are justified by grace: but both believers and unbelievers will be

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judged "according to their works." Those who have sinned without the light of revelation, will be judged by the light of nature. Those who have sinned against revelation will be judged by it, according to the light they had, or might have had. Believers themselves, though not dealt with according to their deserts, (for they will "obtain *mercy* of the Lord in that day!") yet their works will be censured or approved according to what they were. Their sinful works will be burnt up, though they themselves are saved; and as to their good works, though there be nothing in them deserving eternal life, or furnishing the least ground for boasting, yet will they be admitted as evidences in their favour. Matt. xxv. 31—40.

There have been many days of judgment, as it were, in miniature, but this will be universal. Whether men have died at sea, or on land; and whatever became of their bodies, whether slain in battle, devoured by beasts of prey, or decently interred in their graves, all will rise and be judged. Ver. 13.

"Death and hell (or the grave,) were cast into the lake of fire." Death and the grave

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are things which belong to time, and which, as rivers are lost in the ocean, will now be swallowed up in eternity. Prior to the day of judgment the ungodly were confined under their power as in a prison: but having received their doom they shall not be remanded thither, but but shall go away into everlasting punishment. "This is the second death." Into this dreadful abyss all will be cast, as the just punishment of their sins, excepting those whose names are "written in the book of life." An interest in the salvation of Christ is the only security against eternal death.



## DISCOURSE XXX.

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THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH, WITH  
THE NEW JERUSALEM.

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CHAP. xxi. xxii. 1—5.

*AND I saw a new heaven, and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away: and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain:*

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*for the former things are passed away. 5 And he that sat upon the throne, said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. 6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. 9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. 10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone, most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; 12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve*

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*angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. 13 On the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates; and on the west, three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16 And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs: The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. 17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. 18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. 19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth an emerald; 20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the*

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*twelfth, an amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. 22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it. 23 And the city 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. 24 And the nations of them which are saved, shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. 25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there. 26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. 27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

We have seen in the foregoing chapter, the end of the world and the last judgment, even that fearful issue of things described by the apostle Peter: "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens will pass away with a

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great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.—But as the same apostle adds, “Nevertheless we according to his promise look for *new heavens* and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;” so in this chapter, and the first five verses of the next, we find an ample description of them.

What then are we to understand by this “new heaven and new earth,” this “new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven,” and this “pure river of the water of life,” which is supposed to flow in the midst of it? Some have considered it as only a more particular account of the Millennium. But to this it is objected—*First*, The Millennium precedes the last judgment, whereas the new heavens and the earth follow it. *Secondly*, The Millennium was for a limited time, but this is “for ever and ever.” Chap. xxii. Ver. 5. *Thirdly*, Under the Millennium the dragon is only bound for a season, and afterwards loosed; but here there is no dragon, nor enemy of any kind. The devil will have been cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, to be tormented day and night for ever and ever; (Chap. xx. 10.)

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“and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” Ver. 4.

For these reasons others have considered it as no other than *the heavenly state*.\* Yet it seems singular that the heavenly state should be introduced as a subject of *prophecy*.—It is doubtless an object of *promise*, but prophecy seems rather to respect events in the world in which we dwell than in the world to come. Whatever is meant by the glorious state here described, the *earth*, as purified by the conflagration, is the scene of it. The whole of what is said, instead of describing the heaven of heavens, represents the glory of that state as “coming down upon the earth.” Ver. 1—4. The truth appears to me to be this: It is a representation of heavenly glory *in so far as that glory relates to the state of the earth on which we dwell*; which, instead of being the stew of the mother of harlots, shall become the seat of “the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, pre-

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\* LOWMAN—HOPKINS on the Millennium, p. 46.

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pared as a bride adorned for her husband." The earth will not be annihilated by fire any more than it was by water. It will be purified from sin, and all its effects. The generations of a corrupt race of creatures having terminated, it will become the perfect and perpetual abode of righteousness. The creation has long been subjected to the "vanity" of supplying its creator's enemies with the means of carrying on their rebellion against him. Under this "bondage of corruption" it has "groaned and travailed," as it were, in pain, longing to be delivered. And now the period is arrived. The liberation of the sons of God from the power of the grave shall be the signal of deliverance to the whole creation.\*

It is not the object of the Holy Spirit to tell us what the heavenly glory is, but, rather *what this world shall become, in opposition to what it now is*. This opposition is preserved throughout the description. We have read of Babylon; not that in Chaldea, but a *new* Babylon: here we read of Jerusalem; not that in Palestine, but a *new* Jeru,

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\* Rom. viii. 19—23.

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salem—of a city by whose delicacies the merchants of the earth were made rich; now of another city in the light of which “the nations of them that are saved shall walk, and to which kings shall bring their glory and honour”—of a troubled “sea,” from whence arose those monsters which were the plagues of the earth; now of there being “no more sea”—of the “great whore that sat upon many waters;” now of “the bride the Lamb’s wife”—of “great tribulations out of which the saints of God have had to come;” now of “all tears being wiped from their eyes, and of death and sorrow and crying and pain having passed away—finally, of “a golden cup full of abominations and filthiness;” but now of the “pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb,” together with the “fruits of the tree of life, which bears twelve kinds of fruit, and yields it’s fruit every month.”

As the new Jerusalem is denominated “the bride, the Lamb’s wife,” all that is said of her as a *city*, from Ver. 10—27, though couched in highly figurative language, is descriptive of the church triumphant. In this, as in many



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other places, there is a reference to the prophecies of Ezekiel,\* though the events predicted are not always the same. The city in Ezekiel seems to be the church in a day of great spiritual prosperity; this in a state of immortality. Her high wall denotes her complete security; her twelve gates, on which were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, denote that none but Israelites indeed, who have the seal of God in their foreheads, will enter into it; her twelve foundations may refer to the doctrine of the apostles on which she stands; the pearls and precious stones with which she is adorned are her spiritual riches and glory; there being "no temple, nor sun, nor moon," denotes that there will be no need of those means of grace which we now attend upon; what we now receive mediately, we shall then receive immediately; finally, the nations of the saved walking in the light of it, may allude to the interest which surrounding nations take in a metropolitan city, and denotes that the saved, who have been gathered from all nations, will rejoice in the honour that God will have bestowed upon his church.

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\* Chap. xlviii. 31—34.

To complete the description of the city, and to finish the prophecy, we must consider the first five verses of the twenty-second chapter in connexion with the foregoing.

*1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: 4 And they shall see his face: and his name shall be in their foreheads. 5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.*

There is doubtless an allusion in these verses to the waters of the sanctuary, and the trees of life, described in Ezekiel xlvii. 1—12. Both Ezekiel and John make mention of a city—of a river—of trees growing upon

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the banks of it—and of the fruit thereof being for meat, and the leaf for medicine. Ezekiel's waters flowed from the temple, near the altar; those of John out of "the throne of God and of the Lamb." The city is doubtless the same in both; but I conceive at different periods. Ezekiel's city had a temple, but that of John, as we have seen, had no temple; for "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." The first therefore describes the church in her latter-day glory; the last in a state of perfection—and which answers to the promise in Chap. ii. 7. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

## **DISCOURSE XXXI.**

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ATTESTATIONS TO THE TRUTH OF THE  
PROPHECY, &c.

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CHAP. xxii. 6—21.

**W**E have gone through the prophecy: all that remains consists of attestations, directions, invitations, and warnings, concerning it.

*6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.*

Such is the solemn attestation of the *angel* to the truth of all that he had made known to the apostle. He had received it from the Son of God, even the Lord God of the holy

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prophets, who had sent by him to signify it unto his servant John. Chap. i. 1.

*7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.*

After the attestation of the angel, follows that of *him that sent him*. The "coming" of Christ refers to his second appearing. His declaring that this would be "quickly," is declaring that the things which had been foretold should soon be accomplished. Meanwhile they would be a guide to the faithful, and a blessing should attend those who adhered to them.

*8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. 9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.*

This is the attestation of the *writer*. He not only saw and heard these things, but such was their effect on his mind that on

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one occasion he conceived the angel who revealed them to him to have been the Son of God himself, and therefore fell down to worship him. Some have expressed surprise that the apostle, after the angel had once refused his adoration, should offer it a second time: but it appears to me that what is here related is merely a repetition of what was said and done before. (Chap. xix. 10.) He first tells of his having "seen" the things that were to be seen, and "heard" the things that were to be heard; and now, of his having been so overcome by them, as to suppose the angel from whom they proceeded to be the Son of God, and of course to have fallen down to worship him. The design of the repetition is merely to add weight to the attestation.

10 *And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.* 11 *He that is unjust, 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.* 12 *And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*

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13 *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.* 14 *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.* 15 *For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.* 16 *I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.*

He who speaketh in these verses is not the angel, but the Son of God himself, whose speech is resumed from verse 7. The eighth and ninth verses are a parenthesis, in which the writer expresses his own feelings. He who in verse 7. said, "Behold I come quickly," here adds, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand." As if he should say, Do not conceal, but declare them, for they are things of immediate concern.—To this is added a solemn declaration of the near approach of that period when the characters of men should be unalterably fixed. Let the persecutors and corrupters of the gospel know, that there is

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no change but on earth, no Saviour nor Sanctifier beyond the grave. Let the righteous know also, who have faithfully adhered to him through all the temptations and persecutions of the world, that the time draws nigh when their conflicts shall be ended, and they shall be immutably confirmed in righteousness and true holiness. And now the solemn warning of his near approach is repeated, accompanied with a declaration that "his reward is with him, and that he will give every man according as his work shall be."—The character assumed by the Judge, that of "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last," while it ascertains his proper divinity, conveys an impressive idea of the proceedings of that day. It is equal to saying, He that shall judge the world will be possessed of a divine as well as of a human nature; and where God is Judge himself, the heavens will declare his righteousness.—Blessed shall they be in that day who have "done his commandments," or who, amidst the temptations and persecutions of the world, have kept his sayings. All the blessedness contained in partaking of "the tree of life," and of the glory of "the new Jerusalem," shall be theirs.—On the other



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hand, “dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie,” are “without.” Nor does this description appear to refer to ordinary sinners, of which the world is full, but rather to *the enemies of the gospel, and the corrupters of pure religion*. Thus “dogs” denote false teachers; “sorcerers,” those who have been employed in drawing away mankind by the lures of the mother of harlots; “whoremongers,” those who have committed spiritual fornication with her, or her daughters; “murderers,” those who have entered into her persecuting spirit; “idolaters,” those who have gone into the worship of saints, and images; and “he that loveth and maketh a lie,” is one whose heart favouring false doctrine, has employed himself in framing and propagating it. See Chap. xxi. 8.

The Lord Jesus having from the 10th to the 16th verse addressed himself to the apostle, here turns to the churches, assuring them that all which was revealed in the foregoing prophecy was for their use. “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.” Nor was it to those only which were then in being, but to all the

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churches of succeeding ages. The things contained in this prophecy therefore are a message from Christ in his glorified state to us. And as in reference to his second coming he assumed the character of "the first and the last," here he is "the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star:" which names are descriptive of Him who is God in our nature, and whose coming will introduce an everlasting day of light and joy and gladness.

*17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. 18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. 20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.*

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21 *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

Christ does not only assume a name suited to the revelations which had been made, but draws from them the most affecting invitations, and solemn warnings; and with these the book concludes.

‘Reader,’ as if he should say, ‘You have read of *the water of life*: you are invited to “come,” and drink freely of it. You have read or heard of *the Spirit* that spake to the churches: he speaks also to you individually, and the sum of what he saith is, “Come.” You have heard of the *bride*, and of the glories prepared for her: she does not covet to enjoy these things by herself, but joins with the Spirit of inspiration in inviting you to “come.” Nay, every one that “heareth” and believeth these things is warranted to invite his neighbour. And let every one who has any regard for his own soul, avoid the cup of the mother of harlots, and come to these living waters. There need be no hesitation on the score of qualifications, for it is free to all who are willing to receive it.

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‘Know also that the words of this prophecy are sacred. If any man add to them, God will add to him it’s plagues; and if any man take away from them, God will take away from him whatever he may have expected to receive of it’s blessings. He who testifieth these things saith, the third time, SURELY, I COME QUICKLY!’

To this solemn testimony of Christ the apostle adds his cordial “Amen. Even so come Lord Jesus!” And as he had introduced the prophecy with an address to the seven churches, so he concludes it with the apostolic benediction: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

## CONCLUSION.

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**T**HE reader may ask, What are the signs of the present times? What judgments may yet be expected to befall the nations? and, What cheering prospects await the church?

If the outlines of the foregoing commentary be just, we are now under *the period of the vials*, or that space of time which commences with the sounding of the seventh angel, and terminates in the Millennium. This is a period which appears to be marked in the prophecy; particularly in Chap. x. 7, "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." That is, In the times in which the seven vials shall be poured out, the great designs of heaven concerning the overthrow of the Papal Antichrist,

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and the establishment of the kingdom of Christ, as foretold by the prophets, shall be accomplished.

This is the period in which, according to Daniel, "The thrones are pitched down, and the Ancient of days doth sit—in which they shall take away the dominion of the little horn, to consume and to destroy it unto the end." We see not yet the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; but we see that which is both preparatory, and introductory to it.

Moreover, If the exposition of the vials by the trumpets, adopted from Dr. GILL, be just, we are as yet but under the second vial, which for several years has been pouring out upon the *sea*, or the maritime Papal nations of Spain and Portugal; and notwithstanding what has taken place, it may be suspected that much of it is yet to come.

Much has been written on the commencement and consequent termination of the 1260 years assigned in prophecy for the continuance of the Antichristian power. If the former could be ascertained, the latter would follow

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of course. Some think them to have already terminated, and others that they are on the point of doing so. But of this I think we may be certain, that unless the vials are all poured out, to which few if any will pretend, the reign of the Papal Antichrist cannot have terminated, seeing they are the appointed means of it's destruction. The *finishing of the mystery of God*, (Chap. x. 7.) is the same as the termination of the 1260 years, as is evident from the corresponding passage in Dan. xii. 7. where the angel swears that it shall be for *a time, times, and an half*. The pouring out of the last vial is the termination of the 1260 years: accordingly, a great voice is then heard out of the temple of heaven, saying, **IT IS DONE.**\*

It may be questioned however, whether the precise time of the commencement and termination of this period, be not purposely concealed from us. It does not appear to be the design of prophecy so to fix the time of future events, as that we should know them before-hand, to a day, or a month, or a year. It deserves moreover, to be par-

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\* Chap. xvi. 17.

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ticularly noticed, *that those prophecies in which an exact number of years is specified, are generally, if not always, covered with obscurity in respect of the time of their accomplishment, and in some cases have appeared to have had different accomplishments.* Seventy years, for instance, were determined for the Babylonish captivity; but as the captives were carried away and restored at different times, it was hard to say when it began, and consequently when it ended. From the first captivity in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when Daniel and others were carried to Babylon, to the first restoration by the decree of Cyrus, was seventy years; that is, from A. M. 4108 to 4178.\* From the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in the reign of Zedekiah to the decree of Darius to restore it, was seventy years; that is, from A. M. 4126 to 4196.† And from the captivity by Nebuzaradan which finished the desolations, to the dedication of the second temple, which completed the restoration, was seventy years; that is, from A. M. 4130 to 4200.‡ See the Tables in Prideaux.

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\* 2 Chron. xxxvi. 5—7. 22, 23. † 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14—21.

Ezra vi.

‡ Jer. lii. 30. Ezra vi. 16—22.



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Again, Seventy weeks of years were determined for the coming of Messiah; but things were so ordered that though the weeks were well understood to mean 490 years, yet the exact time of their commencement was not understood. A general expectation of him certainly did prevail about the time that he appeared, but that was all that was gathered from the prophecy, and might be all that was intended should be gathered. Those who entertained carnal views of his kingdom, were so blind as not to know it when it did appear. The Pharisees demanded of him, "When the kingdom of God should come?" "The kingdom of God cometh, (answered he,) not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for behold the kingdom of God is among you!"\* As if he should say, The kingdom of God will not, like the kingdoms of this world, rise out of turbulence, intrigue, and bloodshed, nor be accompanied with ostentation and parade. Imperceptible and gradual in it's operations, it comes when you little expect it. You shall not be able to point to the place, and say, Lo, it is here, or lo, it is there! Nay, little as you

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\* Luke xvii. 20, 21.

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may think of it, it is already in the midst of you!

In some such manner as this, we may look for the expiration of the years of Antichrist, and the coming of the kingdom of Christ in these latter days. While curiosity is gaping after wonders, and demanding, when shall these things be? behold it will be amongst us! The Antichristian cause rose gradually, and will probably fall gradually. "They shall take away his dominion to *consume* and to destroy it unto the end."\* It's temporal power has already been shaken and diminished; but it is reserved for the battle of Armageddon, that "great day of God Almighty," under the sixth vial, to accomplish it's overthrow. And when this is done the seventh will purify the moral atmosphere of the world from it's abominable principles, and so make way for the Millennium.

When two of Christ's disciples were inquiring after the *honours* of his kingdom, they were asked, "Are ye able to drink of the *cup* that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the *baptism* that I am baptized with?"†

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\* Dan. vii. 26.

† Matt. xx. 22.

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He would himself have to suffer before he reigned, and they must expect to suffer with him. It is true his sufferings would be but for a short time, and so might theirs; but they required to be the immediate object of their attention. Something similar to this may be expected in what is before us. Some commentators have supposed *the slaughter of the witnesses* in Chap. xi. to intimate as much as this. I have already given my reasons for understanding that part of the prophecy of past events: but there are other passages which seem to give us to expect that the adversary will not expire without a deadly struggle. Thus towards the close of the 1260 years, in which the church is described as being in the wilderness, the dragon is represented as casting out of his mouth a "flood" after her, and as making war with her seed.\* Previous to "the harvest and the vintage, which, synchronizing with the sixth vial, describe the utter overthrow of the Antichristian powers, the *patience* of the saints is celebrated, and a blessing pronounced on the dead that *die in the Lord*.† Previous to the battle of Armageddon, the kingdoms are gathered together to *fight against God*.‡ The beast, and

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\* Chap. xii. 15—17. † Chap. xiv. 12, 13. ‡ Chap. xvi. 14.

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the kings of the earth, and their armies, are gathered together to *make war* with him that sat on the horse, and against his army, and perish in an attempt to crush them.\*

If these events signify *war* between the the nations, as possibly they may, yet it will be a war directed against Christ and true religion, and in which the church of Christ may expect a sharp persecution; and this not merely from one, but all parties, who like Herod and Pilate, will be made friends, and unite in such a work as this. We may think that from the repeated blows which Popery has received on the continent, it will never be able to persecute to any considerable degree again; that from the antipathy between it's adherents and the patrons of infidelity they can never again coalesce; and that from the dishonour which public opinion attaches to intolerance, persecution can never more lift up it's head: but we may be mistaken in all these particulars. If the temporal power of Popery has diminished on the continent, it's spiritual power has increased in Britain.†

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\* Chap. xix. 11—21.

† Recent events have also revived it's temporal power.  
N. B. written in 1814.

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If Papists, and the avowed enemies of religion have fallen out, it has been chiefly on political subjects, a union in which would bring them together again. We have lived to see both whigs and tories unite in opposing a free toleration of Christian Missionaries; and an English writer of note, who professes to be "the enthusiastic friend of freedom," though he wishes the "Catholics the utmost degree of religious liberty," yet proposes in respect of *the evangelical party*, "by well-concerted, and well-applied regulations to *restrain* them!"\* The spirit of the beast and the false prophet certainly can, and will unite with that of the dragon in the war with God Almighty.

It is a consolation that this persecution, or this war against religion, will be the last, and of short duration: this very effort of the enemy will prove his final overthrow: our immediate inquiry however, seems to be, Are we able, previous to our entrance on the Millennial reign of Christ, to drink of his cup, and to be baptized with his baptism?

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\* *Characters of the late Charles James Fox. By Philopatri Varvicensis. Eclectic Review* for December 1809, p. 1128.

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But though our Lord checked the aspiring minds of his disciples concerning his kingdom by presenting to them a time of trial, yet he did not fail to cheer them with the promise of glorious things beyond it. ~ “A woman (saith he,) when she is in travail, hath sorrow because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.”\* The glory of the Millennium will more than balance all the trials during the 1260 years of Antichristian usurpation. Nor shall we have to wait for the Millennium, nor even for the ruin of the Antichristian cause ere we see glorious times. Two hundred years has been thought to be the utmost point to which the pouring out of the vials can extend: they may terminate in less time: but if not, there is great encouragement for the friends of Christ in the promised progress of his cause *during this period*. We shall not have to wait for the Millennium, I say, ere we see glorious days in respect of the success of the gospel. The

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\* John xvi. 21, 22.

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seventh trumpet, though it includes the vials, and in this view is a woe-trumpet, yet is introductory of good tidings to the church. At the same time that her enemies are bleeding under the strokes of heaven, the “kingdoms of this world are becoming the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.” The pouring out of the vials will be to the Millennium that which the wars of David were to the pacific reign of Solomon. The servants of Christ may have to encounter great opposition; but as “the Lord prospered David whithersoever he went,” so he will prosper them. Paganism, Mahometanism, Popery, and Infidelity, shall fall before them. Nor shall the obstinacy of Judaism maintain it’s ground. The wall shall be built though it be in troublous times. What short of this can be intimated by the “Angel flying 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”—and *this before the fall of the Antichristian Babylon.*\*

What else can be meant by the song preceding the pouring out of the vials—“All

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nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest?"\* The judgments referred to are those of the vials, or "seven last plagues;" (Chap. xv. 1.) the effect of which on the nations will be to induce them to "come and worship" before God. They shall so "manifestly" appear to be the judgments of God against the Antichristian powers, that the nations will be deeply impressed by the conviction; and by the concurring influence of the Holy Spirit and the "everlasting gospel," will be subdued to the obedience of faith.

To the same purpose is that remarkable passage in Isa. xxvi. 9. *When thy judgments are in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.* "The church under "the gospel dispensation, (says an able writer,) "is in this and the preceding chapter the "*principal* subject of prophecy. Zion is introduced singing. A song is always in the "prophecies a symbol of the enlargement of "the church. In verses 17, 18, she complains "of feeble and ineffectual efforts in extending "the interests and kingdom of her Redeemer. "*We have not wrought any deliverance in*

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\* Chap. xv. 3, 4.



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“ *the earth, neither have the inhabitants of*  
“ *the world fallen.* She receives in answer  
“ the consoling promise of a period when she  
“ shall make vigorous and successful ex-  
“ ertions, and no longer complain of abortive  
“ labours; when converts numerous as the  
“ morning dew shall join her standard. *Thy*  
“ *dead shall live. Awake and sing—thy dew*  
“ *is as the dew of herbs.* No season or time  
“ is particularly ascertained when this promise  
“ will be accomplished; but another event  
“ is foretold, and immediately connected with  
“ this. A judgment, a singular judgment,  
“ inflicted as the punishment of a peculiar  
“ and enormous crime is mentioned. The  
“ event is represented as inevitable; the Lord’s  
“ people may not pray for it’s removal, but  
“ are directed to fly to their chambers, and  
“ hide themselves until the indignation be  
“ overpast. *For behold the Lord cometh out*  
“ *of his place to punish the inhabitants of the*  
“ *earth for their iniquity: the earth also*  
“ *shall disclose her blood, and shall no more*  
“ *cover her slain!* The terms here used com-  
“ pared with parallel exertions in the revel-  
“ ation, put it beyond a doubt that the blood  
“ of the martyrs is intended, and the punish-  
“ ment predicated is the avenging of that  
“ blood. This is introduced as a coetaneous

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“ event with the enlargement of the church.  
“ Whenever that precious blood begins to  
“ be avenged, then Zion will sing of mercy  
“ as well as judgment; then a new and pros-  
“ perous ministry will arise in the church, and  
“ her borders be widely extended.”\*

If the “punishment” referred to at the close of the xxvith chapter of Isaiah be that which is appointed for the Antichristian Babylon for her having shed the blood of the martyrs, in which not only this writer, but almost all our ablest commentators are agreed, the ninth verse doubtless refers to the same events. The pouring out of the vials are the “judgments,” which while they are in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Many judgments have been in the earth without producing this effect; but the Lord will in this instance accompany them with his word and Spirit, and so render them effectual to salvation.

The same things in substance are taught us in Rev. xix. 11—19. where, prior to the last struggle with the beast and the false

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\* Dr. LIVINGSTONE'S Sermon, from Rev. xiv. 6. before the New York Missionary Society, on April 3, 1804.

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prophet, Christ is described as "going forth upon a white horse, and as being followed by the armies of heaven on white horses." And when their enemies, provoked by their success, shall gather together in order to oppose their progress, they themselves shall fall to rise no more.

*The period of the vials* being a season of WARFARE, it is in this, rather than in the Millennium itself, that we are to look for the most distinguished VICTORIES over error, superstition, and irreligion. The Millennium is a *reign*; but a reign presupposes possession of the throne, and that, in cases where it has been previously occupied by an enemy, a *victory*. It is in this period therefore, that we are to look for the overthrow of Paganism, Mahometanism, Popery, and Infidelity; and towards the close of it may expect the malignant opposition of the Jews to give place to the gospel. The glorious Millennial rest will not commence while such an enemy remains unsubdued. The marriage-supper of the Lamb must include the children of Abraham in it's train. The return of this long-lost prodigal will heighten the joy of the feast, and be as life from the dead.

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Supposing the period of the vials to have commenced within the last five and twenty years, let it be considered *whether the aspect of the times does not correspond with what we are given to expect*. It must of necessity be a period of *unprecedented wars*; and if those wars are designed of God to avenge the blood of the martyrs, it may be expected they should have a kind of special direction given them towards the countries where that blood has been principally shed. How far this is applicable to late events, it is easy to judge. It must also be a period of *extraordinary prayer* and *unprecedented exertion for the spread of the gospel*. It is during this period that “the kingdoms of the world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.” But the accomplishment of such mighty moral changes is not to be expected by any other than the means above-mentioned. When the Lord buildeth up Zion he regards the prayer of the destitute; and when his servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour her dust, then the time to favour her, even the set time is come.\* Had we been more importunate in prayer we might have been more successful; but with all our im-

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\* Psa. cii. 14—17.

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perfections, the prayer of faith has been presented and heard! God hath given the word, and, compared with former times, great is the company of those that publish it. Can we overlook that providence which has been raising up numerous societies and plans, some for teaching the poor to read, and others for furnishing them with books, especially with the oracles of God? Ought we to overlook the translation of the scriptures into the various languages of the East; or the circulation of them through the earth in such a degree as perhaps was never before known? Can we be inattentive to the desire after evangelical preaching which prevails; not in one or two countries only, but almost every where? If our Lord concluded from the flocking of the Samaritans to hear the word, that "the fields were white already to harvest," are we not warranted to draw the same conclusion?

Let us observe the state of the public mind a little before the coming of Christ, and compare it with it's present state. "The people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts whether John were the Christ, or not." And who that is not blind to the operations of God's hand does not muse in

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his heart whether the extraordinary changes which have of late years taken place in the world do not indicate something great to be pending? Whether, notwithstanding the many venders of false prophecies, and mistaken comments on the true, there be not a body of genuine and important prophecies fulfilling and about to be fulfilled; whether some of the convulsions among the nations may not issue in what is foretold of the restoration of the Jews; and finally, whether all that is going on be not a preparing the way of the Lord, and making straight his paths?

Look at the blessing already attending the various attempts to propagate the gospel. To some it may appear a "day of small things:" but if God does not despise it, it will increase. Already have we been provoked to jealousy by Hindoos and Hottentots: nor is this all; look at our fleets and armies: did we ever before hear of so many lovely groups of Christian people amongst them? It would seem as if God had begun with these publicans and sinners to shame the rest of the nation.

*Finally*, If these be not sufficient, look at the state of mind amongst the *enemies* of

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religion. Do not their hearts fail them, like those of the Canaanites before Joshua and his army? Why do the brahmans tremble for their gods? and why are practical unbelievers afraid of godliness, whether in or out of the establishment? It is pleasant to observe, while endeavouring to stigmatize it under the name of "Methodism," how despondingly they confess their inability to arrest it's progress.\* Surely these are tokens for good to the church of Christ.

On the period of the vials being closed, that of the Millennium will commence. "The Lord gave Solomon *rest* round about from all his enemies;" and the Lord will now give rest to his people from theirs. It is probably in allusion to his quiet and pacific reign that that of the Messiah is denominated a *rest*—*His rest shall be glorious.*† Then wars and oppressions will cease. Then the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold of the image, being broken to pieces, and become like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, the stone that smote it will

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\* See *Edinburgh Review*, No. XXII. p. 241. Art. *Methodism*,

† Isa. xi. 10.

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have become a great mountain, and shall fill the whole earth. Then the judgment having sat upon the little horn, and his dominion being taken away, the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Amen.

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*Added in 1814.*

The above was written in 1810 or 1811, since which time the tide of human affairs has taken another turn. A mighty change has taken place in Europe, in favour of old establishments, and so in favour of Popery. We have seen the inquisition, which had been suppressed in Spain, revived; and the Pope, whose temporal power had been taken away, restored. But as the foregoing exposition rests not on any hypothesis formed from passing events, so it is not materially affected by them. The direction that things have taken as it relates to the liberation of nations, and their restoration to peace and independence, must needs be grateful to every friend of humanity and justice: and though the Papal cause may hereby regain some of its former ascendancy,



yet this may be but for a short time, and *that it may be destroyed for ever*. These tides in human affairs may be permitted, as by a flux and reflux of the ocean, to wash away those things which it is the purpose of heaven to destroy. The Antichristian power may rise and fall repeatedly before it falls to rise no more. Irrespective of prophecy, it is easy for an observant mind to perceive that notwithstanding the political advantages which have arisen from recent changes to most of the Papal nations, yet they are not at ease. There remains in them the seeds of discontent and of future wars. Look at the state of Spain, in particular.—Popery must be what it always has been, a persecuting enemy of true religion, or nothing. The preponderating powers of Europe, by restoring it's authority, and recommending it to exercise a liberal government, suited to the times, have done all perhaps that was in their power towards lengthening out it's tranquility: but it is in vain. WE WOULD HAVE HEALED BABYLON, they may say, BUT SHE IS NOT HEALED!