

A SYLLABUS  
OF  
**LECTURES**  
ON THE  
VISIONS  
OF THE  
**REVELATION.**

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BY AMZI ARMSTRONG, A. M.

*Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Mendham, N. J.*

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“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.”....REV. i. 3.

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MORRIS-TOWN, N. J.

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“ A Syllabus of Lectures on the Visions of the Revelation ; by Amzi Armstrong, A. M. Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Mendham, N. J.”

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AFTER frequently reviewing, and carefully examining, in the course of twenty years past, those leading sentiments, in which I was really constrained to differ from the commonly received opinions, in explaining the Visions of the Revelation, I ventured, last winter, to commence a course of Lectures on the subject.

And now, to afford those who heard them an opportunity deliberately to examine those sentiments ; and to submit them to the consideration of my Christian friends generally, I publish an abstract of the Lectures, designed to give a simple statement of the principles, on which I think the Visions of the Revelation ought to be explained.

A. ARMSTRONG.

*Mendham, April 4, 1815.*

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LECTURE I.

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# LECTURE I.

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## INTRODUCTORY.

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REVELATION, i. 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.”*

**T**HIS introductory paragraph gives a compendious view of the history, the subject, and the design of “the Book of the Revelation.”

1st. The History.

It is “the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him.”

“Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

And now, “God who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the *Prophets*, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his *Son*, whom he hath appointed heir of all things.”

It was indeed "the *Spirit of Christ*, in the Prophets, that testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

But even when he came in his own person to reveal the Father unto men, and to bear witness to the truth, he received a commandment of the Father what he should say, and what he should speak; and declared, "whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak"....*John*, xii. 50. In all things he professed to perform the Father's will, and to receive from him whatever he bestowed on men, and whatever he claimed as his, even to the kingdom appointed unto him of the Father. He testified, "as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man."*John*, v. 26, 27.

It is in the character of the Son of man that he says, (*Mark*, xiii. 32) "But of that day and that hour, knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." It is in the same character that he *receives* also this Revelation *given him* of God.

Exalted to the throne of dominion, with "all power given unto him in heaven and in earth," and made "to be head over all things to the Church," whatever is necessary or useful for the Church, is committed to him, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

This Revelation, thus given to Jesus Christ, he communicated for the benefit of his Church and people; "and he sent and signified it by his angel to his servant John."

John was the last of the apostles. His brethren had been removed to the presence of their Master in glory. And while John yet continued to suffer for the "testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God," his Master honored him to be the especial revealer of his purposes concerning his Church in all future ages of the world; and to bear his last testimony from what he himself saw, and in what he was commissioned to declare to the Churches. He was favored with a vision, such as mortal eyes could behold, of a portion of the glory of his exalted Lord and Master; and received from his own lips his messages to the seven Churches in Asia. But the Revelation itself was sent, and signified to him by his angel.

The ancient Prophets, particularly *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, and *Zechariah*, had formerly received revelations in a similar manner. Visions were presented to their observation, in which they not only saw the symbolical representation of future things; but also heard, and even conversed with the persons bearing a part in the representations. The representation itself was undoubtedly by the Divine Power: But angels were commissioned to direct their attention to them, and to explain such particulars in them, as might prevent them from misapprehensions and mistakes.

The Revelation thus communicated to John, consisted of twelve distinct prophetic visions, representing to him, under various circumstances of deep and important interest, a series of the chief great events concerning the Church of God to the end of time.

This is, 2dly, The Subject of the Revelation —“ Things which must shortly come to pass.”

The ancient Prophecies had, from the beginning, revealed Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, and the King of Zion; without noticing the kingdoms of the world, or the nations of men, any otherwise than as their existence or conduct were occasionally connected intimate-

ly with the name of Christ, or the great interests of his Church and kingdom on earth. This Revelation is continued on the same principles, and regards, not the political, or even moral, changes or series of events that affect only the kingdoms of this world, but the state and progress of that kingdom which the God of heaven has set up. It is a prophetic view of Christ's holy and glorious providence over his people, guiding and guarding them in their pilgrimage, and preserving and conducting his Church till she shall "come up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved."

In this course of his providence, his people must be sometimes chastised, and sometimes comforted; and their enemies must be controuled, and judged. And as he will rebuke kings for his people's sakes, and overturn empires to make a way for his redeemed, the names and character of these kings and empires may be mentioned, and so much of their policy and of their history be brought into view, as may be necessary to illustrate the holy providence of the King of Zion over the kingdom of his heritage. On these principles alone, may we apply the things here revealed, to the concerns of the kingdoms of this world.

They are also described as “things that must SHORTLY come to pass”—Or, as the phrase might be rendered, COME TO PASS SPEEDILY, OR IN QUICK SUCCESSION ; importing, either that the beginning of them was already accomplishing, and they were all surely to be fulfilled in their order without delay ; or, that the whole time of their accomplishing would be short indeed compared with that state of things they were to introduce.

3dly. The Design of this Revelation is, “To shew unto his servants,” these things.

It is not to guide the speculations of vain theorists in searching after things to come ; nor is it to soothe the impatience of men under their anxieties about future events : it is not a revelation of all things future ; nor even of the things generally that should take place in the world : but, simply, of “things that must shortly come to pass :” That is, of some events, certainly not unimportant in themselves, nor uninteresting to mankind in general, but especially interesting to Christ’s servants, and useful for them to know, both for the direction of their expectations and their conduct, and for the support and confirmation of their faith in him who reveals them,

The ancient prophecies served these important purposes to the fathers. And Christ's own prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem was eminently useful to his servants who lived in Judea at the time of its fulfilment.

So this revelation is designed to serve the same purposes to his servants in all ages till his second coming. It is a revelation not for the world generally, nor for worldly and profane men; but for the servants of Christ; and is designed to answer every desirable and proper purpose to them, that a revelation of things to come could answer.

Now, from the view given in the text of the history of this book, we are admonished to receive and consider it as the gift of God by Jesus Christ. The representations it contains of future events were, by the Divine power, made to John. And lest he should fail duly to notice them, and lest they should be misinterpreted or misapplied, a special Messenger from the presence of the Lord was employed to direct his attention, and to explain to him the subjects of these representations, so far as was needful, that he might intelligibly record them.

The representations are therefore to be interpreted on the principles of figures, or hieroglyphics, and the explanations literally.

The revelation itself commences with the 4th chapter of the book, and ends with the 5th verse of the last chapter.

In considering the subject of this revelation, we may not calculate on human principles, or rely on human wisdom, to determine what we may expect to find it. Conformably to all other revelations from God, the subject is, **THE POWER, AND THE GRACE OF CHRIST, IN HIS GREAT PURPOSE OF REDEEMING LOVE.**

Representations of these are made in twelve prophetic visions.

The 1st exhibiting Christ himself opening the Seals of the Divine Decrees, and thereby giving a view of the general aspect of his providence over his Church, from the time of his exaltation to his second coming, in seven various characters or dispensations of that providence, at as many different periods in that portion of time.

The 2d declaring, under the sounding of seven Trumpets, as many special and distinguished judgments, which, in answer to the prayers and complaints of his suffering people, he

would execute upon their enemies, within the same period of time, till he shall finally deliver them, from all the power of them that afflict them.

The 3d making a marked distinction of the real from the nominal Church of God; and describing the condition of the former, during a specified term of time.

The 4th giving a general view of the hatred and persecutions of the great adversary, against the Church of God, and the kingdom of Christ in the world, under the figure of a woman persecuted by a dragon.

The 5th describing, under the character of beasts, the principal agents by whose instrumentality the adversary vents his hatred, and carries on his persecutions against the Church, for the space of 1260 years.

The 6th giving a general view of the final triumphing of Christ's servants, and of the account to which he will bring the instruments of the adversary's cruelty, in the harvest and the vintage of the earth.

The 7th describing, under the figure of the pouring out of seven vials of wrath, the particular judgments by which Christ will bring to an end the controversy, in which the agents and instruments of the adversary enlist themselves against him.

The 8th describing the character, and giving the destiny of an apostate and antichristian community under the name of Babylon.

The 9th shewing the fall and utter destruction of that apostate community, in its whole polity and possessions, under the idea of the fall and utter ruin of the city of Babylon.

The 10th declaring the final triumph of Christ over all his enemies, and their entire subversion in “the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

The 11th predicting the millennial state of the Church.

And the 12th the New Jerusalem.

In all these particulars, the power and the grace of Christ are here pledged, in a progressive discipline, and effectual care over his servants, till they shall all be complete in him, and every one of them, in Zion, appear before God.

It is a most interesting prospective history of that providence, which, through the wisdom and power of the Godhead, Jesus Christ shall accomplish in his care over his Church, which he hath purchased with his own blood, till he shall “present it to himself a glorious Church, —holy and without blemish.”

Lastly, The design is worthy of the author,

and is well answered by the nature and the manner of the revelation.

It is worthy of Him, who is the first and the last—who declareth the end from the beginning, when he calls his servants to the honor and the rewards of a co-operation with him, to give them some distinct intimations, not only of the final result, but also of the progressive steps, and the various means and circumstances, in which he will accomplish his great and good purpose concerning the Church of his redeemed.

And it is worthy of Him, who calls his servants confidently to trust in him at all times, and for all things pertaining to life and godliness, to afford them a continued and constantly present evidence of his power and grace to supply all their wants. In the first ages after his exaltation, he gave them the testimony of miracles to witness his constant presence and regard to them. But through all ages, “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,” and is witness to this hour that “all judgment is committed to the Son,” and that he is “made head over all things to the Church.”

The nature also of this revelation, is such as seems most desirable and useful for the ser-

vants of Christ, to keep them in that humble and expecting temper in which they ought to wait on him; and to admonish them of the danger of all near alliances with the world, as well as to warn them of particular and eminent seasons and circumstances of trial and of danger through which they must pass.

The manner of it, likewise, is such as accords with every rational, certainly with every scriptural, idea of true prophecy.

In some of the ancient prophecies concerning nations or people who were never to read them for themselves, before the accomplishment, the representations or predictions are not obscured by hieroglyphics; but are to be understood literally. In many prophecies, however, a degree of obscurity seems necessary, if for no other reason, yet, that they may not stand in the way of their own fulfilment. This revelation is plain enough, to give those who respectfully study and regard it, all needful intimations of the duties their master expects of them in the course of its fulfilling, and of all the dangers and snares he would teach them to avoid. It is sufficient also to assure his faithful servants, at all times, of his supreme providence and constant care over his Church, and of his faithful-

ness to perform, in every particular, that he hath promised ; while, at the same time, it is so obscure as not to prevent its own accomplishment ; and as not to force conviction on men generally, who read it, concerning the character of its author. It leaves them in that free condition, which is indispensable—in that state of discipline and probation for which the present life is designed. In such a state, men's moral faculties must have scope, or there can be no probation ; and in the controul which the Most High maintains over them, room must be left for the exercise of these faculties, or they cannot be disciplined as their rational nature requires. It is therefore of the wisdom and goodness of God, that a revelation of things that must shortly come to pass, when made to those whom it chiefly regards, should be clouded with some obscurity. It is however entirely consistent with these principles, to suppose that they whose hearts are truly turned to the Lord, and habituated to a temper of sincere obedience to him, and of confident trust in his word, may, by serious and diligent study, attain to some good and satisfactory understanding of such a revelation. And that they may, was declared to Daniel when it was

said to him, (*Dan.* xii. 10,) "None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." It is, perhaps, always to be attributed to the perverse inclinations, the wayward tempers, or the profane fancies of men, rather than to any impenetrable obscurity in the visions of the revelation, that they are not better understood. It is consistent with the same principles also, to expect that, when many of the prophecies contained in the revelation have been fulfilled, and especially when some of the last great interesting scenes which they reveal are displaying, and hastening to a close, they for whose sake they were revealed, the true servants of Jesus, shall have their understanding much enlarged on these subjects, according to that other declaration to Daniel (xii. 4,) "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."—"And they that understand among the people shall instruct many." To these times, certainly, is eminently applicable that declaration, nearly connected with our text, in the 3d verse of the chapter, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of his prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand."

The first part of the lecture was devoted to a general  
 survey of the subject, and to a consideration of the  
 principles which should govern the conduct of the  
 student. It was then proceeded to a more particular  
 examination of the various branches of the  
 science, and to a discussion of the methods  
 which should be employed in their study. The  
 lecturer then concluded with some remarks  
 on the importance of industry and perseverance  
 in the pursuit of knowledge.

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**LECTURE II.**

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The second part of the lecture was devoted to a  
 more particular examination of the various  
 branches of the science, and to a discussion  
 of the methods which should be employed  
 in their study. The lecturer then concluded  
 with some remarks on the importance of  
 industry and perseverance in the pursuit  
 of knowledge.

## LECTURE II.

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### *The Vision of the Sealed Book.*

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REVELATION v. 1.

*“ And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within, and on the back side sealed with seven seals.”*

**T**HIS was, probably, the most august Vision, that ever mortal eyes beheld. The awful glories of Sinai, and the resplendent visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel, seem here united ; and the glorious appearance of the Lamb, with the universal concert of worship addressed to him, give the vision a life and a glory before unequalled in all that prophet had ever described, or the eyes of man had ever witnessed.

It was a great occasion ; interesting to angels, and to men. “ The Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world,” had, according to the prophecies and promises concerning him, been offered upon the Altar, and had re-

ascended to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was: and now the divine decrees respecting his future glory, as the Mediator of the new and everlasting covenant, and as the Lord and Head of his Church, were to be delivered with public solemnity into his hands, that he might loose the seals, and in his own name and authority, reveal to his servants the leading features of his holy and glorious providence, determined for the execution of his counsel of love.

These decrees are represented as contained in a Book, that seems to have consisted of seven leaves, or, according to the ancient form of books, seven rolls of skin or parchment, written within, and on the backside sealed with seven seals. If these volumes were fastened together at one end, and together rolled up into the form in which such volumes were usually kept, the seals would then all appear on the outside, and as each one was loosed, the volume it sealed might be opened, and its contents displayed.

To loose these seals was the prerogative of "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness." And till he appeared, "No one in heaven,

nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon."

He received the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne ; and as he opened the several seals, and displayed the volumes in order, there appeared emblems significant of the progressive discipline and effectual care over his Church and people, which it had been determined he should accomplish, in seven various dispensations of his providence toward them, in succession till his second coming.

When he had opened one of the seals, there 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."

This emblem was fully explained, by that which afterwards was witnessed by the apostle, when, as is recorded in the 19th chapter, he " 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 ; and his name is called the Word of God, and he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords." This could be none other than the Lord from heaven, come

forth to triumph gloriously over his enemies in the last great day of battle and of victory. So, in this place, although differing in some circumstances of his appearance, according to the different purposes for which he was manifested, it is the same Lord, accompanied by the same emblems of pure and holy triumph.

In this instance, the white horse, and the bow, and the crown, and the progressive victory represent him, as it had been foretold of him in the 45th Psalm, triumphing by the power of his word, and of his Spirit, and gathering, and building up to himself a kingdom among men.

The opening of this seal, therefore, discloses the sure prospect of the wide-spreading of the gospel, and of its blissful and holy influence over the hearts of men triumphing against all the power of its enemies.

It was accomplished in the early success of the Gospel among the nations of the earth. Historians relate that within less than a century after the exaltation of Christ, all the known world was enlightened by the Gospel; and pagan oracles were silenced, and pagan institutions prostrated before its power. The Apostle had already witnessed this in part ac-

tually accomplished in his own time. And here it was represented to him as constituting the first and leading dispensation of that glorious and holy providence, which, from the counsels of the divine decrees, was now to be revealed to him for the servants of the Lord.

“And when he had opened the second seal, 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.”

None can be at a loss, I suppose, to understand the general import and significancy of these emblems.

The servants of Christ are here forewarned, that, notwithstanding the first success of the Gospel, and its glorious progress, there would yet be a great trial, and severe afflictions to be endured. The adversary of the kingdom in which they trusted, would not quietly yield his dominion; and the Lord would suffer him to contend, by his servants, “the children of disobedience,” with blood, and great slaughter. But, in the end, he would, in his supreme providence, take peace from the earth, and they should kill and destroy one another.

The opening of this seal discloses to view that bloody period, in which the Church suffered her bitter and terrible persecutions ; and in the close of which, the earth was deluged with blood, in the wars the heathen waged among themselves, till the Roman empire was settled in peace under the dominion of Constantine, in the beginning of the fourth century. Peace might truly be said to be taken from the earth, when, in the course of about half a century, more than twenty different emperors reigned, and above thirty usurpers contended unsuccessfully for the crown.

“ And when he had opened the third seal— I beheld, and lo, a black horse ; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. 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.”

This opens a dark dispensation. The black horse seems indicative of famine. The prophet Jeremiah, in his Lamentations, had said, (*Chap. v. 10,*) “ Our skin was black like an oven, because of the terrible famine.” And the measure here mentioned, was only the daily allowance for a labouring man’s sustenance :

and the piece of money mentioned, as we learn from the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, (*Matthew* xx. 2,) was the price of a day's labour. Provisions for the support of life must have been scarce indeed, when a labouring man could obtain enough only for his own bread, as the price of his daily labour.

We would scarcely expect, however, that any actual famine recorded in history would be so distinctly noted, and classed as one of the seven great dispensations of Christ's providence over his Church.

But we read in the Scriptures of a famine of another kind--(*Amos* viii. 11,) "Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and the young men faint for thirst."

When the bread and the water of life are kept back out of view, and neglected, to make way for human inventions and superstitions, or are perverted or alloyed by the profane specu-

lations of a vain and deceitful philosophy, there must a spiritual famine ensue : and such a famine, thus brought on, may be continued in judgment. When the children of Israel murmured and loathed the manna from heaven, God “gave them their request, but sent leanness into their souls.” And when Ephraim made many altars to sin, the righteous judgment of God issued “Altars shall be unto him to sin.”

The solid instructions of the Scriptures had begun to evaporate into light and airy visions, under the ministrations of philosophizing teachers, before the time of Constantine ; and multitudes of the nominal Christians were pleased with it even then. But when the Doctors of the Church came to be flattered and courted by the secular power, and the pressure of persecution was no longer felt, the word of life was generally neglected for human institutions, and the fountains of truth were forsaken for “clouds without water.”

The opening of this seal discloses a period of spiritual famine, from the time of Constantine’s favor to the Church, till the desolations of the empire, by the irruptions of the Barbarians. A period in which the Church enjoys

the advantage of civil justice and equity in her favor, represented, perhaps, by the balances in the hand of him that sat upon the horse, yet, in her spiritual concerns, is characterized as low and languishing, through the scarcity of the ministrations of the pure bread and water of life. No external foe is suffered to prevail against her: the spirit of grace has not yet forsaken her; nor are his unctions withheld from them that wait for them; for a command accompanies the dispensation, "See thou hurt not the oil and the wine." The precious ordinances of Christ are not yet so corrupted, as to bring on spiritual death. But weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, she is found wanting; and a universal leanness and famishing prevails, as is here represented under the idea of a scarcity of the provisions necessary to support life. The pulse of life still continued to beat, but it beat feebly: and toward the close of the period, the chills of death and the convulsions of expiring life, indicated a speedy extinction. The succeeding period discovers the fatal consequences.

"And when he had opened the fourth seal— I looked, and behold, a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell fol-

lowed 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."

Death, as a terrific conqueror, is here represented as going forth to execute his dread commission, in putting an end, by the utter extinction of life, to that languishing condition of the great body of the Church, which was disclosed by the opening of the former seal ; and hell as following, in concert with him, to fix the seal of reprobation on the apostate Church. And power is given to them over that whole division, or quarter of the earth where the Church had become thus apostate, to put an end to life, by the sword, or power of the secular authority, by withholding or perverting the bread and the water of life, by the pestilence of false doctrine, and by the tyrannical and persecuting beasts of the earth.

This is a representation of that long and dreary period in Church history, so destitute of the light of life, from about the time of the barbarians settling, and establishing kingdoms within the bounds of the Roman empire, till the dawning of the reformation. It is a long period ; but let it not surprise us, if we find it

distinguished by but few prophetic notes.— One uniform character of ghastly Death and Hell triumphing, marks and distinguishes it from beginning to end. There were indeed faint sparks of life apparent here and there. But the great body of the Church, in that quarter of the world, had become a lifeless and putrid carcass ; and Christ had rejected it.

“ 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.

“ 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 yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”

After a long night of death, the opening of this seal reveals the spirit of the martyrs of Jesus revived, and the true spirit of prayer, founded upon the promises of God, renewed in them that groaned under the oppression of

the enemies of Christ, and waited for his salvation.

At the commencement of the Reformation, when the enormities of the apostate Church were discovered and exposed, it was natural for the impatience of men to expect, that Christ would soon judge her, and avenge the blood of his martyrs. And when they found his purpose to this effect declared in his word, they would think themselves justified in expecting it would be accomplished without delay. They therefore “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?”

Such were the expectations, and such the prayers of the Reformers and their successors, till within a late period. Even some of us here now can remember, when scarcely a single public prayer was offered to God, that did not contain a petition for the destruction of the power of Antichrist. But God’s time was not yet come; and the faith of men has grown weary, perhaps just when God is beginning to hasten his work, “that *that* day may come upon them unawares.”—For as a snare shall it

come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth."

These prayers were not then answered in kind; but they who offered them were not put by without an answer in mercy. "White robes were given to every one of them." They were supported and made victorious against the adversary; and they received each a personal answer to his prayer, in being clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness. The spirit of truth taught them to understand, and to apply to their own cases, the great and good doctrine, which had been long exploded, of pardon and of justification before God, by the sacrifice and the righteousness of Christ.— It was the revival of this doctrine, that characterized and distinguished the Reformation. It comprises, indeed, the substance, and is the distinguishing theme of the Gospel: and without it, there had been no reformation worthy the notice of the spirit of prophecy.

They were also instructed that they must wait a little season, till the list of Martyrs should be completed; and till the measure of iniquity of their enemies should be filled up, in their persevering, against light and knowledge, to "resist the truth" till "their folly

shall be manifest unto all," as theirs also was, who withstood Moses, that future generations may learn to "fear the Lord and his goodness, in the latter days."

The opening of the next seal reveals the righteous judgments of Christ, accomplished in due time, upon these enemies of his throne and kingdom.

"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.

"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 :

"And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together ; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places ;

"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 ;

"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 Lamb ;

“ For the great day of his wrath is come ;  
and who shall be able to stand ? ”

The earthquake or concussion, according to that explanation by the Apostle, (*Heb. xii. 27.*) “ signifieth the removing of those things which are shaken.” The sun becoming black, and the moon as blood, and the stars of heaven falling to the earth, designate the shrouding in darkness, and covering with blood, and casting down from their high places, the thrones and dominions, and the princes, and the potentates of the earth. And the departing of the heavens as a scroll, or parchment, when it is rolled together, and the removing of every mountain, and of every island, out of their places, can signify nothing less than a total subversion, and universal sweeping off from the face of the earth, all those human establishments, of earthly foundation, whether civil or ecclesiastical, which have been in any way opposed to the spirit and the purity of Christ’s Kingdom. When the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, shall smite the great image of earthly dominions upon his feet, then the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold, shall be broken to pieces together, and become like the chaff of the summer thresh-

ing-floors ; and the wind shall carry them away, that *no place shall be found for them* ; and the stone shall become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth. “ For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven ; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble : and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.”

But what, I think, unequivocally determines the nature of the events here revealed, and the order and period of time in which they shall be accomplished, is, that the kings of the earth, and the great men, and all descriptions of men universally, shall be made fully conscious, that the great day of the wrath of the Lamb is come ; and, feeling themselves utterly unable to stand before him, in an overwhelming consciousness of guilt and despair, shall “ hide themselves in the dens and rocks of the mountains, and say 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 Lamb.”

I know not on what principles, or with what sentiments of piety, this can be applied

to any thing less, than that last great display of Christ's power, in which he will meet and destroy the enemies of his Kingdom, and overturn every foundation, and every establishment, that stands in the way of his universal dominion in the hearts of men, that the Lord alone may be exalted in that day.

“ The day of vengeance is in his heart, for the year of his redeemed is come.”

The execution of this is, probably, now already begun ; but the dreadful consummation is yet future.

As this is a day much in the heart of the Lord Christ, we shall frequently find it alluded to, and once, at least, more particularly and emphatically described in the course of this Revelation, given us, to shew unto us things that must shortly come to pass.

At present, another great and interesting event demands our attention :—the restoration of the Jews, connected with the coming in of the fulness of the Gentiles. For God, according to his promise, will yet gather the out-casts of Israel ; and he will also gather others with him. “ Blindness, in part, is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gen-

tiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved.”

The whole of the 7th chapter is occupied in detailing this event.

While the last indignation is accomplishing, there shall yet be a delay in some period of that time, probably just before the final consummation, when “the four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, shall hold the four winds of the earth, that the wind shall not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.”—“And another angel ascending from the east”—perhaps from some of the missionary establishments already formed there—“having the seal of the living God.”—The power of the Holy Ghost, sealing the ministrations of the word of life, shall be commissioned to seal the servants of our God in their foreheads, that they may be distinguished, and preserved safe in the day of the Lord’s vengeance.

That the vision in the 7th chapter relates to this event, cannot, I think, be doubted, when its coincidence with what is elsewhere predicted in the scriptures, of this great event, is duly considered.

The Apostle heard the number of them which were sealed—an hundred and forty and

four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. And that there might be no room left for misapprehension or doubt, the twelve tribes are severally named, and the number of the sealed of each tribe distinctly recorded. And after these, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.

The four corners of the earth, imply the whole earth; and this gathering of the dispersed of Israel, will be from among all nations, whither they have been scattered. The countless multitude, that the Apostle saw, after the sealing of these, is explicitly stated to be all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. But I have not time in this Lecture to pursue the subject farther.

“ And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.”

The Revelation included under this seal had been in some measure anticipated, by the representation of the result of that great ingathering to the Church, described in the last chapter. “ Therefore, are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple : and he that sitteth on the throne

shall dwell among them." And it was more distinctly and particularly to be made known, in succeeding appropriate visions, as the great result and crowning dispensation of that glorious and holy providence, in which Christ the Lord conducts his Church and people to rest and peace. It is therefore no farther signified, on the opening of the seal, but by that solemn and significant attention, and reverend regard which were expressed by a silence in heaven, for about the space of half an hour ; like that enjoined in the prophet Habakkuk--"The Lord is in his holy temple ; let all the earth keep silence before him." And entirely corresponding to that in Zechariah, at the conclusion of an express and very particular prophecy of the very same event as immediately precedes the opening of this seal--"Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord ; for he is raised up out of his holy habitation."

I cannot suppose that this silence was designed to measure a precise portion of time in the future history of the Church, or to be symbolical of a short respite, that the Church should enjoy, from being persecuted and afflicted by her adversaries.

There is no definite period here mentioned, but it is said to have continued for about half an hour. And the suspension of the course of the prophetic visions, and the delay of the progress of the revelation, for such a length of time, leaving the scenes of vision unoccupied, would seem, as a symbol, greatly disproportionate to the rest of the representations that passed before the view, or came under the observation of the Apostle.

If, however, it must be considered as a symbol, it would seem, in this place, most aptly to represent that state of rest and quiet, in the Church, and throughout the world, that shall obtain under the peaceful dispensation of millennial grace and glory.

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**LECTURE III.**

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## LECTURE III.

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### *The Sounding of the Trumpets.*

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REVELATION viii. 2.

*“ And I saw the seven angels which stood before God ;  
and to them were given seven trumpets.”*

**I**T was the high prerogative of Jesus Christ, to open the seals of the Divine Decrees, and “to shew unto his servants things that must shortly come to pass.”—“No one in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon ;” till the Lamb appeared, and “took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne.” In his distinctive character, as the Lamb that had been offered in sacrifice for the atonement of the sins of his people, but now exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high, he appeared in the midst of the throne, and of the surrounding wor-

shippers, and in due order opened the seals of the sacred book.

After the seals were thus opened, and a general view of the contents of the book displayed, in the great outlines and leading features of that holy and glorious providence, in all the several dispensations of it, which he, in the wisdom and power of the Godhead, will accomplish for his Church and people to the end of time: Then the ministers of his will were employed as agents to signify to the Apostle, in more particular detail, some of the principal events that were to fill up the general view. These events are all comprised in the general view that had been given in the opening of the seals of the book by the Lamb himself, and, in point of time, must coincide, each with some portion of the time embraced by one or more of the seals. I know not why commentators generally have agreed to class them all under the seventh alone, and conclude, that only a small portion of time, and a few events, and these, most of them, comparatively unimportant, are disclosed by the opening of the six former seals. It seems to me a very unnatural arrangement, and by no means analagous to the progress and nature of the

visions ; and I think it makes the last seal a monster in hieroglyphics, such as never was elsewhere witnessed. I do not recollect to have met with any reasons assigned for this arrangement, but what may be reduced to these two—1st, The very worst reason that could be assigned, and yet the one chiefly relied on,—that such an arrangement falls in with, and accommodates itself to the scheme of interpretation, which the commentator has adopted. The 2d, That there would seem an abruptness in the introduction of the Vision of the Trumpets, if it be not considered as flowing immediately out of the seventh seal, and being an exhibition of its contents. This, if correct, would be a good reason. But you all know, I suppose, that the division of the book into chapters, is not of divine, nor even of apostolic authority. It is an arrangement of quite recent invention.

If, then, the first verse of the eighth chapter stood the last of the seventh, and the text, now placed the second verse of the eighth, stood at the head of the chapter ; would there seem an abruptness in introducing this vision, when there had been first an interval of about half an hour of solemn silence, after the opening of

the last seal of the former vision? For we must remember that this interval of silence was witnessed, and is recorded by the Apostle, as actually taking place in heaven.

So solemn and awful a silence, continued for such a space of time, would hardly seem appropriate to the disclosing of the vision of the trumpets, as a display of the contents of the seal so long after it had been opened. It would seem more appropriate to the completing that general view of things to come, that was to be conducted and made by the Lamb himself, in his own person; and to his retiring, amid that profound adoration, to commission the ministers of his will to appear, and conduct the revelation of events that were to fill up that general view. And when it is considered, that the revelation included under the last seal, had been, as was entirely suitable to the occasion it should be, in some measure anticipated, by a representation of the result of the great ingathering to the Church, which is described in the seventh chapter; I think it not reasonable to object, that the contents of the seventh seal are no where revealed, unless in the vision of the trumpets. And as the contents of this seal were to be more distinct-

ly and particularly made known by other appropriate visions, as the great result, and crowning dispensation, of that holy and glorious providence, by which Christ will conduct his Church and people to settled rest and peace in due time; I think it not unreasonable to expect, that it shall be no farther signified, on the opening of the seal, than by that solemn attention, and reverend regard, implied in the awful silence with which it becomes all creatures to receive and submit to the intimations of the purport of the divine decrees. In very much the same manner, the events under the seventh trumpet are also noticed only in a very general view of the consequences, while the woe announced by the trumpet, is left to be described in another vision.

When, therefore, that expression of reverence, at the finishing of the opening of the seals, was ended, a new vision was presented to the view of the Apostle—

“And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.”

To these angels, who are here emphatically distinguished, as the seven angels that stood before God, it was committed to announce

certain interesting events, concerning the Church of Christ in the world, by sounding each his trumpet that was given to him for this purpose. The trumpet was anciently used for various purposes of public interest; but chiefly, and perhaps originally, to sound the alarm of war, or of impending danger.

When the means of intercourse between the nations and tribes of men were much fewer than at present, the first intimation of a hostile invasion would often be, the enemy presenting themselves before the gates of the city, or in the midst of the invaded territory. It was then the business of the watchmen to sound the trumpet of alarm. The prophet Amos alludes to this, when he says, (iii. 6,) "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid?" The assailants also gave the signal of onset to their hosts by the same means. In allusion to this, the prophet Zechariah, describing a day of God's wrath, (i. 16,) calls it "A day of the trumpet, and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers." But what the Apostle witnessed, as immediately preparatory to the sounding of these trumpets, will best explain their significancy in this place.

When the trumpets had been given into the hands of the angels, "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.

"And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

"And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth; and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

"And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound."

The taking of fire from the altar, and casting it into the earth, with the consequent voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake, denotes indignation and wrath, to be executed on them that dwell on the earth: and this token, following immediately upon the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints ascending up before God, indicates this indignation and wrath to be directed against the oppressors of Christ's praying people. But inasmuch as the fire was taken from the

altar which was before the throne, it would seem that the indignation was to be accomplished on a people professing to be the Lord's : as when coals of fire were to be scattered upon Jerusalem, to denote the wrath that should be executed upon the city called by the name of the Lord, the fire was taken from between the cherubims, and the execution of judgment began at the sanctuary.

From these circumstances, therefore, I conclude, that the seven trumpets are sounded, and the judgments they announce are executed, within the period of time when violence and oppression prevail in the Church, and there is exhibited that unnatural and shocking spectacle, of men professing the benevolent Gospel of Christ, and yet afflicting and oppressing, and persecuting fellow-Christians. And as this spirit did not prevail in the Church, till after the Roman empire came to be denominated Christian, and professing Christians gloried in indentifying the empire with the church, and this evil spirit seems to have been generated by that connexion, and was certainly cherished and fostered by it; I conclude, also, that the empire itself, in this connexion, must be in some measure a specific object of

the divine displeasure and wrath announced by the trumpets.

But the last three of these trumpets are emphatically distinguished as trumpets of woe. This term implies the idea of a *curse*, and distinguishes them from those trumpets that announce judgments that are sent for correction, while there is yet left a hope of repentance and reformation; and indicates that these, so distinguished, are signals of judgment without mercy.

I suppose, therefore, that the first four trumpets, are the signals of so many special judgments intended for correction as well as expressions of displeasure, and sent upon the professing people of God, the great body of the visible Church, before it had become entirely apostate, and therefore, rejected of Christ; and that the trumpets of woe are signals of the special curses in judgment without mercy, to be executed upon the apostate Church in its connexion with the empire, after being rejected of the Lord.

On these principles, we would expect the four former to be of short continuance, and the three latter of much longer duration. And we would look for the four former to be exe-

cuted as tokens of displeasure, and intended for correction and warning upon the Church, in that sickly and languishing condition in which it appeared under the third seal : and the three latter to be executed upon the nominal Church in her apostacy, under some of the following seals : Two of them, I suppose, were executed under the fourth seal, and the last coincides with the sixth seal.

After these general observations on the nature and the design of these judgments, predicted under the sounding of the seven trumpets, I shall not detain you long to hear a very particular account of the accomplishment of each of them.

Commentators are, generally, nearly agreed on this subject ; and I see no reason to doubt their correctness.

“ 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 were burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.”

When the Roman empire became Christian, and the way to honour and preferment lay through the Church, its concerns would often come under the direction and management of

worldly minded men, and the humble pious often be afflicted and oppressed. Accordingly, the disposition to depart from the simplicity of the Gospel, and from the truth as it is in Jesus, which began to manifest itself soon after the favour shown the Christian Church by Constantine, continued to increase, and had proceeded to alarming lengths, notwithstanding the efforts and the prayers of the pious to prevent it, when the Lord sent his scourge upon the Church, first by Julian the apostate, and afterwards, upon the Church and the empire more eminently, by the invasions of the barbarian nations ; particularly the Goths, under their famous leader Alaric, about the close of the fourth century.

From the cold regions of the north, they came like a storm of hail upon the empire, and their progress was marked in all their way by fire and blood. The trees and the green grass, the glory and the beauty of the land, were consumed by their fire. Neither old age nor infancy obtained the respect, or moved the pity of the barbarians ; and the temple and the dwelling were consumed to ashes by their fire.

An historian of those times says, "The sword of the barbarians destroyed a very great multitude of men ; and among other calamities, dry heats, with flashes of flame and whirlwinds of fire, occasioned various and intolerable terrors ; yea, and hail greater than could be held in a man's hand fell down in several places, weighing as much as eight pounds."

The barbarians, though they knew it not, had their commission from on high ; and a portion of the stores of vengeance reserved there, coming down at the same time upon them, should have warned the Christian world, that, in all these, the Lord contended against them, and rebuked them for their sins. But they repented not ; and, after a little interval to prove them, the second alarm of judgment was sounded.

"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 :

"And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died ; and a third part of the ships were destroyed."

A great mountain burning with fire, aptly represents a powerful barbarous nation, unre-

strained by principle or law, and raging with thirst of devastation and plunder. Such were the barbarian Huns, when, under their king Attila, to the amount of seven hundred thousand, they, a little before the middle of the fifth century, came with violence upon the Christian world, and invaded the Roman empire from one end to the other ; while the empire, represented as the sea, was in that loose, unsettled, and agitated state, which former invasions of the barbarians, and their own wayward policy had occasioned. These not only invaded the empire, and destroyed some of the fairest portions of it, as had been done by the Goths under the first trumpet ; but, says the historian, “ 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 the myriads of barbarians whom Attila led into the field—words the most expressive of total extirpation and erasure are applied to the calamities which they inflicted on seventy cities.” Attila himself boasted, that he was “ the scourge of God, and the terror of men.” The very language of this boasting should have been enough to awaken the consciences of even the most stu-

pid among the professing Christians of that day, to “remember from whence they had fallen, and repent.” This scourge was not, like the former, a sudden irruption of a merciless barbarian foe, who, when he had done his work of blood and of burning, again soon retired. These were permitted to hold a dominion of terror in the midst of the Christian world, and for fourteen years, says the historian, “shook the east and the west with most cruel fear, and deformed the provinces of each empire with all kind of plundering, slaughter, and burning.”

It was indeed a dreadful scourge for paternal love and faithfulness to inflict : but the corruption and degeneracy of the times, evidently required it. It was sanctified to many individuals, and they suffered in faith, and died in triumph. In the great body of the Church, however, throughout the empire, no reformation was effected : and a scourge on somewhat different principles was speedily after applied.

“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 ;

“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.”

The barbarians who so long, and so dreadfully scourged the Christian world; yet professed, many of them, to adopt the Christian religion. That form of it which they adopted, as being more congenial to their savage and unsanctified tempers, was what was called the Arian; distinguished particularly, as disallowing the proper Deity of Christ, and consisting chiefly in those philosophizing notions of religion, which unsanctified reason is ever disposed to confound with the pure doctrines of the Gospel. This heresy, long before invented, and propagated and resisted, many times by very unchristian means, at length provided the means of a scourge upon the Christian world, from within itself, and suited in kind, to the very crimes, and to that spirit of apostacy, by which they had so far departed from the simplicity of the Gospel, and from the true nature of the religion and kingdom of Christ. The spirit of dominancy, as “being lords over God’s heritage,” and of usurpation upon the sacred rights of conscience, using coercive measures to propa-

gate religious opinions, had greatly increased in the church, and become leading features in the character of apostacy, which the Christian world was then fast assuming. To rebuke and chastise them for this, the Lord suffered the Arian princes, with their barbarians, to exercise a discipline, and hold a rod of terror over them on like principles. Particularly, Genseric, the king of the Vandals, who subdued Africa, in the former part of the fifth century, not only over the African Churches, but at Rome itself, and throughout a great part of the empire, exercised the most despotic power and brutal force, to resist every thing unfavorable to Arian sentiments. And as the nature of his purpose seemed to demand, his vengeance fell heaviest on the ministers and teachers of the Church, who were constrained to embrace and teach Arian sentiments, or they must feel the tyrant's power. Thus were the rivers and fountains of waters made bitter, wherever the baneful influence of this apostate star extended. This, in the superintending providence of the Lord, was visiting their own iniquities upon them, and answering the cries of the oppressed, in which they cried unto God against them. Before the barbarians subdued

Carthage, the capital of the empire in Africa, the historian tells us, "Oppression and cruelty domineered at Carthage; and the poor of the place, in the anguish of their misery, were induced to beseech God to deliver the city to the barbarians."

In 455, Genseric carried his terrors into Europe, and invading Rome, with an army of three hundred thousand men, took it, and gave it up to the pillage and rapine of his brutal soldiery, for fourteen days together. Every where, he persecuted those that called themselves the orthodox Christians. His son and successor, Huneric, and the barbarian princes generally, seem, for a long time, to have followed up his example. "Thus," says the pious historian, "the wrath of God was evidently poured out on the Churches for mercies long abused." But, he adds, "There were those, who, by the principles of divine grace, were enabled in patience to possess their souls, and to evidence that the real Church was far from being extinguished." The Church was therefore suffered for a season longer, and space given for repentance. "But she repented not." And before the close of the century, the fourth signal announced another visting

of judgment--the last for correction : and her external glory, as connected with the empire, was eclipsed, and the lights in which she trusted, were put out.

“ 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 Church, grown vain and insolent in her spirit and in her policy, by her connexion with the Roman empire, is under this dispensation of judgment, proved by her last chastisement, in the subversion of that earthly empire in which she trusted.

“ Genseric left the western Roman empire in a weak and desperate condition. It 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 476, under Momylus, the last emperor of the West.” The senate and consuls were still continued for some time longer ; but the very name of the western empire was put out, and the conqueror took on him the title of King of Italy.

Between this time, and the sounding of the next trumpet, I suppose, it was that the true Church retired to the wilderness—The witnesses began to prophecy in sackcloth—The nominal Church was rejected as apostate—And the beast arose out of the sea.

The succeeding judgments partake of a different nature, and are designed to restrain the power, and to curb the insolence of the apostate Church, now become worldly in all her policy, and ambitious only to be distinguished among the kingdoms of this world.

These judgments are, accordingly proclaimed on these principles, by “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.”

“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.”

Concerning the accomplishing of this, and the following woe, there has been very little difference of opinion among commentators for a long time past.

This trumpet announces the woe inflicted by the Mahomedan power, from about the year 612 to 762—a period of time answering to the season of the continuance of the locusts, by which they are represented; and in prophetic language five months, counting a day for a year. At the expiration of this time, the caliph Almansor built the city of Bagdad, and called it “the city of peace.” A stop was then put to the devastations of these locusts. The Saracen empire continued for a longer time; but after this period, it retained no longer the disorderly locust-character, and became a more settled kingdom. During the five months, or 150 years of their commission, the Mahomedan Saracens were a continual scourge to the Christian world, and hindered the ambition, and abased the worldly glory of the apostate Church. I will not detain you to hear a more particular account of the accomplishing of this woe; as you may find it satisfactorily detailed in almost any of the late commentators; and particularly in Dr. Scott’s, and Bishop Newton’s.

The star, however, that the apostle saw, “that *had fallen* from heaven unto the earth,” (for so the original is literally translated,) was not, I

presume, Mahomed and his successors--They were the kings of the locusts, and the angel, or agent of the bottomless pit. But the fallen star, was either the great apostate angel, of whom Christ said, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven," and to whom Isaiah likens the king of Babylon, under the name of "Lucifer, son of the morning," or it was some apostate minister of the Church, employed as the agent of Satan in this infernal business."

When this woe was accomplished, there was allowed a little season of relief from external pressure, and the apostate Church began again to aspire, with new hope, toward universal domination, and the crusades called forth all her ambition.

But the "sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

"Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates."

This voice, proceeding from the four horns of the golden altar, seems to indicate a universal displeasure with the whole apostate Church, against which the woe is denounced, in all its polity and leading principles : and accordingly

the scourge, which the Lord in his providence had prepared, by the four sultanies of the Turks, or Othmans, upon the borders of the river Euphrates, was let loose upon them, for the space of 391 days or years; from 1281 to 1672. The Othman or Turkish empire still subsists to this day, and probably will continue, till the sixth angel shall pour out his vial of the wrath of God on the great river Euphrates. But it has been gradually decaying in power and glory, since the close of the period assigned for it to be the scourge of an apostate Church and people. During the whole of that period, however, it flourished, and was successful as a terrible and long protracted scourge. Yet, notwithstanding the severity and long continuance of this scourging, and the multitudes of men that perished by it, “The rest of the men that 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 hear, nor see, nor walk; neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.”

A dreadful assemblage of the most presumptuous and the most detestable crimes of the heathen idolaters, is here laid in charge against an idolatrous and apostate Church, for whose judgment the last exterminating woe is next to be announced, by the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

But, before the signal of extermination is given, the spirit of prophecy turns to enquire after the true Church of God, the faithful among the children of men. The community that is to be destroyed, bears the Christian name—possesses the Scriptures of truth, and boasts a direct and regular descent from the Church gathered and organized by the apostles, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is the Christian name then to become extinct? No. The gates of hell shall never prevail against the true Church of Christ. But, for the space of 1260 years, he suffers the name to be assumed by apostates, till they shall have filled the measure of their iniquities, that he may shew his wrath, and make his power known on the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. And that he may make known the riches of his glory, on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory. In the mean time, however,

he acknowledges, and seals by his spirit, and watches over, and preserves a seed to serve him. And there is here introduced, before the sounding of the last trumpet, a succinct view of his holy providence over his true followers, during that whole space of time, under the idea of a distinct and separate record, in a little book especially designed for that purpose. But this, as it is a distinct and separate vision of the revelation, must be the subject of more particular consideration, than we have now time to bestow upon it.

The vision of the trumpets is again resumed in the fourteenth verse of the 11th chapter.—  
“The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

“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 forever and ever.”

The woe announced by this trumpet, is not here particularly described: but the hallelujah of voices ascribes righteousness to God, and celebrates the glorious victory and triumph of Christ over the enemies of his throne and

kingdom, and the consequent conversion of the nations of men to the Lord.

In all this, the accomplishing of the last woe is implied: and in the last verse of the chapter some general view of its nature seems to be given. During the Vision of the little Book, when the angel came down from heaven, and set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, the scene of vision was changed, and the temple of God in heaven, in which had been the scene of the former visions, appears to have been closed. But upon the sounding of the seventh trumpet, "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."

It is, I suppose, to be reckoned the concluding scene of that dispensation of divine providence, that was revealed by the opening of the sixth seal; and is more fully shown in succeeding visions. What the angel said, "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished," seems to imply, that it will be the concluding dispensation of

judgment, by which Christ will finish the mystery of his holy providence over his Church, as he hath promised to his servants ; and removing all the clouds and darkness that have so long hung over it, will introduce the promised millennial rest and glory. In token of this, the ark of his testament is revealed to view, in the temple of God in heaven. “ And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come ; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to thy saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great ; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.”

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## LECTURE IV.

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## LECTURE IV.

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### *The Little Book.*

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REVELATION x. 11.

*“And he said unto me, Thou must prophecy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.”*

**T**HIS is the commission which the Apostle received, when, as he was instructed to do, he had taken the little book from the angel's hand, and had eaten it.

The vision of the little book is introduced between the sounding of the sixth and seventh trumpets. Just before the revelation of that exterminating woe that is to finish the mystery of God, the Apostle “Saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire :

“And he had in his hand a little book open :”  
—This seems to have been a particular record, relating especially to the true servants of God, who worship him in spirit and in truth. And as the sealed book of a former vision, comprising the great outlines of Christ’s holy providence over his Church and people, had already been opened by the Lamb, and the seals thereof loosed ; this also, is presented open, as comprising one of the particular visions by which the general view, given at the opening of the seals, is filled up.

“And he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

“And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth ; and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.”

The station which the angel took, upon the sea and upon the land, putting them both under his feet, seems to be an intimation of the speedy and full accomplishment of that decree revealed in the 8th psalm ; and in the New Testament repeatedly applied to Christ, “Thou madest him to have dominion over the work of thy hands ; thou hast put all things under his feet.” And the voices of the seven thunders, probably, proclaimed the particular

and speedy fulfilling, of what the Spirit of Christ said by the prophet Isaiah—"I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury." The Apostle, however, was commanded, "Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not;" so that we cannot certainly know what was the particular subject of them.

The angel then, in a formal and solemn manner, pronounced the oath of the Almighty, "That there should be time no longer;" implying that the triumphing of the wicked is at an end, and that the delay of judgment, in avenging the blood of the saints, a delay that has so often tried the faith of them that have trusted in Christ, shall thenceforward cease, and be no more. "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel," it is added, "when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets."

The divine providence toward the Church has ever comprised in it, mysteries too great for the human understanding to search. And although, in many cases, men have been able, afterwards, to discover plausible, and sometimes satisfactory, reasons for particular dis-

pensations ; yet, in regard of many of the great leading characters of that providence, the minds of men have never been well satisfied, any otherwise than as the spirit of faith has taught them to say, “ Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” But when the voice of the seventh angel shall begin to sound, this mystery shall be finished, both as it respects the ancient Church, to whom “ blindness, in part, is happened, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in ;” and also, as it respects the Church that now bears the Christian name, as God hath revealed in good news to his servants the prophets. Then “ the saints of the Most-High shall take the Kingdom, and possess the Kingdom, forever, even forever and ever.”

After this solemnity, the Apostle was commanded, “ Go, and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel, and eat it up.”

When he had done as he was commanded, he then received the commision, “ Thou must prophecy again before” or, as the word more exactly imports, *concerning*, or *against* “ many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.”

There had already been signified to him, for the use of the servants of Christ, some leading views of the whole progress of the divine

providence over the Church. But he must yet again, and more explicitly, testify beforehand, by the spirit of prophecy, against the ungodliness of men of all ranks and conditions, and witness a distinction between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. Intimations had been given, in former visions, of the decrees of God against an apostate Church : but, from the record of the little book, the Apostle was now called to exhibit an express and plain testimony on this subject, and to detail such circumstances as could not, except wilfully, be overlooked or misunderstood. “ 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.

“ 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.”

After the Roman emperors affected to take the Christian Church under their protection, and began to take on themselves to model its policy on the principles of the empire, it soon began to wear very much of an earthly appearance ; and, in process of time, became so

worldly, in all its policy and governing principles, as to be unworthy to be owned of Him, who declared, "My kingdom is not of this world." Apostatized from Christ, the great body of the nominal Church became a corrupted mass, and was rejected of him.

This decree of rejection is, I think, very explicitly foreshown, from the record of the little book, when the measuring rod is put into the hand of the Apostle, and he is commanded to draw the line of separation, and distinguish between the true temple and altar of God, with them that worship therein, and the court without the temple : measuring the former, as reserved of Christ to himself, and leaving out the latter, to be given up to the will and to the occupancy of heathenish idolaters, to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, for a time appointed, till the voice of the seventh angel shall begin to sound.

This is, I suppose, the great mystery of God, especially intended, concerning which the angel sware that at the appointed time it should be finished. It is indeed a great mystery in the divine providence. But it has unquestionably existed, and will continue to exist, until the time appointed of the Father. This

time is limited to forty and two months. Comparing this with other prophetic dates, I think there can be no reason to question, that it intends so many months of thirty days each ; and a year for each day ; making the term one thousand two hundred and sixty years.

This is the term of the continuance of that great mystery of the divine providence toward the Church, during which the witnesses of Christ prophecy in sackcloth—The Church remains in the wilderness—The beast triumphs, and holds the saints under his domination—The power of the holy people is scattered—And Antichrist sits enthroned over an apostate Church—While the sanctuary is trodden under foot, and heathenish idolaters boast themselves in occupying the place of the Church of the living God.

These events, from their nature, seem so nearly allied to each other, that they must, I think, be very nearly coincident in point of time : and as the prophetic records assign to each of them precisely the same date of continuance, I am therefore constrained to believe that they all have their beginning at about the same time ; and that they will all end together, when the seventh angel shall begin to sound,

and the mystery of God shall be finished. Certainly none of them will be permitted to continue beyond that period.

The giving the outer court of the temple and the holy city to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, being the first of these events that we meet with in the visions of the revelation, you, probably, expect of me an opinion as to the time of its commencement.

We shall, however, be better prepared for an opinion on this point, after a careful consideration of the true nature and real amount of such of these events as will be the subject of animadversion in the course of these lectures. In the present instance, there does not seem necessarily connected with this event itself, any external circumstance to determine the precise point of time in history from which it commences. It seems rather a representation of the operation of the divine decrees, by which, possibly in a silent manner, the distinction is made, and the line of separation is drawn, for the sake of introducing, or making way for, some of the other events connected with it.—The act of measuring, to which the Apostle was directed, with the instructions under which it was done, were significant of the divine pur-

pose to be executed in due time : But not necessarily significant of any remarkable visible event, that we might expect to find recorded in human histories.

The progress of that great community, bearing the name of the Christian Church, in corruption and depravity, commenced early, and proceeded gradually. And the historians of those times, whose records have reached us, so far partook of the spirit of the times, that it is vain to look for any discriminating testimony from them on this subject. And the public documents and records of the community have passed through such hands, and have been so variously represented, and interpreted, that it is difficult to fix on any particular point in that progression to apostacy, in which we may with confidence suppose, that the measure of their iniquity was filled up for rejection.

The boasted conversions, however, of heathen and idolatrous nations, and the multitudes of them that were introduced into the Church, under the auspices of Justinian, about the middle of the sixth century, seem to argue, both in the nature of the conversions, and in the manner and principles of their being introduced, that the Church could not long after

that time deserve the name of Christian. "It appears," says the historian Mosheim, "that the converted nations retained a great part of their former impiety, superstition, and licentiousness." And again, "The principal injunctions they imposed upon these rude proselytes were, that they should get by heart certain summaries of doctrine, and pay to the images of Christ and the saints, the same religious services which they had formerly offered to the gods." And he adds, "Nor were they at all delicate or scrupulous in choosing the means of establishing their credit: for they looked upon it as lawful, nay, even meritorious, to deceive an ignorant and inattentive multitude, by representing to them, as prodigies, things that were merely natural, as we learn from the most authentic records of those times."

Now whether this could be truly a Christian Church, and these conversions to Christianity, may, I think, at least be questioned. And I am much inclined to think, that the extensive introduction of such converts, on such principles, marks the nominal Church as apostate, and nearly to be rejected, and the outer court of the temple, and the holy city, to be given up to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles,

When such conversions were all that seemed to be desired, and such accessions were the boast and the chief glory of that community, it could no longer be accounted the Church of Christ.

Whenever this rejection may have happened, however, it was not in all respects a total rejection, so as to cause the Church of Christ to cease to exist on the earth. The temple and the altar, and they that worshipped therein were reserved, and measured, as the heritage of the Lord separated to himself. And he adds, "I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophecy a thousand two hundred and three-score days, clothed in sack-cloth."

Who, or what these witnesses are, is to me, a question of very great difficulty. But their office, and their designation to their office are, I think, very plainly described. They are witnesses for Christ and his true worshippers, against an apostate and rejected Church.

Their business is to prophecy, or, as the term imports, to preach and testify from the Lord, against the enemies of his kingdom, and for the consolation of his believing and obedient people; and to bear a living, and continually repeated testimony for his truth, during the

space of twelve hundred and sixty years, or the whole term of the court of the temple and the holy city being trodden under foot of the Gentiles. But they prophecy in sack-cloth, wearing the garments of mourning, and being subject to such degrading disguises, as the necessity of the times, and the arrogance and oppression of the dominant power, impose upon them. Yet, "These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth."

The manner in which the revelation concerning these witnesses is introduced, seems to imply that they had already been, before this time, recognized under this character.

They are spoken of as two established and known witnesses, not now to be newly raised up, especially for this occasion; and the description of them, as being "The two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth," evidently refers us to the vision which Zechariah saw, and has recorded in the 4th chapter of his prophecy. There the two olive-trees are said to be, "The two anointed ones," or sons of oil, "that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." And the import of that vision was given to Zechariah

by the angel, "Saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

The golden candlestick, for there was but one in that vision, with its seven lamps, represented, according to the explanation of the mystery in the 1st chapter of the Revelation, the Church of God. And the vision conveyed an assurance that, as God designed his Church should exhibit the light of his truth in the world, so he would provide a sure and a constant supply of the oil necessary to support that light. It conveyed also, a particular assurance to Zerubbabel and his brethren, who, under many circumstances of difficulty and discouragement, were engaged in building the Lord's house, that the spirit of the Lord would insure the success of their undertaking: and instructed them, that they were not to lay their calculations in the might and the power of human means and aid, "But by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." The spirit of the Lord, in whose hand is the heart of the king, had moved Cyrus to issue his decree for the building the house; and the same Spirit would insure the success of the work.

The two anointed ones have been supposed to mean Joshua the high-priest, and Zerubbabel the governor. I do not perceive any good reason for this supposition. There is certainly nothing here recorded by the prophet to determine it. They seem rather to be the sources of the grace conveyed by the Spirit to the Church and people of God. This was certainly the design and office of the two olive-trees in the Vision, which, through the two golden pipes, emptied the golden oil out of themselves, for the supply of the lamps. Now the sources, whence the Spirit supplies grace and life to the Church in all ages, are *the Word* and *the Ordinances of the Lord*.

It was from the Word of the Lord, which he had spoken by Isaiah, that the Spirit stirred up Cyrus to issue his decree. And it had been protested by the angel, in the preceding part of the vision, to Joshua, "Saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, If thou wilt walk in *my ways*, and if thou wilt keep *my charge*, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts." Moses, by the divine appointment, set before Israel life and good, and death and evil, "In that I command thee," said he, "to love the Lord thy God, to walk

in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply." And he commanded the Levites which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, "Saying, 'Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.'"

The two witnesses here spoken of, in the vision of the Apostle, are expressly said to be, the *two olive trees* and the *two candlesticks* standing before the God of the earth. And, according to the vision to which this refers us, they would seem to be the same *holy Word* and *sacred Ordinances*, represented in their connexion and relation to the Church.

But as, in the time of the former vision, there had been but the one organizing of the Church under Moses, and but one candlestick appeared in that vision; so, in the time of this vision, there had been another and new organizing of the Church, under the name of Christ by his Apostles, and in this vision, there are two candlesticks spoken of, with which the olive-trees were connected.

If we might adopt this idea of the witnesses, it would not be difficult to show, that the *Word and Ordinances of the Lord*, in their connexion and relation to the Church, have ever been the standing witnesses of truth and righteousness against transgressors, and of grace and salvation, through Christ, to them that believe and obey.

They have continually prophesied; and though clothed with sack-cloth, during part of their prophesying, and disguised by whatever impositions, or vain and human decorations; yet, so long as they were not totally obscured or proscribed, they have ever been the sources of the light and life that have at any time been supplied by the spirit of grace to the benighted and dying children of men. By these the light of life has been preserved through the dark ages of corruption and ignorance, and has come to us pure and uncontaminated, with a full supply of grace: when, if they had been utterly proscribed and banished, even from the outer court of the temple, not a vestige of the true knowledge of Christ, or of the light of life in him, would, in all human probability, have been preserved to after ages.

It may seem, perhaps, that the name of witnesses, and the description and character here given of them, bear too much of a personal appearance to be applied to such subjects as the Word and Ordinances of the Lord. And yet, we find Laban saying to Jacob, (*Gen.* xxxi. 44,) "Let us make a covenant; and let it be for a *witness* between me and thee."—And again, (*Joshua* xxii. 34,) "The children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, called the altar Ed; for it shall be a *witness* between us, that the Lord is God." And God has promised concerning the throne of David, (*Psalms* lxxxix. 37,) "It shall be established forever as the moon, and as a faithful *witness* in heaven." And as to the character here given of these witnesses, "If any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies;" God said by Hosea, "I have hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth." And by Jeremiah, "Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them." The Holy Ghost testifies concerning the ordinance of the sacramental supper, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily,

eateth and drinketh damnation to himself. Indeed, I know of nothing on earth, of which, or of whom it may be said more emphatically, than of the Word and Ordinances of the Lord, "If any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy; and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will." If these, by means of men's abusing them, withhold their influences, no refreshings of grace descend from on high—a spiritual death ensues—the people represented by the waters, become blood—the pulse of life ceases to beat; and no greater plagues than these can smite the earth.

But when these witnesses shall be about finishing the period of their witnessing in sackcloth, it is said that war will be made against them, and they shall be killed, by a beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, and their dead bodies shall lie unburied in the street, or some principal division of the great city, the apostate Church. And they that dwell on the

earth, shall rejoice over them, for a little season; " And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God, entered into them, and they stood up on their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. 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.

" And the same hour there was 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."

All this seems to have been very circumstantially fulfilled, if it may be applied to the sacred Word and Ordinances, in what has of late taken place in Europe, within our own recollection.

A spirit of infidelity and of deadly hostility to these, has long pervaded the greater part of the empire or city of the beast. And of late, open war has been made against them, and they have been overcome and killed in one of the principal divisions of that great community. In France, the National Convention, on the 26th of August 1792, passed a Decree,

proscribing wholly and entirely the Word and Ordinances of Christ, and, establishing Atheism by law, forbid the use of every form of the Christian religion.

In the course of the following month, this decree was carried into effect, in a manner that seemed likely to blot out forever the very names of these witnesses of Christ. And their enemies, of every nation, rejoiced and boasted over them, and congratulated each other, in the idea that their authority and influence were forever destroyed.

But in March, 1796, after a trial of three years and a half, it having become evident that the principles they had substituted for them, were equally destructive of life and comfort, as they were of godliness, after an immense number of people had perished by violence, under the reign of terror, the remnant were affrighted, and, to about the same extent that the king of Babylon had done before them, they gave glory to the God of heaven; and by a counter decree, permitted his holy Word and Ordinances again to resume their testimony. "The spirit of life from God entered into them:" and, since that time, they have been more extensively efficacious for salvation,

than at any other time since the first ages of the Christian Church.

Just at this time, also, commenced the era of Missionary and Bible Societies, on principles calculated, in due time, to enable the witnesses to put off their sack-cloth, and shine in their own native lustre ; and in a spirit that seems like a voice from heaven, calling them to that exalted station they were originally designed to occupy.

In the same hour, there was also a great earthquake, that shook the whole empire of the beast ; and one of his ten kingdoms, or a tenth part of the city, fell ; and there were slain of men seven thousand.

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LECTURE V.

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## LECTURE V.

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### *The Persecutions of the Dragon.*

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REVELATION xii. 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.”*

**I**N this Vision is given a general view of the hatred and persecutions of the great adversary against the Church of God, the Kingdom of Christ in the world.

This, and the following vision in continuation, reveal the principal agents, by whose instrumentality the adversary vents his hatred, and carries on his persecutions, against the servants of Christ, from the time of his exaltation, to his final triumph; and prepare the way for a full representation, in the vision following them, of the triumph of Christ, and of

the great salvation he will accomplish for his Church.

The three former visions are complete in themselves; each one continuing the particular prophetic view it is designed to give, from its commencement to its consummation.

The three following appear to be a series of visions, of which this is introductory, and the other two follow in chronological order, continuing the same prophetic view, under its appropriate symbols, according to the different characters which it exhibits, and ending, as each of the three former had done, in a representation of the triumph of Christ, and the destruction of his enemies.

After the discrimination made in the vision of the little book, between the true worshippers of God, and the apostates who were to be rejected; and after the representation there given of the low and afflicted state of the servants of Christ, and of the narrow limits within which his true Church would for a time be comprehended; it became a question of very great interest—Whence come these things to pass; and what shall be the circumstances and situation of the Church; and who her enemies and oppressors, that shall at length cause the

holy city to be given to the Gentiles, to be trodden under foot of them forty and two months ?

This part of the revelation seems designed to meet these enquiries.

“ There appeared a great wonder in heaven ”—The term here translated *wonder*, is, in its derivation and import, equivalent to the one used in the 1st verse of chap. 1, and there translated, “ he *signified*.” It means simply, a *sign*, or significant emblem. This emblem was “ a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.”

This is an emblem of the Church of God, invested with the rays of the sun of righteousness, and all sublunary things put in subjection to her destinies, and she herself distinguished by a crown of twelve stars, significant of the twelve patriarchs, and the tribes descended from them, who originally constituted the Church of God on earth.

Unto this Church it had been promised, in that interesting prophecy of Isaiah, “ Unto us a child is born—unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder ; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsel-

ler, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." And it is here said of the woman, "And she, being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered."

The Church is, in this, represented in the situation she was in, at about the conclusion of the seventy weeks prophesied of by Daniel, when all the pious, and them that waited for the consolation of Israel, were travailing with earnest expectation of the coming of Messiah the prince; and looking for redemption in Israel, by the mighty Counsellor promised by Isaiah.

"And there appeared another wonder," or significant emblem, "in heaven; and, behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth."

This dragon is afterwards described, "That old serpent, called the devil, and satan, which deceiveth the whole world," a fit prototype of that beastly power revealed to the prophet Daniel, as the fourth beast, or kingdom on earth that should devour the whole earth. That it is this fourth power that is here intended,

I conclude, from his being described by the same distinguishing appearance of having ten horns, and from the character given of him, particularly in his universal and terrible dominion, and his persecuting the saints.

His horns, which, in a succeeding vision, are seen wearing their crowns, are, in this, yet uncrowned ; for the vision relates to events, that took place, before this appearance was developed in his actual existence ; and the Apostle saw him in this vision, as the prophet Daniel had seen him, in this particular. Another distinguishing character of him was, however, at this time, already developed, in his varied forms of supreme dominion : and he appeared to the Apostle having seven heads, and seven crowns upon his heads. And, as an emblem of his extensive dominion, his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.

He is farther described as being red--the colour adopted by the fourth, or Roman government, to adorn and to distinguish the splendor of the imperial dignity.

“ And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.”

The Roman government, boasting itself the mistress of the world, never condescended to notice the Church, as a Church, till the confident expectation of Messiah the Prince awakened her jealousy. Then the Roman governor of Judea, to maintain the universal dominion of the Cæsars, and to secure his own delegated authority under them, with undistinguishing zeal and rage, "Slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under;" that he might thereby be sure to destroy him, who, he had been told, was born king of the Jews. And, afterward, when the name of the Prince of Peace came to be revered and to be trusted in by many, even the majesty of Rome descended to all the meanness of persecution, and the exertion of beastly power, to crush the growing church, and eradicate the Christian name. But the counsel of the Lord shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure.

The woman "brought forth a man-child," or, as it would be more literally, and more emphatically translated, *a son, a man*, "who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron." This part of the description is taken from the decree recorded in the 2d Psalm--"I shall give thee

the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron." The same description is also applied in chap. 19th of the Revelation, to him who is King of kings, and Lord of lords—It is the true Messiah, the Prince of Peace that is here intended. And, when this child was born—this son was given to the Church, and the old serpent, through the agency of the Roman power, sought to devour and utterly destroy him, he "was caught up unto God, and to his throne." He was exalted at the right hand of God, "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." All things were put under his feet; and he was made to be head over all things to the Church.

This explication of this first part of the vision, I am aware, applies to events that had taken place before the Apostle saw the vision. But as no history gives an intelligible representation of any great event, without going back to trace the causes, and shew the connexion whence such event arose; so, in a general view of the great contest between the Church and

the adversary, which is at last to be terminated by a glorious and signal display of the power and grace of the King of kings in favor of his Church, it was necessary to make the view complete and fully intelligible, that the vision should go back to the beginning of the contest, that is conducted on the part of the adversary, by the fourth and last beastly power predicted as the formidable enemy of the Church, and give a distinguishing representation of the beginning of that contest, that so the progress and the finishing of it might be distinctly foreshown. The object was, to shew things that must come to pass. But here was a necessity to introduce the revelation of them, by declaring things that had already taken place. And it was worthy of the spirit of truth, in this case as well as in others, to direct the Prophet in recording them.

To ascribe the description here given of the son that was born, as has been usually done, to Constantine, or to any other mortal, would be to derogate from the prerogatives of the King of kings. And to avoid this, by ascribing it to Christ mystically, as he will rule by his people, is heaping symbol upon symbol in an unwarrantable manner, and rendering the whole

unintelligible. The liberties of this kind, that commentators have taken, have done more than any thing else to perplex the understanding of the prophecies, and render them obscure and indeterminate.

I am persuaded, this vision is, thus far, retrospective. And the occasion and cause of it being by this explained, the vision then proceeds to state, that the Church should retire into the wilderness.

“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.”

The wilderness is a place of retreat from the customary haunts of men. And the woman fleeing into the wilderness, represents the true Church of God, as retiring from the courts of Princes, and from the observation of the men of the world, and continuing in comparative obscurity, while the Gentiles tread under foot the holy City ; and her place is occupied by an apostate Church, during the space of 1260 years. When, however, this had been stated as a leading object of the vision, the vision then returns to bring up the prophetic history, in a

representation of the immediate causes of this event, to the period of its taking place.

“And there was war in heaven ; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon ; and the dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was there place found any more in heaven.”

This, I suppose, represents the contest of the pagan empire against the kingdom of Christ. And the dragon and his angels constitute an emblem of the Roman government, and its officers and dependants. But as the emblem, by which the Church of Christ is represented in the vision, is unsuited to the representation of battles and war, Michael, the Prince that standeth for the children of God's people, is introduced with his angels maintaining the contest on the behalf of the Church. And it is well worthy of remark, that during this whole period, the Christians made no efforts to resist by force the oppressions and violence of their Pagan persecutors, but submitted themselves quietly to them that ruled over them, even after they came to be probably more numerous than their oppressors, and, in all human appearance, able to resist with much effect. Yet they bore their testimony with meekness, and opposed

to the violence of their adversaries, nothing but an honest life and upright manners, and a faithful testimony for the truth, which they held themselves ready to seal with their blood. Therefore it is here said of them, "And they overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony ; and they loved not their lives unto the death." The Prince of the hosts of the Lord stood for them, and maintained their cause, till "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."

This describes the revolution, when heathen emporors ceased to reign, and the head of the empire professed himself the friend of the Christian Church. It was a time of great rejoicing and triumph in the Church, when Constantine openly professed to espouse the Christian cause.

Whether in the end it proved advantageous to truth and piety, or not, it certainly relieved the Church from grievous oppressions ; and afforded a great opportunity for the furtherance of the Gospel. When, therefore, it was viewed in this light, it was indeed an occasion of

great joy in the Church. As a representation of this, it is added, "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 accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night. 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. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them." At the same time, there is denounced a "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."

This was the first beginning of the prostration of pagan authority and dominion before the Christian name: and it was a prostration of the highest dignity, and the most exalted authority that the prince of the power of the air, the God of this world, could boast. It was, therefore, a sure presage to him, that his kingdom among men must eventually be destroyed; and that the kingdom, which the God of heaven had set up, should fill the whole earth. When, therefore, he was cast out of this

eminent dominion into the earth, he came down to his inferior thrones of pagan dominion, some of them more and some less established, like the earth and the sea, and extending almost under the whole heaven, with great wrath, to stir them up, and bring them to support his contest against the kingdom of God, and the power of his Christ; because, having begun to fall, he knew that the complete destruction of his kingdom was hastening on.

It is true he was afterward greatly successful in controuling and wielding the power and authority of the same empire from which he had been cast out: but never in his own name. Whatever he accomplished afterward, bore this mark of subjection and inferiority, that his agents never acted openly in his name, to bring any glory to the pagan authority, but whatever they accomplished for him, was under the cloak and disguise of the Christian name.

He succeeded, however, among his inferior thrones, to stir up, and bring on, to the contest barbarous pagan nations on the borders of his ancient empire. And for two hundred years they vexed and harassed the empire and the Church, till at length they overcame and

possessed the dominion ; but at the same time they changed their name and profession, and took on them the name and the profession of Christians. This is thus described in the vision : “ And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which had brought forth the man child”--Or, as in the original, *the man*. “ And 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.”

Whatever corruptions the imperial favour was the means of introducing into the Church, and no doubt they were great, and led to her being finally rejected of Christ ; yet this favour afforded a protection for the true Church of Christ in all after ages, from the violence of pagan hatred and power.

The extensive dominion of the empire, at that time divided into two, the eastern and the western, like two wings of a great eagle, which was the Roman standard, afforded a shelter and defence for all that bore the Christian name, throughout that dominion, from being oppressed by pagan authority. Even the success and conquests of the barbarians, in their

irruptions into the empire, were overruled, in the providence of God, to serve the same purpose ; as is described in the two following verses :

“ 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.

“ 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.”

Waters are emblematical of multitudes of people, especially of tumultuous bodies of them. Such were the barbarian pagan nations, by whom the serpent sought to deluge and overwhelm the Church of Christ. “ Nothing,” says an eminent writer on this subject, (*Newton*.) “ was more likely to produce the ruin and utter subversion of the Christian Church, than the irruptions of so many barbarous heathen nations, into the Roman empire. But the event proved contrary to human appearance and expectation : the earth swallowed up the flood. The barbarians were rather swallowed up by the Romans, than the Romans by the barbarians. The heathen conquerors, instead of imposing their own, submitted to the religion

of the conquered Christians ; and they not only embraced the religion, but affected even the laws, the manners, the customs, the language and the very name of Romans ; so that the victors were in a manner absorbed and lost among the vanquished.”

The earth, his own kingdom, and the pagans, his own devoted subjects, here failed the great adversary the serpent, and contrary to all human calculations, the inundation, by which he hoped to regain his lost dominion, was swallowed up and lost to his purpose. And, although this event made the necessity, yet it also afforded the opportunity, for the woman to retire from the face of the serpent—the Church to cease from the conflict with avowed pagan idolatries, until the time appointed for her final triumph.

This, I suppose, determines the true era of the commencement of the 1260 years of the retreat of the Church in the wilderness. And, though we may not be able to fix on the precise year of its commencement, yet I think it unquestionable, that it must have been, either cotemporaneous, or immediately consequent to the event here revealed : when these heathens professed to embrace the Christian religion,

and became constituent members of the community styling itself the Church of Christ.

The temple of God hath no agreement with idols ; nor Christ any concord with Belial.

When, therefore, these sons of Belial were introduced within the pale of the Church, and permitted to bring in with them their flood of idolatries, into a Church already far gone in devotedness to idols ; then the true worshippers of God must be separated from that Church : and the real community of Christ's people must be constrained to hold their fellowship with each other in retirement, in the wilderness.

In that unassociated state, they must maintain their little communities, separated from each other, and be dissenters from the ecclesiastical establishments within the bounds of the old empire of the dragon, until the time appointed. And though many shall cleave unto them with flatteries, so that some of them of understanding shall fall, yet it shall only be " to try them, and to purge and make them white, even to the time of the end : because it is yet for an appointed time."

They may in some instances be flattered with seeming countenance and favour by those

who occupy the empire of the dragon. But it is designed only as a snare for them, that they may be taken and fall; for the purpose of the old serpent is to exterminate them, if possible, wholly from the face of the earth.

“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.”

Christ being exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high, and his Church dispersed in the wilderness, the dragon set himself to persecute the followers of Christ, wherever he might find them; as is more particularly detailed in the next succeeding vision.

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## LECTURE VI.

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## LECTURE VI.

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### *The Vision of the Beasts.*

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REVELATION xiii. 1.

*“ 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.”*

**T**HIS Vision exhibits, in continuation, the same general view, which was begun to be exhibited in the preceding vision, of the hatred and persecutions of the great adversary, the old serpent, against the Church of God, the Kingdom of Christ in the world. It describes, under the character of Beasts, the principal agents, by whose instrumentality the adversary vents his hatred, and carries on his persecutions during the space of 1260 years.

The scene of vision was changed when the dragon was cast out into the earth, and this

vision was witnessed by the Apostle in very much the same situation as the vision of the little book.

THE BEAST WITH SEVEN HEADS AND TEN  
HORNS.

The first Beast here described is, I think, evidently the same as is described in the prophecy of Daniel. It is there revealed, that there should be four successive dominions, that should bear rule in the earth, according to the vision of the four beasts which the prophet saw rise out of the sea : and that the fourth beast, diverse from the others, exceeding dreadful, and having ten horns, should be the fourth kingdom on earth. The same thing is also there revealed under another figure, in the prophet's interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar ; in which he saw the image, whose " head was of gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay." In his explanation, the prophet said to the king of Babylon, " Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another, a third

kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron." These have been universally understood to designate the four great kingdoms that have successively reigned over all that part of the world, where the Church of God existed. The first, or Babylonian, was succeeded by the Persian—that by the Macedonian, and the Macedonian by the Roman. And the kingdom set up by the God of heaven, is represented as putting an end to this kind of dominion, and destroying utterly the image of these kingdoms, by smiting with violence, the last of them, and causing the whole form of them to be destroyed, and the very materials of them to "become as the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them."

The three former of these had fallen from their dominion, though their lives were prolonged for a season and time, and the fourth, or Roman dominion alone continued, at the time when the Apostle saw this vision. I think it, therefore, unquestionable, that it was a representation of this dominion, in one particular form of it, which was to be its last form,

that he saw, in the beast that rose out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns.

In the explanation of the vision of Daniel, it is said, "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and shall break it in pieces.

"And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise."

Here are two distinguishing characters of this kingdom.

It was diverse from all kingdoms.

The other dominions existed, uniformly, under one and the same form of government from their beginning to their end. Although the third, or Macedonian, was divided, during part of the time of its continuance, into four principalities; yet they all bore the same character of kingly governments. The fourth was to be diverse from the others. This diversity, I suppose, consisted in this very particular, of its having seven heads and ten horns,

1st. In its seven heads.

No other dominion ever underwent so many changes in its head, where the supreme power

was lodged, and yet continued, under all of them, essentially the same dominion. The beast therefore appeared to the Apostle having seven heads. And it was distinctly explained to him afterwards, (Chap. xvii.) that the dominion it represented, would be distinguished, by having seven kinds, or heads, of government; five of which, it was stated to him, had already been, and were fallen; one was at that time, when the Apostle saw the vision; and the other was not yet come. Now the Roman government first arose under kings as the head of dominion. To these succeeded consuls—then dictators—after these, decemvirs—and these again were put down to make way for military tribunes.

Through all these changes the Roman glory and dominion continued to be increased. And at length, at the summit of their glory, emperors reigned as the head of dominion. This was the sixth form of government, and existed in the Apostle's days. The seventh was not yet come; and it is added, "when he cometh he must continue a short space." But he was to come, and occupy his short space, before that particular form and arrangement of the dominion which was represented to the Apostle by the

ten horns: for the Angel in his explanation expressly tells him, "The beast that thou sawest--that was, and is not, *even he is the eighth*, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." Commentators, in that licentiousness of fancy they have ventured to indulge, in commenting on the prophecies, have wearied themselves to discover, what they have styled, the *septimo octave* head of the beast, and seem wholly to have overlooked this express declaration of the angel. The Roman dominion is the beast, unchanged, as to its beastly nature, from beginning to end, till it shall go into perdition. And this form of it, which the Apostle saw under ten distinct principalities, was its eighth and last form, under which it will go into perdition. Instead of being represented and formally reckoned as a head of the beast, as the preceding forms had been, it is described as branched out and divided into ten horns, distinguishing this last form of government from all the others; and although it is said to be of the seven, it is counted the eighth.

The imperial form of government ended with Augustulus, in 476. All that remained, after this, of the Roman name and form of

government in the west, was the senate and consuls. This continued but a short space. In 566, Italy was reduced to the form of a province; and the seventh head ceased to exist.

But the beast, "the fourth kingdom upon earth," did not, therefore, also cease to exist. It seemed, indeed, in its last head, to be wounded to death. The sword of the barbarians must, in all human calculation, have been supposed at the time, to have destroyed forever the Roman name and authority, and to have erased the principles and the foundation on which the dominion rested. But it was represented otherwise to the Apostle, and it proved otherwise in fact.

The conquerors settled on the same foundation, and aspired to the same dominion; and under a new, or eighth form, which is therefore counted to be of the seven, they attained to the same dominion.

The barbarians adopted the Roman laws, the religion of the empire, the Roman manners, and even affected the Roman name. This coalition of the conquerors with the conquered--the barbarians with the Romans, is very distinctly predicted in Daniel's explanation of

Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The legs of iron, in the image he saw, represent the former part of the Roman dominion ; and the feet, part of iron and part of clay, the prophet thus explains, (ii. 41.) " And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay and part of iron : the kingdom shall be divided ; but there shall be in it of the strength of iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken.

" And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle with the seed of men : but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay."

This is a most circumstantial representation of the new form of dominion, that arose under the Latin or Roman name, when the victorious barbarians mingled with the inhabitants of the ancient dominion, and constituted a kind of republic of kingdoms, all owning the same origin, and professing to derive their laws, and authority, and their principles of government and of religion, from the same source. And, as in the lowest, or last part of the image, the dominion seemed divided into ten princi-

palities, represented by the ten toes of the feet : so, in the prophet's vision, in which the fourth beast he saw represents this dominion, that beast appeared with ten horns, or emblems of power ; and it is thus explained to him :--  
“ The ten horns out of this kingdom, are ten kings that shall arise.” Not that the dominion should be thus distinguished from the beginning ; but in its progress, these principalities should arise, and distinguish its latter appearance.

This is another distinguishing character of the beast, which the Apostle saw rise out of the sea,

2d. In its ten horns.

In a former vision, recorded in the 12th chapter, the Apostle had seen these ten horns of the beast, as Daniel saw them ; yet uncrowned ; for they had not yet attained their dominion. And although, at the time to which that vision relates, the characteristic mark, of several various heads, or different forms of government, had been developed in history, so that the Apostle, in addition to what had been seen by Daniel, saw also, the seven heads of the beast, wearing their seven crowns ; yet the horns wore the same appearance

as in the ancient vision, till the Apostle, in this vision, describing the rising of the beast in this particular form of it, with reference to the time of the change taking place, saw it arise with “ten horns, and upon his horns *ten crowns*.” In a succeeding vision the angel explains this, as the same vision had been explained to Daniel. “The ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings.” And he adds, with reference to the time when the Apostle saw the vision, “Which have received no kingdom as yet, but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.”

They did not exist to characterise the beast in any of the preceding forms ; but they constitute the supreme power of the beast during one hour, or one division, or part of his existence. And although they cannot be accounted strictly an individual head, as all the former were, when the supreme power was lodged with one individual, or with several conjoined, so as to be only one distinct body ; yet they come in place of the head, and actually constitute the supreme power of the beast in one of its forms. This is the eighth, and whatever the change may seem, is of the seven.

It ariseth out of the bottomless pit, under the influence of the old serpent, after he was cast out of his ancient dominion; and is the form, under which the fourth beast will end, and go into perdition.

This makes that other seemingly contradictory description applicable to it, "The beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

The Roman dominion seemed crushed, and overwhelmed by the barbarian nations. And when they settled within its bounds, and the several principalities represented by the ten horns arose, it certainly wore the appearance of a new dominion. Yet the spirit of prophecy recognized it, as only another form of the same fourth, and last earthly dominion that shall exist. The beast is the same, but no longer united under one individual head as formerly. As the Macedonian empire, after the first horn was broken, was represented by a beast with four horns, to signify the four principalities which arose with the successors of Alexander: so the fourth, or Roman dominion, is represented to the Apostle as rising under its last form, out of the sea, from the deadly wound it had received, in ten distinct principalities. It is not the same head that

received the deadly wound, that again revives : but it is the beast that was wounded, that again recovers life, and is healed of his deadly wound.

A catalogue of these kingdoms, as they first divided the supreme power among them, is given, in a distinct and formal manner, by a historian, (*Machiavel.*) whom no one ever suspected of being prejudiced in favour of applying these prophecies to them as horns of the beast.

Their names, with the dates of their origin, are as follows :—

1st. The Huns in Hungary, about the year 356.

2d. The Ostrogoths in Mœsia, in 377.

3d. The Visigoths in Paannonia, in 378.

4th. The Franks in France, in 407.

5th. The Vandals in Africa, in 407.

6th. The Sueves and Alans in Spain, in 407.

7th. The Burgundians in Burgundy, in 407.

8th. The Heruli and Turingi in Italy, in 476.

9th. The Saxons and Angles in Britain, in 476.

10th. The Lombards in Hungary and Italy, in 526.

Of these kingdoms, some continue to the present day. And although there have been changes with regard to others, some falling, and others rising up in their stead ; yet, from that time to the present, this dominion has been distinguished from all other dominions, by its being constantly occupied by several distinct principalities, all united in some common principles, by which they hold themselves, in some respects at least, to be one body. Though the attempt has been repeatedly made, by foreign invasion, and by one and another rising up among themselves, to reduce them all under one head, it has always failed of success. In this, the late scourge of Europe attempted to go beyond his commission, and from the scourge, aimed to become the conqueror of those guilty nations. But when he seemed, in all human probability, ready to accomplish his aim, he was suddenly cast down, and his commission taken from him.

To this day they have continued about the same number of distinct principalities ; and will continue till the beast shall go into perdition. Every one of them has maintained, throughout, its beastly character ; requiring of their subjects to bow down, and worship

whatever image, or idol they are pleased to set up: and ruling, both in civil and ecclesiastical concerns, by the law of force, or mere physical power. This "*ratio ultima regum*," or, *last argument of kings*, has been the boast of their dominion. And, however they may have been obliged, at times, to modify the exercise of it for a season, it has always been, and still is, the foundation on which they rest, and the vital principle of their existence.

It is not in this alone, however, that they are identified with each other, and with the Roman dominion. This character they have, in common with all the other beasts that have reigned on the earth.

They also agree and give their power and strength unto the beast.

There subsists a family compact between them, in which, though they are almost continually at war among themselves, yet they hold themselves bound, to a certain extent, not only for defence against foreign invasions, but also in their striving among themselves, to maintain, what they technically call, "the balance of power;" and prevent any one from sinking out of existence, or from rising to a supreme dominion. In this principle the great

Congress of nations is now, or has lately been, assembled at Vienna. And if the time of their continuance is now drawing near to its close, they will, probably, arrange the dominion, and parcel it distinctly into ten different principalities, that under that form it may go into perdition. Out of the same principle, also, has grown, what is called among them, "The law of nations," by which they hold themselves bound to each other, in certain general maxims or rules, which all are pledged to support, for the mutual defence of their authority and dominion. Thus they form a kind of republic of kingdoms, all resting on the same foundation, and supporting the same cause; and having, therefore, a community of interests, in the maintenance of which they constitute effectually one body, and agree, and give their power and strength to this body.

They are also identified with each other, and with the Roman power of dominion, in their all deriving their principles of law, and of civil policy from the same source.

After they had established themselves within the bounds of the Roman empire, but before this family compact was begun, Justinian, who then reigned at Constantinople with the

title of emperor, in the eastern division of the empire, employed the most learned and able civilians of his time, the principal one of whom was a pagan, to collect and digest into one body, or code, the ancient Roman laws and principles of jurisprudence. This, when completed, he published in about the year 530, as the standard law of the empire. The principles of this code were sooner or later adopted by all the newly risen kingdoms: and to this day, the Justinian code is the great fountain of law with every one of them.

So, also, in their ecclesiastical concerns, their religious principles and policy are derived from the same sources.

They adopted the forms of the Christian religion, and received the nominally Christian Church, as they had been arranged and modeled by the emperors and their bishops: and the Roman Church became their Church, and the Romish religion, their religion.

These two great causes first brought them into compact with each other, and at the same time that they had influence to bind them together as one body, they also necessarily connected them to the Roman dynasty, and brought them into the authority and power of the Roman dominion.

Thus they were revealed to the Apostle, as the continuation of the fourth kingdom on earth, which had been revealed to the ancient prophet.

They constitute one body, though divided into several distinct principalities, like the toes of the great image, and the ten horns of the beast, wearing their ten crowns. And they will continue to maintain this characteristic, till the end of the triumphing of the adversaries of the Church of the living God, and of the enemies of true godliness.

The beast is farther described in the vision, "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." He concentrated in himself the beastly qualities and character of the three former beasts, that had been described by the prophet Daniel.

"And the Dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority."

The dragon of paganism, animated by the old serpent the devil, had been cast out from the imperial dominion, and had come down to his inferior dominions with great wrath, and cast out water as a flood after the woman. He stirred up the pagan nations, to invade the

dominion from which he had been cast out, with intent to destroy the Church of Christ. But when he found that these nations, though victorious, were yet adopting the laws and sentiments of the conquered, and were likely to be swallowed up of them ; like a subtle adversary, he changed his measures, and joined issue with them, that he might thereby bring in the spirit, though he could not the name, of paganism into the reputed Church of Christ, and thus more successfully make war with the remnant of the seed of the woman which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. For there was a remnant, even in those days, that testified against the pagan innovations that were introduced into the Church. But the great body of the Church had exceedingly corrupted their ways ; and the Lord, in his holy and mysterious providence, suffered the dragon in this way, to prevail. And the dragon gave the beast his power, and his seat, and great authority, that he might thereby secure his service, and use him as an instrument and agent of his hatred and malice against the followers of the Lamb.

In this way the pagan philosophy, and pagan

notions of God and of religion, soon came to take the lead, and prevail in the Church : and the writings of Plato and of Aristotle gained a credit, above those of Paul and the Apostles : and reputed saints, like the demons of paganism, occupied the place of the one only Mediator between God and man. Pagan principles of morality, and pagan notions and forms of religion triumphed, and to this hour continue to triumph, under the authority of the beast, and the patronage of the dragon.

Thus the Christian world, with a pagan phrenzy, “wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon, which gave power unto the beast ; and they worshipped the beast,” delighting to call it the great holy Roman empire, and bowing down and prostrating themselves to adore and serve, as the Lord’s anointed, the viceroys of the devil ; “saying, Who is like unto the beast ? Who is able to make war with him ?

“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.”

The time of his blasphemies is limited ; and the charter of his existence will expire,

with the 1260 years given to the Gentiles to tread under foot the holy city.

Then shall the saints of the Most High take the kingdom, and possess it even forever and ever. But, till that period is accomplished, "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. 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."

Mysterious as this may seem, in the holy providence of Christ the Lord toward his saints, yet it has been literally fulfilled according to the prediction. The fundamental principles of the policy of the beast, and of all the craft by which he prospers, from their very nature, lead him to war against the saints, as those whom he most dreads and hates: and, in the holy providence of the Lord, he is permitted to overcome them. And so extensive and absolute is his influence and power over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations, that none has been found to stand up against him on their behalf. Whatever have been the efforts of ambitious individuals, or combinations of

men, to break the power of this dominion, they have all been animated by the spirit of the beast himself, and have aimed at nothing more, than to occupy his place, and receive for themselves individually, that adoration and worship which they still held to be due to the supreme authority in the seat of dominion. And all, whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life, have worshipped, and still continue to worship the beast. While his power and authority are devoted to the support of beastly anti-christian principles, and continually exercised in oppressing and afflicting the saints; yet all acknowledge that power and authority to be of God, and therefore to be conscientiously respected and obeyed. Even at the time of the reformation, the reformers seem to have thought of but half their work; and while they resisted the domination of anti-christian power and principles in the Church, they either through necessity, or perhaps unwittingly bowed respect to the very power and authority that supported and maintained the Antichrist.

Although they received favors from some of the horns of the beast, that seemed to oblige the generosity of their natures to a return of

compliments ; and by this means some of those horns abated a little the rigour of their domination over the saints ; yet, to this day, every horn of the beast maintains his beastly power and authority over them, and each one, as far as he thinks he may with safety to his dominion, exercises this power and authority, to oppress and afflict the humble followers of the Lamb. Their *acts of faith*--their *acts of uniformity* and *of conformity*--their *establishments*--their *concordat*--their *test-laws*, and even their *tolerations*, as they now exist, all of them bear the same stamp : and by whatever new names, or reformed appearances they may seek to disguise them, they all partake of the same nature, and are designed to sanction the exercise, in a greater or less degree, of that beastly domination, by which they attempt to bind the consciences of men to obey their authority, and in which they oppress and afflict the saints.

But the end of all these things is at hand.

“ 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 the faith of the saints.”

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## LECTURE VII.

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## LECTURE VII.

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### *The Beast with two Horns.*

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REVELATION xiii. 11.

*“ 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.*

**T**HIS new dominion, here represented as rising up out of the earth, is not reckoned among the great dominions revealed to the prophet Daniel, as those that should reign over the earth in succession, till the dominion shall be given to the saints. The last of those corresponds with the ten-horned dominion described in the former part of this chapter.

But, in considering the horns of that dominion, the Prophet beheld, and “ there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots ; and behold, in this horn were

eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things,—and his look was more stout than his fellows.”

Here is a dominion described as connected with the fourth that should be on the earth in its last form, and in some sense rising out of it, and making a constituent part among the several principalities; yet differing from them, in having eyes like a man, and his look more stout than his fellows, speaking great things.

This has generally been understood to represent that spiritual, or ecclesiastical dominion, of earthly foundation and authority, that arose, and subsisted in the church of Rome, and has for centuries been exercised with such arrogancy in connexion with the dominion of the beast with ten horns.

The Beast here described by the Apostle, appears to correspond with this horn, and to represent the same dominion. It is the dominion arrogated to itself by an apostate Church, which, professing to hold only the power, and to exercise only the dominion of a lamb, yet speaks as a dragon, and tyrannizes over mankind.

Other dominions arose up out of the sea, from small beginnings, in the midst of tumults

and agitations, conquering and subduing nations under them. But this arose out of the earth in the midst of a dominion already formed. And therefore, also, this beast is said to exercise all the power of the first beast before him, or in his presence. It is a kind of empire within an empire : a dominion in some respects essentially distinct from the other ; yet in its origin and foundation, and in its professed 'design and aim, so diverse from the other, that its existence is not deemed incompatible with it ; nor even the possession and exercise of its whole authority in the very presence of the other dominion. There seems, in this, a very singular concurrence and agreement between these two dominions.

Just such a friendly concurrence and agreement has subsisted between the Roman empire under its last form, and the ecclesiastical dominion of the Church of Rome.

Under the emperors, the Christian Church was either oppressed and persecuted by them, as by enemies, or when they professed to be its friends, was subjected to their authority and domination. And even after emperors ceased to reign in the west, the emperors of the east held a supreme controul and dominion, in and

over the Church, till the end of the reign of Justinian. Vigilius, at that time bishop of Rome, strove hard to cast off the authority of the emperor. But, in the language of a pious historian, “Justinian suffered not Vigilius to be the pope of the Church.” He chose to be himself both pope and emperor. After the death of Justinian, however, the Roman Church seems to have acted very much independently of the emperors. And amidst the changes that took place, and in the absence of all supreme authority in the west, while the barbarian kingdoms were settling within the bounds of the Roman empire, the authority of the Church increased, and became in a great measure independent. And those who held and administered the Church authority, succeeded to make it so necessary in those newly formed kingdoms, that they found it for their interest to countenance and support it, and allowed it to extend an influence, even to temporal concerns, and generally, to all the interests of their dominion.

Thus, as a judicious writer, (*Whiston*,) observes, the ecclesiastical power has become “the common centre and cement, which unites all the distinct kingdoms of the Roman empire ;

and, by joining with them, procures them a blind obedience from their subjects ; and so it is the occasion of the preservation of the old Roman empire in some kind of unity and name and strength.”

This extraordinary dominion was obtained, and is exercised by the concurrence of two distinct powers, or orders of men in the Church, represented by the two horns, with which the beast appeared. And as the horns were like those of a lamb, so these two powers both profess to derive their authority from Christ the Lamb of God, and to exercise it in his name, and for the service of his cause.

These are the two orders of the Romish hierarchy, or priesthood, called the *regular*, and the *secular* clergy. The former, holding a kind of general office and influencing authority in the church, without any particular charge ; the latter having particular charges annexed to their office, and being the allowed legal rulers in the Church. These are the two eminent fountains of power in the Roman Church ; or the two horns of the beast. In their authority and influence, the ecclesiastical dominion affects an entire supremacy over all sublunary persons and things, and takes to

itself the state of the god of this world, and utters decisions and decrees like the dragon, and to the same idolatrous and blasphemous purposes.

“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.”

The plain common sense of mankind, while professing the Christian religion, would never, of its own motions, have come to identify the barbarian dominion, with all its pagan spirit and character, with Christian dominion; so as to look upon it as an ordinance of God, that ought to be cherished and supported at every expence, as containing in it the spirit and life of the Christian Church. But the hierarchy perceiving that their importance, and beastly dominion must rest on such a foundation, and be supported by such principles, were greatly zealous and active to settle this foundation and enforce these principles, in such a way, that their interposition was necessary to sanctify the thrones, and to consecrate the princes. Thus these pagan thrones, by the ghostly authority of the hierarchy, became sacred, as ordinances of God, and the princes, the Lord's

anointed. By the influence of the hierarchy the barbarian kingdoms had their stability ; yet in such a way that the good will, and the favor of the hierarchy were always necessary to the stability of their thrones, as they were also necessary to the support of the hierarchy. Thus this beastly dominion, under the appearance of a lamb, caused the earth and them that dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. By its means, the name, and the authority, and the glory of the old Roman dominion was revived in the ten horns. And these pagan principalities, having assumed Christian names, and appearing under Christian forms, were worshipped as occupying the place of God and of Christ in civil concerns, as the hierarchy also affected to do in spiritual. Dr. Scott, in his commentary, well observes of the Romish hierarchy, " They have always been the enemies of civil liberty, and the supporters of tyranny, and even of the *unlawful* commands of those princes who supported their authority ; which is a kind of idolatry, as it exalts the will of man above that of God. So that tyranny upholds them, and they uphold tyranny ; they enslave men's consciences and help kings to enslave their

persons ; and in both respects enforce idolatry. Implicit obedience, however, to the authority of the beast, as supporting idolatry, and requiring men to worship creatures and images, under heavy penalties, must be especially meant."

"And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh 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."

In explaining and applying this, I need only copy from the same excellent commentator as above. "The second beast maintains his power by doing great wonders, &c."

These, whether they be human impostures, or wrought by the agency of satan, he doeth in the sight of men to deceive them, and in the sight of the first beast to serve him ; but they are performed neither by the power, nor for the glory of God. The fire may allude to the miracles wrought by Elijah ; and predict the vain pretences of the beast to miracles of the same kind. Thus the miracles of which the advocates for popery boast, as certain marks of a true Church, are here shewn to be the

distinguishing stigma of Antichrist--that is, such ambiguous and suspicious miracles, or indeed any miracles, if wrought in support of idolatry, in opposition to the doctrines of the scriptures, and to justify the persecuting cruelty of those who profess them. By these means the two horned-beast, or the regular and secular clergy deceived the inhabitants of the earth, to make an image of the first beast, or the temporal authority of the empire, as it formerly subsisted in the emperor at Rome."

"Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword and did live.

"And he had power to give life to 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.

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads ;

"And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."

This is the description of an image, very active indeed, and very efficient to promote the

designs and purposes of the beast that made it. It can be no other, I think, than the popedom, or papacy of the Church of Rome, including under it, the general form and organization of the Church on the principles, and after the plan of the old Roman empire ; the pope occupying the place of the emperor. It was invented and contrived by the two orders of the clergy, represented as the two horns of the beast, and is by their power and authority supported ; for in the papacy their power and authority centres. And, from time to time, when the old incumbent dies, or is otherwise removed, they, in the college or consistory of cardinals, elect a new one, and raise whom they please, even from the lowest orders, if they so choose, to fill the office. And having elected him, and given him his crown, and clothed him in the pontifical robes, they then elevate him upon an altar, and kiss his feet. Thus they create him, and then adore him : for they themselves call this ceremony *adoring his holiness*. When thus by them created and exalted, he rules for them, and supports and sanctions their authority, as they do his. By him they hold a kind of supremacy over the principalities of the empire, by which they are all bound

to serve and support one dominion ; and all conspire together to “blaspheme the name of God, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven ;” and to hold together their beastly dominion, and tyrannize over them that dwell on the earth.

Bishop Newton remarks, “The pope is the principle of unity to the ten kingdoms of the beast ; and he causeth, as far as he is able, all who will not acknowledge his supremacy to be put to death. In short, he is the most perfect resemblance of the ancient Roman emperors—is as great a tyrant in the Christian, as they were in the heathen world—presides in the same city, usurps the same powers, affects the same titles, and requires the same homage and adoration. So that the prophecy descends more and more into particulars, from the Roman state, or the ten kingdoms in general, to the Roman clergy in particular ; and then to the pope, the head of the state, as well as of the Church, the king of kings, as well as bishop of bishops.”

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

In the second century, Irenæus who had been the disciple of Polycarp, one of the immediate disciples of the Apostle John, suggested that this name was *Lateinos*, a Greek name, signifying *the Latin man*. which contains the precise number given, according to the Greek principles of notation. He esteemed the suggestion the more probable, because, said he, "the last kingdom is so called, for they are Latins who now reign." And it is well known how much, since the days of Irenæus, the apostate Church has affected the Latin name and language. He seems to have had no hesitation on account of its being a Greek name; for the Revelation was written in the Greek language, and that language was in great use in the Church in the early ages. But there is a very extraordinary coincidence in this respect, in the chief and distinguishing names by which that Church, as a community, and the supreme head whom they worship, have chosen to be called. In Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin, the chief distinguishing name, in which they glory, contains in each of these languages, the precise number 666.\*

\* The Hebrew appellation *Romiith*, signifying a *Roman* community, the Greek *Lateinos*, signifying the *Latin* man, and the Latin title *Vicarius Filii Dei*, *Vicar of the Son of God*, which is

These names applying both to the community, and to the individual head of the community, seem to answer to the description stating that the number belongs both to the beast, as a body, and to a man, as the head of that body.

In their union or connexion, as both together forming one power, they seem to have been represented to the Prophet Daniel under the idea of a little horn rising up among the ten. But the Apostle John had a more distinct representation of the beast, with two horns like a lamb, making, or creating a distinct image of

the chief distinguishing title by which the Church of Rome has universally chosen to designate their supreme head, the pope, each contains, according to the principles of notation in the several languages, the precise number 666.

THE HEBREW.	THE GREEK.	THE LATIN.
R.....200	L.....30	V.....5
O..... 6	A..... 1	I..... 1
M.....40	T.....300	C.....100
I..... 10	E..... 5	A.....
I..... 10	I..... 10	R.....
TH....400	N.....50	l..... 1
<hr/>	O.....70	U or V..5
666	S.....200	S.....
	<hr/>	F.....
	666	I..... 1
		L.....50
		I..... 1
		I..... 1
		D.....500
		E.....
		I..... 1
		<hr/>
		666

the fourth beast that Daniel saw, according to the form in which it had in its highest glory existed, and giving life and efficiency to that image. The Apostle Paul, also, has spoken of it with the same distinction, describing an apostacy to take place in the Church, and the consequent revealing of "that man of sin, the son of perdition."

Even in the early ages of the Church, many shewed a strong inclination to be called after the names of men; and to have the Church united under some visible earthly head. And ambitious men in the Church, early began to aspire to that distinction and supremacy for themselves. This disguised and deceitful principle, called by the Apostle *the mystery of iniquity*, began to work, as he testifies, even in his days. But the existence of a supreme head in the Roman dominion, that ruled over them, hindered the revealing of that man of sin; for the Roman emperors, whether pagan or Christian, would never suffer such an encroachment on what they esteemed their prerogative. And the same cause continued to hinder, till the end of Justinian's reign.

That emperor, jealous as he was of suffering any but himself to be the actual pope of

the Roman Church, yet laid the foundation, and prepared the way for the bishop of Rome to fill this station. His code of laws or institutes, in regulating the religious concerns of the empire, distinctly acknowledges the bishop of Rome as the head of all the Churches : and the emperor himself sent legates to him, as ambassadors to the court of a prince.

A papal supremacy in and over the Church began, in fact, to be exercised by Constantine. It was reduced to system, and regularly established by Justinian, in connexion with his supremacy in the dominion of the empire. And when the Roman dominion was broken in the west, and wounded to death in its last or seventh head, in the new form of dominion that arose, this supremacy was transferred to the bishop of Rome ; and he ruled in the authority and by the power of the apostate Church--the beast with two horns like a lamb. So that the pope was created for the office, rather than the office for the pope.--Then was revealed, in his true character, " That man of sin, the son of perdition ; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped ; so that he,

as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”—(II. *Thess.* 2d chapter.)

It was a specious pretext, as there is unquestionably, in the true Christian Church, “One Lord—-one faith—-one baptism,” that there should also be one visible head of the Church on earth, and that under him, all should hold the same faith, and be united and conformed together in the same sentiments, and external forms of religion. But this *mystery of iniquity* arrogated for ambitious and wicked man, a prerogative that belongs to Christ alone; and vainly sought to constrain and direct the minds of men, by exercising a tyrannical authority, and a torturing dominion over their bodies. The Creator, as intending the rational mind shall be free, and subject to no direct authority but his own, has formed it inaccessible by all direct exercise of power short of omnipotence. And the only efficient and honest influence of man with man, that our rational nature admits, is that of argument and persuasion. But the wicked pride and the pernicious ambition of men, are ever prompting them to assume the place of God, and tyrannize over the minds of their fellow-men.

They persuade themselves that they serve God, when they, by their power and authority, constrain others to put on the appearance of serving him ; and that they promote the unity of the Church, when they attempt to make others think just as they do in religious matters. And as this is a kind of service congenial with their native tempers, they delight and glory in acts of uniformity, and formulas, and creeds sanctioned by civil penalties. To enforce these, seems the very life and spirit of all their religion.

The time approaches, however, when the operation of this mystery of iniquity will be no longer permitted to rule the destinies of the Church, and destroy the souls of men. Especially, that great system of it, which has so long prevailed in the Church of Rome, shall come to its end with its chief production, "the man of sin—that Wicked whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

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LECTURE VIII.

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## LECTURE VIII.

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### *The Harvest and the Vintage.*

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#### REVELATION xiv. 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.”*

**I**N the two preceding Visions, the Apostle had witnessed representations of the hatred and persecutions of the adversary, and of the agents by whose instrumentality he oppresses and afflicts the servants of Christ. In this, he was called to witness the triumph of Christ, and the utter destruction of the oppressors of his people.

The vision opens with a triumphant view of the purchase of Christ’s blood, in the redeemed of the seed of Abraham his friend, and of the glorious efficacy of his Gospel, preached

to "them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

This opening of the vision necessarily turns our thoughts back, to what is recorded in the 7th chapter of the book. There the Apostle describes, among the events disclosed by the opening of the sixth seal, "Four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree:" while another angel, having the seal of the living God, is employed in sealing the servants of God in their foreheads. "And there were sealed one hundred forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. And after this, 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." The same hundred forty and four thousand, and the same multitude of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, are here again brought into view in this vision.

I have considered the 7th chapter, as predicting the restoration of the seed of Abraham—the gathering of the dispersed of Israel to the true shepherd and bishop of their souls, and

the consequent glorious success of the Gospel among the nations of men : events that are often spoken of and promised in the sacred volume. And I have supposed, that while the events comprised under the sixth seal are accomplishing, and the last indignation against the oppressors of the servants of Christ is taking its effect on the nations, there shall yet be a delay, in some period of that time, probably just before the final consummation, when these hundred forty and four thousand shall be sealed with the seal of the living God, in their foreheads ; and that, consequent to this, the countless multitude of the nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people, shall come and stand with acceptance before the Lamb. Accordingly, in this vision, before the Apostle witnessed the final destruction of the enemies of Christ, there appeared, standing on the mount Sion, that is in the true Church of God, which, on this occasion, begins to be revealed in its true glory, “ A lamb, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his father’s name written in their foreheads.

“ 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 forty and four thousand that were redeemed from the earth."

It is twice repeated in the Psalms, "Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice and Israel shall be glad."

It will indeed be a new song of praises to the Redeemer that shall be sung on that occasion; and being suited to the case of the dispersed of Israel, when the Lord shall bring back the captivity of Jacob, it will be peculiar to them, and no man will be able to sing it, in the same appropriate sentiments and feelings, but the hundred forty and four thousand of those redeemed.

These are they, that have never been defiled with spiritual whoredoms--that have never partaken in the idolatries of those that have apostatized from Christian faith and morals. They come to Christ, in this respect, as virgins: and are the first fruits unto God and unto the Lamb, of a glorious ingathering of such as shall follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, without any mixture of pagan philosophy or human traditions, or superstitions, in their belief and practice of Christianity.

The Apostles and primitive Christians, after they received the promise of the Father in the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, had, I suppose, more just and clearer views of Christian doctrine, and exhibited more of the Christian spirit and temper in their life and manners, than has, since their days, ever been witnessed generally in the Church. In the mysteries of his providence, God has been pleased to suffer the passions, the weaknesses, and the ignorance of men, to bring into the church many corruptions, and errors, and superstitions : And although there have been great and good reformation, it is, I think, evident that none of them ever brought christians, of later days, back to the Apostolic standard. However *we* may congratulate ourselves, on the light, and knowledge, and christian sentiment and practice, that abound in the church, in our days ; it is yet not one of the least of the mysteries of God's providence over his church, that, to this hour, the passions, and the prejudices, and the unhallowed speculations of men are suffered so to discolour and cloud the truth, and to pervert and abuse the pure doctrine of Christ ; And that, what we esteem a sincere and honest belief of the christian religion, is for the most

part so powerless over our hearts, and has so feeble, and so unsteady an influence on our principles and manners.

But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, this mystery of God also shall be finished. Then, not only here and there, once in an age, shall there a Nathaniel to be met with, "An Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile;" but the whole company of these redeemed will be followers of the Lamb, in the true spirit of discipleship, and in their mouth will be found no guile; for they will, in this respect, be without fault before the throne of God. Coming to Christ as virgins not polluted with any of those worldly or heathenish sentiments and maxims, by which the profession of Christianity has been so much and so long debased, they will give an exhibition of the power and the purity of the Gospel of Christ, that will probably astonish and confound many, that now rank high in the Christian church. The promise of God (*Ezek.* xxxvi. 25) concerning them is, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in

my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses." "These are the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb." And when they appear and stand on the mount Sion, as trophies of the grace and power of Christ, then the three angels, in quick succession, make their several public and solemn proclamations, as is represented in the vision.

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven." There seems no reason for this being called *another* angel, without referring to the 7th chapter, and considering the opening of this vision as presenting the same scene as is there recorded. It was *another* angel succeeding the one that sealed the redeemed of the twelve tribes. And as he ascended from the east, with a special and particular commission, so this one was seen to fly in the midst of heaven, as executing a commission of a more general tenor, and of a more extensive application—"Having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

His commission relates to the great multitude, which no man could number, of all

nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, which, on a former occasion, the Apostle saw stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands.

The missionary spirit, manifested in the societies formed for missionary purposes, and by a very few individuals, who have consecrated themselves to the work of missionaries, and the disposition to multiply and distribute copies of the sacred scriptures, that have distinguished the present age, seem to be hopeful essays toward the fulfilling of this part of the vision. But while this spirit and these efforts fall so far as they do below what even sectarian feelings and efforts usually are, for vigor of pursuit and devotedness to their object, and indeed so far below what has been often exhibited even by an apostate Church to proselyte to its communion, they are destitute, in a very great measure, of that Apostolic spirit and character, which are essential to the accomplishing of the work. When Christians generally shall begin to feel the obligations they are under, to hold themselves personally, and all they possess and enjoy, honestly devoted to serve God in the Gospel of his Son, and shall keep back nothing

that could be profitable to this service, then will the everlasting Gospel speedily be preached, unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and tongue, and people. But this they will probably not feel, till they shall be persuaded that the hour of his judgment is come. This therefore will be the subject of the angel's proclamation, as he flies through the midst of heaven, "Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come."

Christians will then be constrained no longer to glory in men, and range themselves in sects under the names of men. Nor must they any more do homage to the petty perishing claimants of the earth and of the sea, but "Worship him who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

When the sealing of the servants of God shall be completed, and the four angels, standing on the four corners of the earth, shall no longer restrain the tempests of wrath, the hour of God's judgment being then come, it will begin to take effect, first on great Babylon. This is the subject of the proclamation of the second angel, who is represented as following the angel that was seen to fly in the midst

of heaven, proclaiming the hour of judgment to be come.

“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.”

As this will be an event of great interest, the Apostle was afterward instructed, in a distinct and separate vision, on this subject, which is recorded in the 17th and 18th chapters of the book. It will be, however, only the beginning of those final judgments, in which Christ will gloriously triumph in the utter destruction of all the oppressors of his people. But there will be an awful rapidity in the succession in which the rest will follow. Having begun, “He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.” Accordingly, the proclamation of the third angel immediately follows, warning men that the Judge is at hand, and that he comes with a purpose of judgment, no longer to be delayed.

“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand,

“ The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation ; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb :

“ And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever ; and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”

The Apostle Paul, preaching to the men of Athens, and speaking of the times past, when God “ suffered all nations to walk in their own ways,” says, “ And 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, by that man whom he hath ordained : whereof, he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”

God has indeed never left himself without witness among the children of men ; so that they are always without excuse, if they do not fear and obey him. Yet charity constrains us to believe, there may have been good and

pious people, who have yet, unwittingly, borne the mark of the beast and of his image. This, with other mysteries of his providence, God has suffered. But when the seventh trumpet shall begin to sound, this mystery shall be finished. A proclamation will be made, for all that fear God, to separate themselves from them ; and this will be enforced, by the dreadful warning here recorded : and whoever they may be, that after this shall continue attached to the beast and to his image, hope and charity must leave them forever.

“ Here is the patience of the saints : here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

Men shall then return and discern between the righteous and the wicked ; between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not. The faith and patience of the saints shall no longer be subjected to those severe trials, which the ungodliness of men in every age, has one way and another occasioned. The great issue will then begin to be revealed, according as they have believed in God, and have kept the word of Christ's patience ; and he will keep them from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try

them that dwell upon the earth. For at that time, when Michael shall stand up, the great prince that standeth for the children of the people of Israel, there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time.--(*Daniel* xii. 1.)

The saints will, of necessity, be more or less involved in this perplexity and distress of nations ; but they shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. The effect of the trial on them shall be only as the refiner's fire, to purify them, and to make them white.

It was, I suppose, with reference to this, that the voice from heaven proclaimed, " Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth."

When the Apostle had heard the warning voice of the third angel, and the awful scenes of the harvest and the vintage were ready to be revealed, there seems to have been a momentary suspension of the prophetic scenes that were passing before him ; and he heard a voice from heaven, for the support and consolation of the servants of Christ amidst the fearful scenes and the awful terrors of those days, " Saying, Blessed are the dead that die

in the Lord from henceforth." And the Holy Spirit, before proceeding with his prophetic representations, adds the confirmation, "Yea, saith the Spirit; that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." There seems in this, a reference to that in the 57th chapter of Isaiah--"The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart, and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness." The prophetic Spirit had said, on a former occasion, (*Chap. ix. 6.*) "In those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." In both these cases, reference is had to the calamitous events, and the distressing circumstances of the times. But there is a wide difference in the character and circumstances of the persons, who are the subjects of these two parts of the sacred word. Those in the 9th chapter, under the pains and suffering of the righteous judgments of God for their iniquities, are described as seeking in mad despair for any refuge, even in death itself, from the present power and weight of their sufferings.

But in this place, they are represented as taken by their Lord and Saviour from the fury of a wicked and malicious world, whose hour of judgment is come, to enter into their rest, and cease from all their toils and sorrows.

Immediately after this, the Apostle beheld the majestic appearance of the great Judge of quick and dead, come forth to separate between the wheat and the tares.

“ 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.

“ And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap ; for the time is come for thee to reap ; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

“ And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth : and the earth was reaped.”

In explaining the parable of the wheat and the tares, Christ said, “ The harvest is the end of the world.”

On the same principles, it may be understood to mean the end of any particular state of discipline in his providence, when he pleases to bring it to a conclusion. But it cannot

intend any thing less : and it implies the ideas of a day of reckoning, of separation, and of retribution.

The harvest, here spoken of, is like that concerning Babylon, (*Jer.* li. 33.) “ Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, the daughter of Babylon is like a threshing-floor, it is time to thresh her ; yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come.” And it is, probably, the very same that is prophesied of, (*Joel* iii. 13,) “ Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat ; for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.”

“ Put ye in the sickle ; for the harvest is ripe ; come, get you down ; for the press is full, the vats overflow ; for their wickedness is great.

“ Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision ; for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.”

Here, both the harvest and the vintage are introduced to represent God's purpose of judgment and retribution--“ For their wickedness is great.”

So also in this vision that the Apostle saw, after the harvest, succeeds also the vintage.

“ And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

“ And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire ; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth ; for her grapes are fully ripe.

“ 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 ”

The Vine, as an emblem, was originally used to designate the *true* Church of God. But by the prophet Jeremiah, (ii. 21,) God rebukes the apostacy of his people, saying, “ I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed : how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me ? ” So also by Isaiah, ii. 4—“ What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it ? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes ? ” And again, (*Deut.* xxxii. 32.)—“ Their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah ; their grapes are

grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter; their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps." And according to what the Apostle saw and heard in this place, the vine of the earth is to be gathered, and cast into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. This vintage, therefore, I think, evidently intends, the exterminating judgments which shall be executed upon an apostate Church; and the dreadful vengeance Christ will take on them that have prostituted the profession of his Gospel, and his name, to the purposes of their own aggrandizement and self-will, at the expense of the blood of his martyrs, and the suppression of his truth.

The harvest seems of a more general nature; but the vintage particular and appropriate to the apostate Church.

They seem to be very nearly connected, and may, probably, be both accomplished at the same time, and in a great measure by the same events. For the harvest seems to intend the bringing to dissolution, in an utter extinction, the anti-christian dominions of the earth in general; or, perhaps, especially those of civil, or secular policy; And the vintage a like demolition of anti-christian ecclesiastical institutions

and authorities. Whatever may be the precise distinction between them, I think it unquestionable, that both together, they unequivocally predict an entire subversion of all anti-christian usurpation and authority, in both Church and State ; and a day of reckoning, and of terrible retributions, for the adversaries of Christ, and the oppressors and persecutors of his servants.

The same judgment and retribution, with a view of the preparatory process for the introduction of them, are more specifically predicted in the next vision, under the idea of the seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, and poured out by the “seven angels having the seven last plagues ; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.” And yet again more expressly, in the description of “the battle of that great day of God Almighty,” when he that shall rule all nations with a rod of iron, shall “tread the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”

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## LECTURE IX.

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## LECTURE IX.

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### *The Vision of the Vials.*

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REVELATION xv. 1.

*“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.”*

**T**HIS sign, from the terms in which it is described, evidently relates to the last period of that twelve hundred and sixty years, in which the sanctuary is given to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles.

The vision contains a representation of the means, and of the several successive judgments, by which the anti-christian powers will be destroyed, and a way prepared for the saints of the Most High to take the kingdom. It is one of those particular and detailed representations, by which the general view, exhibited at the opening of the seals, is filled up: and is to be ranked

under the sixth seal. It cannot, I think, be comprehended under the seventh trumpet, as has commonly been supposed ; for the oath of the Almighty has proclaimed that time shall then be no longer, but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall *begin* to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished. This vision, no doubt, extends to the last indignation. And the first six vials prepare the way for the sounding of the last trumpet.

The pouring out of the seventh vial, will, therefore, coincide with the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and constitute the judgments, by which the mystery of God will be finished.

In the preceding vision, the Apostle had witnessed a representation of the concluding scenes of this period, both in the triumphs of grace, and in the execution of a righteous vengeance, accomplishing the destruction of the enemies of Christ. In this vision, he is led back to view the several steps, by which the way will be prepared, and these scenes introduced.

These judgments, from their nature, and their relation to each other, and to the great final consummation, would seem as though they must follow each other in quick succes-

sion : and the description of them in the text determines that this will be the case. They are “the seven last plagues ; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.” All the intimations, given us in the scriptures of those judgments, by which the final destruction of the enemies of Christ’s kingdom on earth shall be accomplished, seem distinctly to imply, that the vengeance taken in them, will be speedy, and that the Lord will hasten his work in his time ; “for a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.”

Accompanying this sign, the Apostle saw also a representation of the condition and feelings of the true servants of Christ, during the execution of these last plagues. Standing on a foundation, supported by no earthly constitutions, and continually sending forth the fire of God’s judgments, they seem, according to human calculations, to rest upon a fragile and slippery support, in the midst of awful judgments and desolations ; as though they stood upon a sea of glass mingled with fire. But kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, they sing the song of Moses and the Lamb ; expecting, with full assurance, the speedy accomplishing of all the good things

spoken concerning Zion ; and beholding, in the surrounding desolations, the true and righteous judgments of the King of Saints. To their faith, “the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven is opened :” and from the light of God’s word, and the testimony of his covenant, they see the approach of that blissful state of the Church, which is so much the object of their desires. But by reason of the smoke from the glory of God, and from his power, no man will be able to enter into that state, till the seven plagues of the seven angels are fulfilled. In this condition, and with these feelings and expectations, in the midst of many and great temptations, the true servants of Christ wait for his salvation, while the last indignation is accomplishing upon them that destroy the earth.

“The first angel 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.”

This has, by several late commentators, been understood as predicting the breaking out of that great moral putrefaction, which prepared the way, and introduced those awful convulsions.

which, five and twenty years ago, began to indicate the approaching dissolution of the body politic, in the dominion of the beasts of the earth. The explanation seems precisely to accord with the order and progress of the prophetic visions, and to be consistent with the general manner and spirit of the representations contained in the book ; I therefore know of no reason, why it may not safely be adopted.

“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.”

When the bonds of social order, and of moral obligations were loosened, or shaken off, the population of the kingdom of the beast became unsettled and agitated like the sea : And the vial of God's wrath being poured out upon them in that situation, scenes of blood and carnage desolated the dominion, and that tumultuous sea became as the blood of a dead man.

“And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters ; and they became blood.”

By “the rivers and fountains of waters” are intended, those who “have shed the blood of

saints and prophets :” and the angel of the waters, and another angel out of the altar, unite to praise God’s righteous judgments upon them.

The symbol requires, that this should be applied to the spiritual rulers and teachers of the apostate Church ; and the history of late events furnishes abundant record of the fulfilment of the prophecy, in this application of it.

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

The events of the three preceding vials, greatly awakened the jealousy and the wrath of the *ruling powers* within the dominion of the beast ; and, to support their tottering thrones, they grasped at an authority, subjecting the lives and possessions of their people to the most lavish and unbounded expense of blood and of treasure ; “ And men were scorched with great heat.” They were consumed by this absolute and unlimited exercise of authority and power over them. Yet so much did madness and raging passions prevail, that they “ blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues : and they repented not to give him glory.” But all this exertion

of power and authority by the rulers, and this madness of the people, will not avail them: for when the fifth angel shall pour out his vial upon the seat of the beast, and it is probably now just ready to be poured out, his kingdom will be full of darkness; and they will gnaw their tongues for pain.

Mr. Faber has very justly remarked--  
“Wherever *the beast* is simply mentioned, by way of eminence, as it were, I believe it will invariably be found, that the ten-horned or secular beast is intended.”

What the particular kind of judgment will be, that at the pouring out of the fifth vial, shall come upon them that worship the beast and his image, is not here revealed. It will be one that will deeply affect his dominion, and will probably go nigh to destroy it; for it will come upon the very seat of the beast, and will fill them with such anguish, that they will gnaw their tongues for pain. But still will they blaspheme the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repent not of their deeds.

“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.”

In a former vision, the Euphrates, according to the almost universal consent of all commentators of later days, is a symbol of the Othman or Turkish Empire, that arose on the borders of that river ; and, according to every principle of consistent interpretation, it must be the same here. This vial therefore includes under it the destruction of the Turkish dominion, which is to prepare the way of the kings of the east. Whether this is to open a way for the return of the seed of Abraham, as some have supposed, to come and inherit the land given to them by promise, and live and reign with Christ a thousand years : or whether it intends the opening of the way for the thrones and dominions of Asia to come into a nearer intimacy with the potentates of Europe, that they may be gathered with them to partake in the judgments of the last vial of the wrath of God cannot I suppose now be determined. But from what immediately follows, under this vial, it would seem to be the latter.

“ And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out

of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

“For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth *and of the whole world*, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

This certainly portends a day of wrath, not only for the dominion of the beast, but also expressly for the *kings of the whole world*. These deluding and infuriating spirits come out of the mouth of the dragon of paganism, and out of the mouth of the beast of Roman dominion, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, either of Mahommedism, or of Romish ecclesiastical tyranny: and they are instrumental of a universal gathering of all the enemies of Christ, and the oppressors of his people, to suffer his indignation in the pouring out of the last vial of the wrath of God.

“And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.” That is, “the cursing to utter destruction at Megiddo,” as the name is explained, I think justly, by Mr. Faber.

“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air, and there came a great voice out

of the temple of heaven from the throne, saying, It is done."

In explanation of this I quote from Scott's Commentary—"Satan is called *the prince of the power of the air*, and this last vial will be poured into the seat of his empire; for after it, his cause in every place, without as well as within the dominions of the beast will be ruined. A proclamation was therefore made, that it was *done*, or finished; as under the seventh trumpet, the mystery of God was to be finished, (x. 7.) Terrible calamities...awful displays of the divine presence...intestine distractions, and the revolt or destruction of cities and nations, &c. will make way for great Babylon to drink of the wine of the fierceness of God's wrath; and the concurrent judgments are described in the strongest language: especially by hail stones of above a hundred pounds weight each; which must dash in pieces all persons and things whatsoever, on which they fall."—"It is clear beyond doubt, that convulsions, revolutions, and the wreck of nations, to a degree and extent never hitherto witnessed, or recorded, are yet to be expected, before the mystery of God is finished."

“ 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.

“ 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.

“ And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

“ 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.”

The pouring out of the seventh vial is coincident with the judgments of the seventh trumpet, and, I think, seems to be a detail of those judgments. The former trumpets do not include every judgment that fell upon men, within the period of time which they embrace.— They only announce those distinguished judgments, by which some important change was effected in the state or condition of the Church. On the same principles, the seventh trumpet, after the way is prepared by the judgments com-

prised under the first six vials, announces the last great exterminating judgments, by which the existence of the apostate Church, with all its earthly connexions and establishments, is brought to an end.

These it announces, however, in more general terms than any of the preceding trumpets; and the detail under the seventh vial seems necessary to make it as explicit as they had been. Here we learn, what will be the attending circumstances, and the effects of the lightning and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail, announced by the seventh trumpet.

The great city, or Roman community, will be divided into three parts, and the cities, or associated communities of the nations will fall; and great Babylon will come into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And even the separate, and isolated structures of human inventions, whether secular or ecclesiastical, will flee away: And the mountains of human establishments will no more be found. And the most destructive plagues will come upon all them, that do not truly serve Christ, and obey his Gospel. Thus will the way be prepared, that "The kingdoms of this world may be-

come the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ ; and he shall reign forever and ever." He will utterly destroy them that now destroy the earth. This is again more distinctly foretold in the 19th chapter, where He that is Faithful and True, is described as coming forth, clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and the armies of heaven following him, that he may smite the nations, and tread the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

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LECTURE X.

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## LECTURE X.

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### *The Warning.*

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REVELATION xvi. 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.”*

**T**HIS is an interesting admonition.

It is in the voice of the exalted Judge of quick and dead, that it is proclaimed.

It relates to his coming to execute righteous judgment on the adversaries of his kingdom, and to give the kingdom and the dominion to the people of the saints of the Most-High. And it admonishes us, that this his coming will be sudden and unexpected to men; and will be productive of most decisive and important effects.

It is introduced in that part of “the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto

him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass," where the seven angels are seen coming forth with the seven last plagues, in which is filled up the wrath of God. When they have come forth, at the call of the great voice out of the temple, and six of them have, in quick succession, poured out their vials of wrath, and the three unclean spirits are gone forth to the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day;—just before the pouring out of the last vial, which is to fill up the measure of God's wrath. While those unclean spirits are busy through the whole world to stir up strife, then is this solemn admonition introduced.

In the midst of the prophetic representation, when the awful catastrophe is wound up to its close, and the finishing of it is ready to be revealed, there is a solemn pause of the narration. The interesting representation is suspended, just when the last convulsion is ready to be disclosed! and the voice from the temple proclaims the admonition,

“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”

Let us consider this admonition, in its relation to the event it announces ;

I. In the nature and circumstances of that event.

II. In its effects.

III. As to the time of its accomplishment.

I. As to the nature of the event--It will be a very solemn, and a very interesting one ; the most so of any event that is to take place until the day of the last judgment.

The descriptions of it in the prophecies are in so many respects like the descriptions of the last great day, that many have believed they are both one : and that when the seventh trumpet shall sound, and the seventh angel shall have poured out the last of the vials of the wrath of God, there shall immediately succeed the gathering of the nations together, to stand before the son of man, and receive their final award of judgment.

There will, unquestionably, be a great and solemn account to be settled in that day, between Christ and the world. He will come to make inquisition of blood ; and to avenge the blood of his saints, that has been shed upon the earth. And there will be a great gathering

of his enemies together to suffer the effects of his indignation.

This is represented here, by the three unclean spirits going forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle: and by the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the earthquake, and the hail, that shall be employed as the instruments of vengeance in that day: and especially by the calling all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, to gather themselves together to the supper of the great God, that they 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.

These representations seem to intimate, that God, by the secret ministers of his wrath, will sift out and distinguish his enemies, in all nations, or certainly in all that have borne the Christian name, suffering one or another unclean spirit to engage them, and lead them out, and distinguish them for destruction. And when they shall be thus sifted out and distinguished, in the height of their rage and their madness with which the unclean spirits will

inspire them, He that in righteousness doth judge and make war, will come forth against them, clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and will smite the nations, and tread the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And so blinded, and so intoxicated will they be, by the passions and the rage which the unclean spirits will stir up in them, that they will not know, or regard the King of kings and Lord of lords, but will gather themselves together to make war against him, till they shall be taken, and the leaders and foremost of them shall be cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone: and the remnant shall be slain with the sword; and all the fowls be filled with their flesh. In this will be accomplished that alarming circumstance declared in the text, "Behold, I come as a thief."

In every instance, in which the scriptures reveal to us this coming of Christ, they also warn us of this circumstance, that it will be sudden and unexpected to them that dwell on the earth. Whatever may be the reasons *why* it will be thus, it will most certainly be so. In warning his disciples on this subject, Christ has said, "As the days of Noah were, so shall

also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not till the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." And when he represents this matter in the parable of the ten virgins, he describes them as all slumbering and sleeping. "And at *midnight* there was a cry made, behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him."

They had all been waiting in expectation of his coming; yet while he seemed to them to tarry, they slept. And when they least expected it, his approach was announced. In another place it is recorded, that he warned his disciples of the coming of this day in these very remarkable words; "As a snare shall it come on *all* them that dwell on the face of the *whole earth*."

Now this will not be for want of suitable warning on the subject; or because Christ will hide his coming, or omit to give the predicted signs of his approach. He has told us what shall be the signs of his coming, and has so distinctly noted them, that none *need* be

taken unawares by it, unless a spirit of unbelief, or some dreadful passion blind their minds.

The old world did not perish without a warning. They had long and distinct warning by the space of a hundred and twenty years: and yet they knew not till the floods came. Their unbelief, and their lusts, and their passions prevailing, the warning had no good effect on their minds. So also, at the first coming of the Son of man; the Jews had express prophecies pointing out the precise time, and the distinguishing signs and tokens, that should attend his coming; and they, and the world generally, were looking for the event, at the very time when it did take place. Yet, through the pride and hardness of their hearts, and the wilfulness of their tempers, they knew him not, when he appeared among them.

So, it will not be for want of warning, that this awful day will come as a snare, on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. The time is expressly foretold, both by the designation of a precise number of years, and of the course of events that shall precede it; and by comparing the time with the times of other events that shall prepare the way, and introduce it. And the most distinguishing and

unequivocal signs and tokens of its approach are foreshown, and expressly pointed out in the scriptures. It will not therefore be, because men cannot distinguish the approach of that day : it will be through a destitution of that lively faith, that should keep their minds in a waiting and expecting temper ; and through a dreadful spirit of malignity, distrust, and worldly speculations, that will prevail among men, that they will not be aware of that day. Christ has said, “ When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth ? ” Not that the profession of faith, or the knowledge of the truth, shall be less at that day than in any time before. It is probable, from the strain of prophecies, and from the present state of the world, that many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased previous to that day : and perhaps, a much greater number of names will be attached to the profession of the Christian religion at that time, than in any preceding. But the spirit of the world will so fill up the minds of professing Christians, and the lusts and the passions of men will bear so much sway, that humble and expecting faith will scarce be found at all in that day.

Many, no doubt, will be deceived by the events of that day being brought about contrary to their preconceived opinions or wishes. But probably the greater part will be taken by it as by a snare, by reason of their being engaged, and having their passions enlisted, by those very events that will introduce it. And while He, who disposeth these events, is making his way to the speedy accomplishment of his vengeance, they will regard them, only as the actions and designs of men are concerned in them, and taking different sides on those subjects, they will contend with each other, till that day shall overtake them, "as a thief in the night." It is probable, that but few of Christ's own people will be found in that humble and expecting temper, which is necessary to prepare them for the fearful events of that great and terrible day of the Lord. And perhaps some, even of them that shall be aware of its approach, and distinguish the signs of Christ's coming, will yet so suffer their lusts and passions to influence and occupy them, that they will be wholly unprepared to meet him. The Holy Ghost has said, by the prophet Daniel, "And some them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge and make them white,

even to the time of the end." And we know it was the case in his first advent, that, notwithstanding all their warning on the subject, the disciples slept, while he endured the agonies of Gethsemane, and while the traitor gathered his band, and came to betray their Master : and after he was taken, they all forsook him and fled. So it will likely be in that day, that either through a sluggishness and unbelief of temper, or through the blindness that passion, and jealousy, and ill temper will occasion, that day will take by surprize most even of the followers of Christ, and find them unprepared for its events. Here a Simeon, and there an Anna, will be found watching and praying, and will be prepared to hail the morning of that day, that shall break the fetters of the servants of Christ, and cast the rod of oppression into the consuming fire. But, with only these few exceptions, "As a snare shall it come on *all* them that dwell on the face of the *whole earth*."

Let us now consider,

II. The effects of the coming of this day.

We may be assured that it will be emphatically, a day that will try men's souls.

When God shall suffer those wicked and deluding spirits to go forth to all the world, for

the express purpose of enlisting, and drawing out all the enemies of Christ to make war against him ; and when it is his design, that they shall all be distinguished and known, that he may pour out his vengeance in a most signal and terrible manner upon them, there will not be one of them left behind. These secret ministers of divine wrath will enter into every place, and stir up the wicked passions, on which they are allowed to work, in every breast, to bring them forth. They are said to be *like frogs*, I suppose, in allusion to the plagues of Egypt, when the frogs were brought upon the land, and came into the houses and into the bed-chambers, and on the beds, and into the houses of the servants, and into the ovens, and into the kneeding-troughs, so that no place, even of domestic recess, escaped them. So these unclean spirits will, probably, not only visit every neighborhood to vent their malignant poison, and stir up the wicked passions of men one against another ; but will even enter into every family, and into the very bed-chambers ; and in all the relations of life will stir up jealousies, and strifes, and wrath, and variance, so that every enemy of the kingdom of Christ will be stirred up, and provoked to distinguish himself as an enemy, and

make it evident to all, that the vengeance to be poured out upon him, will be a just and holy vengeance.

Christ himself has warned us on this subject, (*Luke xvii. 34,*) “In that night there shall be two in one bed ; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two shall be grinding together ; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two shall be in the field ; the one shall be taken and the other left.”— And when the disciples asked him, “where, Lord ?” He answered, “Wheresoever the carcase is, thither will the eagles be gathered together :” Intimating that, with all the acuteness in which the eagle discovers carrion, to prey upon it, so these ministers of divine wrath will seek and search out all its objects, and not one of them will escape. It will be a day of fearful terrors to all the enemies of Christ’s Kingdom, when he shall come to tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, and none of them will be suffered to escape. Though they hide themselves in dens and caves of the mountains, they shall not be passed by. “He will slay the last of them with the sword : he that fleeth of them shall not flee away ; and he that escapeth of them shall

shall not be delivered"...(*Amos ix. 1.*) It is also added, (verse 2d,) "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: and though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them." There will be no escaping the terrors and the judgments of that day, any more than those of the last judgment; but in all lands, where the Gospel has been preached, every enemy will be sought out, and not one shall escape. In vain will they call to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: when the great day of his wrath is come.

Men have usually been accustomed to think of Christ, as a Lamb who does nothing else but save sinners by the sacrifice of himself. But they will then find, that even the Lamb has his day of wrath. There is a time for judgment, as well as a time for mercy: and the abusers and despisers of Gospel grace shall yet see the compassionate Redeemer of men,

when he will have put on all the terrors of righteous judgment, and bathed his sword in heaven, that it may come down upon the people of his curse to judgment. Hitherto his triumphs, in building up his kingdom on the earth, have usually been the triumphs of grace : and his people have been saved under oppressions, and preserved in the midst of dangers and tribulations : while the wicked have enjoyed all the pride and the splendor of external triumph ; and his enemies have reigned in the earth. But when there shall have been enough of this fully to display the glory of his providence, and the faithfulness of his care to preserve his Church in the wilderness, and to keep his people safely amidst the ragings of the savage beasts of prey that have thirsted for their blood ; then these things shall have an end ; and the Lord will awake to judgment. He shall go forth as a mighty man ; and shall stir up jealousy like a man of war. “ The Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim ; he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work ; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.” Strange as it may seem, the time is coming, when the compassionate Redeemer of sinners, who was once

heard to groan, and seen to yield himself to the death of the cross, through the influence of that love, stronger than death, which he ever feels toward the work of his hands, will yet "put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and be clad with zeal as a cloak; that according to their deeds, he may repay fury to his adversaries--recompense to his enemies." He intends the utter ruin of that pre-eminently wicked one, "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming;" and the entire overthrow of all his enemies.

And however he may prepare his way for the accomplishment of this great purpose by the gracious influences of his spirit, and by extending light and knowledge among men; yet the last end of it shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. When the sealing of the servants of God shall be completed, there will then be an awful pause in the annals of mercy; and the reign of grace, for one dreadful moment, will seem suspended, when the King of grace shall arise up out of his place, and put on the robes of judgment, that he may come forth, and tread

the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

I am aware, that the current of public sentiment, in the present day, does not favor the expectation of such events. Christians, wearied with beholding the scenes of blood and desolation, that have held them in astonishment for twenty five years past, seem disposed to hope, that the days of vengeance are nearly over ; and that the triumphs of grace shall now complete the work of subduing the nations of men to the obedience of faith. I would gladly cherish such a hope, if I did not fear, that it would become the means of hiding from men's observation the approach of a day, often described in the scriptures by representations too great, too terrible, and too extensive in their import, to be applied to any thing the world has yet witnessed ; and involving in it, changes and events that certainly have not yet taken place.

It will indeed be a fearful day to the ungodly among men, when the last refuge of hope shall be covered with the flame of God's jealousy, and the God of mercy himself shall rise up, and come forth out of his place, clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and his sword

bathed in heaven, that he may avenge the blood of his saints, upon them that dwell on the earth ; and destroy them that destroy the earth. But such a day will yet most assuredly come.

In that day, also, “The Lord will search *Jerusalem* with candles, that he may punish the men that are settled on their lees ; and that say in their hearts, the Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.”

The pale of the Church will be no defence, and the thick veil, the deep disguises of hypocrisy, will be no covering in that day. It will have a solemn and awful effect on the true Church of Christ, and upon its members individually. The unbelieving must be punished ; and all that in any way hide or pervert the counsel of God. Some of the true disciples of Christ will fall, in the sight of the world, and become victims of those visible temporal judgments that are ordained against the enemies. And probably the far greater part of them will be affected by it as intimated in the warning.

They will be so led away by the spirit of the world, and so involved in the quarrels, and raging passions, and worldly speculations of the times, that when the light of that day shall

break upon them as the lightning that cometh in the east, and shineth even unto the west, they will be like men, who, walking naked in the darkness, have suddenly emerged into the light, and their shame is exposed to the surrounding multitude. "Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." While men suffer jealousies, and passions, and pride to reign in their hearts, they easily flatter themselves, that almost any conduct or sentiments, to which these prompt them, is right, or may at least be excused in them. By this means, they become enveloped in darkness and ignorance of themselves...are strangers to their true character, and obliterate, in a great measure, the distinctions between virtue and vice, and confound truth and falsehood together. But when the light of that day shall break upon them, they will be deeply conscious of the ugliness of their passions, the hatefulness of their ways, and the shamefulness of their pleas and excuses, by which they have attempted to justify themselves before men, and to excuse themselves to God; and will perceive that others discover the same shame upon them, so

that they will be like people walking naked, and all their shame uncovered.

While fear, and the pit, and the snare shall be upon the rest of the world, their nakedness will be exposed, and their shame will be seen; and the Lord will take a signal vengeance of their inventions: and though they shall be saved in that day, yet shall be only so as by fire; for the fire shall try every man's work, and the wood, and the hay, and the stubble shall be burnt up.

Only those few, who shall be clothed with "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of the Lord, is of great price," shall escape the shame, and the confusion, and the terrors of that day, and be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of man, when he shall appear in his glory. But upon all others it shall come as a snare. "As the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so shall the children of men be snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them." The shameful and wicked passions and prejudices, by which even pious people now suffer themselves to be influenced, will then appear in their

true light. “Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.”

“Therefore, be ye also ready; for in such hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.”

“Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.”

We are now to consider,

III. The time of Christ's coming in these dread events.

#### THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

III. The signs, or tokens of the approach of these dreadful and decisive events, are of two kinds:

1st. The dates that are given in prophecy for the continuance of God's forbearance, till the measure of the iniquities of the adversaries of his kingdom is filled up.

And 2d, The accomplishing of other events, that, according to the word of prophecy, are to prepare the way for the execution of God's wrath, or are to be cotemporaneous with it.

1st, The dates.

The only definite period of time given in

the book of the revelation, as fixed to a precise number of years, is the forty and two months, or one thousand two hundred and three score days, a day being given for a year, at the expiration of which the afflictions and oppressions of the saints are to cease, and the pollutions of the sanctuary are to be cleansed.

This period is given in relation to four different events.

1st. The holy city being given to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles forty and two months, (xi. 2.)

2d. The prophesying of the witnesses for the space of one thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sack-cloth. (xi. 3.)

3d. The nourishing and preservation of the Church in the wilderness a thousand two hundred and three score days....(xii. 6.) This is also again spoken of in the 14th verse of the same chapter, as to continue for a time and times, and half a time—that is, three years and a half, or forty and two months; which, reckoning the months at thirty days each, is one thousand two hundred and three score days, as stated in the 6th verse.

4th and lastly, The continuance of the power of the beast with seven heads and ten

horns, is to be forty and two months, after the healing of his deadly wound in his head, in which he received the wound by a sword and yet did live...(*Chap. xiii. 5.*) "Power was given unto him to continue forty and two months ;" or, more literally rendered, "Power was given him to do," or "to act"...That is, I suppose, to occupy his place and maintain his beastly state, and tyrannize over the saints "forty and two months."

These events seem, in their nature, so intimately connected with each other, and in the prophecy revealed in such connexion, that, as they all have precisely the same duration assigned them ; so, I suppose, the time of their commencement, and, of course, the time of their ending, must be very nearly the same with all of them. If, therefore, we could ascertain the beginning of this period, in reference to any one of the four events, it would very nearly determine the times of the others.

The giving of the holy city to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, and the retiring of the Church into the wilderness from the face of the serpent, and the two witnesses putting on their sack-cloth, are events that I am persuaded had their beginning before the close of the

sixth century. The history of the latter part of this century is as strongly indicative of the state of things intended by these representations, as that of almost any succeeding age. But the histories we have of these times, except the jejune and uncertain one that bears the name of Evagrius, have all been composed in later ages, from the few and doubtful public records, and detached tracts that have passed through the dark ages, to the revival of letters in the 13th century, and most of them to the invention of printing in the 15th. It is therefore not to be accounted strange, if we can fix on no one precise date, that from the light of such history seems eminently distinguished by circumstances, that would unequivocally mark the commencement of these events. From their nature, I suppose, they must have been nearly connected in time with the prevailing of the power of the beast with seven heads and ten horns. But as there was a difference of almost two hundred years, between the rising of the first and of the last of the principalities represented by the ten horns, and as the union of these principalities, in giving their strength and power to the beast, was not an event all at once brought about, and made manifest by any

explicit general compact or act of union, it seems difficult to fix the æra of this event.

There is, however, an intimation on this subject, in the 2d Epistle to the Thessalonians, that seems to have in it something decisive. The spirit of inspiration is unquestionably the best guide to the interpretation of the prophecies, which he has dictated.

Speaking of the man of sin, the son of perdition, the Apostle says “Ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way; and then shall that wicked be revealed.” The tradition that this hindrance, which prevented the revealing of the man of sin, was the dominion of the ancient Roman empire, is, I think, worthy of full credit. And whatever may be meant by this man of sin, we must look for his manifestation immediately upon the old Roman dominion being removed out of the way. This seemed to be accomplished, when the title of emperor expired with the reign of Augustulus, in 476. But as the senate and consuls still continued to exercise their office, and the Church of Rome still acknowledged

the authority of the emperor of the east, there was not yet an opportunity for his being fully revealed. But when the entire dominion of the old Roman empire ceased, and no longer stood in the way to hinder the exaltation of the man of sin, then was he revealed, and commenced his full career of iniquity.

The eastern emperor withdrew his deputy from Rome, and gave up the city to the government of the pope, in the year 552. But it was not till 566 that the entire dominion of the Roman senate ceased, and the whole form of the old Roman government was abolished, and gave full scope to the dominancy of him, who opposeth and exalteth himself, above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.

It is true that there is no specific period mentioned in prophecy for the continuance of the papacy, which seems chiefly to be intended by the man of sin; neither is there any period assigned in the revelation, for the continuance of the beast with two horns like a lamb, or the spiritual tyranny of the Romish priesthood. But the union of these powers, as they are in fact one in their nature and principles, seems to be intended by the little horn, which the prophet Daniel saw coming up among the ten



40 years

after the  
last of  
ten king

doms were  
established  
ed. p. 1

horns of the fourth beast. And of him it is there said, the saints shall be given into his hands for a time, and times, and the dividing of time, which is the same period, that is assigned for the continuance of the beast with seven heads and ten horns. Indeed, so intimately blended with each other, are all the three powers predicted in the 13th chapter of the Revelation, and so dependent on each other for support and continuance, that it seems scarcely possible, that they can subsist separately, or any one of them much outlive the others. So also in their origin, they are probably to be accounted nearly coeval.

Now the dragon is said to give the beast with seven heads and ten horns his power and his seat, and great authority. But this seat could not be occupied by a new dynasty, until vacated by the old ; therefore the succession of this beast, cannot be dated till the old Roman form of government entirely ceased and was abolished. The very same event was necessary to make way for the revealing of this, as for the revealing of the other dominions predicted in connexion with it in the same chapter. The old Roman form of government must cease, and be taken out of the way,

before any of them could occupy the places assigned them, and exercise their beastly dominion, as ascribed to them in the prophecy.

This took place in 566, when that which hindered the revealing of the man of sin, was taken out of the way, and the form of dominion of the fourth kingdom on the earth was changed, to admit of the last form of that dominion coming forward to occupy its place and exercise its authority.

The seat of the dragon would not be left long vacant, nor the man of sin any longer be withheld, when that which hindered was taken out of the way. Accordingly, every thing was already prepared, at that time, for the coming in of this triple alliance of anti-christian powers.

The ten principalities were already established, and only waited the entire removal of the ancient form, to have the transfer of the supreme authority made by the dragon to them, that they might succeed to the seat and dominion of the old Roman Empire.

The code of the Roman laws that was, by their adopting it, to identify them, in after times, as the legal successors to the dominion, had been formed and published by Justinian, a lit-

tle more than thirty years before : and at whatever time they may have in any way explicitly adopted this code ; yet, as they from the first came into many of the principles of jurisprudence of the people whom they conquered, and with whom they intermingled, I think they must be reckoned to have commenced their dominion, as the last form of the fourth kingdom on earth, immediately on the entire removal and dissolution of the preceding form.

So, likewise, the fundamental principles of the spiritual dominion had been adopted, and acted on before this time. Justinian had also thirty years before published his *Novellæ*, or ecclesiastical canons, for regulating the polity of the Church, which to this day are the fountain of canon law to the Church of Rome, and to all the ecclesiastical establishments that have copied from her. These, however, were administered by the authority of the Emperor, as long as Justinian lived, and in the dominion of the Empire, as long as it lasted in the west : but when Justinian died, in 565, and the last remains of the ancient form of government in the west was removed, in the year following ; then, the beast that rose up out of the earth, or the hierarchy of the church of Rome, took the ad-

ministration on themselves, and constituting an ecclesiastical empire under the Bishop of Rome, as the Image of the ancient beast, in his name administered the government of the Church.

Thus, when that which hindered was taken out of the way, then was that Wicked revealed, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders.

Serez, a French historian, says "The Bishop of Rome lived there amidst the confusions of the Empire, even at Rome. Whereas the Emperors were seldom seen there; which forced Christians to fly to their Bishop for counsel, and laid the foundation for their authority." And again, in the early part of the sixth century, he says "The Pope of Rome thrust himself forward amidst these confusions and ruins of the Empire, recovering that which the Emperors had lost."

Thus was the way preparing, and the new form of dominion was coming forward, as the old retired and gave way. The actual change, when the new dominion must be considered as absolutely taking place of the old, cannot, I think, be dated later than 566, when the last remains of the ancient form entirely ceased: for

so fully was every thing prepared and matured for the coming in, and establishment of the new dominion, that the history of the times, for some years before this period, seems to be the history of that new dominion : and nothing but the two facts, 1st, of the ancient form of the Senate and Consuls being continued to that time... and, 2d, of the dominion of the beasts that succeeded being continued to the present time, could seem to warrant us in fixing the date of this change so late as 566. For 14 years before this time, even the claim of the emperor of the east to a secular dominion in Rome had been withdrawn ; and although the eastern emperors continued to attempt something in the general government of the universal Church, as they had formerly been used to hold a dominion over it, yet after the death of Justinian, their authority was very little regarded, and never again had efficacy in the west to control or limit the spiritual dominion.

As to the open revealing of the spiritual dominion, or the kingdom of the little horn described by Daniel, Machiavel himself says expressly, " Upon the coming of the Longobards into Italy, began the evident and open state of the Pope's kingdom." Now this was

in 568. I perceive, however, no sufficient reason to suppose there was a delay, even of two years only, after the ancient seat of the dragon was vacated by the ancient dynasty, and that which hindered the revealing of the man of sin, was taken out of the way; but that the anti-christian triumvirate commenced immediately their tyrannical and impious career.

This was in 566, and if to this be added, the period assigned, 1260 years, for the existence of their dominion, it must end in 1826.

Mr. Faber has, I think, sufficiently exposed the mistake of former commentators, in supposing, that the little horn intends the temporal authority of the Popes, and that consequently the saints could not be given into his hands, till he became a temporal Prince. But he has himself mistook, I think, in supposing that they were given into his hands by the grant of Phocas, giving the Pope the title of universal Bishop. He had already been recognized in the code of Justinian, as the head of all the Churches, and the Bishop of Bishops. The truth is, that the saints had long before this been oppressed by the old Roman Beast, who changed not his beastly character by professing

Christianity, but still continued to rule with beastly authority, and hold the saints under his dominion, as long as that dominion lasted in the West: and when that ceased, and the dominion passed over to the new anti-christian powers, the transfer was made, not by any grant or proclamation of man, but by the providence of God, suffering the coming in of this new dominion, and thus giving the saints into the hands of the little horn, "Until a time, and times, and the dividing of time." This was not the beginning of the saints being subjected to beastly domination, nor was it the beginning of the Pope's claiming such a domination for himself over them; but it was the beginning of his being suffered, in the providence of God, to come into the actual exercise of this dominion, in connexion with other anti-christian powers, who, instead of hindering, as the ancient government had done, this exercise of dominion, not only assented to it, but supported it, as securing to them the stability of their own. This is the last form of the fourth and last beastly kingdom that shall be upon the earth, whose duration is limited, also, to 1260 years from its commencement. At the expiration of that time, whenever it may be, their destruction will be inevitable.

2dly. We must look also to the course and succession of the events predicted, to ascertain the progress of their accomplishing; for nothing shall be able to divert this course, or to hinder or delay, even for one moment, the accomplishing of these events, precisely according to the prediction. He who declareth the end from the beginning, hath given the revelation of them to his servants, for their instruction and warning.

I suppose that, according to the explanation I have here given of the order and progress of the prophetic visions, the events disclosed by the opening of the sixth seal, must have begun to be accomplished--(vi. 12.)

The first concussions of that great earthquake have already been felt, and although there may be short intervals of awful stillness, yet the concussions will continue to be renewed, till the total removing of the things that are shaken shall be completed. The thrones and dominions of the earth, both secular and ecclesiastical, have begun to be shrouded in darkness, and covered with blood, and the princes and potentates to fall from their high places, "even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind."

I suppose, also, that of the seven angels which have the seven last plagues, in which is filled up the wrath of God, and which are described as following each other with an awful rapidity in their succession, the first four have already poured out their vials of wrath; and that we may be daily looking for the fifth to begin to take effect, and fill the kingdom of the beast with darkness, and cause them that are attached to it, to gnaw their tongues for pain. And that very soon after this, and perhaps in a measure cotemporaneous with it, the pouring out of the sixth vial will bring on the destruction of the Turkish empire, and open the way for the kings of the east to come in for their portion in the events of the last day. They have long enslaved multitudes of them that have borne the Christian name.

After this there will probably be a general cessation of the nations, for a little season, from the tempests and desolations of war, while the four angels, standing on the four corners of the earth, hold the four winds of the earth, till the servants of the living God shall be sealed in their foreheads....(vii. 1.)

During this calm, the dispersed of Israel will begin to be gathered to the land of their

inheritance, and be brought to the knowledge and acknowledgment of Christ as the true Messiah....(vii. 4.)

True Christians will then generally be convinced, that the hour of God's judgment is come, and there will be a general concurrence among them, and a union of successful efforts to spread the knowledge of the Gospel among the nations....(xiv. 6 and 7.)

And while the servants of the living God are thus separating themselves, and receiving his seal in their foreheads, that they may be distinguished as his servants, the three unclean spirits will be executing their commission, to distinguish also his enemies, and gather the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, with their marshalled hosts, to suffer the vengeance of the King of kings and Lord of lords....(xvi. 13 and 14.)

When these things shall be accomplished, and every thing thus prepared, the calm will be interrupted, and the silence broken by the sounding of the seventh trumpet in an unexpected moment, and the pouring out of the seventh vial, when men have become most confident in their security. The great city will then be divided into three parts.

The cities of the nations will fall.

Great Babylon will be made to drink the cup of the wine of the fierceness of God's wrath.

The Beast and the False Prophet will be taken and cast alive into an endless perdition; and the remnant of their hosts will be slain with the sword of him, that in righteousness doth judge and make war.

Then Satan shall be bound a thousand years, and a seal be put upon him, that he shall deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years shall be fulfilled. And the saints shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years.

### CONCLUSION.

I have now given such an abstract of my Lectures on this great and interesting subject, as will, I hope, make the plan, on which I would explain the Visions of the Revelation, intelligible to my readers. Perhaps a fear of burdening the volume with matter not absolutely necessary to my purpose, may have prevailed to leave some parts but indistinctly explained.—Those things which I found satisfactorily explained in any of the writers on the subject, who are commonly held in high esteem, as Newton, Scott, and Faber, I have passed over,

with only those observations which seemed necessary to show their place, in the plan I would adopt. The last Lecture, as the subject seemed to require it, I have given entire. Some of them, that were confined to the illustration of particular subjects, are wholly omitted.

As they are here given, I beg leave to submit them to the consideration of my Christian Friends, and particularly of my Brethren in the Ministry.—If in my retired situation I have found more leisure, than they usually enjoy, and have had my attention more turned to this particular subject, they will on this account allow me a claim on their attention to what I submit to their consideration. I make no pretensions to any other claim. Of the nature, the greatness, and the extent of the changes I have supposed are predicted, as soon to take place in the religious, the moral, and the political world, I have the more confidence, because I have found so sober and judicious a Commentator as Doct. Scott, speaking of them as unquestionably intended by the prediction.—And since preaching these Lectures, I have acquired some confidence to have them published, by finding in the Appendix to Mr. Faber's second edition of his Dissertation, which I had

not before seen, that both he and Archdeacon Woodhouse are agreed in the leading principle, which induced me to depart from the commonly received opinion, in explaining the Vision of the Seals. In most of the other instances in which I have departed from the general opinion, I have ventured, as far as I know, without the support or countenance of names. And I frankly acknowledge, it is very much for *me* to adventure. But I have not done it hastily, or inconsiderately ; and I trust I have not done impiously.

If my general plan be in any good measure correct, it must involve in it matters, that I confess, I have not confidence at present to state : and that very nearly concern the duty, and the interests of all the true servants of Christ in these days.

I anxiously wait the judgment of my Christian Friends.

THE END.

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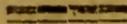
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## ERRATA.

The reader will please to strike out the (—) in the 7th line of  
page 19 ; insert the word *be* before *a* at the close of 7th line of  
page 168, and the word *may* before *eat* in the 12th line of page 204.