THE HARMONY OF HISTORY
WITH
PROPHECY:
An Exposition of the Apocalypse.

BY
Josiah Conder,
Author of "The Literary History of the New Testament," etc. etc.

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PREFACE.

Numerous as are the works which treat of the Scripture Prophecies, there are few complete Expositions of the Apocalypse in the English language; and, before the appearance of the Rev. Mr. Elliott's "Critical and Historical Commentary," there had been no recent publication of any great value to the Biblical student, or sufficiently attractive to redeem the subject from the neglect and distaste with which it had come to be very generally regarded. Since then, the Commentary of the Rev. Moses Stuart has appeared, having for its object to set aside altogether the historical interpretation of the Apocalypse, in favour of the absurd reveries of the German Neologists, yet supplying, by its textual criticism, and by the preliminary disquisitions, an apparatus of considerable value.
Neither of these publications, however, can be thought to render superfluous, a work which aims to exhibit, in a compendious and popular form, "the harmony of History with Prophecy," as illustrated by the interpretation of those predictions which have been fulfilled, up to the present remarkable Era—the Era (as the Writer believes) of the Seventh Vial.

While History is the decipherer of Prophecy, Prophecy is the expositor of History. It has accordingly been the Writer's aim, to furnish, not only an interpretation of the Visions of this wonderful Book, but, at the same time, a rapid retrospect of those great revolutions and leading events which stand out in the annals of the Past, and which, unexplained, wear so mysterious an aspect. Hitherto, the history of Christianity has been "the mystery of God;" a mystery which was not to be completely unravelled till it should be consummated by the events prefigured. That consummation is fast approaching; and we may therefore expect that a clearer light will be thrown upon the page of prophecy, and upon the true philosophy of history as the record of the Divine dispensations.

In the present volume, the reader will observe,
that the historical counterpart to the predictions is given in the form of citations from Gibbon, Robertson, Hallam, Sismondi, and other popular writers, in whose language there will frequently be found a precise adaptation to the Apocalyptic emblems, which is the more striking from being undesigned. There can be no pretext, therefore, for the charge of having unfairly accommodated the narrative to the prediction. Of the forcible evidence supplied by the independent witness of the historian, the reader will judge for himself. It is assuredly a most remarkable circumstance, that, so far as his narrative extends, the pages of Gibbon supply the best commentary upon the Revelation, to the authority and inspiration of which he would have been the last to bear an intentional testimony.

In the general view of the Inspired Book, it will be seen, that the Writer coincides with Mr. Elliott, to whose erudite labours the following pages make frequent reference, and from whose opinions it has always been with reluctance that he has found occasion to dissent. Concurring in the exposition of the Seals, the Trumpets, the Witnesses, and the Vials, contained in the "Hornæ Apocalypticeæ," with some slight modi-
fications, the present Writer adheres to that view of the Ten-horned Beast which has obtained the concurrence of all the more modern expositors, and which Mr. Elliott appears to him to have rashly pronounced one of the most plain as well as most fatal of Protestant expository errors. He has also supplied the singular hiatus of two centuries and a half, occasioned by passing over the interval between the Reformation of the sixteenth century and the European Revolution of the eighteenth; and has shewn, he hopes satisfactorily, that the Vision of the Harvest and the Vintage applies, with chronological exactness, to the tragical sequel of the Reformation in the "religious wars" of a hundred years. He has, moreover, felt impelled to reject, as unauthorized by any sound principle of interpretation, that exposition of the Vision contained in the nineteenth chapter, which has been made the basis of the theory of a personal Advent of Our Lord previously to the Millennium, as well as the literal interpretation of the "First Resurrection."

From any attempt to lift the veil which conceals the Future, by conjectural anticipations, the Writer has conscientiously refrained. The Revelation was, he apprehends, intended to be a
guide to the general expectations of the Church in all ages, and more especially to sustain the faith and patience of the persecuted and oppressed servants of Christ under the protracted conflict, first between Paganism and Christianity, and, subsequently, between the despotic powers of apostate Christendom and the adherents to the primitive Faith. For this purpose, however, it was not necessary that the interpretation should anticipate, but merely that it should keep pace with the events. Such has been most remarkably the case. The earlier portions of the Apocalypse were correctly interpreted by writers who lived at the time of the events prefigured, but who, in attempting to carry further their exposition of its mystic symbols, became lost, and only exposed their ignorance. The Visions which prefigured the wonderful burst of light and development of intellectual and religious life at the era of the Reformation, were not less correctly interpreted by the Saxon, Helvetic, and English Reformers; but they, too, cease to be either authorities or guides, when they attempt to spell out the undeveloped sequel. The remark will equally apply to the learned Expositors of the seventeenth century, who often discover great sagacity in their deductions as to the signs of the times, but
who failed altogether in attempting to expound the Vision of the Seven Vials, to which they were inclined to give, more or less, a retrospective application. When the first French Revolution burst like a thunder-clap upon the startled world, its manifest correspondence to the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, was first recognized by Mr. Bicheno in his "Signs of the Times"; and subsequent writers, differing widely in their political views and anticipations, (among others, Faber, Galloway, and Cuninghame,) concurred in this correct interpretation, which Mr. Elliott may be considered as having, by his masterly illustration of the historical evidence, completely established. Among all thoughtful and devout observers, there has for some years past prevailed a conviction, that the exhausted state of the Turkish Empire corresponded to the judgment of the Sixth Vial, and that the Apocalyptic scheme had advanced to this point in its historical development. And now, the startling and portentous character of the events which have convulsed all Europe, has produced a very general impression, that we are witnessing the predicted effects of the last mystical Vial, poured out upon the political atmosphere. While entertaining a strong assurance that this is a correct
view of the signs of the times, the Writer has nevertheless not presumed to speculate upon even the proximate issue. God has not designed that we should anticipate, even by the aid of His own word, the revelations of His providence. The great outlines of the future are, indeed, discernible in the prophetic page, but the filling up cannot be supplied by mortal intellect. "It is not for" us "to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power."

_Clapham,_

_Dec. 30, 1848._
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THE VISIONS OF JOHN THE APOSTLE:
COMMONLY CALLED
THE APOCALYPSE, OR REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

I. PREFATORY TITLE. Verses 1—3.

The title prefixed to this Divine Book in the Authorized Version, although found in many ancient Greek codices, forms no part of the genuine text. The Book is not, indeed, properly speaking, "the Revelation of John," but "the Revelation of Jesus Christ;" made not by the Apostle, but to him, with a command to transmit it to the churches. More correctly it might be entitled, "The Visions of the Apostle John." The Book of the Prophet Isaiah is entitled, "The Vision of Isaiah, the Son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." So, the prophecy of Obadiah is entitled, "The Vision of Obadiah;" and that of Habakkuk, "The Burden which Habakkuk the Prophet did
see." The appropriate title of the Apocalypse, in corresponding phraseology, would be, "The Visions of John the Apostle, which he saw in the Isle of Patmos in the reign of the Emperor Domitian."

The first three verses of the present text constitute, in fact, a title to the book, setting forth the nature of its contents, and designating its author as that same John who has borne record to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, and to the things of which he was an eyewitness. This would seem to refer to a former work; and, if so, to the Gospel of John; and it accords with what the Apostle himself declares at the opening of his General Epistle: "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you." Some expositors have understood the words as simply referring to the record contained in the book itself, and would interpret them as equivalent to "who has herein testified." But this deprives the designation of all force or distinct purpose. The more natural conclusion is, that the words are intended to distinguish the John referred to as the Evangelical Historian.* They are not a part of the writing of the Apostle, but were doubtless prefixed to the work by an early copyist; together with the benediction pro-

* "That John who had declared and openly published the Gospel, was the servant of Christ to whom the symbols of the Revelation that follows were disclosed." So Stuart interprets the words (vol. ii. p. 10); although, strange to say, he considers it as still open to question, whether the Apostle John is intended.
nounced upon the public reader* and the hearers of the words of the prophecy, who should bear in mind the things written. The reason given for this declaration is, indeed, taken from the language of the Apostle,—“for the time is nigh, or draws near;” that is, the time when the fulfilment of the predictions would have its commencement. And the period to which the opening of the first seal refers, was immediately at hand, dating from the accession of Domitian’s successor, Nerva. The declaration may more especially refer to the warnings specifically addressed to the Seven Churches, and to the sudden visitation with which they are threatened unless they repented. The trials and calamities for which they are admonished to prepare themselves, were shortly to come to pass.

The declaration, then, was true, although not part of the apostolic text; and it corresponds to a similar note of warning in the Gospel of Matthew, “Whoso readeth, let him understand.” (ch. xxiv. 15.)

It forms an additional reason for regarding these verses as a title prefixed by another hand, that the words, “a revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to him,” are not in accordance with Apostolic usage. They seem to have been suggested by the vision in which the Lamb was seen to take the Book out of the hand of Him who sat upon the throne; and what

* The term διηγοντα, refers to a public reader; and the declaration seems to enjoin the public reading of the Apocalypse in the churches.
is added, that, "sending by his angel, he signified it to his servant John," plainly alludes to ch. xxii. 16: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things." In this way, the construction of the title may be accounted for; but a difficulty arises from ascribing this phraseology to St. John himself, which is obviated by considering the first three verses as the prefatory title or introduction of the transcriber.*

II. THE APOSTOLIC SALUTATION AND EXORDIUM.

Verses 4—8.

"John to the Seven Churches which are in Asia." With the Apostolic Salutation to the seven Christian communities to whose custody the Prophecies were to be more especially committed, the inspired writing properly opens. These churches were, in all probability, composed, for the most part, of Jewish believers settled in those great commercial cities; Christian synagogues formed out of Jewish colonies, such as were scattered throughout Asia and the other Roman provinces of the peninsula. To these elect brethren of the Dispersion, St. Peter addressed his Epistles. As it had been arranged between Paul and Barnabas on the one hand, and Peter, James, and John, on the other, that the former

* The nature of this gratuitous difficulty will be seen on referring to Stuart's criticism, by which he endeavours to shew, that the passage implies the dependent state of the Mediator even after his exaltation!
should "go to the heathen," and the latter to the Circumcision (Gal. ii. 9), it may be presumed, that, while the churches founded by St. Paul were chiefly gathered from among the Gentiles, those addressed by St. Peter and St. John were composed of Jewish Christians. In Ephesus, Paul found disciples on his first arrival there; and he commenced his ministry among them by preaching in the synagogue. Afterwards, for two years, he disputed in the school of one Tyrannus; and his converts consisted of both Jews and Greeks. Yet, from his Epistle to the Ephesians it may be gathered, that the church to which he addressed that letter, was mainly composed of Asiatic Greeks, such as had previously been, in contrast with the Jewish nation, "afar off" from God. In so large a metropolis, there would be ample room for a numerous synagogue of Jewish believers distinct from the Pauline church; and the fact, that the Apostle found it necessary to insist so earnestly, that "in Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing," and to deprecate party divisions, proves that the Jewish believers were strongly indisposed to abandon their national distinctions, and to allow of the incorporation of all Christians into one society.

We have no account of St. Paul's having founded churches in any other of the seven cities, although he had probably visited Laodicea, which was on the border of Phrygia, not far from Colosse. Phrygia and the region of Galatia, he repeatedly traversed; but he had been originally restrained by Divine intimation from preaching the word in
Asia (Acts xvi. 6; xviii. 23); of which restriction the most probable explanation is, that Asia was to be evangelized by other Apostles, being filled with Jewish communities; whereas Phrygia and Galatia were peopled almost exclusively by Greeks and other Gentiles.

For what reason these seven churches of Asia were selected as the depositaries of the Divine communication, has been the matter of much curious conjecture. The most natural explanation is, that, being found in seven of the principal and most wealthy cities, they were the seven principal or largest Christian synagogues, and might be considered as representing the entire Christian body in Roman Asia. In addressing them by his servant John, our Lord addressed all; for whoso had ears to hear was commanded to hearken to what the Spirit addressed to these churches. Moreover, these seven churches were to be severally charged with the custody of this Book, in order to secure its preservation and due publicity; for which purpose, seven might seem a competent number.

Of the Eleven Cities of Asia which had once "disputed the honour of dedicating a temple to Tiberius," five contained each a Christian church of sufficient importance to be thus separately addressed. Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamos long contended with each other for the titular primacy of Asia. Sardis had been the metropolis of the Lydian kingdom; and Laodicea, though among the four less wealthy of the Eleven Cities, derived a considerable revenue from its flocks; and its
ancient splendour is attested by its ruins.* Thyatira and Philadelphia, the two farthest inland, and both in Mysia, were also places of considerable trade. We find a female trader in the purple goods manufactured at Thyatira, visiting Philippi, probably upon business, at the time of St. Paul's first journey into Greece. (Acts xvi. 14.) Under the name of Ak-hissar (white-castle), its site is occupied by a respectable Turkish town. Philadelphia, under that of Allah-shehr (corresponding to the Greek word Theopolis), is still a flourishing city. Smyrna alone has preserved both its ancient name and its commercial importance, having succeeded to the maritime trade and consequence of Ephesus. The desolation of that proud city, the worshipper of the goddess Artemis, is complete; and in the words of Gibbon, "the temple of Diana and the church of Mary will equally elude the search of the curious traveller. The circus and three stately theatres of Laodicea are now peopled with wolves and foxes; Sardes is

* Gibbon, ch. ii. "Of these eleven cities, seven or eight are totally destroyed; Hypsae, Tralles, Laodicea, Ilium, Halicarnassus, Miletus, Ephesus, and we may add Sardes. Of the remaining three, Pergamos is a straggling village of two or three thousand inhabitants; Magnesia, under the name of Guzelhissar, a town of some consequence; and Smyrna, a great city peopled by a hundred thousand souls." Ib. note. Guzelhissar, mistaken by Chandler for Magnesia ad Maendarum, represents Tralles. The site of Magnesia has been ascertained to be occupied by Inekbasar. Mod. Trav. Syria, ii. 165. Pergamos is a more considerable place than Gibbon represents, containing a Greek church, an Armenian church, a synagogue, nine or ten mosques, and some 10 or 15,000 inhabitants.
reduced to a miserable village;" Pergamos is little better. "Among the Greek colonies and churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect; a column in a scene of ruins; a pleasing example that the paths of honour and safety may sometimes be the same."*

The phraseology of the Apostolic Salutation is in many respects highly remarkable. The title given to the God and Father of Our Lord, has the grammatical peculiarity of consisting of a series of nominatives following an article in the genitive, (governed by the preposition from,†) and the explanation of this peculiar construction is, that the words, "who is and has been and is to be," are taken together as one indeclinable noun, corresponding to the Hebrew word Jehovah, implying the Self-existent, Pre-existent, and Eternal, and equivalent to the "I am that I am" of Exodus iii, 14. Still more singular is the periphrase which designates the Holy Spirit—"From the Seven Spirits which are before His throne." This expression refers, by anticipation, to the emblematic appearance in a subsequent vision, in which the Apostle beheld "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of

* Gibbon, ch. lxiv. The last remark alludes to the valiant defence which her citizens maintained for four-score years against the Ottomans, and which draws forth the insidious remark from the Historian, "Philadelphia alone has been saved by prophecy or courage." One forgives the infidel's sneer for the value of the admission.

† In some codices, the τῶν after αὐτῶν is wanting, but evidently through an attempt at emendation.
God;" and in order to construe it aright, it must be taken in connexion with the title assumed by Our Lord himself in addressing the church at Sardis: “He who has the seven spirits of God.” It is an ancient opinion, that there is a reference, in this language, to a passage in Isaiah (xi. 2) which prophetically describes the attributes or personal qualities of the Messiah; but it is not very easy to make out seven distinct properties or attributes in that description. The word “spirit” occurs in it only four times; hence, the Jewish Cabbalists assert, that four spirits belong to Messiah. The language of the Prophet is, nevertheless, illustrative of the Jewish modes of expression; and, as the manifold spirit of the prophetic description (whether interpreted as threefold, fourfold, or seven-fold) is but one in nature, and is described as multiform in reference only to its operations and qualities, so, here, the Seven Spirits before the throne are but One Spirit, and are so represented with reference to the Divine attributes. On the day of Pentecost, the descent or presence of the Holy Spirit was symbolized by twelve cloven tongues of flame. Yet, the Apostle Paul tells the Corinthian Church, “there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.” (1 Cor. xii. 4.) And again, in writing to the Ephesians (iv. 4); “There is one body and one Spirit.” The emblem was multiform; the Spirit, one and the same.

The supposition of some commentators, that created spirits, "presence-angels," are here intended, not only receives no countenance from
Scripture, but is plainly and positively anti-scriptural. If the highest creatures could be so associated with the Deity in an act of solemn benediction in the Divine name,—a benediction partaking of the nature of prayer,—what reason could be assigned against the invocation of angels? Is it for a moment to be imagined, that the Beloved Disciple, who, in this very book, has recorded a direct prohibition to pay such worship to angels, could have intended to convey the idea, by the language of his salutation, that grace and peace are to be looked for as coming from the angels that stand in the presence of God? Or would he have countenanced for a moment the doting superstitions of Rabbinical fiction?

The phrase, however, being undoubtedly mystical or figurative, and relating to a symbolical appearance, may be supposed to have some allusion to familiar notions connected with Oriental usage; and in this point of view, some light may be thrown upon it by a passage in the Apocryphal book of Tobit (ch. xii. 15), in which Raphael is made to describe himself as "one of the seven holy angels which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One." If it could be supposed that St. John refers to this passage at all, it would be where, in direct opposition to this lying legend which represents the angels as mediators between God and man, he records the title assumed by our Lord in vision, as "He who has" (indwelling in his own Person) "the seven Spirits of God." It is very possible, however, that both the Apostolic phrase,
"the Seven Spirits before the Throne," and the Rabbinical legend of the Seven Presence-angels, may allude to a council of State, or what we understand by an Administration. The position of the emblematic lamps, before the Throne, which are said to signify the Seven Spirits of God, accords with this idea of a Council standing in immediate relation to the Throne, and, as related to the Throne of Deity, a Divine Executive,—the Administration of the Godhead. In allusion to the customs of earthly kingdoms,* the Holy Spirit is figuratively designated as a Cabinet or Government of Seven. So the Lamb is represented as having seven eyes, emblematic of his all-comprehending rule and providential superintendence. Seven, as a number, was held to denote perfection or completeness; and such would be the idea suggested by the word to a Jewish Christian. What appears mystical and enigmatical to us, there is reason, therefore, to believe, would be readily interpreted by those to whom the Apostolic salutation was addressed.

There is a passage in the prophecies of Zechariah, which might, indeed, furnish the key to the cipher: "Those Seven are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth."† Here, we have the same idea of a Sevenfold Executive Ministry or Administration, the emblem of the Divine Government. Now, when we consider

* See Esther i. 10, 14.
† The vizier is styled in Eastern phraseology, The Eye of the Sovereign.
that the Holy Spirit is represented as proceeding or sent forth from the Father, in the character of a Legate or Minister, and that the kingdom of Christ is identified with the Ministry of the Spirit, there seems to be a peculiar appropriateness in the analogy implied by the figurative phrase so interpreted. And when it is said, that Our Lord has (or possesses) the Seven Spirits of God, the meaning becomes obvious; that the administration of all things is committed to His hands, and that He is invested with the requisite Divine powers and attributes. For, "as there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit," so, "there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." 1 Cor. xii. 4—6.

In the subsequent clause, which describes Our Lord in his mediatorial character by a series of titles, there occurs another apparent grammatical solecism; the words which would naturally be governed by the preposition from, are in the nominative case. As much stress has been laid by learned critics upon these verbal peculiarities, it may be proper to offer an explanation. The German critic Eichhorn, in order to get rid of what he deems a false construction contrary to the analogy of the Greek language, would amend the text by inserting the words, ὃς ἐστιν, who is, which our Translators have supplied in italic, as if they were to be understood. Stuart contends, that this supplement is unnecessary, and that the construction is by no means infrequent. Dr. Bloom-
field adopts the suggestion proposed by the present writer in a literary journal,* that the words may be regarded "as forming a separate clause, in some degree parenthetical, containing, as it were, a proclamation of the divine and sovereign titles of the Messiah." When pointed as a separate sentence, the difficulty disappears. "The faithful Witness-bearer; the First-born of the dead; and the Ruler of the Kings of the earth." The first of these titles corresponds, if it does not allude, to what Our Lord declared of himself to Pilate: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." (John xviii. 37.) So, in other passages of John's Gospel, Our Lord declares: "I am one who bear witness of myself, and the Father who sent me beareth witness of me." "I speak to the world the things which I have heard of Him." "I have not spoken of myself, but the Father who sent me gave me a commandment what I should speak." (John viii. 18, 26; xii. 49.) The second title is found in the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians, "the firstborn from the dead," and answers, in sense, to the equivalent phrase, (1 Cor. xv. 20,) "First-fruits of them who slept." St. Paul connects with the former expression the declaration, "that in all things he might have the pre-eminence;" and, in allusion to the resurrection of the saints in the image of Christ, he says, "that he might be the first-born among many brethren." (Rom. viii. 29.)

That is, as Hooker expresses it, "the leader of the whole army of bodies that shall rise again."* The third title declares Our Lord's supremacy as "King of kings and Lord of lords,"—the "Head of every principality and power." (Col. ii. 10.) Thus does the Apostle bear testimony to Our Lord's threefold character, as Prophet or Teacher of his Church, as the Risen Saviour who died to redeem us by his blood, and as the "Head over all things" or Sovereign Lord; winding it up, (as if animated with this view of the glory of his beloved Master,) with the sublime doxology which ascribes to Him the worship and the glory proper to the Godhead: "To Him who loveth us, and who has cleansed us from our sins with his own blood, and constituted us a royal priesthood† to God, even His Father,—to Him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

The Apostle now, as if preparatory to his immediate subject, introduces the great article of faith and glorious hope of the Church respecting the Second Advent of Our Lord to judge the earth. "Lo! he is coming, surrounded with

* "We nothing doubt but God hath, many ways above the reach of our capacities, exalted that body which it hath pleased Him to make His own, that body wherewith he hath saved the world, that body which hath been and is the root of eternal life; the instrument wherewith Deity worketh, the sacrifice which taketh away sin, the price which hath ransomed souls from death, the leader of the whole army of bodies that shall rise again."—Eccl. Polity. B. v. § 54.

† Either kings and priests, as Rev. v. 10, or, if, the various reading be adopted, "a kingdom, priests unto God," i.e. a "royal priesthood," as Exod. xix. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 5.
THE APOSTOLIC SALUTATION AND EXORDIUM.

the clouds, and every eye shall behold him; and they who pierced him, and all the tribes of the earth shall bewail themselves on account of him. Yea, Amen.” The latter clause is obviously cited from Zech. xii. 10: “They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one who mourneth for his only son.” St. John, in his Gospel, cites the same passage; and in both cases, the version is the same, differing from the Septuagint, and affording a strong presumption of their proceeding from the same hand. In fact, as Stuart remarks, “the circumstance of a reference to the pierced side of the Saviour, mentioned only by John among all the Evangelists, and again distinctly brought to view here, affords stronger ground of presumption, that the same hand was employed in both the passages, than the sameness of translation.” And when we connect with this, the apparent allusion, in the title given to our Lord, to what is recorded only in the same Gospel, as well as the spirit that breathes throughout the sublime exordium, we seem to require no stronger internal evidence that the Revelation was indeed penned by the Beloved Disciple.

The phrase, “coming in (or, rather, with) the clouds,” is supposed to be taken from Dan. vii. 13; and it occurs at Matt. xxiv. 31; (where, also, there is a reference to Zech. xii. 10;) but it may, perhaps, admit of question, whether it is to be understood in a literal or in a metaphorical sense. St. Paul speaks of those who, remaining alive at the coming of Christ, shall “be caught up in the
clouds to meet the Lord in the air," (1 Thess. iv. 17.) Here, the expression is different; "The Lord shall come attended with the clouds." Now, Jude cites the prediction of Enoch, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints;" and St. Paul says, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed with the angels of his power." 2 Thess. i. 7. In Heb. xii. 1, the word "cloud" occurs in a metaphorical sense; "Seeing we are encompassed with so great a cloud (multitude) of witnesses (or confessors.)" May not, then, Our Lord's coming with the clouds refer to the glorious multitudes by whom he will be attended, rather than to the mode of his appearance as descending through the firmamental heavens?

St. John is now about to give an account of the first vision with which he was favoured; but he introduces it abruptly with the words which, as he immediately explains, broke suddenly upon his ears before he beheld, on turning, the glorious form from which they proceeded: "I am the Alpha and the Omega,* saith the Lord, who is, and has been, and is to be, the Omnipotent." In these words, it is remarkable, that the speaker, who is evidently Our Lord himself, assumes the very same title of Deity that, in the Salutation, is appropriated to the Father. If there could be any doubt of this, the repetition of the declaration, not only at ver. 8, but also in the final chapter (ver.

* The words ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος, which are obviously a translation of τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω, are wanting in the best MSS.; and had they been genuine, they would doubtless have had the article prefixed.
18) would decide the point. It is true, that the words, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," which occur in the Received Text, at ver. 11, are wanting in some codices, and are rashly rejected by Stuart; whereas it was evidently these words, uttered in a trumpet-like voice, that led the Apostle to turn to see who spake to him. It is, besides, quite improbable, that the first words addressed to him should be, "What thou beholdest, write." The varying of the declaration, by the introduction of the words, The First and the Last,* proves that they cannot have been interpolated from ver. 8, and denotes that they were repeated by the speaker. At all events, there can be no question, that He who, in the final address to the Apostle, proclaims himself the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, is the same who says also, "Behold, I come quickly," and, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches."†

* These words, δ ἡμών καὶ δ Ἑξαρτός, have the article prefixed, and convey an idea distinct from that implied by τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω, as will be seen on turning to Rev. xxii. 13.
† Rev. xxii. 12, 13, 16.
Vision the First.

THE MESSAGES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

St. John now proceeds to narrate the circumstances under which he was favoured with the heavenly vision. He was in the Isle called Patmos, in the character of a fellow-sufferer with those who were enduring persecution for the sake of the doctrine of God and the testimony of Christ;* which clearly denotes the occasion of his exile, and seems to imply that persecution was raging at that time. Being in an ecstasy or trance, (for such is the meaning of the phrase, "in the spirit," or, under the prophetic inspiration,) on the dominical day, (the day sacred to the Lord,) he heard behind him a great voice as of a trumpet. The appellation here given to the first day of the week occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, although the adjective (κυριακός) rendered 'the Lord's,' is used by St. Paul (1 Cor. xi. 20) in application to the Eucharist; and in both applications, the idea of commemoration is conveyed by

* The import of these expressions is fixed by chap. vi. 9; xii. 11; xx. 4.
the expression. In the Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians, (A.D. 101,) the Lord's day is mentioned under that appellation, and is styled "the queen and prince of all days;"* and Chrysostom (on Psalm cxviii.) says, it was so called because The Lord rose from the dead on that day. A more full and decisive statement of the views and usages of the early Christians, is contained in Eusebius's commentaries on the Psalms; especially in a passage cited by Prof. Stuart from the commentary on Psalm xci. (xcii.): "The Word [Christ], by the new covenant, translated and transferred the feast of the Sabbath to the morning light, and gave us the symbol of true rest, the saving Lord's day, the first day of the light, in which the Saviour obtained the victory over death. . . . On this day, which is the first of the light and of the true Sun, we assemble after an interval of six days, and celebrate holy and spiritual sabbath; even all nations redeemed by him throughout the world; and do these things according to the spiritual law, which were decreed for the priests to do on the sabbath. . . . All things whatever that it was duty to do on the sabbath, these we have transferred to the Lord's day, as more appropriately belonging to it,

* The words of Ignatius are remarkable: "Let us no longer sabbatize, but keep the Lord's day on which our Life arose." (Lardner, iv. 217.) The Lord's day is mentioned under that name by Dionysius of Corinth, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Origen. (Ib. p. 218.) Commodian, a Latin author contemporary with Cyprian, (about A.D. 270,) thus refers to the agape held on that day: (Ib. iii. 134.)

"De die Dominica quid dicis? Si non ante locavit,
Excita de turbâ pauperem, quem ad prandium ducas."
because it has a precedence, and is first in rank, and more honourable than the Jewish sabbath. . . . It is handed down to us, that we should meet together on this day; and it is ordered that we should do those things announced in this Psalm.”*
That the first day of the week was from the beginning so observed by the Church as a day of assembly and worship, is indicated, indeed, by several passages in the New Testament.†

The state of trance into which the Apostle was thrown, appears, from several passages in the Holy Scriptures, to have uniformly attended prophetic visions.‡ These differed from dreams, in which the body and the mind are alike wholly passive, as the trance differs from sleep, resembling more nearly somnambulism, but with this essential difference; that the somnambulist acts as if he were awake, yet has no recollection of his acts on waking, and is not susceptible, while in that state, of external impressions. In a trance, the body is passive and dormant, but the whole mind is consciously active, and retains afterwards the distinct impression of all that has passed. The visions (as in the case of that of Isaiah, ch. vi. and in that of St. Peter, Acts x.) not being produced by external objects, must be carefully distinguished from actual occurrences. When St. Paul saw Our Lord, on his road to Damascus, not only was he broad awake, but the men who were with him witnessed the glorious appearance, and

* Stuart, vol. ii. 40, note.
† Acts ii. 1; xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2.
‡ See Num. xxiv. 16; Ezek. viii. 3; xl. 2; Acts x. 10.
heard the sound of the voice, although the Apostle alone understood the language, and discerned the speaker. This appearance of Our Lord was as real and personal as any of those which are recorded as having taken place previously to the Ascension; and it is accordingly referred to by St. Paul among the evidences of the Resurrection,* which it could not have been, had the appearance been strictly visionary. On several other occasions, the same Apostle mentions The Lord's appearing to him in a vision, when he was in a state of trance; but these visionary appearances are never referred to as instances of his having really and with open eyes beheld Jesus Christ Our Lord, so as to qualify him to be a witness to the cardinal fact of his Resurrection.† The appearances of Our Lord to St. John in the Visions of Patmos, were clearly of the same kind as those vouchsafed to St. Paul at Jerusalem and at Corinth; not personal manifestations, although real Divine communications, in which the instructions were first conveyed by symbols or emblematic representations, as if to produce the more vivid impression, the import being subsequently explained.

When the Apostle John, on hearing himself addressed in a trumpet-like voice, turned to behold the speaker, he saw what at first he could not understand,—a mystical representation of the Son of God as the Head and High Priest of his

* See 1 Cor. xv. 8; ix. 11.
† See "Literary Hist. of the N. Test." pp. 150—154.
Church. In the midst of seven golden lamps, such as were always burning in the Jewish sanctuary, appeared a human form in a pontifical dress, whose head was radiant with the purest light, his eyes like flames of fire or lightning, his countenance as the sun shining in his strength; his feet like glowing brass; and from his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword, symbolical of "the spirit of his mouth,"—as if the breath assumed that shape. Upon his right-hand shone seven stars,—like a circlet, perhaps, of brilliant gems, or clustered like the Pleiades. The effect of this glorious appearance upon the Apostle was similar to that produced upon the ancient prophet, Isaiah, when he saw emblematically represented the glory of Christ:* he fell prostrate with awe and terror. Such is the effect uniformly produced by any supernatural appearance, or by the consciousness of a supernatural presence. On being strengthened and raised up, the Apostle receives an explanation of the vision, and is commissioned to record what he had seen, and to write down what should be dictated to him as the Messages of Christ to the Seven Asiatic churches.

How long the vision lasted, by which he was so powerfully affected, is not stated. There is no reason to suppose that it continued during the delivery of the Divine communication. On the contrary, it seems intimated by the injunction, "Write what thou hast seen" (ver. 19, 20), that it was but a transitory representation, which the

* Comp. Isa. vi.; John xii. 41.
Apostle had ceased to behold when the mystery was explained to him. It may be assumed, that the trance and the vision passed away together, and that what he was commanded to write down, was dictated by the Angel who was sent to signify unto him all these things;* and written down at the time, portion by portion, as customary with the ancient scribes.† That the messages to the churches were dictated audibly to the Apostle, seems to be clearly implied. The reiteration of the direction, "Write," at the commencement of each address, conveys the idea, that St. John was able to take down at the moment what he was commissioned to record. In a subsequent vision, when he was about to write what had been uttered by the seven thunders, he was forbidden by a voice from heaven saying, Write them not;‡

The message to each of the several churches is addressed, To the Angel, or Minister, as the organ of the whole assembly. The title is borrowed from the synagogue, and appears to correspond, in its literal meaning, to the sheliah tshibbor (legatus ecclesia), whose office, according to Ewald, resembled that of a vestry-clerk or secretary, to whom letters intended for the whole congregation would properly be addressed. Upon the precise nature of his office, however, the learned are not

* Comp. Rev. i. 1; xxii. 16.
† See Jer. xxxvi. 4, 17, 18.
‡ Ch. x. 4. Stuart refers to this passage, as showing that the visions were written down at the time; yet, much stress cannot be laid upon it, as it seems to describe part of the symbolic transaction of the vision.
agreed. Mr. Milman adopts the opinion which identifies the angel of the church with the chazan; remarking, that "neither the chazan or angel of the synagogue, (which was a purely ministerial, comparatively a servile office,) nor the heads of the assembly, possessed any peculiar privilege, or were endowed with any official function, as teachers of the people."* It affords a strong confirmation of this opinion, that, in these addresses, no personal direction is given to the angel of the church as sustaining either the character of a teacher or the responsibility of a presiding ruler; which we might have looked for, had the office been of that superior dignity which some have been anxious to ascribe to it. The substance of the address applies to the whole collective body. It was to be read to the congregation, as that which the Holy Spirit spoke to the churches, and to which every one who had ears was called to give heed.

The only plausible objection to this view of the designation, is derived from the emblem of stars, applied to the angels of the seven churches; which has been thought to indicate either an office

* Milman's History of Christianity, book ii. ch. 4; Stuart's Commentary, vol. ii. pp. 55, 6. The latter Writer refers to Schoettgen as giving the best account of the office, and as pointing out some errors and deficiencies of Vitringa; from whom, indeed, Lightfoot also differs. See, for other learned opinions, Coleman's "Church without a Bishop," pp. 21, 157—161. Prof. Neander's fanciful supposition of a reference to "theовый of the Parsees, as a symbolical representation and image of the whole Church," is a curious instance of learned refinement. See also Dr. S. Davidson's Lectures on "The Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament."
of rule and dignity, or the function of a public instructor. But any ministerial office or service in the Christian Church, whatever its precise nature, must be deemed honourable; more especially when the person sustaining it is regarded as the representative of the body; and it is evidently in a representative capacity that the minister of the church is addressed. The leading idea conveyed by the symbol is, however, as Professor Stuart suggests, that those who were represented by the stars, were altogether at the disposal of Him in whose hand they were held. They were not stars set in the firmament, (the emblem of political rulers,) but stars that could be grasped and upheld; implying that these angels were Christ's ministers and servants, and altogether in His hand.

In each of the Seven Epistles, the address to the church is introduced with a declaration of some of the attributes of the Redeemer, indicated by the emblems in the Vision; and in almost every instance, the tenor of the address, and the threat or promise with which it closes, correspond to the attributes described at the commencement. Thus, Our Lord addresses the church at Ephesus as He who holds in his right hand the Seven Stars, and who walks amid the seven golden lamps;* implying His watchful observance of his

* This declaration, apart from the introductory Vision, would have been scarcely intelligible; and the promise with which the Address closes, looks forward to ch. xxii.; showing that the whole Book was to be sent to each of the churches.
churches; and it follows: "I know thy works, thy toil, and thy patient endurance." Inasmuch as these Ephesian believers had declined from their former fervour and from the Spirit of their profession, they are warned that, unless they repented, the Lord would come upon them suddenly, and remove their lamp from its place in the sanctuary; denoting their extinction as a church. This conditional threatening is not to be regarded as an absolute prediction. Yet, the fate of the Ephesian church seems to be a fulfilment of the denunciation.

Ephesus had been more than once attacked by the Goths, before their third naval invasion in the reign of Valerian and Gallienus (A.D. 253), in which the Temple of Diana, "after having risen with increasing splendour from seven repeated misfortunes, was finally burned."* How far the Christians were involved in the common calamity, and whether, as a community, they even survived the visitation, ecclesiastical history does not inform us. That the city recovered some degree of its importance, may, however, be inferred from its having been chosen as the most convenient seat of the third œcumenical council, held in the year 431; in which, after a fierce, tumultuous struggle between the Syrian and Egyptian factions, Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, was condemned and degraded. Eighteen years afterwards, the Second Council of Ephesus, which is branded by the indignant historian as a gang

* Gibbon.
of robbers and assassins, exhibited a similar scene of fanaticism and violence.* This is the last time the name of the city occurs in ecclesiastical annals. It had become a ruinous place when, about A.D. 530, the Emperor Justinian filled Constantinople with its statues, and raised the church of St. Sophia on its columns. Ever since the beginning of the fourteenth century, its site has been completely deserted. Its port is ruined; its streets are overgrown; the partridge is heard in the area of the theatre and of the stadium; and the miserable huts of a few Turkish peasants alone represent the metropolis of Asia.

It is mentioned in commendation of the Ephesian church, that they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans, who are referred to also in the address to the Church at Pergamos. This designation has given rise to conjecture and discussion, both in ancient and in modern times. The patristic traditions, which are vague and conflicting, make them a Gnostic sect, deriving their name from their leader, Nicolas; but respecting the character and even the existence of any such sect, history furnishes no precise information. Some learned writers have conjectured, that, as the Hebrew Balaam may be interpreted "Conqueror of the people," and Nikolaus has a similar etymology, as compounded of νίκος (victory) and λαός (people), the appellation is symbolical, being equivalent to Balaamites, or those who "hold the doctrine of Balaam." (Ch. ii. 14.) That the

* Gibbon, ch. xlvii.
apellation was actually current in the time of St. John, whatever was its origin, as denoting certain false teachers and their followers, there seems, however, no reason to doubt. At the same time, it may be gathered from the address to the congregation at Pergamos, that there was a correspondence between their doctrines and deeds and "the evil counsel of Balaam," (Numb. xxxi. 16,) which seems to have consisted in his advising Balak to invite the people of Israel to join in the idol festivals, as the only means of conquering them by seduction. When we consider how repeatedly the primitive Christians required to be admonished to abstain from partaking of idol sacrifices, that the Apostolic decree (Acts xv. 29) specifically forbade this practice, that St. Paul deemed it necessary to exhort the Corinthians to flee from idolatry, and to take warning from the fate of the ancient Israelites, (1 Cor. x. 7, 8,) and not, by partaking of "the table of demons," "provoke the Lord to jealousy;" also, that St. John closes his general epistle with a similar exhortation, "Keep yourselves from idols;" we cannot but infer, that there was great danger of falling into the snare of accepting such invitations from the heathen. We cannot be surprised, then, to find that there were teachers who defended and encouraged the compliance as harmless.* Even in our own time, so lightly has the sin of partaking of idol-meats been thought of, that, in Calcutta, British Christians have not scrupled

* See 1 Cor. x. 19, 20.
to attend the idol-festivals of opulent Hindoos, thereby sanctioning at once the idolatry and all its attendant impurities.

Taking this view of the sin of the Nicolaitans, there seems a beautiful appropriateness in the promise given to the victor over temptation: he who abstains from partaking of forbidden indulgences, and abhors the idol banquet, shall partake of the fruit of immortality in the paradise of God.

In the opening of the address to the church at Smyrna, Our Lord proclaims himself in the character of the Eternal One—the First and the Last, who died and rose again: that is, at once the Word who was from the beginning, and the Lamb of God who laid down his life and took it again. This declaration suitably introduces an address predicting the persecution and suffering to which the poor Christians at Smyrna were to be exposed, and which concludes with the promise that the faithful martyr should also rise again, as his Lord has risen, having nothing to fear, unharmed from the after-death which awaits the wicked. "Fear not," said Our Lord to his disciples, "those who can kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matt. x. 28.) It would appear that the sufferings which were to come upon this Christian congregation originated in false accusations brought against them by Jewish zealots, to whom the honourable appellation of Jews is denied,*

* Comp. John viii. 33, 39; Rom. ii. 17; 2 Cor. xi. 22; Phil. iii. 5.
but who are appropriately styled, a synagogue of Satan, the Accuser of the Brethren. Vitringa supposes, that the name "Jews" is here to be taken mystically, and that they belonged to the Christian body, false professors; and adopting this view, Mr. Elliott argues, that, from actual Jews, the Christians could have little to fear. But it is observable, that it was not as persecutors, but as false accusers before the heathen magistrates, that these Jews discovered their malignity, which militates against the supposition of their belonging to the Christian body. Eusebius has supplied an historical comment upon this passage, in a touching narrative of what actually occurred to the church at Smyrna under the reign of Antoninus Pius.* When Polycarp was apprehended and brought before the pro-consul at Smyrna, the Jews were the most furious of all the multitude in demanding his condemnation; and when, after he was sentenced to death, the mob set about gathering fuel to burn him, the Jews discovered particular alacrity in running to provide fuel; and inasmuch as the burning failed, and the blessed martyr was transfixed with weapons, the Jews besought the magistrates that his body might not be given up to the Christians. As Polycarp suffered in extreme old age, (for he is related to have said to the pro-consul, "Eighty and six years have I now served Christ," ) he must have been, at the time St. John wrote, a member, if not, as tradition reports,†

* Stuart, ii. 69.  
† Lardner, ii. 97.
the chief presbyter or bishop of the church at Smyrna. Irenæus mentions, that, Marcion once meeting Polycarp, and asking him, "Do you own me?" Polycarp replied, "I own you to be the first-born of Satan."* The words of Our Lord in this epistle may have been present to his recollection when he used that expression. Marcion appeared as an open heretic about the year 180. He was a native of Pontus, the son of a bishop, and a follower of the heretic Cerdon, but not, so far as appears, a Jew: nor is there anything that connects him with the Church at Smyrna, although he may have had disciples there.

The prediction that they would suffer affliction "ten days," can scarcely be taken literally; and even if we understand days as put for years, it is not necessary to construe it as denoting specifically ten years. The numbers eight and ten appear to have been used in the sense of "a few;"† and thus, "ten days" may intend an indeterminate, but brief period. The persecution which arose in the reign of Antoninus Pius, and extended into that of his successor, Marcus Aurelius, did, indeed, last for more than ten years. Polycarp suffered, according to some authorities, about A.D. 148: others fix it in A.D. 167. Justin Martyr suffered at Rome in 165; Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, in 168; and the fury of persecution appears to have been stayed only by the accession of Commodus in 180.

The address to the church at Pergamos is in

* Lardner, ii. 95. † See Gen. xxiv. 55; 1 Pet. iii. 20.
the name of Him who bears the sharp two-edged sword, which, in the vision, was seen proceeding from his mouth. The import of the emblem corresponds to the phrase, the "spirit of his mouth,"
2 Thess. ii. 8; denoting "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."* It appropriately introduces the threatening which follows: "I will fight against them with the sword of my mouth;" indicating the power by which His word pierces at once to the conscience, and lays bare the heart, making the most obdurate sinner tremble.

The city of Pergamos was particularly given to idolatry, and was distinguished for its bitter enmity to Christians. Escolapius, in particular, was worshipped there with great honour; which would seem to indicate that the city was resorted to for health, on account either of its salubrity or of its medicinal waters.† By its being the very seat or throne of Satan, the Accuser, we are probably to understand, not so much the impiety and immorality, as the malignity and fanaticism of its inhabitants. Satan reigned there, by exciting a spirit of hatred and persecution against the followers of Christ. Hence, Antipas is honourably mentioned as having suffered martyrdom for his faithful testimony during a time of persecution which had tried the constancy of the church. Of this honoured martyr, we have no

* Comp. Eph. vi. 17; Heb. iv. 12.
† The union of the sacerdotal function with the healing art in the priests of Escolapius, was borrowed from the Egyptians. See Mod. Trav. Greece, vol. ii. p. 118.
other authentic record, but merely a fabulous legend. The persecution referred to might have a local origin; and the phrase, "in those days," seems to denote that it was not very recent. It can scarcely refer, therefore, to the general persecution under Domitian, which did not commence till about A.D. 94, or 95; although it might possibly be connected with the Neronic persecution, which ceased only with the death of the tyrant in 68, and which extended its effects to the provinces.* These Pergamensic Christians had stood the test of persecution; but they had not all been proof against the seductive influence of those Gnostical sophists who taught the harmlessness of attending the idol feasts, and "allured through the lusts of the flesh those who were clean escaped from those who live in error,"—"turning the grace of Our God into lasciviousness." (2 Pet. ii. 18; Jude 4.) The rise of such false teachers, "separatists, sensual, destitute of the Spirit," had been most clearly predicted. (Jude 19.) And now the congregation at Pergamos are warned, that, unless they repent, inasmuch as such practices implicated the whole body that suffered them, The Lord would suddenly visit them with spiritual judgments, in such a way as should strike terror into these offenders.

The promise to the victor over these temptations, is twofold; first, that he shall partake of the stored manna, laid up in the heavenly temple; that is to say, the bread of heaven, the

food of angels (Psa. lxxviii. 24; cv. 40); symbolizing the joys of the future world; and, secondly, that he shall have given to him a white stone inscribed with a new name, known only to the individual who receives one. This evidently alludes to some ancient custom, but different explanations have been suggested. Some expositors have supposed the allusion to be to the Greek custom of throwing white stones into an urn in token of acquittal, and black stones to signify the condemnation of the party accused. But this cannot be referred to, inasmuch as here the stone is given to the victor. A more probable opinion is that of Lowman, Doddridge, and Grotius, which explains it as referring to the tessera given to the victor in the Olympic games, as a warrant for receiving the prize, and on which was inscribed the reward he was to obtain from his native city. A third opinion (that of Dr. Ward, Heinrichs, and Professor Lee) explains it by the tesserae hospitalitatis given to guests, entitling them to whatever they might ask for. This white stone would thus secure admission to the heavenly feast. Professor Stuart, again, supposes the expression to denote a resplendent or pellucid precious stone, as a diamond, inscribed with the name of the Saviour; to be worn, like the inscribed frontlet of gold on the mitre of the high-priest, on the diadems of those who are made priests and kings to God. But the new name is evidently not a name of Christ, but one given to the person receiving the token as a mark of honour; a secret token of Divine
favour, not to be divulged till the great day of inauguration. Gems and signets have often been bestowed upon their friends and favourites by princes, as signs of regard, and as entitling them to whatever they might request, on producing the royal token. Whether the allusion is to such a custom or to the white stone given to guests at a festival, the meaning designed to be conveyed is, a personal assurance of Divine acceptance and approval.

The fourth address, To the minister of the church at Thyatira, opens with a reference to the mystical appearance of Our Lord in the Vision; His eyes of flame denoting His all-penetrating knowledge as the searcher of hearts, and His feet of glowing or shining brass (a figure applied by Hesiod to Hercules) being emblematic of glorious might and of strength to trample upon all his enemies. This primitive church is commended as having made some advancement in piety, and in the practical Christian graces. Nevertheless, they were chargeable with having given some countenance to the impure heresies of the Gnostic sect. The same sinful conformity to idolatrous practices is evidently alluded to, that has been before referred to as the doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans; but here, the seducer of the servants of Christ is designated, under the name of Jezebel, as a false prophetess, in allusion to the fatal influence exerted over Ahab, king of Israel, by his queen, (1 Kings xvi. 2,) which led him to serve Baal, and build an altar to him in Samaria. It is said, (1 Kings xxii. 25,) "Whom
Jezebel his wife stirred up (or incited), and he did very abominably in following idols according to all things as did the Amorites." But there is no reason to believe that he forsook the worship of Jehovah: like Jeroboam and others, he attempted to combine idolatry with the worship of the only true God. It is not probable, that any female heresiarch is referred to as having personal influence over those of Thyatira who joined in the idol festivals; but we may well suppose, that mixed marriages with the heathen, like that of Ahab with the daughter of the king of the Zidonians, were one cause of the prevalence of so gross a compromise of the morality of the Gospel on the part of professed Christians. In accordance with the language of the Old Testament, this flagrant attempt to establish an "agreement of the temple of God with idols," of Christ with Belial, (2 Cor. vi. 16,) is described as spiritual adultery; (for so we must interpret what is said of the doctrine of the false prophetess;) while the practical results corresponded but too closely to the impurity of the teaching. The figure is kept up in the threatening, that the harlot and her lovers should be stretched upon a bed of sickness and suffering. The infliction of deadly disease or pestilence was to be the punishment which should ensue, unless they repented. In like manner, the Corinthian Christians appear to have been judicially visited. "For this cause," says St. Paul, referring to a gross abuse that had crept into the church, "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." in death. (1 Cor. xi. 30.) The delivering
up of the impenitent offender to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, (1 Cor. v. 5,) probably refers to the same ordained penal result, whether a miraculous infliction or otherwise. Here, it is implied, that the disease would so find out the offender as to afford a proof that He who sent it is the searcher of hearts, the detector of all secret iniquity, and the righteous judge.

There is another remarkable expression relating to these Gnostic doctrines,—"the depths they speak of," which are really "depths of Satan," i.e. Satanic mysteries.* Irenæus, referring to the Gnostics, says: "Qui profundi Bythi adinvenisses se dicant"; and again, "Profunda Dei adinvenisses se dicentes." And Tertullian thus characterises some of the same sect: "Si bona fide quæras, concreto vultu, suspenso supercilio, Altum est, aiunt."†

It appears from 1 Cor. viii. 1, that, even in St. Paul's time, there were some among the Corinthians who took their stand upon their superior knowledge, in maintaining the harmlessness and consequent lawfulness of eating meats that had been offered to idols, inasmuch as an idol had no real existence. And they were "puffed up" by their assumed attainments in knowledge, and presumed upon their superiority to the mass of Christians, as giving them greater license. St. Paul speaks of the "deep things" (or depths) "of God," and the "hidden wisdom" (1 Cor. ii.); borrowing, probably, the very language of those who pretended to a profounder wisdom and to a knowledge

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* Mysteria quae dicunt, revera Satanae.—Ewald.
† In Stuart, vol. ii. p. 83.
of the esoteric doctrines of philosophy, the mysteries communicated only to the "perfect;" and he contrasts with the "wisdom of this world," that which can be attained only by "the spiritual man," under the teaching of the Spirit of God. Our Lord here declares, that those who were happily ignorant of these Satanic doctrines, not being initiated into such mysteries, but "simple concerning evil" (Rom. xvi. 19), should have no other burden or infliction laid upon them; which seems to denote an exemption from persecution or heavy trial: only they are exhorted to hold fast their profession of the faith, in expectation of The Lord's second coming. The promise to the victor who shall persevere to the end, is that of sharing in the predicted triumph of Christ over His enemies and His kingly rule, in language corresponding to the prophecy in the second Psalm. This was fulfilled, in some degree at all events, by the overthrow of paganism which realized the predictions of the Sixth Seal, and the consequent exaltation of Christians to temporal power and dignity. Its ultimate fulfilment is reserved for the heavenly reign.*

It is added, "I will give to him the morning star." This is usually explained as equivalent to, "I will give him to shine with radiance like that of the morning star;" as it is said in Dan. xii. 3: "They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." So also, Matt. xiii. 49: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their

* Compare, for similar promises, Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 29, 30; 2 Tim. ii. 12: also, 1 Cor. xv. 24—28.
Father." Here, however, there seems to be an allusion to the custom of bestowing diamonds and sparkling gems upon royal favourites. To be in possession of remarkable jewels of this description, has been deemed one of the most valuable prerogatives of royalty; and wars have been waged for the sake of obtaining them. Sir Robert Ker Porter describes the appearance of the Persian Shah on a state occasion, as "one blaze of jewels which literally dazzled the sight." His tiara was composed of thickly set diamonds, pearls, rubies, and emeralds, so exquisitely disposed as to form a mixture of the most beautiful colours in the brilliant light reflected from the surface. His vesture was of gold tissue nearly covered with a similar disposition of jewellery. "But, for splendour, nothing could exceed the broad bracelets round his arms, and the belt which encircled his waist: they actually blazed like fire when the rays of the sun met them. The jewelled band on the right arm was called, 'the mountain of light,' and that on the left, 'the sea of light.'"* Sir John Malcolm describes the king, on another occasion, as clad in white robes covered with jewels of an extraordinary size; "and their splendour, from his being seated where the rays of the sun played upon them, was so dazzling, that it was impossible to distinguish the minute parts which combined to give such amazing brilliancy to his whole figure."† The Persian Court has also its

* Mod. Trav. Persia, ii. 208, 9.
† Ib. p. 213. These descriptions of Oriental magnificence may serve to illustrate the emblematic descriptions of the resplendent appearance of the Son of God.
orders, the insignia of which, as in those of European knighthood, are stars of jewellery. This usage is stated to have been borrowed from the Court of Constantinople. It is, however, probably of remote antiquity. As the highest mark of favour which a sovereign can confer, is a star of knighthood, may we not suppose that there is an allusion to this usage in the promise to bestow upon him who shall overcome, "the morning star"? It is as if Our Lord had said, I will invest him with heavenly radiance as much surpassing all earthly glories, as the jewellery of monarchs is excelled by the brightness of the star of the morning.

In the fifth address, To the minister of the church at Sardis, Our Lord proclaims his Divine prerogatives as having the seven spirits of God, symbolized by the seven lamps before the throne, and the seven stars. By the latter emblem, it is implied, that the affairs of His churches are in His hands; that its ministers are but His servants, and at His disposal. By the former expression must be understood, Our Lord's supreme authority in heaven, as the administrator of the Divine counsels, or as having at his disposal all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The striking language of St. Paul in reference to spiritual gifts, (1 Cor. xii. 3—6,) may illustrate the import of the declaration: "There are diversities of gifts, but it is the same Spirit; and there are diversities of administrations (or ministerial functions), but it is the same Lord; and there are diversities of powers, but it is the same God who works all things by means of all."
In this judicial character, Our Lord declares, that he found the congregation at Sardis to have sunk into a state of formalism which had little more of Christianity than the name. Spiritual life was at so low an ebb in this community, that, unless they could be roused to repentance and watchfulness, what remained of piety among them would soon be extinguished; and then, sudden judgments would come upon them. There were yet a few righteous “even in Sardis,” for whose sakes they were spared; and these should stand approved as the faithful followers of their Lord. The language of the promise made to him who should overcome, corresponds to the judicial tenor of the address. To be invested with white robes, denotes the public justification of the saints (Rev. xix. 8); and what follows implies that, while many names would be expunged from the register of life as having forfeited the rights of the heavenly citizenship, theirs should stand, and Christ would attest their claim in the Great Day.

The sixth address, To the minister of the church at Philadelphia, is distinguished by its containing nothing of a minatory character, the state of that congregation being more satisfactory than that of any other of the seven Christian communities. The titles assumed by Our Lord are accordingly adapted to assure them of His faithfulness to His word, and of His power to perform what He had promised. “The Holy One” is unquestionably a title of Deity.* “He who is True,”

* See Hos. xi. 9; Hab. iii. 3.
is also a Divine designation,* but is specifically attributed to the Son of God,† as the Revealer of the Father's will. The phrase, "Who holds the key of David," &c. receives illustration from Isa. xxii. 22, which shews it to have been in proverbial use as denoting the office of a royal chamberlain. This, in Oriental countries, implies a high political authority, involving unlimited control over the royal family and household, with the power of admission or exclusion.‡ In accordance with this language, Our Lord declares, that he had set open a door before the Philadelphian church, which no one had power to close. This would seem to intend the privilege of access at all times to the Divine presence; or it may be interpreted, agreeably to what follows, as an open door of escape from trouble and persecution. The expression, "an open door," occurs elsewhere in the sense of an enlarged sphere of labour (1 Cor. xv. 9; 2 Cor. ii. 12), or of the removal of impediments to usefulness (Col. iv. 8). But the opening of "the door of faith to the Gentiles," (Acts xiv. 27,) obviously implies admission into the Christian Church, and "access to the Father." And so here, it is more natural to understand it, being the language of a Divine promise, in the sense of freedom of access, or of the right of ingress and egress, including the power to admit others to their communion. Taken

* Exod. xxxiv. 6; Deut. xxxii. 4; Psa. xxxi. 5; lvii. 10; c. 5; cxlvi. 6.
† John i. 14; xiv. 6; 1 John v. 20; Rev. vi. 10; xix. 11.
‡ So, Heb. iii. 6, we read, "Christ as a Son over his own house."
in this sense, it may also imply the promise of an increase. This assurance was given to them, because, although they were politically or numerically feeble, they had nevertheless preserved the purity of the Christian doctrine, and had stedfastly maintained the profession of the faith amidst the surrounding declension. There were some at Philadelphia who arrogated a superiority over them;—pretended Jews, as in the church at Smyrna. False professors have been supposed to be intended; yet, there seems no sufficient reason for rejecting the literal meaning: they were such as boasted of being of the Jewish stock, and deemed themselves holier on that account; they did not, however, belong to the spiritual Israel, the "true Circumcision," the synagogue of Christ, but were of Satan's synagogue; and it is declared, that they should be brought to do homage to the faithful servants of Christ, and to recognize their being the objects of His special favour. It is highly probable, that this was literally fulfilled in the time of trial that is predicted as then impending; when, if the wealthy Jews were more especially the objects of persecution, while the little band of true Christians were Divinely preserved, these their former despisers and enemies might come to be indebted to them for safety or subsistence, and be literally reduced to a servile condition.* The persecution under the Antonines, between A.D. 160 and A.D. 180, may be specifically referred to. Our Lord's coming speedily, indicates the sud-

* Comp. Isa. xlix. 23; lx. 14.
denness with which the trial should come upon the churches. It is the language of warning: Be on your guard, lest any one turn you aside, and so rob you of the reward of fidelity, the heavenly prize—Μηδὲς ῥμᾶς καταβραβεῦτω.*

The promise to the victor, corresponds to the title assumed by Our Lord as holding the key of David: “He shall be a pillar in the Temple of my God.” It is said of Eliakim (Isa. xxii. 12), “I will fasten him as a nail (or tent-pin) in a sure place;† and he shall be for a glorious throne (or seat of honour).” The idea conveyed by these figurative expressions is that of a fixture, something built into the structure, and yielding support. So James, Peter, and John are spoken of as reputed pillars of the church at Jerusalem. (Gal. ii. 9.) And the same expression, where it occurs in 1 Tim. iii. 15, is considered by an ancient writer ‡ as having reference to Timothy. The passage would accordingly read:—“That thou mayest know how to conduct thyself in the family of God, which is the church of the living God, as a pillar and stay of the truth.” Here, what follows, clearly indicates the import of the figure, (the copulative having, as elsewhere, the force of ἵνα, “so that,”)—“I will so fix him that he shall never be removed from his place in the temple.” If we consider this exegetical clause

* Col. ii. 18.
† So Ezra ix. 8: “Grace has been shewed from the Lord our God, to give us a nail in his holy place.”
as a parenthesis, what is said of the inscription, may be properly regarded as carrying on the metaphor. Inscribed upon the pillar shall be the name of Jehovah, the name of the City of God, and the new name of the Lord Jesus, (see ch. xix. 11,) "King of kings and Lord of lords." Thus, the victor is represented as a triumphal pillar, upon which is recorded the name of the Deity to whom it is erected, of the city to which the conqueror belonged, and of the new title assumed by him in commemoration of the victory. But what is implied as regards the believer? That he shall be acknowledged as consecrated to God; that he belongs to God; that he is a citizen of the new Jerusalem, and shall be a partaker of The Saviour's conquests.

The seventh and last address is To the Minister of the church at Laodicea. Our Lord now proclaims Himself as "The Amen," — i. e. the Truth (2 Cor. i. 20), or the True One; which is explained by the following words — "The Faithful and True Witness (or Testifier);" and, as " the Prince (or Head) of the Creation of God." By these titles are implied His sovereign claim to implicit belief and obedience. This community, it appears from what follows, had lapsed into a state of heartless, pharisaic formalism, of proud self-sufficiency and secularity of spirit, more hopeless than even utter apathy or open enmity. The figure by which Our Lord intimates his displeasure against them, has probably a local allusion to the tepid waters with which the site of Laodicea abounded. In such a climate, cold water is
esteemed one of the most refreshing luxuries, while hot-water baths are a favourite indulgence; but tepid water is not fit either for the table or for the bath, and, to the palate of an Oriental, must be particularly nauseous. Hence, water neither cold nor hot would denote good for nothing. That the phrase was in proverbial use, may be inferred from its being adopted in such a connexion; and to the Laodiceans, if understood as alluding to the temperature of their own waters, it would have a graphic appropriateness and force.* The state of mind which rendered these Christians at Laodicea obnoxious to so severe a rebuke, is afterwards more distinctly explained. They were at ease and well satisfied with their moral condition and spiritual attainments; yet, they were really poor in respect to true faith; (which St. Peter describes as more precious than gold, 1 Ep. i. 7;)—unprovided with the only investiture in which they could stand approved, the true bridal garment, and therefore exposed to shame; and blind to their real character and to the excellence of spiritual things. The remedy for this state of poverty, defilement, and ignorance was to be

* Pococke, speaking of the neighbouring waters of Hierapolis, opposite Laodicea, says: "The warm waters here are the greatest natural curiosities in Asia. They are only tepid; have the taste of the Pyrmont waters, but are not so strong; and must have in them a great quantity of sulphur. They do not drink them, though I could not perceive either salt or vitriol in the taste of them to make them unwholesome. The waters of Laodicea, though drinkable, have a petrifying quality, and originate in similar mineral springs."—Mod. Trav. Asia Minor, ii. p. 150.
sought at the hands of Christ their Lord, who, because He had not as yet utterly cast them off, rebuked them in love, to lead them to repentance. Our Lord represents Himself as addressing His gracious offer of friendship personally to each individual, as if going the round of the whole church, and knocking at the door of each, in order to ascertain whether he would indeed receive Him as a guest. The figure recalls the parable in the xxvth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew: "The King shall say to those on the left hand, I was a stranger, and ye took me not in." Here, it is promised, that, with those who recognized his voice and welcomed Him, He would condescend to hold such familiar intercourse as is enjoyed at a dinner or banquet. So Our Lord promised his disciples (John xiv. 23), "My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him." The whole address is crowned with the sublime promise, that he who should come off conqueror, should share in the Mediatorial triumph and reign of Christ, even as He had taken possession of the Throne of Deity as One with the Father.* This language is highly remarkable as distinguishing between the throne of Christ, upon which He will associate himself with his saints, and the throne of the Father, upon which Our Lord represents Himself as having taken His seat: agreeably to the declaration, Heb. i. 3, "When He had by Himself expiated our sins, He sat down on the right

* Compare John xvii. 21—23.
hand of The Majesty on high." While the saints reign with Christ, Christ alone reigns with God.

The question has been raised, whether each of the Seven Epistles was separately transmitted to the church to which it was addressed. It seems strange that any doubt should exist upon this point. When it is considered, that the entire Book itself is inscribed, in the opening Salutation, to the Seven Churches,—that the lessons addressed to each congregation really concerned all, as being mutually interested in each other's welfare and fate,—and further, that the titles assumed by Our Lord in addressing them severally, allude to, and receive explanation from, the preceding vision, as well as relate also to those which follow,—there can be no room for doubt, that the whole series of addresses claims to be viewed as composing one Encyclical Letter to the Churches; and not to those of Asia only, but to the Church Universal; for the proclamation is subjoined to each portion, "Whoso hath ears to hear, let him hearken."

It may be proper to notice the fantastic supposition of the learned Vitringa and some other Apocalyptic commentators, which ascribes to the Seven Epistles a symbolical and mystical meaning, as prefigurative of the successive stages and fortunes of the Christian Church from St. John's day to the consummation of all things. This hypothesis, besides being wholly unauthorized by any intimation of such prospective meaning in the sacred text, lies open to the grave objection of confounding the typical with the prophetical.
These seven congregations would, upon the supposition, have been types of a future state of things, yet of no archetypal perfection; foreshadowing nothing more excellent than the figure. Nor is it possible for learned ingenuity to make out any plausible correspondence between these ecclesiastical sketches and any seven chronologically successive phases of Christendom. The schemes of those writers who have attempted it, differ so widely as to shew that they are purely arbitrary and fanciful.* By mystical glosses of this description, an enigmatic character has been thrown over the plain and unequivocal declarations of the Divine oracles, and the interpretation of prophecy is made to assume an air of utter uncertainty. It is remarkable, that those expositors who convert the historical into the typical, the practical into the mystical, are generally found equally prone to give to the mystical a literal meaning.

* Thus, while Vitrinæ makes the Epistle to Pergamos prefigurative of the state of the Christian Church from the Diocletian persecution to A.D. 800, Mr. Girdlestone considers it as applicable to the period from 311 to 1500. The Epistle to Sardis presages, according to the former, the period from A.D. 1200 to the Reformation; according to the latter, from 1685 to 1800! The seventh period, Vitrinæ dates from 1700; Girdlestone considers it as still future; and Dr. James Bennet, who advocates this theory, thinks, that, to the seventh period, neither beginning nor end can be assigned. Mr. Fleming briefly adverts to this typical interpretation of the Seven Epistles as untenable; referring, for a demonstration of his proposition, to his learned master, Witsius's "Diatribe de septem Epistolârum Apocalyppticarum sensu Historico et Prophetico," published in his "Miscellanea Sacra."
It has been urged, that, as the scope or design of the Revelation was to shew the things that were to come to pass, these Epistles cannot be viewed as merely historical. They are, in truth, not more historical than they are prophetical: they are hortatory and admonitory. They do, however, not prefigure, but announce what was future,—the impending trials that were to come upon the churches, and their issue; and they have received, in the fate of those churches, an exact historical fulfilment. The theory which ascribes to them a further mystical and prefigurative import, demands rejection as an unauthorized addition to the prophecies of this Book.
Vision the Second.

THE FIRST SIX SEALS.

What interval elapsed between the conclusion of the first Divine communication made to the Apostle, and the commencement of the Second Vision, does not appear. The expression, "after these things," denotes simply, that the former Vision had been brought to a close. St. John was probably employed in meditating upon what had been revealed to him, when, looking up, he beheld what seemed to be a door or gate opened in the firmament,* and the same trumpet-toned voice that he had heard in the first Vision, called him to ascend and enter the glorious court into which the gate seemed to lead. Immediately, he becameentranced. It is not stated, that he underwent any bodily transportation: it might be that, like St. Paul, when caught up to the third heaven, whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell. As, however, the scene which he proceeds to describe is emblematic, there is no reason to suppose that the representation was

* Comp. Ezek. i. 1; Matt. iii. 16.
otherwise than visionary, exhibited to the eye of his mind, and requiring no change of place. He was transported, then, we conclude, in spirit, not in bodily presence, to a scene of which the central object that first fixed his gaze, was a throne "high and lifted up,"* upon which was seated a human form, whose glistening and beautiful aspect resembled precious stones of white and carnation hue.† Over the throne, forming as it were a canopy, was a rainbow, which had the effect of emerald.‡ In a semi-circle, on either hand of the throne, but, we may suppose, beneath it, were ranged four-and-twenty venerable forms, clothed in white robes, and wearing on their heads golden coronets; signifying that they were royal priests. These seem to correspond to the heads of the four-and-twenty priestly families, "governors of the sanctuary and of the house of God," to whom David assigned the service of the Temple.§ The whole representation

* Comp. Isa. vi. 1; Ezek. i. 26.
† The jasper has been supposed to be diamond; the sardine was of carnation hue.
‡ The celebrated takhti-tauus, or peacock-throne of the Shah of Persia, brought from Delhi as a trophy by Nadir Shah, is thus described by Sir Gore Ouseley. "The golden throne seemed studded at the sides with precious stones of every possible tint; and the back resembled a sun or glory, of which the radiation was imitated by diamonds, garnets, and rubies. Of such also were composed the two birds which give name to the throne, one perched on each of its enamelled shoulders." Mod. Trav. Persia, ii. p. 212.
§ Comp. 1 Chron. xxiv. 3—19; Ezek. viii. 16; xi. 1; Luke i. 5.
is borrowed from the course and arrangements of the earthly sanctuary. Before the throne were seven lamps burning, answering to the seven-branched candelabrum, which are said to represent the Seven Spirits of God; that is, (as explained under chap. i. 14; iii. 1,) the emblem of the Divine superintendence. Beneath the throne was a floor or pavement of crystal, answering to the crystalline firmament in the vision of Ezekiel.* In front of the throne, and round it, were seen four complex animal forms, full of eyes, which studded the six wings that covered their bodies. In like manner, in the visions of Ezekiel, the four living creatures had their bodies covered with their wings; but the emblematic eyes appear to have been set upon the wheels which they animated or impelled, as in Milton's imitation of the passage:

"Forth rushed with whirlwind sound
The chariot of Paternal Deity,
Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel undrawn,
Itself instinct with spirit, but conveyed
By four cherubic shapes: four faces each
Had wondrous; as with stars, their bodies all
And wings were set with eyes; with eyes the wheels
Of beryl, and careering fires between;
Over their heads a crystal firmament,
Whereon a sapphire throne, inlaid with pure
Amber, and colours of the showery arch."

Par. Lost, vi. 749—759.

The import of the complicated emblem is plain; the eyes implying constant vigilance, the wings activity and swiftness, two of the distinguishing

* Ezek. i. 22.
attributes of spirit. Each of the four living creatures in the Apocalyptic vision, is described as having a different face, while, in Ezekiel's vision, each had four faces; a difference which shews that St. John did not copy his representation from the Hebrew prophet, but described the appearance actually presented to himself. In other respects also, the emblematic representations vary. In Ezekiel's vision,

"the fourfold-visaged four
Distinct with eyes,"

bear up and guide the fiery chariot of the Almighty; and they are described as appearing to be made of fire, and darting with the velocity of lightning. There can be no doubt that the ministry of the angelic orders is signified under this emblematic form. Thus, we read in Psalm xviii. 10, "He rode upon a cherub, and did fly; yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind." And at Psalm civ. 3, 4, "Who maketh the clouds his chariot; who walketh upon the wings of the wind; who maketh His angels spirits, His ministers a flaming fire." In both passages, the awful phenomena of nature seem to be employed as symbols of the agency of "those ministers of His that do His pleasure." Like the Egyptian sphinx, which, according to Clemens Alexandrinus, symbolized the union of strength and wisdom, the cherub may be regarded as a chimerical combination of two or more animal forms intended to express certain qualities or powers;* but, with this material distinction, that,

* See Hengstenberg's Egypt, p. 155.
whereas the sphinx was a royal emblem, designating not qualities only, but the king as the possessor of those attributes, or, when placed at the entrance of a temple, the union of those properties in the deity to whom the temple was dedicated, the cherub of the Jewish tabernacle and temple seems to have been designed to symbolize qualities attributable to those glorious hosts who excel in strength as well as in knowledge, in swiftness as well as in power, but certainly not the Divine attributes or any object of worship.

Unquestionably, the four emblems must have been familiar signs of ideas. From the earliest times, indeed, animals have been selected both as personal and as national emblems. Thus, in Gen. xlix., "Judah is a lion's whelp;" Issachar, "a strong ass;" Dan, "a serpent;" Naphtali, "a hind let loose;" Benjamin, "a wolf." In Deut. xxxiii., Joseph is compared to a young bullock with the horns of a reem or buffalo; Dan, to a lion's whelp; and of Gad, it is said, "he dwelleth as a lion." These figurative expressions give countenance to the supposition, that the ensign or banner (nails) of the standards of the tribes of Israel, "the ensign of their father's house," (Numb. ii. 2,) was an animal symbol. There is a Rabbinical tradition, though of disputable antiquity, that the lion, the ox, the human face, and the eagle, were the devices on the four grand standards of Israel, borne by the four tribes who occupied the outermost posts of the encamped host.*

* "Animantibus illis composita erant ex quatuor praeclentium"
If this could be authenticated, it would place beyond all doubt the true meaning of the complex emblem. In the prophecies of Daniel, the two-horned ram is explained as the emblem of the king of Media and Grecia, (chap. viii. 20,) and the fierce goat as that of the king of Grecia and Macedonia. A goat is said, indeed, to have been the emblem on the Macedonian standard. In a preceding vision, a winged lion rampant is the symbol of the Babylonian empire; a tusked bear, of the Median; a four-headed winged leopard, of the Macedonian; a ten-horned beast, whose form is not described, with iron teeth and hoofs, of the Roman. By Ezekiel, the kings of Babylon and Egypt are represented under the figure of two eagles (Ezek. xvii.); and by Isaiah, Cyrus is prophesied of under the same emblem. All these instances serve to shew how ancient and universal has been the symbolical language of heraldry. But the heathen went a step further, and, in representing Divine attributes under these emblems, became chargeable with “changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to that of corruptible man, and to birds, and quadrupeds,

animalium, Hominis, Aquila, Bovis, et Leonis speciebus, quarum figure etiam in quatuor vexillis primariis Israelitarum quondam expressasuisse tradunt Hebræi: Dixerunt majores nostri, quod in vexillo Reubenis expressa fuerat forma hominis . . . in vexillo Juda leonis . . . in vexillo Ephraimi bovis . . . in vexillo Danis aquila; ita ut exhiberint formam cheruborum quas vidit Ezechiel.” (Aben Ezra.) Michaelis’s Notes prefixed to Ezechiel. Meade cites the same passage from Aben Ezra; and Bp. Newton adopts the same traditional explanation.
and creeping things." It was the sin of Aaron in making the golden calf, and of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that they formed emblematic representations of Jehovah, which was expressly forbidden. That graven images were not in themselves unlawful, is evident, both from the Brazen Serpent made by Divine command, and from the cherubs, and lions, and oxen of the tabernacle; but they were altogether prohibited as symbols of the Divine attributes, or as emblems of anything to be worshipped. Such a mode of worship, even when the True God was the professed object, was idolatrous.

It is therefore important to observe, that the emblematic forms alike of the Jewish sanctuary and of the prophetic visions, are symbolical, not of the Object of worship, but of the functions, and service, and character of worshippers.* Such was obviously the import of the attitude of the cherubim of glory, shadowing the mercy-seat. In Isaiah's remarkable vision of the Divine glory, the winged seraphim or burning ones are not, like the cherubim, of complex form, and do not support the throne, but stand around it: the idea is that of liturgical spirits. In the vision of Ezekiel, it is not a throne, but a chariot, that is the seat of Deity; and the attendants, therefore, are represented as upholding and impelling the wheels of the crystal platform which sustained the sapphire seat of the Divine glory. The idea thereby conveyed is that of ministerial agency, rather than of

* One important exception, the emblematic representation of Our Lord, will be noticed hereafter.
adoration and worship; and there seems to be an allusion to the martial pomp of eastern monarchs. When the living creatures moved, the Prophet heard the voice of their wings as the noise of great waters, and as the voice of a host, and a noise of a great rushing. This description suggests the idea of a multitude of heavenly attendants; to which corresponds the remarkable language of the Psalmist, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place." (Psa. lxviii. 17.) Of the four faces of the living creatures, those of the lion and the eagle are expressive of military qualities, on which account those animals were selected as royal and martial emblems. Thus, Saul and Jonathan, in David's Lamentation over them, are described as "swifter than eagles, stronger than lions." It is reasonable to suppose, that the allegorical emblems of the prophetic visions would be accommodated to the familiar notions of the Jews. Thus, the heavenly hosts are described under military figures, as consisting of chariots and cavalry. It were not less absurd to conceive of angels with actual wings, than of heavenly existences four-faced, monstrous, and yoked to a wheeled car. Assuming, however, the complex cherubim to be described with reference to such previous notions, their four-faces, looking every way, would naturally suggest the idea of "an army with banners." Upon the supposition that these were the emblems of the four great Israelitish standards, their combination in a fourfold form would indi-
cate that each of these living creatures stood for a numerical multitude. And while this explanation solves the enigma of the complex symbol, it enhances the sublimity of the allegorical description. To the vast numbers of the angelic hosts, we have frequent allusions in the Holy Scriptures. "Thinkest thou," said Our Lord to Peter, "that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. xxvi. 53.) Any description of the angelic ministry would manifestly lack one material element of sublimity, that did not include a reference to their collective numbers as well as to their glorious attributes.

In the Apocalyptic Vision, however, the four living creatures represent neither liturgical seraphim nor the angelic hosts, but the redeemed spirits of the just, who are engaged in worship before the Throne. The throne is fixed; there are no wheels; nor are the living creatures described as either impelling or supporting it. They are not agents, but worshippers constantly serving God. They are not each four-faced, because they do not each represent a complete number, but each a fourth division of the host of the spiritual Israel encamped, as it were, around the Throne, as the tribes were formed in four divisions around the tabernacle in the centre, which contained the symbol of the Divine Majesty. Together, the four living creatures represent the whole nation of the redeemed. The emblematic eyes are explained as intimating that they need not, as military guards, to be
relieved, or, as courses of priests, to take their turn of service, for they require no rest day or night.* And as often as they give glory to God upon any fresh occasion of praise, (such as are afterwards mentioned in the Vision,) the four-and-twenty crowned elders take part with the general host; indicating their close connexion with them. They may be regarded, indeed, as corresponding to the Levitical tribe, who were not included in the twelve tribes of the Israelitish camp, but had their station in the centre, immediately round the tabernacle.† These elders have thus their seats round about the throne; and without them, the allegorical representation would have been incomplete. Not that we are to imagine them intended to denote any orders of the Christian Church; for the character which they sustain of royal priests, is subsequently ascribed to the whole number of the redeemed. They seem introduced into the Vision for two reasons; first, as necessary to the completeness of the imagery, and, secondly, as more distinctly

* The question has been absurdly raised, Of what use were eyes in a position which precludes the idea of seeing with them? As well might it be asked, Of what use were wings which no animal could fly with? In neither case is it intended to represent a physical reality, but only to express, as by a hieroglyphic sign, an idea of a quality.

† So Bishop Newton explains the scene as alluding to the encampment of the children of Israel in the wilderness, Numb. i. 11. "Next to the tabernacle encamped the priests and Levites, and next to the throne were four-and-twenty elders sitting, answering to the princes of the four-and-twenty courses of the Jewish priests."
expressing the character attaching to the entire glorious company of happy worshippers. It is observable, that, in this part of the Vision, the glory is ascribed to Jehovah as the Creator, and Sovereign, and Final End of all things.

Having described the emblematic scene which met his entranced sight, the Apostle proceeds to narrate the mystic transaction which was exhibited to him. On the right hand of the glorious throned form, he beheld a scroll written upon on both sides, and sealed up with seven seals, which divided it into seven portions. As these seals were visible, we may conclude them to have been attached, not to the surface of the parchment, but to the strings that fastened down each portion of the roll. Proclamation was now made by a mighty angel, "Who is worthy (or qualified) to open the volume by breaking the seals?" No answer being returned, the Apostle (who describes himself as acting in the Vision much as we seem to ourselves to take part in transactions of which we dream*) felt intense grief that no one could be found competent to open the mysterious volume;—till one of the elders bade him not to weep, since the Lion of the tribe of Judah, of the house of David, had obtained the honour of unsealing it. On looking again towards the Throne, he beheld an emblematic representation of this exalted Personage; not, however, in the form of a lion, answering to his royal title, but in that of a lamb; appearing, not as a victor, but as a victim; for the Lamb

* Comp. Dan. vii. 15.
bore the marks of having been slain in sacrifice. Yet, grafted upon this emblem, were the symbols of Divine attributes,—seven horns, denoting almighty power, and seven eyes, signifying the all-seeing providence of God, or the administration of the Divine government;—for such is the import of the explanation which is added: "which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." This mystic form, standing in the midst of the Throne, appeared to take up the volume or scroll which was in the right hand of the Throned One. Upon which, a chorus of praise burst forth from the whole assembly of worshippers.

A frivolous question has been raised, how, in the emblematic form described, the horns and the eyes were disposed; and it has been asked, how the Lamb could take up the scroll. To any one who had formed a correct conception of the design and nature of emblems, such points could not present any difficulties. In heraldry, we are accustomed to meet with the most impossible combinations of animal forms, without attaching to them any notion of the monstrous or the incongruous. We see represented, for instance, a crowned lion bearing a sword, and a lamb passant bearing a standard; we have two-headed eagles, griffins, and wyverns, animals with human heads, and similar hieroglyphs. Who would think of referring it to a painter to dispose according to the rules of his art, the emblems of a coat of arms or the supporters of a shield? It is perfectly immaterial, whether, in the Vision, the seven horns appeared to rise singly, or to branch, and whether the seven
eyes appeared to be inserted in the forehead, or otherwise disposed: the significance of the symbols is not affected by the mode of arranging them. A lamb might be as appropriately represented taking up a scroll, as bearing a standard: if the idea conveyed by the symbolic action is not unworthy of the subject, the action cannot be unsuitable.

The scene itself is in conformity to the ceremonial of Oriental courts; and the description given by an eye-witness of the ceremony of presentation at the court of the Persian Shah, will strikingly illustrate both the scenery and the action of the emblematic Vision. "The throne" (we are told) "was a platform of pure white marble, raised a few steps from the ground, and carpeted with shawls and cloth of gold. . . . While the Great King was approaching the throne, the whole assembly continued bowing their heads to the ground till he had taken his place. A dead silence then ensued, the whole presenting a most magnificent, and, indeed, awful appearance; the stillness being so profound among so vast a concourse, that the slightest rustling of the trees was heard, and the softest trickling of the water from the fountains into the canals. . . . In the midst of this solemn stillness, while all eyes were fixed on the bright object before them, which sat radiant and immovable, a sort of volley of words bursting at one impulse from the mouths of the moollahs and astrologers, made me start. This strange outcry was a kind of heraldic enumeration of the Great King's titles, dominions, and glorious
acts; with an appropriate panegyric on his courage, liberality, and extended power. When this was ended, all heads still bowing to the ground, and the air had ceased to vibrate with the sound, there was a pause for about half a minute, and then His Majesty spoke. The effect was even more startling than the sudden bursting forth of the moollahs; for this was like a voice from the tombs, so deep, so hollow, and, at the same time, so penetratingly loud."

This picture of the abject homage yielded to an Oriental despot, conveys a more vivid idea of the intense sentiment of reverential awe and admiration which is represented as characterizing the heavenly worship, than, perhaps, any other earthly spectacle is adapted to suggest. How closely, indeed, such profound homage borders upon the adoration which belongs to the Deity alone, may be inferred from the fact, that it was for accepting such worship that Herod the King was smitten by the angel of the Lord with an incurable and fatal disease.

But what, it may be inquired, was the instruction intended to be conveyed to the Apostle, and, through him, to the Church, by this emblematic scene? As the First Vision exhibited the glory of the Risen and Ascended Saviour in the character of Head over all things to his Church, and was introductory to the messages to the Seven

† Acts xii. 22, 23.
Churches; so, this Second Vision seems to have had for its design, to represent the mediatorial glory of The Lamb of God in the character of the Revealer of the secret counsels of Deity, introductory to the prophetic disclosures which follow.

The absolute knowledge of the future is repeatedly, in Scripture, ascribed to Jehovah as a prerogative of the Godhead. "Secret things belong unto God."* When, shortly before His ascension, Our Lord was asked by his disciples, whether he was then about to restore the kingdom to Israel, His answer was: "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which The Father hath put in His own power."† He had before told them, that, of the day and hour of His second advent, no one knew, not even the angels of heaven, "but my Father only."‡ St. Peter represents the angels as intently desiring to understand the yet undisclosed mysteries of the scheme of Redemption. Conformably to these declarations, the Sealed Volume of Futurity is represented, in the Vision, as in the hand of Him who sat upon the Throne, (which must be understood of The Father,) and not even the highest angel was able to loose the seals, (that is, to reveal what was known to God alone,) but the Son only, as sharing in the Divine counsels, and administering The Father's will. An essential distinction is thus implied between the Mediator who is in the midst of the Throne, and every created being. It was He who shewed by

* Deut. xxix. 29; Gen. xl. 8; Isa. xlvi. 3—6; Dan. ii. 28, 47.
† Acts i. 7.
‡ Matt. xxiv. 36.
His angel the things which were to befall His Church and the world.* The whole heavenly company are represented as awaiting in eager expectation the disclosures in which they were so deeply concerned. And when The Lamb of God, having ascended to the right hand of The Father, presents, as the great High-priest, His own sacrifice, and claims His ineffable reward, the hosts of heavenly worshippers break forth into a new song of praise and adoration, of which The Lamb is Himself the theme: "Worthy art Thou to receive and to open the volume, for Thou wert slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."† No language could more unequivocally and emphatically set forth the full participation of The Son of God in the attributes and prerogatives of Deity, as both essentially and ministerially One with Him who sitteth upon the Throne of Heaven.

But further. The disclosure of future things to any of the servants of God, is not only an exercise of the Divine Prerogative, but is also a mark of special favour. Thus, to Daniel, as "greatly beloved,"‡ the angel was sent to explain the vision, and to show what was "noted in the Scripture of truth." So, to Abraham, and to Joseph, it was as a mark of condescension and distinguishing favour, that God revealed what was about to take place.§ Our Lord told His disciples, that He treated them as friends, not as servants, in making known to them the things He had heard of The

* Rev. xxii. 16. † Rev. v. 9. ‡ Dan. x. 11, 19. § Gen. xviii. 17; xli. 39.
Father.* That the Disciple whom Jesus loved, should have been selected as the depositary and medium of these more ample and wonderful disclosures, is in strict harmony with the general rule of the Divine procedure.

While the symbolic representation so unequivocally ascribes to Our Lord the attributes of Deity, it as distinctly intimates, that it was in consequence of the atonement he had offered on earth, that he had prevailed to open the mystic volume. The emblem as well as the title of "The Lamb," obviously refers to His mediatorial character and His propitiatory sacrifice. "Therefore doth my Father love me," said Our Lord, "because I lay down my life, that I might take it again."† And so St. Paul declares, that it was because Christ Jesus became "obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross," that "God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that, at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."‡ The Lamb's having prevailed to open the book, is represented as the reward of His having died to redeem His people to God by His blood: "Thou art worthy to take the book, because Thou wert slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and Thou hast made us unto our God kings

* John xv. 15. † John x. 17. ‡ Phil. ii. 9, 10.
and priests."* Thus, the cardinal truth which has justly been styled the central point and distinguishing tenet of Christianity, the doctrine of the Atonement, is here broadly presented to view in a manner which admits of no controversy,—as a fact which calls forth the rapturous praise and adoration of all the heavenly world. The scene, indeed, is visionary and symbolical: the harps are a symbol of the praises of those who employed them, as the censers are of "the prayers of saints." We are constantly reminded, that what St. John beheld in vision, was not an actual, but an emblematic scene. In no other way could heavenly realities be conveyed to mortal understanding, or future things be exhibited as present. But, if this book is indeed a revelation from God, as all that it predicts was always certain, so, all that it exhibits through the medium of symbolical representation must be absolutely, though not literally true. It is not, for instance, a literal fact, that Our Lord ever assumed the appearance of a Lamb, or that living creatures of complex shape, having harps and censers, lead the worship before the Throne. But the real import of the visionary scene is actual fact; that the praises and worship of the redeemed host of heaven are con-

* A various reading, adopted as the true one in recent critical editions, exhibits a change of person in the second clause: "And thou hast made them kings and priests unto God, and they shall reign over the earth." Stuart suggests, that this may be taken as a response to the first clause; and it would extend the application to the whole number of the redeemed,—on earth as well as in heaven.
tinually presented to Him "who, being the brightness of The Father's glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself expiated our sins, sat down on the right hand of The Majesty on high."*

It has already been noticed, that the manner in which the acclamations of the heavenly court are described as bursting forth, is in accordance with Oriental usage. The song is begun by the redeemed host,—the four living creatures and the elders: it is responded to by an innumerable company of angels, forming as it were the outer circle. "The offering of such an ascription to the Redeemer," as Professor Stuart justly remarks, "is an expression of the highest adoration which language can designate."† "The meaning is, that Christ is worthy to receive honour, and glory, (or praise,) and blessing, as ascribed to Him and proffered to Him by His creatures." After this, a general chorus is, as it were, echoed back from

* Heb. i. 3.

† "What have we here? A Doxology in which all heaven unite, framed so as to be made the most significant possible by comprising the number seven, and applied directly to The Lamb, in the same manner as the same doxology is applied to God in Rev. vii. 12. What else could the sacred writer expect, but that equal glory and honour should be paid to both by his readers? If not, he has done the utmost in his power to lead them into a mistake." "Well does Ewald say: 'Angelorum . . . conclamatio, augustam et vere divinam Messiae tanti numinis majestatem praconiiis justis prosequens.' And Eichhorn: 'Excurrit in laudes Messiae, diversam cum Deo majestatem et imperium habentis.'" Stuart, vol. ii. 135, 6.
every part of the universe, Jehovah and The Lamb being joined in the same doxology. As the act of adoration commenced with the living creatures and the elders, so, they give the final response, Amen, and prostrate themselves before the Eternal Throne.

After the song of praise had ceased, The Lamb appeared in the Vision to loose one of the seven seals, so as to allow of the unrolling of a portion of the scroll; and the Apostle was summoned by a voice proceeding from one of the living creatures, to draw near and behold what was inscribed upon it. Instead of writing, he beheld an emblem,—a white horse, upon which sat a crowned personage holding a bow, and riding forth as a conqueror. Upon the second seal being loosed, a voice from the second living creature summoned the Apostle to look, and there was seen the same emblem of the horse,—but its colour was changed to a fiery red; and its rider bore a great sword, to denote a period of civil war and mutual slaughter. On the opening of the third sealed portion of the scroll, again there was seen a horse, but its colour was black, and its rider held a balance, the emblem of justice; and, in explanation of the emblem, a voice from the midst of the four living creatures proclaimed a fixed price for wheat and barley, and commanded, that no extortion should be practised with regard to oil and wine.* On the opening of the fourth seal, the horse was seen of a livid hue,

* So Elliott renders μὴ ἀδικος. Mede also, "Ne sic injustus." So Junius, and Arthur Dent. Elliott, i. 151.
and his rider was Death or Pestilence, followed by the Grave; and it was intimated, (either by what was written under the emblem or by oral communication to the Apostle,) that power was given to this terrific agency to destroy with the sword, with famine, with pestilence, and with wild beasts, over a fourth part of the land.

In each of these several representations, the principal subject is the horse, the other features of the emblem being accessories. It is not said, that the Apostle beheld a horseman, but, a horse which had a rider; and the difference between the two modes of expression is significant. Had the horse alone been exhibited, it would at once have been interpreted as the emblem of some nation or empire; like the Macedonian goat or the winged lion of Assyria. As little difficulty would there have been in determining what power was symbolised by it. A horse is, in Scripture, emblematic of military power;* and it was particularly adapted to signify the Roman nation, inasmuch as the war-horse was sacred to Mars, and was one of the ancient Roman standards. It appears also as an emblem upon some of the ancient Roman coins; and in Imperial times, a horse with a crowned rider occurs upon some medals.† The learned Dr. Henry More, in his "Alphabet of Prophetic Iconisms," cites several passages from ancient writers to show, that "horses are the symbols of the conditions of their riders, or of the people

* Exod. xv. 21; Jer. li. 21; Ezek. xvi. 6; Hag. ii. 22; Zech. ix. 10.
† Elliott, vol. i. p. 122.
over which they are set, who are the beast they ride upon. Which will facilitate," he adds, "the understanding of the visions of the Four Horses in the Apocalypse, whose riders are easily conceived to be commanders, who are properly emperors, and what is signified in the horses to respect either the Empire or the Emperors themselves."*

At all events, a similar and accordant interpretation of the emblem common to the four seals, is obviously required; and if the horse be symbolical of a state or people, then, the different colour of the horse in the successive seals, will unequivocally denote the condition of the body politic at the periods indicated, while the riders will be symbolical of the characteristic agents or agencies by which that condition had been instrumentally caused.

Here, however, expositors have stumbled at the very threshold of the prophetic portion of the Visions; some ascribing a personal character to

* More's Works, p. 243. The learned writer can scarcely mean to say, that the riders may be symbols of emperors, which would be to make personifications symbolical of individuals. But he correctly interprets the emblem of the horse. It may possibly strike some readers as a difficulty, that, as the Fourth Beast of Daniel unquestionably symbolises the Roman Empire, it should here be designated by so different an emblem. But to this objection it may be a sufficient answer, that, while the Macedonian Empire was clearly intended by the four-headed leopard, the rough goat is also the emblem of "the king of Grecia." By the more composite emblem, an empire, in all its geographical extent, seems to be intended. The war-horse is the symbol of a military power or people.
the emblematic horseman in the first Seal, such as it is impossible to affix to the rider of the black horse or of the livid horse in the third and fourth; others, by making the horse to signify the church in the first seal, and the civil state in the subsequent ones; others, again, by making the horse a mere subsidiary feature, which, if supposable in the first symbol, is clearly inadmissible in the third and fourth. Some expositors of note, because Our Lord is subsequently represented as appearing on a white horse at the head of the heavenly armies, have been misled into interpreting the crowned rider on the white horse as Christ himself,* overlooking the essential difference be-

* This is a very ancient error. Irenæus interprets the white horse and its rider as signifying Christ born to victory. Victorinus, the earliest extant commentator on the Apocalypse, of the triumphant progress of the Gospel from the Ascension. He is followed by Andreas, who also applies it to the apostolic era; and by Anselm, A.D. 1145, whose views exhibit the earliest "church-scheme of the Apocalyptic Seals." So, Joachim Abbas, towards the close of the same century, makes the white horse the primitive Church; the red horse, the Roman army; the black horse, the Arian clergy; the pale horse, the Saracens. The erroneous interpretation of the first horseman is adopted by Bede, Bullinger, and Bale. Brightman (A.D. 1600) regarded it as symbolical of the triumph of Christ's truth. He is followed by Mede, Grotius, and Vitringa, whose interpretation of the Seals as prophetic of the state of the Church, has been adopted, with various modifications, by Woodhouse, Cunningham, and Bickersteth. See Hist. of Apocal. Interpretation, in Elliott, vol. iv. App. Bishop Newton (1758) pointed out the impropriety and inconsistency of understanding the first Seal of Christ and the Christian religion, and the next three seals of successive revolutions in the Roman empire; but he has fallen into an opposite error in applying the
tween the two symbolical representations; the one exhibiting simply the imperial wreath and emblematic bow; the other, the eyes of flame, the many crowns, and the sword proceeding from the mouth, which are expressive of the attributes of Deity. It would be impossible, indeed, to reconcile with Scriptural usage or propriety the application of the emblem of a war-horse to the Christian Church, as denoting its peaceful and flourishing state, or that of a warrior to the moral conquests of Christianity. The horse, if it has any specific meaning, must denote a military power, and of course a heathen nation, and cannot designate an ecclesiastical condition, or the successive phases of the Church. That interpretation of the first four Seals which makes them prophetic of the state of religion, or of the external fortunes of the Christian body, must therefore, in spite of its antiquity, be rejected as both unnatural and incongruous, contrary to Scriptural analogy, and involving insuperable difficulties and inconsistencies.

Equally inadmissible, not to say absurd, are those arbitrary schemes of interpretation which make the four horsemen to represent mere ab-

first Seal to Vespasian and Titus. A recent Commentator (Mr. Lord) has attempted to lay down "laws of symbolic representation," which would require us to give a mystical meaning to the most obvious symbol. Military emblems cannot represent, according to his theory, historic events or personages, but analogous agencies of a moral or ecclesiastical nature! That is to say, the emblems represent, not things, but metaphors; or what they mean, represents something else by analogy! A truly wonderful discovery!
stractions; such as four religious systems,—Christianity, Mohammedism, Popery, and Infidelity;* or, Christianity, War, Famine, and Pestilence;† or, the four great empires of Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Rome;‡ of which it is enough to say, that they violate Chronology as much as they offend against every correct principle of prophetic interpretation. Still stronger language of reprobation might be applied to the fanciful attempts of some modern writers to apply the emblems to obscure events in Jewish history. Thus, Wetstein makes the victor horseman in the first Seal, Artabanus, king of the Parthians, who smote the Jews in Babylon with great slaughter; the red horse, the assassins and robbers of Judea in the times of Felix and Festus; the black horse, the famine under Claudius; the pale horse, the pestilence which followed upon famine and pillage. Herder affirms the conqueror with the bow to be Aretas, the Arabian king who defeated Herod; the red horse to denote civil discord among the Jews; following Wetstein in his explanation of the third and fourth Seals. It is lamentable to find Professor Stuart mentioning with respect interpretations which seem almost adapted to throw ridicule upon the Apocalypse as a Divine prophecy, while rejecting, almost with contempt, the only rational historical application of which the Vision is susceptible.

Dismissing these idle reveries, let us recur to the design of the Divine communication as

* Keith. † Victorinus, &c. ‡ Foxe the Martyrologist, and Faber.
made to the favoured Apostle. He was caught up to heaven in vision, that he might have shown to him the things which should hereafter take place, and which were as yet hidden in the unrevealed purpose of God. This must be understood of great events; nor is it possible to dissociate the idea of historical occurrences from that of political changes affecting the state of society at large. The general character of those events to which the Church had to look forward, had been already obscurely pre-intimated by Apostolic prophecy; and the visions of St. John are but the filling up, as it were, of the outline traced by the pen of St. Paul.* The portentous event which was interposed between the Apostolic age and the Day of Christ was, the Apostacy and the manifestation of the Man of Sin, the son of perdition, whose coming was to be after the working of Satan. But something stood in the way of that event, and prevented the development of the mystery of iniquity; and this required to be first taken out of the way. The removal of this obstruction, whatever it was, must, therefore, have been the antecedent and proximate event which believers had to look for. The primitive Christians knew what this obstruction was; they are assumed to be generally aware of its nature; but, as the Apostle Paul has maintained a significant reserve in describing it, we are left to gather by inference what they must have been distinctly informed of. Interpreting the prediction by the event, we are warranted, however,

* 2 Thess. ii. 3—12.
in concluding, that whatever had the effect of restraining or preventing the manifestation of the great Apostacy, (and it must have been something already existing in the time of St. Paul,) was the hinderer or hinderance alluded to.* It is an opinion of very early date, that the Pagan Roman Empire was referred to by St. Paul in this expression; † and if so, there were obvious reasons for his not being more explicit. The Roman civil power operated as a restraint upon the corrupt tendencies already at work in the Christian Church, both by the direct persecutions which checked the growth of dissensions and heresies, and which were recognised by the pious as the just and merciful chastisements of Heaven, and by precluding that incorporation of political and spiritual power which subsequently changed the whole frame of Christianity. So general was the belief among the primitive Christians, that what hindered the rise of the "Man of Sin" was the Roman Empire, that they prayed for its peace and welfare, as knowing that, when that empire should be dissolved, Anti-Christ would be revealed. Nor

* τὸ κατεχον . . . δ κατεχων.
† Tertullian, in commenting upon 2 Thess. ii., says, "Quis nisi Romanus status; cujus abscessio, in decem reges dispersa, Anti-Christum superducet." So, Chrysostom, in his Homily iv. on Thess. ii., makes the Roman Empire to be the hinderance to Anti-Christ's manifestation. And Jerome, adopting the same view, adds, that St. Paul did not mention this, for fear of stirring up persecution against the infant Christian church. Elliott, i. 204, 365. Augustine thought that the Roman Empire might be meant, but confessed his own ignorance in the matter
has any other exposition of the remarkable prediction in St. Paul's Epistle to the Thessalonians been proposed, having the slightest degree of plausibility attaching to it.

What, then, but those political events which brought on the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, could be the subject of an emblematic revelation of the things which were first to take place? To an Apostle conversant with the prophetic records of Daniel, who knew that, of the four Wild Beasts seen in vision, three had passed away, and the fourth yet remained to be slain,—what but the Roman Empire could suggest itself as intended by that martial emblem, the horse, under four successive phases? For it is manifest, that the first four Seals are closely related as a series; and the iteration of the voice, "Come and see," on the opening of each, indicates, that they form a fourfold emblem of the same object under different aspects and in successive conditions. It is not,

Calvin, indeed, while referring with respect to Chrysostom's opinion, proposes a different explanation; interpreting the hindrance, of the necessity that the Gospel should first be universally proclaimed; but in this, he will not be thought to have displayed his usual judiciousness. It will be sufficient to mention, as specimens of erroneous and perverse mis-interpretations of the prophecy, Vitringa's notion, that the predicted apostacy took place between the time of Nero and that of Trajan; Whitby's opinion, that the Man of Sin was the Jewish nation; Hammond's, that Simon Magnus is referred to; the blunder of Grotius, who supposes Caius Caligula to be meant; and that of Wetstein, who refers it to Titus and the Flavian house. Most of these absurd theories have originated in a wish to screen the Papal apostacy from the Apostolic sentence.
then, because the emblematic representations might not possibly apply to anything else than those changes in the Roman Empire which led to its removal out of the way, that we conclude the interpretation which would naturally occur to a Christian of the Apostolic age to be the true one, but because predictions of coming events, antecedent to the great Apostacy, must have related to the condition of society in the Roman world. And this general conclusion would commend itself as reasonable, even if we were unable to decipher the emblems so as to ascertain their precise application.

When, however, we come to examine how far the emblems correspond to the historical facts which, according to this view, they must have been designed to represent, we find so strongly marked and exact an agreement in every particular, as admits of no reasonable explanation on any other supposition than that the historical interpretation is the true one. Thus, in the rider upon the white horse, the laurel crown or wreath, which was worn by the Roman emperors till the assumption of the Oriental diadem by Diocletian, is the obvious symbol of the Imperial power; while the bow, the distinctive badge of the Cretan nation, receives its only probable explanation from the remarkable fact, that the successor of Domitian, and the founder of the dynasty which reigned during the fortunate period of the first Seal, was of Cretan extraction.* As Trajan was adopted by

*Aurelius Victor, in his Life of Domitian, notices the re-
Nerva, Adrian by Trajan, Antoninus by Adrian, and Aurelius by Antoninus, (each taking the name of his predecessor in virtue of his adoption,) this whole line of emperors, according to the Roman law, were reckoned as of Nerva's house. This triumphant rider is not to be considered, therefore, as representing an individual, but as designating that dynasty under which the Roman Empire attained the zenith of its prosperity. And the bow, which limits the application of the emblem to the Cretan dynasty, marks with precision the chronological period embraced by the first Seal, extending to the accession of Commodus, A.D. 180.

The peculiar badge of the rider upon the red horse was the sword committed to him, by which the internal peace that had hitherto prevailed, was taken from the earth. This symbol, besides generally designating the military profession, or the military power as distinct from the supreme civil authority, is susceptible of a more specific and appropriate application to the function and power of the Prætorian Prefect, who, on his appointment, markable fact. "Hitherto, men of Roman or Italian origin ruled the Empire; after this time, foreigners in extraction." And referring to the prosperity which attended the change, he adds: "Quid enim Nervâ Cretensi prudentior." Cited by Mr. Elliott, (Hor. Apoc. vol. i. pp. 138—140,) to whom we are indebted for this happy elucidation of the meaning of the bow, which had perplexed all preceding commentators; although, in the time of St. John, its import would doubtless be well understood, since Mr. Elliott has shown from ancient coins and a Greek epitaph, that such was the familiar meaning of the symbol.
was invested with the sword by the Emperor in person; as well as to the office of the imperial lieutenants commanding the legions in the provinces. The ascendency of the Praetorian guards, dating from the reign of Commodus, who was the first victim of their licentious turbulence, characterised the first stage of the decline of the Roman Empire.

The third horseman held in his hand a balance, the symbol of administrative justice; and it is remarkable, as throwing a strong light upon the application of this emblem, that a balance, together with a Roman measure and an ear of corn, is found upon ancient medals, as the distinctive badge of the Roman procurators and pro-praetors, the officers upon whom it devolved to collect the taxes; which, under the extortion of these provincial governors, became at length so oppressive, that they are mentioned by the Historian as a distinct cause of the further decline of the Empire. The price of corn specified in the Vision appears, from an elaborate investigation,* not to indicate famine or even scarcity, but rather the equitable price at which it ought to have been sold. The charge respecting the wine and oil, which the Apostle heard proceeding from the midst of the four living creatures, as from the throne, is to be interpreted, not as a prohibition to injure those productions, but as forbidding those who had the levying of the

* See Elliott's Hor. Apoc. vol. i. pp. 162—171. Such monitions, it is shown, were often charged on the provincial presidents by the juster Emperors, in connexion with the imperial exactions of wine and oil, in their Canon Frumentarius.
contributions from the provinces to commit wrong by exorbitant exactions. The emblem, therefore, represents, not Famine, but Extortion or Oppression, the colour of the horse being symbolical of mourning and distress, rather than of destitution. It is the more surprising that Expositors, ancient and modern, should have mistaken the rider on the black horse for an emblem of Scarcity, when that fearful scourge is expressly introduced as one of the four terrific agencies under the Fourth Seal. Besides, who would place the scales of Justice in the hands of a personification of Famine?*

The fourth horseman is obviously symbolical of the terrible mortality which was to ensue. It is death in person, followed by his attendant, the keeper of the prison of Hades,—the buryer of the slain. And the commission given to him is so specific as to require, for the verification of the prediction, a distinct historical counterpart. He was to slay with the sword, and with famine, and

* Anselm, the author of the earliest exposition of the Apocalyptic seals upon the Church scheme, interprets the black horse of the Church’s state blackened with heresies, and the rider, of men pretending to hold the balance of justice in their discussions, but falsely weighing words and arguments. So, Joachim Abbas (in the twelfth century) makes the black horse the Arian clergy, the balance symbolising the disputatio literae and cunning dialectics of the Arians. Mede explains the third Seal of the severe justice and procuration of corn notable in the reigns of the two Severi. So, Bishop Newton. Fleming, of the just reigns of Antoninus Pius and Philosophus. See Elliott’s H. A., vol. iv. pp. 371, 376, 450.
with pestilence, and with the wild beasts of the earth.

Now, on turning to the pages of the great secular Historian who has so accurately indicated the successive stages, and illustrated the causes of the decline of the Roman Empire,—the exact verbal accordance with the prophetic symbols will appear most striking; the more so since it cannot be ascribed to any religious bias. The period embraced by the First Seal is characterised by Gibbon in the following glowing terms:

"If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would without hesitation name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman Empire was governed by absolute power under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm but gentle hand of four successive Emperors, whose characters and authority commanded respect. The forms of the civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian,' and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws. . . . The golden age of Trajan had been preceded by an age of iron."*

Of the change which took place in the period

* Gibbon, vol. i. c. iii.
introduced by the emblem of the Second Seal, he thus writes:—

"Excepting only a short, though violent eruption of military license," (during the eighteen months which followed the death of Nero,) "the two centuries from Augustus to Commodus passed away unstained with civil blood, and undisturbed by revolutions. The emperor was elected by the authority of the senate and the consent of the soldiers." "The power of the sword is more sensibly felt in an extensive monarchy than in a small community. . . . The Prætorian bands, whose licentious fury was the first symptom and cause of the decline of the Roman Empire . . . derived their institution from Augustus. By introducing them as it were into the palace and the senate, the Emperors taught them to perceive their own strength and the weakness of the civil government. . . . The first prefect who enjoyed and abused this immense power was Plautianus, the favourite minister of Severus." . . . "The Prætorians who murdered their Emperor (Pertinax), and sold the Empire, had received the just punishment of their treason; but the dangerous, though necessary institution of guards was soon restored in a new model by Severus, and increased to four times the ancient number. . . . The command of these favoured and formidable troops soon became the first office of the Empire. As the government degenerated into military despotism, the Prætorian Prefect who, in his origin, had been a simple captain of the guards, was placed not only at the head of the army, but of
the finances, and even of the law. In every department of administration, he represented the person and exercised the authority of the Emperor. . . . Posterity justly considered Severus as the principal author of the decline of the Roman Empire. . . . The dissolute tyranny of Commodus, the civil wars occasioned by his death, and the maxims of policy introduced by the house of Severus, had all contributed to increase the dangerous power of the army, and to obliterate the faint image of laws and liberty that was still impressed on the minds of the Romans."*

The next stage of the decline of the Empire, symbolised by the emblem of the Third Seal, is ascribed by the Historian to the iniquitous exactions levied by the provincial governments.

"A most important edict of Caracalla communicated to all the inhabitants of the Empire the name and privilege of Roman citizens. His unbounded liberality flowed not, however, from the sentiments of a generous mind; it was the sordid result of avarice. . . . The reluctant provincials were compelled to assume the vain title and the real obligations of Roman citizens. Nor was the rapacious son of Severus contented with such a measure of taxation as had appeared sufficient to his moderate predecessors. Instead of a twentieth,† he exacted a tenth of all legacies and in-

* Gibbon, vol. i. ch. iii. v. vi.
† The imposition of a twentieth on inheritances and legacies was introduced by Augustus.
heritances; and during his reign, (for the ancient proportion was restored after his death,) he crushed alike every part of the Empire under the weight of his iron sceptre. When all the provincials became liable to the peculiar impositions of Roman citizens, they seemed to acquire a legal exemption from the tributes which they had paid in their former condition of subjects. Such were not the maxims of government adopted by Caracalla and his pretended son. *The old, as well as the new taxes were, at the same time, levied in the provinces.* It was reserved for the virtue of Alexander to release them in a great measure from the intolerable grievance, by reducing the tributes to a thirtieth part of the sum exacted at his accession; . . . but the noxious weed, which had not been totally eradicated, again sprang up with the most luxuriant growth, and, in the succeeding age, darkened the Roman world with its deadly shade. In the course of this history, we shall be too often summoned to explain the land-tax, the capitation, and *the heavy contributions of corn, wine, oil, and meat* which were exacted from the provinces for the use of the court, the army, and the capital."*

The fourth stage in the declension of the Empire, symbolized by the emblems of pestilence and mortality, is not less strongly marked and vividly portrayed.

"From the great secular games celebrated by Philip (A.D. 248) to the death of the Emperor Gallienus (A.D. 288), there elapsed twenty years of

* Gibbon, i. ch. vii.
shame and misfortune. During that calamitous period, every instant of time was marked, every province of the Roman world was afflicted by barbarous invaders and military tyrants, and the ruined empire seemed to approach the last and fatal moment of its dissolution. . . . . Of the nineteen tyrants who started up under the reign of Gallienus, there was not one who enjoyed a life of peace or a natural death. As soon as they were invested with the bloody purple, they inspired their adherents with the same fears and ambition that had occasioned their own revolt. Encompassed with domestic conspiracy, military sedition, and civil war, they trembled on the edge of precipices, in which, after a longer or shorter term of anxiety, they were inevitably lost. . . . When they fell, they involved armies and provinces in their fall. . . . Whilst the public forces of the State were dissipated in private quarrels, the defenceless provinces lay exposed to every invader.

"Our habits of thinking so fondly connect the order of the universe with the fate of man, that this gloomy period of history has been decorated with inundations, earthquakes, uncommon meteors, preternatural darkness, and a crowd of prodigies fictitious or exaggerated. But a long and general famine was a calamity of a more serious kind. It was the inevitable consequence of rapine and oppression, which extirpated the produce of the present and the hope of future harvests. Famine is almost always followed by epidemical diseases, the effect of scanty and unwholesome
food. Other causes, however, must have contributed to the furious plague which, from the year 250 to the year 285, raged without interruption in every province, every city, and almost every family of the Roman empire. During some time, five thousand persons died daily in Rome; and many towns that had escaped the hands of the barbarians were entirely depopulated. . . . . Above half the people of Alexandria perished; and could we venture to extend the analogy to the other provinces, we might suspect, that war, pestilence and famine had consumed, in a few years, the moiety of the human species."*

One of the four destructive agencies referred to in the prediction, is not mentioned by Gibbon; but it is upon record, that, within a few years after the death of Gallienus, the multiplication of wild beasts, in some parts of the Empire, had become a grievous calamity. Arnobius (about A.D. 300) rebuts the charge brought against the Christians as the guilty cause of this plague, by remarking, that the evil was not unprecedented, having been known before Christianity was promulgated. In fact, the increase and encroachment of wild beasts naturally

* Gibbon, vol. i. ch. x. Bp. Newton cites passages to the same effect from Zosimus, Zonaras, and other historians of the times. In the reign of Probus (A.D. 276) there was a great famine throughout the world. In that of Gallus and Volusian (A.D. 251), brake out the plague referred to by Gibbon, which, originating in Ethiopia, pervaded all the Roman provinces, and continued for fifteen years. In the reign of Gallienus, and in that of Claudius, the ravages of this pestilence are mentioned, to which the latter emperor fell a victim.
follow upon famine and depopulation. Thus it was said to Israel: "I will not drive out the inhabitants from before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee."* It was during this calamitous period that Cyprian wrote his treatise "De Mortalitate;" "as if," remarks Bp. Newton, "he had taken the name from the prophecy which had predicted it."†

There is one feature of the allegorical prediction, which has presented a critical difficulty. The commission given to the rider on the livid horse, extended only to a fourth part of the earth; and if this is to be understood of a fourth division of the Roman Empire, the universal prevalence of the mortality seems not to correspond to the limitation in the prediction. Besides which, no quadripartite division of the Empire appears to have taken place before the reign of Diocletian, A.D. 291. Mr. Elliott supposes, that the sword only was to be so restricted in its destructive agency to the fourth part of the Roman earth, while the famine, the pestilence, and the plague of wild beasts were to spread devastation through the other portions of the empire. This interpretation, however, requires a forced construction to be put upon the text, and is not in accordance with historical fact. If each agency had its allotted fourth in the desolation of the Empire, it could not be in different quarters, since pestilence is

* Exod. xxiii. 29.
found succeeding to famine as the effect of scanty and unwholesome food, as famine is the consequence of rapine and war, and the ravages of wild beasts are consequent upon the desolation produced by war and famine. Besides, is it supposable that the mortality arising from the multiplication and fierceness of the wild animals, could bear an equal proportion to that produced by either of the other causes? To reconcile the apparent limitation in the prediction with the universality of the fact, it is necessary to understand, by a fourth part of the earth, a fourth part of mankind or of the inhabitants of the Roman world. Nor does there seem any objection to this explanation. If Gibbon was led to infer from the mortality which took place in Alexandria, that one-half of the human species may have perished in a few years, from the ravages of pestilence, it is certainly a safe calculation which reduces the estimated mortality arising from the four terrific agencies combined, to half his moiety, or a fourth part of the then existing population of the Roman world.

Calamitous, however, as was the period referred to by Gibbon as distinguished by shame, misfortune, and horrible mortality, it is not the only one to which the terrific emblems of the prediction seem applicable. During the fourfold division of the Empire, which lasted for only a short period, Italy and Africa were again ravaged by the sword and by famine, under the savage tyranny of Maxentius (A.D. 290—312); and at the same time, the Eastern provinces were visited with famine and
pestilence. Eusebius has given an affecting description of the calamities of this period. "An infinite number died throughout the cities, but more throughout the countries and villages."* As the famine was general, so must also have been the pestilence which followed. In fact, of the four destructive agencies, not one was wanting. We conclude, therefore, that, while the prediction received its primary or initial fulfilment in the disastrous twenty years from the reign of Philip to the death of Gallienus, its historical application ought to comprehend the subsequent twenty years of slaughter, famine, and pestilence in the reign of Maxentius.

The only difficulty connected with this view of the prediction as embracing both periods, arises from its requiring us to make the fourth Seal extend beyond the Diocletian era, which is generally regarded as the time indicated by the fifth Seal. But is there any reason for supposing that each Seal indicates a distinct and successive chronological period? That of the first Seal, indeed, is definitely limited to a dynasty, the term of its duration being as precisely marked as its commencement. Where the second Seal begins, the first Seal ends; and this could not, from the nature of the events predicted, be otherwise. Health and disease in the political body, as in the human frame, cannot co-exist, but exclude each other. Peace was taken away by the sword of the

* A writer in the Presbyterian Review adduces this fact as an objection to Mr. Elliott's scheme of the Seals.
second horseman. The following three Seals describe, not a succession, but a cumulative aggravation of calamities. The sanguinary conflicts and military license which date from the accession of Commodus, continued throughout the whole period distinguished by provincial oppression; and the system of taxation introduced by Caracalla, extended with aggravated pressure throughout the calamitous periods when to slaughter and oppression were added the collateral visitations of famine and pestilence. It would therefore be a chronological error, to limit the application of the emblem of the red horse to the brief interval between the accession of Commodus and the edict of Caracalla. Gibbon records, that "under the vague appellation of the friends of Geta, above 20,000 persons of both sexes suffered death as victims of the jealous fears of the imperial fratricide; and every province was by turns made the scene of his rapine and cruelty by this common enemy of mankind."* The commencement of the period symbolized by the emblem of mortality, may be definitely ascertained; but its duration is

* Sismondi, in treating of the "Fall of the Roman Empire," dates "the third and most calamitous period, that of upstart soldiers of fortune who usurped the imperial power," from the death of Commodus, and assigns to it a duration of ninety-two years, from 192 to 284. "During that time, thirty-two Emperors and twenty-seven pretenders to the Empire alternately hurled each other from the throne by incessant civil warfare. Ninety-two years of nearly incessant civil warfare taught the world on what a frail foundation the virtue of the Antonines had reared the felicity of the Empire." (Cited by Elliott.)
left indeterminate, and can therefore be only inferred from the historical record. It is not necessary to suppose that it had run out before the new feature of evil prefigured by the succeeding Seal was developed. Mr. Elliott supposes, indeed, that "there may be a certain overrunning of the new vision's subject, by the termination of that of the vision preceding."* These successive emblems belong, however, to the same vision; and, instead of a mere "overrunning" of the terminating period of one Seal into the succeeding one, it is more correct to describe the second, third, and fourth Seals as successive in their commencement, but, in their continuance, synchronous. In like manner, unless there were anything in the nature of the events predicted by the fifth Seal, that implied a termination of the calamities prefigured under the preceding three Seals, the duration of these evils may be supposed to run parallel with the sufferings of the martyrs which form the next feature of the prophetic vision.

On the opening of each of the preceding Seals, the Apostle had been summoned by a voice from one of the living creatures to come and see what was exhibited in the form of an emblematic or hieroglyphic picture. It was, as it were, the voice of the Church, or of the spirits of the just, calling him to witness the Divine judgments upon the heathen. When the Fifth Seal was opened, no voice invited him to look, because the Church was itself

* Elliott, vol. i. pp. 119, 142.
the subject of the emblem. He beheld a representation of the altar of burnt-offering; and beneath it, or at its base, where the blood of victims was poured, were pictured the bodies of the slaughtered martyrs; for the word (ψυχα) rendered souls, is applied, in the Septuagint, both to the separate spirit (as Psa. xvi. 10) and to the body of the dead or the dead person. (See Ezek. xliv. 25; Deut. xix. 28; xxi. 1; Num. v. 12; ix. 10.) Nor could dead persons be otherwise represented, unless a hieroglyphic was employed, than under a bodily form.* While he looked, voices were heard, which expounded the emblems. First, there was heard the cry of the martyred saints pleading with the Lord. And then a reply was given, which recognized their acceptance before God, by appointing to them white robes, symbolical of their public justification, and bade them wait yet a little while till their company should be completed. It is not necessary to suppose (with Mr. Elliott) that the Apostle saw the shadowy forms invested with white robes, or that any visionary transaction took place. The award would be intimated as significantly by the command that they should be so arrayed, as by the declaration that white robes were assigned to them. Mr. Elliott finds an historical counterpart to this symbolical justification of the martyrs, in the edict issued by the persecutor, Galerius,

* The emblem was probably pictured upon the scroll, like those of the preceding Seals, as there was no change of the visionary scene.
A.D. 311, (which bore also the names of Licinius and Constantine,) putting a stop to the persecution, and concluding with an entreaty to the Christians to pray for him; in consequence of which, Gibbon states, "great numbers of the Christians were released from prison or delivered from the mines. The confessors, singing hymns of triumph, returned to their own countries."* It forms an objection, however, to this application of the prediction, that, after the souls of the martyrs had had the white robes assigned to them, they were to wait yet a little while before their blood was to be avenged, which was not to be till other martyrs had been added to their company. Now no persecution of the Christians by any heathen Emperor took place subsequently to that edict; and yet, as it was from the martyrs slain under Pagan Emperors, that the complaint proceeded, it must have been upon their heathen persecutors that their blood was to be avenged. Some of the Christian fathers understood this reference to a future body of martyrs, of those who should be put to death under Anti-Christ;† and some modern expositors, supposing the

† So Tertullian, in a passage cited by Mr. Elliott, in which he supposes the innumerable multitude described in ch. vii. to consist of those "de Anti-Christo triumphales." Interpreting the new series of martyrs as those who should be slain under Anti-Christ, whose manifestation was expected to be almost immediately followed by the Second Advent and the final Judgment, this Father erroneously inferred that the end of the world was drawing near. See Elliott, vol. i. pp. 200, 205, 207, notes.
victims of Papal persecution to be intended, would extend the application of the fifth Seal to the whole period of the domination of Papal Rome. This interpretation not only does violence to the chronological order of the whole series of predictions, but is irreconcilable with the expression, that they must wait yet a little while, before judgment should be executed upon the dwellers on the earth, the fulfilment of which is evidently the subject of the Sixth Seal.

Mr. Elliott's main reason for connecting the justification of the martyred Christians with the edict of Galerius, rests upon the supposition, that the time of the Fifth Seal is to be dated from the reign of Diocletian, which was emphatically, and beyond any other, "the Era of Martyrs," and formed, under that title, a chronological era of general use among Christian writers, until the introduction of the Christian era in the sixth century.* Throughout the two centuries subsequent to the death of the last of the Apostles, Christianity had to sustain a precarious sufferance on the part of the Imperial authorities, alternating with seasons of cruel persecution. Of these, the most protracted and severe were, under the Second Antonine, between A.D. 160 and 180; under Septimius Severus, from A.D. 202—208; under Decius and his successors, A.D. 249—259;

* This era, though instituted for other and astronomical purposes, received its title from the martyrs of the Diocletian persecution. It is reckoned from August 29, 284, and is still observed by the Copts and Abyssinians. Elliott, vol. i. p. 186; Gibbon, ch. xvi. note.
and under Diocletian, A.D. 303—312.* During this whole period, from the date of Trajan’s celebrated Rescript, (the first law against Christians as such,) the aspect of the political world presented a contest between the Imperial delegate of “the Prince of this world” and the Church of Christ,—between, in fact, the head of the kingdom of Pagan darkness, and the Divine Founder and Head of the Church and King of kings. The complaint of the martyrs has evidently a retrospective reference to the treatment to which Christians had been exposed during the whole period embraced by the preceding Seals. But, under the pressure of prolonged persecution, the voice of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held, seemed to wax louder and louder,—the voice of their blood crying to Heaven, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” And it seems prophetically intimated, that a tone of murmuring and impatience would begin to mingle with the cries of the suffering.

Now, there appears to be no sufficient reason for dating the Fifth Seal from the commencement of the last general persecution, with which it might rather seem to terminate. If we reflect upon the primary design of this prophetic communication to the Church, we shall see reason to conclude,

* The notion of ten distinct persecutions, though it may be traced up to the fifth century, Mosheim has shown to rest upon a popular error. Lactantius enumerates only six, including those under Nero and Domitian.
that the Divine exhortation to patient waiting must rather have been addressed to the earlier sufferers under the first general persecution. The first four Seals revealed to the Christians of the second and third centuries, what was to befall the Roman Empire, the removal or overthrow of which was to precede the manifestation of the Apostacy. But, even to the mind of the Apostle himself, it might be a subject of anxious inquiry, what, during the running out of those periods, and under the darkening calamities of the Empire, would be the condition and fate of the Church of Christ. In the Seven Epistles to the Asiatic churches, the whole body of believers had, indeed, been admonished to prepare against the hour of trial which should come upon all the world, and for the special tribulations to which Christians should be exposed; and promises had been given, peculiarly adapted to sustain and console them in the hour of calamity. The seals of futurity being now broken, it might naturally be looked for, that some intimation would be afforded of the fate of the Christian body. And this was disclosed by the emblem of the Fifth Seal, which exhibited the souls of the faithful who had been slaughtered for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; proving that, whatever declension might take place in the spirit of the Christian profession, and notwithstanding that the incipient apostacy might be already working, still, there would remain at least a few faithful unto death, who should be worthy of being invested with white robes, (agreeably to
the Divine promise, ch. iii. 4,) and of receiving the crown of life. We may well suppose that many of the pious, contemplating the declension from purity of life or doctrine, the worldliness and lukewarmness which had early overspread some portions of the Church, would be led to take a desponding view of the future; and to them it might convey the consoling thought, that God would still reserve to Himself a true Church. But, when the day of persecution came, what could be so well adapted to sustain the faith and patience of the saints, as the lesson conveyed by the prophetic emblem, which assured them, not only that "no strange thing" had befallen them, no unforeseen evil, but also, that their blood would be required at the hands of their persecutors? We find Tertullian and Cyprian expressing a confident expectation of the coming days of vengeance, but in language, as Mr. Elliott remarks, "too maledictory, and hardly in unison with the spirit of Stephen or of Polycarp."* At the same time, the prophetic intimation was adapted to moderate their impatience under the apparent delay of Divine retribution. It was said to them as distinctly from the inspired page, as if by a voice from Heaven, that those who had entered into rest, must wait to be joined

* Elliott, vol. i. p. 200. Cyprian, addressing the Roman Judge, says: "We are sure that whatever we suffer will not remain unrewarded, and that, the greater the injury of the persecution, the heavier and juster will be the vengeance." So Marianus, the African martyr, is stated to have prophetically warned his persecutors of the coming vengeance. Ib. p. 199.
by a larger company of fellow-sufferers. This admonition would be more specially applicable to the time of the Decian persecution, at the commencement of that dreary period of aggravated calamity under which the Roman Empire seemed approaching its dissolution. Under that protracted and general persecution, the cry of the martyrs could not, indeed, but have been heard; and to that period, therefore, we seem warranted in applying the emblematic description; while the prediction of a future persecution that should complete their number, may be understood as having received its fulfilment under Diocletian and Maxentius. Then, indeed, the Christian Church might look for the coming day of just retribution, and, if they read aright the mystic page, prepare for the speedy accomplishment of the judgments pres figured by the Sixth Seal.

To harmonize with history, moreover, we must consider the era of martyrdom as synchronizing, to a certain extent, with that of the calamitous period of the Fourth Seal; and, as has been already remarked, the Fifth Seal has a retrospective reference. But the justification of the martyrs, if it is to be historically interpreted, may be considered as fulfilled by the first edict of toleration to Christianity, issued by the Emperor Gallienus, A.D. 261, by which the Christian worship was legalised, fifty years before the edict of Galerius; nor does there seem any propriety in supposing the latter to be alluded to, to the exclusion of the former. "The accession of Gallienus," says Gibbon, "restored peace to the
Church; and the Christians obtained the free exercise of their religion by an edict addressed to the bishops, and conceived in such terms as seemed to acknowledge their office and public character; and by another edict, he directed that the *cemeteria* should be restored to the Christians."* The latter is a very significant circumstance, if construed agreeably to the comment of the Historian upon the measures taken by the Emperor Pertinax to heal the wounds inflicted by the hand of tyranny in the reign of his predecessor.† "The unburied bodies of murdered senators were deposited in the sepulchres of their ancestors: their memory was justified."

* Gibbon, ch. xvi.
† Cited by Elliott, i. 209, in illustration of the edict of *Galericus*.
‡ In Fleming's remarkable discourse concerning the "Rise and Fall of the Papacy," the same view is taken of the period comprised under this Seal. "The fifth Seal discovers the state of the Christian Church to be exceedingly languishing and melancholy, as if the saints were all slain, praying and crying for vengeance against their persecutors, while they are represented as lying under the altar. So that this period begins with *Decius*, the first universal persecutor of Christians, (for all the former persecutions under Nero, Domitian, Trajan, and the Antonines, were but provincial ones, and that of Maximinus against the ministers only,) who began his reign and persecution together in the year 250, and was seconded in it by Valerian; for the short reigns of Trebonianus Gallus and Æmilianus hardly deserve to be taken notice of in this case. Now the souls of the martyrs are desired to rest patiently until the confused reign of Gallienus should run out, and the thirty tyrants that rose in his time should be cut off, together with the short-lived Claudius Gothicus; seeing, after that interval, their brethren were also to suffer still further under
The Apostle "beheld when the Lamb had opened the sixth Seal;"—he must, therefore, have still been in view of the Throne;—and lo! a representation of a tremendous convulsion of nature: there was a great earthquake, and the sun became dark as under eclipse, the moon blood-red as it appears in a mist, and the stars fell from heaven like fruit shaken from a tree by a tempest; and the firmament in which they appeared fixed, passed away, like a scroll rolled up; and every mountain and island were removed from their places. In what manner all this was presented to the mind of the Apostle, it is not of any importance to determine. In a vision or dream, images are pictured to the mind, not as external objects are perceived by the senses, fixed and unchanging, but as a shifting scenery, transient and successive like our thoughts, suggesting ideas in a manner totally different from that in which they are conveyed to us when awake. Whether we suppose the Apostle to have beheld this emblematic scene pictured on the scroll or spread out beneath him as a visionary landscape, the change which passed over the objects as he looked upon them, might in either case occur as described, without our supposing

Rome Pagan, viz., under Aurelian, and afterwards, (when the short reigns of Tacitus, Probus, Carus, and Cærenus should be over,) under the cruel persecution raised against them by Diocletian and Maximianus, elder and younger, together with Severus and Maximinus. So that this Seal ends with the conclusion of this last persecution begun by Diocletian, and so expires, A.D. 306."
any other operation of mind than such as takes place in a vivid dream. The movement of hills and islands, and the rolling up of the sky or firmament, could scarcely, indeed, be exhibited pictorially as in a landscape, although these ideas might be expressed by emblems. We may imagine a series of pictures upon the scroll, such as are presented in the paintings and sculptures of the old Egyptians, in which the historical and the ideal or emblematic are often mingled, or else a sort of dioramic change in the emblems themselves. The language of the panic-stricken host may have been suggested to the Apostle's mind by written sentences connected with the figures. It is not stated, that he heard what they said: it was the language of the action, or rather the interpretation of the emblem. If regarded as a picturesque description, (the light in which some Biblical critics have erroneously represented it,) it seems to present a tissue of incongruities, monstrous phenomena at variance with the laws of nature being blended with human action. As a hieroglyphic or emblematic representation, it is forcibly expressive; and the only difficulty relates to the historical application.

That the emblems employed are to be understood as denoting a political catastrophe, it is strange that any one familiar with the figurative language of ancient prophecy should call in question. In predicting the destruction of the Jewish kingdom by the Babylonians, Jeremiah describes a visionary scene in which the earth appeared without form and void, and the heavens
were deprived of light, and the mountains and
hills trembled and were moved, and the fertile
places were changed to a desert, and the cities
were overthrown.* Isaiah, in foretelling the
overthrow of Babylon by the Medes, declares, that
"the day of the Lord was coming, cruel both with
wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate;"
when "the stars of heaven and the constellations
thereof should not give their light, the sun should
be darkened, and the moon should not give her
light."† Still more striking and apposite is the
language of the same Prophet in a prediction
relating to Idumea: "And all the host of heaven
shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled
together as a scroll; and all their hosts shall
fall down as the leaf falleth off from the vine,
and as a falling fig from the fig-tree; for my
sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall
come down upon Idumea."‡ The Prophet Joel
employs similar highly figurative phraseology.
Predicting a judgment upon Israel under the
figure of an army of locusts, he says: "The
earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall
tremble; the sun and the moon shall be dark,
and the stars shall withdraw their shining."§
And again, in a passage cited by St. Peter as
having its fulfilment in those days: "And I will
shew wonders in the heavens and on the earth;
blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun
shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into

* Jer. iv. 23—26. † Isa. xiii. 9, 10.
‡ Is. xxxiv. 4, 5. § Joel ii. 16.
blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord."* Moreover, the latter part of the Apocalyptic prediction has its counterpart in the language of Hosea in reference to the terror and calamitous effects of Shalmaneser's invasion:—

"And they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us."† This very passage appears to be cited by Our Lord, in application to the horrors attendant upon the siege and fall of Jerusalem;‡ and the same figurative language that is employed by the ancient prophets, is adopted in the prediction of the political changes which should follow the tribulation of those days.§ If, then, "the very same images, the very same expressions, are employed by other prophets concerning the mutations and alterations of religions and governments," "why may they not," asks Bishop Newton, "with equal fitness and propriety be applied to one of the greatest and most memorable revolutions which ever were in the world, the subversion of the heathen religion? The series of the prophecy requires this application; and all the phrases and expressions will easily admit of such a construction."

If, indeed, the interpretation of the preceding Seals be correct, the Sixth Seal must relate to that

* Joel ii. 30, 31. So Ezekiel, concerning Egypt, ch. xxxii. 7.
† Hos. x. 8. ‡ Luke xxiii. 30.
§ On comparing Luke xxi. 25 with Matt. xxiv. 29, there seems reason to understand "the times of the Gentiles" as denoting the duration of the pagan Roman Empire.
Pagan power which was the persecutor of the martyred saints whose blood cried out from the altar of burnt-offering; that power which hindered the development of the Great Apostacy.* It is true, that the Roman Empire was not subverted at the era of Constantine; but the Pagan power of Rome, as antagonistic to the kingdom of Christ, and the political system which was identified with its priesthood, were signally and for ever destroyed. Again the pages of Gibbon will be found to attest, by the sober, unbiased evidence of secular history, the correspondence of the event to the prediction. By the victory of Constantine over his last Pagan rival, Licinius, the Roman world became united under the sceptre of the conqueror, who, says the Historian, "bequeathed to his family a new capital, a new policy, and a new religion."† "The foundation of a new capital is naturally connected with the establishment of a new form of civil and military administration;" and the removal of the seat of empire and the establishment of the Christian religion were "the

* Foxe, the martyrlogist, A.D. 1586, appears to have first distinctly pointed out the reference of the Sixth Seal to the overthrow of the pagan emperors and empire by Constantine. He was followed by Brightman, A.D. 1600, and by Mede in 1627; also, by Robert Fleming about 1700; Daubuz, in 1720; and Bishop Newton, in 1758. Dr. More, Dr. Cressener, Jurieu, Whiston, Lowman, Faber, and Elliott substantially adopt the same interpretation. Vitringa, by a palpable anachronism, interprets the Sixth Seal of judgments upon Anti-Christ, in accordance with the more excusable blunders of the mediæval writers; Dean Woodhouse, of the Day of Judgment!

† Gibbon, ch. xvii.
immediate and memorable consequences of this revolution."

The language of Gibbon, in describing the anxiety with which, while this important revolution yet remained in suspense, the Christians and the Pagans watched the conduct of their sovereign, strikingly illustrates the real character of the struggle, and the light in which it was regarded by both parties. The Pagans, "till their just apprehensions were changed into despair and resentment, attempted to conceal from the world and from themselves, that the gods of Rome could no longer reckon the Emperor in the number of their votaries."* "The tragic deaths of Galerius and Maximin soon gratified the resentment, and fulfilled the sanguine expectations, of the Christians. The success of Constantine against Maxentius and Licinius, removed the two formidable competitors who still opposed the triumph of the second David, and his cause might seem to claim the peculiar interposition of Heaven . . . The piety of Constantine was admitted as an unexceptionable proof of the justice of his arms; and his use of victory confirmed the opinion of the Christians, that their hero was inspired and conducted by the Lord of Hosts. The conquest of Italy produced a general edict of toleration; and as soon as the defeat of Licinius had invested Constantine with the sole dominion of the Roman world, he immediately, by circular letters, exhorted all his subjects to imitate, without delay, the

* Gibbon, ch. xx.
example of their sovereign, and to embrace the
divine truth of Christianity." "In the second
civil war, Licinius felt and dreaded the power of
the consecrated banner (the labarum), the sight of
which, in the distress of battle, animated the
soldiers of Constantine with an invincible enthu-
siasm, and scattered terror and dismay through
the ranks of the adverse legions."* "The ruin of
the Pagan religion is described by the sophists as a
dreadful and amazing prodigy, which covered the
earth with darkness, and restored the ancient dominion
of chaos and of night."†

Thus, according to the scornful testimony of
the learned and sceptical Historian, the contempo-
rary Christians and the pagan sophists alike recog-
nized, in the triumph of Constantine, and in the
changes to which it led, an amazing prodigy, a
stupendous revolution, involving the downfall of
the Pagan powers and authorities. In the pages
of Eusebius and Lactantius, the correspondence
of the event to the prediction becomes still more
manifest. The destruction of Maxentius and
his host in the Tiber, is compared by the ecclesi-
astical Historian to that of Pharaoh and the
Egyptians in the Red Sea; and a bas-relief still
to be seen on Constantine's triumphal arch at
Rome, represents the terror of Maxentius and his
army in their flight across the Tiber after the
battle of the Milvian bridge. "And this," Mr.
Elliott observes, "was chiefly remarkable; that
it was not the terror of their earthly victor's

* Gibbon, ch. xx.  † Ib. ch. xxviii.
wrath that alone oppressed them. There was a consciousness of the powers of Heaven acting against them; above all, the Crucified One, the Christians' God. For the war, in each case, was felt to be a religious war. In the persecution just preceding, the Emperors Diocletian and Maximin had struck medals of themselves in the characters and under the names of Jove and Hercules, destroying the serpent-like, hydra-headed monster, Christianity; and these titles of Pagan mythology had been adopted in the same spirit by their successors. When Maxentius went forth to battle, he went fortified by heathen oracles; the champion of heathenism against the champion of the Cross. When Maximin was about to engage with Licinius, he made his vow to Jupiter, that, if successful, he would extirpate Christianity. When Licinius, again, was marching against Constantine and his crusaders,* he, in public harangue before the soldiers, ridiculed the Cross, and staked the falsehood of Christianity on his success. Thus, in all these cases, the terrors of defeat must have been aggravated by a sense of their gods having failed them, and of the power of Heaven being with Christ, the Christians' God, against them. Besides which, there are to be remembered, the recorded dying terrors of one and another of the persecuting emperors. A dark cloud seems to have brooded over the death-bed of Maximian, if not over

* "Eusebius," remarks Gibbon in a note, "always considers the second civil war against Licinius as a sort of religious crusade." . . . He styles Licinius's war against Constantine a ἥερμαχια—a war against God.
Diocletian's also. The report was, that, oppressed by remorse for his crimes, he strangled himself. Again, Galerius had, from an agonizing and awful death-bed, evinced his remorse of conscience, by entreating the Christians, in a public proclamation, to pray to their God (i.e. Christ) for him.* And Maximin, soon after, in similar anguish of mind and body, confessed his guilt, and called on Christ to compassionate his misery.† Thus did a sense of the wrath of the Crucified One, the Lamb of God, whom they now knew to be seated on the throne of power, lie intolerably heavy on them. And when we combine these terrors of the death-bed with those of the lost battle-field,—which must have been experienced alike by officers and soldiers, the slaves as well as the freemen,—when we con-

* The edict is given in full by both Eusebius and Lactantius, towards the close of which occurs the remarkable clause, “Juxta hanc indulgentiam nostram debemus Deum suum orare pro salute nostrâ.” Thus, in the language of Milman, “the whole Roman world was witness of the public and humiliating acknowledgment of defeat, extorted from the dying Emperor.” “It is certainly singular,” he adds, “that the disease vulgarly called being eaten of worms, should have been the destiny of Herod the Great, of Galerius, and of Philip of Spain.”—Milman's History of Christianity, b. ii. c. 9.

† Maximin, after his defeat by Licinius, is said to have revenged his baffled hopes of victory on the Pagan priesthood who incited him to the war, by a promiscuous massacre of all within his power. His last imperial act was, the promulgation of an edict restoring to Christians the confiscated property of their churches. “His bodily sufferings,” says Milman, “completed the dark catalogue of persecuting Emperors who had perished under the most excruciating torments; his body was slowly consumed by an internal fire.”—Milman, b. ii. c. 9.
sider the terrors of those Christ-blaspheming kings of the Roman earth, routed with their partisans before the Christian host, and miserably fleeing and perishing, there was surely that in the event, which, according to the usual construction of such Scripture figures, might well he deemed to answer to the symbols of the prefigurative vision, in which kings and generals, freemen and slaves, appeared fleeing and seeking to the caves of the rocks to hide them from the face of Him that sate on the throne of power, even from the wrath of The Lamb.”*

Considering, then, the way in which the cause of Christianity was implicated in the issue of a conflict in which both parties made a direct appeal to Heaven for succour and success, there is no event in Jewish history, which can be regarded as of greater concern or consequence to the world, or upon which the character of a Divine interposition is more legibly inscribed; no fall of any of the ancient cities or kingdoms, to adopt the words of Bp. Newton, “more deserving of being described in such pompous figures, than the fall of the Pagan Roman empire, when the great lights of the heathen world, the sun, moon, and stars, the powers civil and ecclesiastical, were all eclipsed, the heathen emperors and Cæsars were slain, the heathen priests and augurs were extirpated, the heathen officers and magistrates were removed, the heathen temples were demolished, and their revenues appropriated to better uses.” The

destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, (to which some early expositors imagined the prediction to have a retrospective reference,) was even a less signal display of the Divine judgments upon the enemies and persecutors of the Church, and a less conspicuous manifestation of the power and glory of Christ, than the destruction of the Pagan power by Constantine. With much more reason, therefore, might we conclude, that it would stand prominently out in the page of prophecy.

Against this application of the prediction, an objection has been urged by Vitringa and others, which may seem to deserve notice. How, it has been asked, could it suit the times of the early Christian emperors, considering that Pagans were still promoted to the highest dignities in the State? It was not till near the close of his life, that Constantine issued edicts for the suppression of the heathen sacrifices, the destruction of their temples, and the toleration of no other form of worship than the Christian; and it was not till the reign of Theodosius, that Christianity was finally and formally established as the religion of the State.*

The proper reply to this objection is, that, in the emblems of the Sixth Seal, there is nothing that points either to the civil establishment of Christianity, or to the subsequent imperial edicts. Those emblems denote a violent political convulsion, and a day of terror and slaughter, in which the Divine judgments would be executed upon the

enemies of Christ; but, to the human instrumentality employed, there is no allusion. The wars of Constantine were the means of accomplishing the Divine predictions; just as the conquests of Cyrus were overruled for the deliverance of Judah from the seventy years' captivity, and as the arms of Vespasian and Titus were employed in the predicted overthrow of the Jewish city and polity. Thus, the Almighty is represented as having made use of the ancient tyrants of Assyria and Egypt, of Persia and Macedonia, as "the rod of his anger," or as "the shepherd to perform his pleasure on behalf of his people."* But it would be as unwarrantable to conclude in the one case as in the other, that the instrument of accomplishing the purpose of God was personally approved by Him, or, that the worldly and wicked policy of conquerors and tyrants had the Divine approbation.

The revolution effected by Constantine, inasmuch as it led to a change of the seat of empire, may be considered as having eclipsed, if not extinguished, the Sun of Rome; and it was this removal of the imperial throne from the capital of the Pagan Caesars, which, more directly than any other circumstance, opened the way for the subsequent usurpation of the Roman Pontiffs, agreeably to the Apostolic prediction respecting "the Man of Sin." The emblematic fall of the stars may be understood of the downfall of those associates in the divided Empire who were finally swept away by the victorious arms of the Protector

* Isa. x. 5; xliv. 28.
of the Church; and it may not be overstraining the figure, to interpret the removal of the firmament in which they were fixed, of the transfer of the seat of government from the banks of the Tiber to those of the Bosphorus, whereby Italy sank into a province. The mountains and hills were thus, in the figurative language of prophecy, moved from their places. Nor was it an immaterial circumstance, that, as the Roman Emperor was the Pontifex Maximus of the Pagan hierarchy, the conquest of Italy by Constantine, and the death of Maxentius, crushed the very head of Paganism, and virtually extinguished the political power of the Roman priesthood. Need we look any further into history for the accomplishment of the prediction? In the intolerant penal edicts of the Christian Emperors, we no longer recognize "the wrath of The Lamb," but only the shortsighted and mistaken policy of man, which proved eventually not less disastrous to the Church, than the rage of heathen persecutors. At the same time, as the ruin of Paganism was not consummated till the reign of Theodosius,* we may consider the period embraced by the Sixth Seal as extending to the reign of that Emperor, without

* "The ruin of Paganism, in the age of Theodosius, is perhaps the only example of the total extirpation of any ancient and popular superstition; and may therefore deserve to be considered as a singular event in the history of the human mind. . . . . The pious labour which had been suspended near twenty years since the death of Constantius, was vigorously resumed and finally accomplished by the zeal of Theodosius." Gibbon, ch. xxviii.
reference to the erring zeal which, as Gibbon
observes, had not the same excuses of fear and
ignorance as the persecuting spirit of the heathen
emperors, when it "violated the precepts of
humanity and of the Gospel."
Vision the Third.

THE SEALING OF THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND.

A change now takes place in the visionary scene presented to the Apostle; which is indicated by the words, "After these things;" denoting that the preceding Vision had closed. That which is now described, has been characterized as an episode; and it evidently occupies an intermediate position between the opening of the sixth and of the seventh seal.

The Apostle beheld the representation of four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding in the four winds, while another angel was seen ascending from the sun-rise, bearing in his hand a seal, and crying to the four angels of the winds, not to execute their destructive commission till the servants of God had been sealed on their foreheads.* The Apostle did not, apparently, witness this mystical transaction: he only heard the proclamation of the angel, and heard

* Again the emblems in the vision suggest the idea of a hieroglyphic, rather than of a pictorial representation.
the number of the Sealed; as he had heard, in connexion with the visible emblems of the Seals, voices interpretative of their import. The number of the faithful who were sealed, was twelve thousand out of each tribe of Israel; a number indicating a small proportion; perhaps about one in fifty.* That, by the tribes of Israel, the Christian Church is symbolized, is plain, not only from the frequent occurrence of this analogical application of Jewish images and appellatives, but also from the historical connexion, and from the reference to what was speedily to befall the inhabitants of the Roman world. This mystical Sealing must denote a spiritual, not a national distinction; one of character, not of external profession or condition. The supposition of some expositors, that Israelitish Christians are intended, as selected from the rest of the Jewish nation,† is a palpable violation of every rational principle of interpretation, as it arbitrarily assumes a literal meaning, where the whole representation and the phraseology are figurative, and altogether overlooks the purport of the emblem. The idea conveyed by the Sealing is obviously that of Divine selection or appropriation and approval; and it is illustrated by a similar passage in the Visions of Ezekiel:—“Go

* The population of the twelve tribes under David and Solomon, appears to have been between six and seven millions. Under Moses, it was near two millions and a half.

† Grotius, Hammond, Eichhorn, and Rosenmüller, agreeably to the Romanist hypothesis, that the Apocalypse applies to Jewish history, make the sealing refer to the withdrawmtent of Jewish Christians to Pella.
through the midst of the city, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof." (Ezek. ix. 4.) The figurative language alludes to the ancient custom of wearing upon the forehead either distinguishing ornaments or peculiar marks; a custom still perpetuated in the East. Thus, all the different sects of Hindoos are distinguished by peculiar marks on the forehead and breast, made with a pigment ordinarily composed of cow-dung, or whatever is burned upon the sacrificial hearth, mixed with the dust of sandal-wood, turmeric, or lime.* Irenæus states, that the Gnostics were accustomed thus to mark their disciples. Slaves, among the Romans, were branded on the forehead as the property of their masters; and the Roman soldier bore the Emperor’s name or mark on the hand.† To this ancient custom, there is an evident allusion, Deut. vi. 8: "Thou shalt bind these words for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." They were to be as a mark or token of their being worshippers and servants of the True God. In reference to the same custom, the servants of Christ are spoken of, in the Apostolic writings, as sealed by the Holy Spirit.‡

* "Signare, quid est nisi proprium aliquid ponere? Ideò rei ponis signum, ne res, cum aliis confusa, à te non possit cognosci." Augustine on John vi.
† A mark of this nature is stated to have been inflicted on the conquered Jews by Ptolemy Philadelphus.
‡ 2 Cor. i. 22; Eph. i. 13; iv. 30.
Such being the import of the emblem, the purport of the intimation intended to be conveyed to the Apostle must be, that, of the whole Christian body, or visible Church, (which, after the establishment of Christianity, assumed the form of a political society,) a comparatively small portion only would be "called, and chosen, and faithful." As, under the Jewish dispensation, "all were not Israel who were of Israel,"* so, amid the prevalent formalism and degeneracy of the nominally Christian world, there would be left but "a remnant according to the election of Grace," bearing the seal of the Spirit as the true worshippers of God.

In the messages to the Seven Churches, a similar distinction is made between nominal Christians, and those who, having "kept the word," should be "kept from the hour of temptation";† and upon whom, Our Lord promises, that He will inscribe His new name,—an obvious allusion to the practice of bearing the name or mystical mark of the object of worship as a seal or token. And, as the sealing in the Vision had reference to the predicted calamities about to ensue, the promise is implied, that they should be, agreeably to Our Lord's declaration, "kept from the hour of trial that should come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth."

With respect to the particularity of the enumeration, twelve thousand out of each of the twelve tribes, it is the more remarkable, inasmuch as the

* Rom. ix. 6; xi. 5.  
† Rev. iii. 9—12.
Jewish tribes differed from each other very considerably in numerical strength and importance, as well as in the peculiar dignity attaching to the three tribes of Levi, Judah, and Ephraim; whereas the tribes of the mystical Israel are here all put upon an equality as regards the number of the Sealed. This may be designed to intimate, that the elect number would be from no one class, or rank, or order of the Christian Church, but a few, and only a few, from every section of the catholic body; consequently, that the declension or adulteration of the Church would be general, not confined to any particular part.

In the enumeration of the Twelve Tribes, there is an apparent omission, which has given rise to many curious speculations.*  Manasseh and Joseph are mentioned as distinct tribes, as, in Numbers xiii., Ephraim and Joseph are reckoned separately; but here, Levi is mentioned, and Dan is omitted. The several enumerations of the Tribes, which occur in the Old Testament, vary both in order and in completeness; and in the enumeration of the several families in the first book of Chronicles, the tribes of Zebulun and Dan are both passed over. Reasons may, however, be assigned for these variations, arising out of the historical circumstances, which are inapplicable to a symbolical enumeration intended to convey the idea of completeness.† Although

† Comp. Gen. xxix. xxx. xlix.; Numb. xiii.; Deut. xxxiii.; Josh. xiii. xix.; 1 Chron. iv.—viii.
Joseph is put for Manasseh in Numbers xiii., no instance occurs of its standing instead of Ephraim. The simplest and most obvious explanation would be, that "Manasseh" has crept into the text instead of "Dan"; a conjecture to which the similarity of the former name, in an abbreviated form, to Dan, lends great plausibility.* But Andreas, Origen, and even Irenæus found the present reading, and speak of it as a difficulty. If an error of transcription, it must, therefore, have been of very early date. Andreas assigns the fanciful reason for the omission, that Anti-Christ was to spring from the tribe of Dan. Another conjecture accounts for the omission by the early apostacy of that tribe. Grotius thinks, that the name of Dan may have been omitted because the tribe was nearly extinct when the Apocalypse was written. These hypotheses are not merely baseless and gratuitous, but entirely fail to remove the difficulty as relating to an enumeration purely figurative. In the absence of any plausible reason for regarding the omission as enigmatical and significant, we must be satisfied with the fact, that, whether through a corruption of the text or not, the name of Manasseh occupies the place of Dan. Mr. Elliott's suggestion, that Dan was omitted simply to make room for Levi is unsatisfactory, since, as Joseph might stand for both his sons, Manasseh would be superfluous.

Having now ascertained the general purport of the prefigurative vision, let us turn to History for

the counterpart. After the overthrow of the Pagan supremacy by Constantine, the Roman people in multitudes, and at length in the mass, embraced Christianity; and to the indiscriminate reception of the candidates for baptism has been ascribed the rapid change which took place in the character of the churches.* Yet, this consequence would not necessarily have ensued, but for the extravagant notions which had become prevalent as to the virtue attaching to the baptismal rite. Instead of being regarded as but the door of Christian instruction, the rite of discipleship was represented as the very gate of salvation. Throughout the preceding century, indeed, the language applied to baptism, indicated the working of that insidious superstition by which the simple ordinances of Christianity were converted into magical rites.† Speaking of the chrism

* "The salvation of the common people was purchased at an easy rate, if it be true, that in one year, 12,000 men were baptized at Rome, besides a proportionable number of women and children; and that 'a while garment,' with twenty pieces of gold, had been promised by the Emperor to every convert."—Gibbon, ch. xx.

† "Besides its earlier title of λοιπον παλιγγενεσίας, it was now entitled, as Bingham tells us, (xi. 1,) the σφραγις, χαρακτηρ Κυριου, φωτισμος, φυλαιτηριον, αφθαρσιας ενδυμα, σωτηριον; the Seal, the Lord's mark, the illumination, the phylactery or preservative, the investiture of incorruption, the salvation. In the language of an eminent bishop of the day (Cyril), it was 'the ransom to captives, the remission of offences, the regeneration of the soul, the garment of light, the holy seal indissoluble, the chariot to heaven, the luxury of Paradise, the procuring of the kingdom, the gift of adoption.' . . . . A magical
which had been grafted upon the Scriptural rite, Cyril says: "This holy thing is a spiritual preservative of the body, and safeguard of the soul."* "The general belief in magic, in the early ages of the Church," remarks Bp. Hampden, "may sufficiently account for the ready reception of such a theory of sacramental influence." It was, in fact, only "an adaptation of the popular belief respecting the power of incantations and charms to the subject of religion."† How apposite, then, is the emblematic transaction of the Apocalyptic Vision, which, referring to this very period, exhibits the mystical sealing of the true Israel in contrast with the sacramental or ritual sealing of the masses numbered with the professed Church of Christ!‡ The application of the symbolical prediction to the Constantinian era, is strikingly illustrated by the language of Augustine, who has been aptly styled the Elijah of his age, and in whose extant writings, the doctrines of Grace stand out in broad opposition to the "religion of Sacraments," which was the first stage of the Anti-Christian apostacy."§ In his great work, "De Civitate Dei," he describes the constituency of the Heavenly Jerusalem as elect from the mul-

virtue was too generally thought to attach to the rite."—Elliott vol. i. pp. 251, 2.

* Ib. i. 252.

† Hampden's Bampton Lectures, Lect. vii.

‡ Tertullian speaks of the baptized as those who were no more numbered in Adam, but numbered in Christ.

§ The whole of Mr. Elliott's admirable remarks on this subject, vol. i. ch. vii. § 1, deserve attentive perusal.
titude of the baptized; speaking of them not merely as elect Israelites (fratres electorum Israelitarum), but, specifically, as God's twelve tribes of Election out of Israel's twelve professing tribes (tribus purgatae, electæ, quasi tribus Domini); and he asserts their inviolability, as God's sealed ones, from real injury by the Devil.* He notices, moreover, that the saints, while on earth, are a definite number, answering to the Apocalyptic Hundred and Forty-four thousand; small as compared, at any given period, with the number of the reprobate, yet, in the aggregate, very large, and, in the eternal world, forming a number innumerable,—a society to be gathered out of all nations, and kindreds, and tribes, and destined to realise in the heavenly blessedness, the types of Israel's festival-keeping in Canaan, and the paradisaical emblems of the Apocalypse.† We have thus, in the writings of this early Reformer, an authority almost contemporary with the time to which the prediction points, for interpreting the Vision as prefiguring the numbering and preservation of a Church within the Church,—an "election of grace" gathered out of the aggregate body of nominal Christians; and as consequently denoting the corruption which followed the political establishment of Christianity. The language of Augustine shows how well the emblematic


† "Centum quadragesima quatuor (mille), quo numero significatur universitas sanctorum in Apocalypsi."—Ib.
figures of the Apocalypse were then understood, as well as how exactly their import corresponded to the historical fulfilment.

After this,—that is, after the Apostle had heard proclaimed the number of the Sealed Ones,—there was presented to him the Vision of an innumerable multitude, composed of some of every nation, of all tribes, races, and dialects, who stood before the Throne, and in the presence of The Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and bearing in their hands palm-branches, the emblem of victory. This glorious multitude with one accord shouted forth an ascription of their salvation to God and The Lamb; upon which the angelic attendants, and the crowned presbyters, and the living creatures, all fell prostrate and joined in the act of adoration. The Apostle is asked by one of the crowned forms, whether he understands the Vision, or knows of whom the multitude consists. Upon his intimating his wish to be informed, he is told by the elder who addressed him, that they have come out of the great tribulation, and are such as have attained to their beatific state of purity and joy through the justifying virtue of the blood of The Lamb. This multitude which no one could number, is so described as in antithesis to the definite number of the Sealed Ones; and the view taken by Augustine of the import of the Vision, seems to supply the true explanation. Although the faithful servants of Christ, who are found within the visible Church, are at all times a comparatively small number in relation to the existing generation, yet,
in the aggregate, gathered from all times and from all nations, they will form an incalculable number.* The Sealed Ones represented the Church militant; hence, the Apostle did not behold them in the Vision, the scene of which was the heavenly temple; but, as if to console him for the small proportion they bore to the Christian Israel, he was favoured with this prospective Vision of their collective numbers, and of their ultimate triumph and blessedness. This portion of the emblematic representation must be considered, therefore, as applying not to any historical era, but to the felicity which awaits the redeemed and saved of all ages and generations; being intended to convey to the mind of the Apostle, and to the early Churches, the assurance, that, notwithstanding the wide-spread apostacy and the calamities and persecutions which should both precede and follow it, the gates of death and the powers of hell should not prevail against the kingdom and cause of Christ, and that those who should be faithful unto death should come off more than conquerors through Him who loved them. Thus,

* See Elliott, vol. i. pp. 284, 5, notes. A similar explanation of the passage is given by the ancient expositor, Berengaud:—

"Per 144,000, electi qui in ecclesiâ Dei singulis temporibus laborent, designantur: et quia in comparatione reprodorum exigua est turba electorum, non immerto numero 144,000 designantur. In celesti vero beatudine, ubi singulis temporibus ex omnibus gentibus tribubis et linguis congregantur, tanta eorum efficitur multitudo ut nullo numero comprehendi possit." Ib. 274, note. Berengaud was a Benedictine monk of the ninth century, and his commentary seems of small value; but he, no doubt, derived this explanation from Augustine. See Ib. vol. iv. p. 361.
in connexion with the Sealing, the Vision denotes, not only the preservation of a continued living succession of true witnesses, but also their assured spiritual preservation, individually, "through faith unto salvation."

It is remarkable, however, that, in the ecclesiastical usages of the fourth century, we find a correspondence to the emblematic representations of this Vision, not less striking than that which has been already pointed out between the mystical sealing and the phraseology of ecclesiastical writers in reference to the baptismal and chrismal rites. At the Easter and Pentecostal festivals, the newly baptized neophytes, in their white vestments,* formed conspicuous groupes round each Christian sanctuary; and having been enrolled in the church register, they were led up to the altar, and received with psalmody; coronals also were bestowed upon them, typical of their victory over the world and sin. At the feast of Whitsuntide, the πιστοί, or church members, including those baptized at the preceding Easter, walked in procession, bearing palm-branches, in imitation of the Feast of Tabernacles. It may, perhaps, admit of doubt, whether these ceremonies were suggested by the emblems and language of the Apocalypse, or whether (as Mr. Elliott maintains †) the Apocalyptic picture was

* The newly baptized were styled, from their white dress, λευχειμονοες, and albatì. Mosheim notices the crown worn by them: "Initiati coronâ candidaque veste ornati, domum revertebantur."

† See authorities in Elliott, vol. i. pp. 253—6, notes.
designed to be "antithetical to the ritualistic system and doctrine of the times referred to." In either case, the correspondence is significant; and while the customs referred to illustrate the figurative language of the prediction, they show how, by substituting the ritual for the spiritual, the symbol for the thing signified, the whole character of Christianity was changed.
Vision the Fourth.

THE SEVENTH SEAL—THE TRUMPETS.

This glorious vision faded away with the last words of the sublime colloquy with the heavenly Elder. But now, to the view of the entranced Apostle, there was again presented the Throne, and, in the midst of it, and of the living creatures, and of the elders, appeared The Lamb; for he proceeds to say, as if resuming the Vision of the Sealed Volume, "When He had opened the Seventh Seal, there was silence in heaven, as if for about half an hour." During this pause, he beheld the seven trumpet-bearing angels standing ready to sound; and another angel came forth and stood at the golden incense-altar before the Throne, and offered incense, which is represented as imparting its fragrance to the prayers of the saints. This silence in the heavenly temple corresponds to the customary interval in the worship of the Jewish sanctuary, during which the priest whose turn it was, went in to offer incense, while the worshippers remained silently waiting in the court without; a
silence which was broken by sound of trumpets.* The act of the angel has been interpreted, with manifest propriety, as denoting the mediatorial nature of Our Lord's intercession in Heaven, of which, indeed, the function of the Jewish high-priest was typical. To speak of the angel in the vision as being, or as representing the person of, Our Lord seems, however, quite unwarranted. The emblematic representation may rather be said to describe, in visible language, His prevailing advocacy, in virtue of which the prayers of His people find acceptance. What then followed, denoted the answer to the prayers which ascended with the incense. The angel filled his censer with burning coals from the altar, and scattered them upon the earth; and there ensued mystic voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake; upon which, the seven angels raised their trumpets ready to sound; trumpets of alarum;† such as were also used in the Jewish ritual to announce the new moon or the new year;‡ thereby to indicate, like the striking of a clock, that the hour was up.§

* Luke i. 40. Philo (cited by Bp. Newton) states, that the incense used to be offered before the morning, and after the evening sacrifice. Mode and Daubuz, as well as Newton, consider the half hour's silence in heaven as figurative of the church's silence in prayer before the trumpets' sounding. Mr. Elliott's dissatisfaction with this view seems to rest upon a forced and mistaken construction of the context.

† Numb. x. 1—10; Isa. xviii. 3; Jer. li. 27; Zeph. i. 16.
‡ Psal. lxxxi. 3; Levit. xxv. 9.
§ "Each trumpet-angel's sounding, like the hour-strikings on a chronometer, might be regarded as a chronological epoch in the prophecy, a note of advance towards the consummation." Elliott, i. 322.
The phrase, "there was silence in the heaven," has been thought to admit of a different interpretation, as denoting a stillness in the firmament, preparatory to the loosing of the four winds,—a calm before the tempest. This rendering of the phrase would be strictly in accordance with classical and sacred usage;* and, adopting this interpretation, Mr. Elliott would render the clause, "there had been a calm in the firmament for about half an hour;"† so as to make the silence or stillness precede the opening of the Seventh Seal. He moreover considers this pause as corresponding, chronologically, to the seventy years which intervened between Constantine's final victory over Licinius, A.D. 324, and Alaric's revolt consequent upon the death of Theodosius, A.D. 395. Against this historical application of the emblematic silence, as well as the ingenious interpretation of the phrase, there lie objections which must be deemed insuperable. Admitting that the expression might aptly denote the calm which ordinarily precedes a storm, had the figure of the four winds occurred in the immediate context, the reference is too remote to be natural or probable; whereas the allusion to the silent interval in the Jewish ritual is obvious, and accords with the rest of the imagery. There seems, also, too much refinement about the

* So Grotius explains the passage: "Factum est silentium in calo: id est, venti illi de quibus actum supra, vii. 1, quievere." Mr. Elliott cites from Virgil, the expression, "silet aquor," and from Ovid, "silet humidus aër." The Hebrew for a calm is literally 'silence'. Psal. cxxi. 29.

† Elliott, vol. i. pp. 297—299.
calculation by which Mr. Elliott would make the half-hour denote a specific period: it is more safe to interpret it as denoting simply a brief interval, such as can scarcely be understood as embracing a term of seventy years. Moreover, the period fixed upon by Mr. Elliott, was very far indeed from being one of unbroken tranquillity, as regarded either the internal state of the Empire and the Church, or freedom from foreign wars. It included the civil war which ensued upon Constantine's death, between his eldest and his youngest sons; the alternate persecutions directed by Constantius and Valens against the Orthodox and the Arians;* the temporary restoration of Paganism by Julian; the defeat of Valens by the Goths, in the fatal battle of Adrianople; the usurpation of Maximus after the death of Gratianus; and, finally, the wars

* "By an edict of Constantius against the Catholics, those who refused to communicate with the Arian bishops, and particularly with Macedonius, were deprived of the immunities of ecclesiastics, and of the rights of Christians; they were compelled to relinquish the possession of the churches, and were strictly prohibited from holding their assemblies within the walls of the city." In Thrace and Asia Minor, "the cruelties exercised by the semi-Arian tyrant (Macedonius) in support of the Homoioiun, exceeded the commission, and disgraced the reign of Constantius." The consequence was, the revolt of whole provinces of the eastern empire, followed by a civil war in which whole towns and villages were laid waste, and thousands of so styled heretics massacred. In Africa, the revolt and fanaticism of the Donatist Circumcellions led to similar horrors. Gregory Nazianzen pathetically laments, that the kingdom of heaven was converted, by discord, into the image of chaos, of a nocturnal tempest, and of hell itself. Gibbon, ch. xxi.
and death of Theodosius. In fact, the period extending from A.D. 339 to 395, has been supposed, by one expositor, to be that of the First Trumpet;* a more plausible, though, as it will be shewn, an inadmissible theory.

It has already been remarked, that the utter overthrow of Paganism, symbolized by the emblems of the Sixth Seal, was not consummated till the reign of Theodosius. Such being the fact, it seems but reasonable to consider the period embraced by the Sixth Seal as extending to his reign. But, if so, the silent interval could not prefigure any historical period of earlier date, nor could the First Trumpet have sounded before the death of Theodosius. On turning, however, to the page of the secular Historian, we find strongly marked, a brief period of tranquillity, which followed the triumph of that Emperor over the Barbarians, and attended the concluding years of his extraordinary reign,—answering with historical exactness to the emblematic prediction.

The position of affairs at the death of Valens, is described by Gibbon in language which forcibly recalls the emblem of the angels holding back the tempest winds. "A formidable tempest of the Barbarians of Germany seemed ready to burst over the provinces of Gaul; and the mind of Gratian was oppressed and distracted by the administration of the West. . . . The deliverance and peace of the Roman provinces was the work of prudence,

* Fleming's Rise and Fall of the Papacy, p. 30.
rather than of valour: the prudence of Theodosius was seconded by fortune. . . . The general, or, rather, the final capitulation of the Goths may be dated four years, one month, and twenty-five days after the defeat and death of the Emperor Valens . . . . An army of forty thousand Goths was maintained for the perpetual service of the Empire of the East; . . . and while the Republic was guarded, or threatened, by the doubtful sword of the Barbarian, the last sparks of the military flame were finally extinguished in the minds of the Romans: . . . As the impatient Goths could only be restrained by the firm and temperate character of Theodosius, the public safety seemed to depend on the life and abilities of a single man."*

The fourteen years which intervened between the capitulation of the Goths and the death of Theodosius, A.D. 395, were characterized by an unusual calm and repose. If the half-hour of silence is to be understood of any political lull precursive of impending calamities, there is no period to which it is so signally applicable. If it be restricted to the brief suspension of hostilities after his death, it was an interval of days, rather than of years. He expired Jan. 17, and "before the winter had ended, the Gothic nation was in arms." His death "was considered by the people as an unforeseen and fatal event, which destroyed,

* Gibbon, ch. xxvi. The Goths, after the defeat of Valens, never abandoned the Roman territory; and this is considered by Gibbon as the principal and immediate cause of the fall of the Western Empire of Rome.
in a moment, the hopes of the rising generation."

"The Genius of Rome expired with Theodosius."

But what, then, were "the voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and earthquake which ensued upon the Angel's casting fire from his censer upon the earth? In the chronicles of the time, we find a precise counterpart to these mystical portents. Both in the year 394, which preceded the death of Theodosius, and in 396, the year that followed it, there occurred repeated earthquakes and tempests, which caused general forebodings of evil." "It was," remarks Mr. Elliott, referring to the statements of Ambrose and Jerome,† "like nature's own alarum, with men's voices of alarm responding, as well as the furnishing by nature of the very portents used symbolically of the events and epoch in the Apocalyptic Vision."

The Sixth Seal had been fulfilled in the overthrow of the Roman Paganism and the execution of the Divine wrath upon the heathen persecutors of the Church; and the removal of the seat of government to the banks of the Bosphorus had, as a preliminary step, prepared the way for the

* Gibbon, ch. xxvii.

† "Hoc nobis motus terrarum graves, hoc juges pluvia minabantur, et ultra solitum caligo tenebrosior denuntiabat, quod clemensissimus Imperator Theodosius excessurus esset et terris. Ipsa igitur excessum ejus elementa mærebat." Ambros. de obit. Theodos. The Benedictine Editor, in a note to this passage, cites the Chronicle of Marcellinus as recording continued shocks of earthquake, in some regions of Europe, from Sept. to Nov. 394. Marcellinus notes also the earthquakes and portents of 396; and Jerome refers to an eclipse of the sun. Elliott, i. 350, notes.
manifestation of the Apostate Usurper; but the "hinderance" was not yet taken away; and the Seventh Seal is prefigurative of those calamities upon the Western Empire, which accomplished the prediction. On the death of Theodosius, the Roman Empire was partitioned, by his two sons, into Eastern and Western, the Illyrian Prefecture being almost equally divided. The Western Empire comprised Gaul and Britain, Spain, Italy, and Africa, besides that portion of the Illyrian province which included Noricum, Pannonia, and Dalmatia. But the ancient tripartite division of the Empire was still so far recognized, that the Illyrian third, although repeatedly dismembered, and, under different arrangements, attached sometimes to the Eastern, sometimes to the Western Empire, preserved its geographical identity.* This fact is important as furnishing the most natural and satisfactory explanation of the phraseology employed in the subsequent emblematic description of the destructive agencies under the first four Trumpets; "The third part of the trees," "the third part of the sea," and "the third part of the rivers." Obviously, a third part of the Roman world is intended; and the actual threefold division of the Empire, under Constantine, Licinius, and Maximin, supplies a key to the specific import of these expressions.

The Western Third, which, in the tripartition referred to, fell to Constantine, comprised Gaul,

* Mr. Elliott has clearly established this historical fact, vol. i. pp. 333—340.
Spain, Britain, Italy, and Africa.* This political division is geographically subdivided into the plains of Gaul, the basin of the Mediterranean, west of Cape Bon and the Straits of Messina, with its islands and peninsulas, and the Alpine and Sub-Alpine regions which give rise to the European rivers. To these marked geographical features, the emblematic language of the Trumpets will be seen precisely to correspond; and the only plausible ground for doubting the intended reference, is the mixture of local allusion with symbolical description which the interpretation implies. This objection loses all its force, however, when it is recollected, how frequently the same blending of the literal with the figurative, the emblematic with local characteristics, occurs in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, imparting to specific predictions both definite significance and beauty.† A strong presumption

* Elliott, i. 336. To Licinius was assigned the vast Illyrian prefecture, comprising the rest of Roman Europe; to Maximin, the Asiatic provinces and Egypt.

† Mr. Elliott refers to Ezek. xxvii. 26, where Tyre is symbolized as a ship, and Nebuchadnezzar as the east wind; yet, "in the midst of the seas" designates the local position of Tyre. Again, in Ezek. xxxii., Pharaoh is designated under the emblem of a crocodile, while the prediction relates to the literal land of Egypt; and, in the same chapter, the sun, moon, and stars are referred to in an emblematic sense, while the application of the prediction is to Egypt. Many commentators, however, have arbitrarily contended, that, the words, land and sea, must always be taken, in the Apocalypse, in a mystical sense. Mede set the example of this fanciful interpretation, according to which the land or earth is the system or consti-
is thus afforded in favour of a similar interpretation of the emblematic language of the Apocalypse.

There is, moreover, an obvious reason why the calamities of the first four Trumpets should be figuratively described with reference to the local quarter, the countries with their inhabitants. In those of the preceding Seals, the Roman empire and polity, symbolized by the horse and its riders, was the subject of those judgments which issued in the overthrow of Paganism and the removal of the seat of imperial power. But now, as intimated by the Sealing Vision, it is upon the people of apostate Christendom, the baptized multitudes of the Christian Israel, that the tempest is to burst. The reign of Theodosius is at once the era of the destruction of Paganism and of that corruption of Christianity which so

tution of the empire; the sea, "that amplitude of rule which circumscribes it;" or, again, the sea means the barbarous nations separated from the empire, or nations in a perturbed state. So Vitrina, Daubuz, Woodhouse, Faber, and others. Nothing has tended more to introduce confusion and uncertainty into the interpretation of the prophecies, than these arbitrary rules, by which the figurative is converted into the enigmatical. If one part of a prediction is emblematic, it is argued, the rest ought to be so interpreted; and if the burning mountain, or the meteor, is an emblem, the sea and the rivers must be symbolical. The truth is, that the latter are geographical symbols: as such, they must be viewed at ch. x. 2, and xii. 12. It is absurd to contend that they cannot, in their literal meaning, be symbols. The literal sea may be an emblem of a maritime country or of maritime dominion, as in the familiar instance of Britannia ruling the waves.
speedily followed upon the establishment of its political supremacy.* "Well, then," remarks Mr. Elliott, "might the prophecy speak henceforward of the mass of the inhabitants of Roman professing Christendom under the same title as of its heathen population previously; 'the inhabitants of the earth.' For Heathenism had indeed now joined with Judaism, by its idolatry, as before by its philosophy, in corrupting the Christianity that had overthrown it. Alike the infidel Gibbon and the Christian Bishop Van Mildert speak of heathenism as revived in the Empire. To use the words of Coleridge, 'the pastors of the Church had gradually changed the life and light of the Gospel into the very superstitions they were commissioned to disperse, and thus, paganized Christianity in order to christen Paganism.' † "If," says another learned and elegant writer, "the 'philosophy and vain deceit' of Paganism were injurious to the simplicity which is in Christ, still more fatally infectious were the seductions of its gay ritual and imaginative mythology. With these elements of corruption, Christianity was everywhere surrounded. The genius of heathenism was incessantly at work to convert the religion of the Saviour into its own likeness. If an Apostle had revisited the earth at the end of four or five

* It deserves notice also, that, whereas the calamities prefigured under the Seals, had consisted chiefly in intestine discord, oppression, and suffering, the Trumpets are prefigurative of foreign invasion and conquest.

† Elliott, vol. i. p. 316.
centuries from the period of his ministry, and had looked at nothing but the outward and visible form of the Christian Church, he might have been tempted to fear, that the truth for which he had laboured and bled, had been wholly transformed into a gorgeous spectacle, a sort of mystic pageantry, its painful and laborious Evangelists into pompous actors, its places of worship into splendid theatres... All testimony combines to shew, that the genius of Paganism, despairing of an open conflict against the Imperial faith, was spreading its own fantastic embroidery over the simple and seamless vesture of Christianity; and not only so, but was beginning to mix up its palatable venom with her sacred and living waters."

Thus, then, while the prayers of the faithful ascended to Heaven with acceptance through the incense of the mediation of Christ, the answer to those supplications, symbolized by the action of the angel in casting fire from the altar upon the earth, was the infliction of His righteous judgments.

The Seven Angels having now assumed the attitude of being about to sound,—having (we may suppose) raised their trumpets,—"the first angel sounded; and there fell a shower of hail and fire mingled with blood,† by which the third part of the land was burned up, and the third part of the trees was consumed, and all the green grass was de-

* Le Bas' Life of Wicliff, pp. 6, 10. See, also, Gibbon, ch. xxviii.
stroved." When the second trumpet was sounded, it was as if a great volcano fell into the sea, and the third part of the sea became blood, the third part of the living creatures in the sea perished, and the third part of the ships was destroyed. On the sounding of the third trumpet, there fell from the firmament a flaming meteor, which turned the third part of the rivers and sources of waters to poison, so that multitudes died because the waters were poisoned. When the fourth angel sounded, the third part of the sun was eclipsed, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars, so that the day might not shine for a third part of it, and the night likewise; or, so that there was neither day-light nor moon-light nor star-light, as regarded the third part of the heavens.

These four Trumpets are obviously connected together as a series of calamities, like the first four Seals, being distinguished, by the proclamation of the angel who followed, from the subsequent three woes. Agreeably to the interpretation of the emblematic language already given, we must understand the plague of the first Trumpet as indicating destruction and slaughter poured upon the cultivated lands, and woods, and fertile pastures of the plains of Western Europe. The second plague, compared to a volcano cast into the sea, must be understood of a maritime war spreading devastation over the islands and shores of the Western Mediterranean. The third predicted judgment was to have for its local scene, the region in
which the European waters have their sources, and
the rivers which have always formed the bound-
daries of empire. The fourth Trumpet prefigured
the extinction of the political authorities of the
Western Empire. And most precisely did the
historical fulfilment correspond, in the Gothic,
Vandalic, Hunnic, and Ostrogothic invasions.
Again we turn to the page of the secular Histoi-
rian as supplying the key to the prophetic cipher.

The very year after the death of Theodosius,
Alaric the Goth, who, by the infatuation of the
Emperor Arcadius, was appointed Master General
of the Eastern Illyricum, made an inroad into
Greece; but the events prefigured by the first
four Trumpets, concern only the Western Empire.
Four years afterwards, having been proclaimed by
the Gothic chieftains, "King of the Visigoths,"
Alaric made his first attempt upon Italy. The
terms in which Gibbon describes the panic alarm
occasioned by his approach, are highly remark-
able. "'Fame,' says the Poet Claudian,* 'en-
circling with terror or gloomy wings, proclaimed
the march of the Barbarian army, and filled Italy
with consternation.' The most timid, who had
already embarked their valuable effects, meditated
their escape to the island of Sicily or the African
coast. The public distress was aggravated by the
fears and reproaches of superstition. Every hour

* The same poet describes a Veronese patriarch as lamenting
that "his trees, his old contemporary trees," must blaze in the
conflagration of the whole country; a striking coincidence
with one feature of the Apocalyptic emblem; and he compares
the invasion of Alaric to a hail-storm.
produced some horrid tale of strange and portentous accidents: the Pagans deplored the neglect of omens and the interruption of sacrifices; but the Christians still derived some comfort from the powerful intercession of the saints and martyrs."* It is but too probable, that they ascribed to that mediation the respite obtained by the victories of Pollentia and Verona, achieved by the skill and valour of the Imperial general, Stilicho, which, for a time, turned back "the deluge of Barbarians." The retreat of Alaric, like the drawing off of the Roman army from Jerusalem, afforded an opportunity of emigration and escape, of which, it may be supposed, numbers of the true servants of Christ would avail themselves, and thereby be saved from the calamities that ensued.

"While Italy rejoiced in her deliverance from the Goths," continues the Historian, "a furious tempest was excited among the nations of Germany, who yielded to the irresistibile impulse that appears to have been gradually communicated from the Eastern extremity of the continent of Asia . . . . This formidable emigration issued from the same coast of the Baltic which had poured forth the myriads of the Cimbri and Teutones to assault Rome and Italy in the vigour of the Republic . . . . The correspondence of nations was, in that age, so imperfect and precarious, that the revolutions of the North might escape the knowledge of the court of Ravenna,

* Gibbon, ch. xxx.
till the dark cloud which was collected along the coast of the Baltic, burst in thunder upon the banks of the Upper Danube. . . . . The king of the confederate Germans passed without resistance the Alps, the Po, and the Appennine. Many cities of Italy were pillaged or destroyed; and the siege of Florence by Radagaisus is one of the earliest events in the history of that celebrated republic, whose firmness checked and delayed the unskilful fury of the Barbarians.* . . . . . . After the defeat of Radagaisus (by Stilicho), two parts of the German host, which must have exceeded the number of one hundred thousand men, still remained in arms between the Appennine and the Alps, or between the Alps and the Danube. . . . . The invasion of Gaul, which Alaric had designed, was executed by the remains of the great army of Radagaisus . . . . . . On the last day of the year (A.D. 406), in a season of the year when the waters of the Rhine were most probably frozen, they entered without opposition the defenceless provinces of Gaul. This memorable passage of the Suevi, the Vandals, the Alani, and the Burgundians, who never afterwards retreated, may be considered as the fall of the Roman Empire in the countries beyond the Alps; and the barriers which had so long separated the savage and the civilized nations of the earth, were from that fatal moment levelled with the ground.” . . .

* This signal deliverance will be adverted to hereafter, as probably alluded to, ch. xii. 16, in the earth's swallowing the flood cast forth by the dragon.
"The subjects of Rome, unconscious of their approaching calamities, enjoyed the state of quiet and prosperity, which had seldom blessed the frontiers of Gaul. . . . The banks of the Rhine were crowned, like those of the Tyber, with elegant houses and well-cultivated farms. This scene of peace and plenty was suddenly changed into a desert; and the prospect of the smoking ruins could alone distinguish the solitude of nature from the desolation of man. The flourishing city of Mentz was surprised and destroyed, and many thousand Christians were inhumanly massacred in the church. Worms perished after a long and obstinate siege; Strasburg, Spires, Rheims, Tournay, Arras, Amiens; experienced the cruel oppression of the German yoke; and the consuming flames of war spread from the banks of the Rhine over the greatest part of the seventeen provinces of Gaul. That rich and extensive country, as far as the Ocean, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, was delivered to the Barbarians, who drove before them, in a promiscuous crowd, the bishop, the senator, and the virgin, laden with the spoils of their houses and altars."*

What could answer with more historic precision to the terrific emblems of a tempest of hail and fire, mingled with blood?

Twice had the destructive storm been diverted from the plains of Italy, by the retreat of Alaric and by the defeat and death of Radagaisus; but, in the year which followed the desolation of Gaul,

* Gibbon, ch. xxx.
(A.D. 408,) Alaric, who, from his camp on the confines of Italy, had watched his opportunity, "urged by the pressing invitation of malcontents," and by the injurious treatment he had himself received at the hands of the Imperial ministers, suddenly descended from the Alps, and crossed the Po, pillaging the cities in his course, without encountering any opposition. Instead of attempting the hopeless siege of Ravenna, "the impregnable residence of the Emperor of the West," he proceeded to Rimini, stretching his ravages along the coast of the Adriatic. In this part of his route, the King of the Goths is stated to have been confronted by an Italian hermit, who boldly denounced the indignation of Heaven against the oppressors of the earth. "But," continues the Historian, "the Saint himself was confounded by the solemn asseveration of Alaric, that he felt a secret and preternatural impulse, which directed and even compelled his march to the gates of Rome.

"During a period of six hundred and nineteen years, the seat of Empire had never been violated by the presence of a foreign enemy. . . . . By a skilful disposition of his numerous forces, Alaric encompassed the walls, commanded the twelve principal gates, and vigilantly guarded the navigation of the Tyber, from which the Romans derived the surest and most plentiful supply of provisions. . . . . The unfortunate city gradually experienced the distress of scarcity, and at length the horrid calamities of famine. . . .
Many thousands of the inhabitants of Rome expired in their houses or in the streets for want of sustenance; and as the public sepulchres without the walls were in the power of the enemy, the stench which arose from so many putrid and unburied carcases, infected the air; and the miseries of famine were succeeded and aggravated by the contagion of a pestilential disease. . . . . The last resource of the Romans was in the clemency, or at least in the moderation of the King of the Goths. . . . . Alaric at length consented to raise the siege on the immediate payment of 5000 pounds of gold, of 30,000 pounds of silver, of 4000 robes of silk, of 3000 pieces of fine scarlet cloth, and of 3000 pounds weight of pepper. . . . . His army, enriched by the contributions of the capital, slowly advanced into the fair and fruitful province of Tuscany; and the Gothic standard became the refuge of 40,000 Barbarian slaves who had broken their chains, and aspired, under the command of their great deliverer, to revenge the injuries and the disgrace of their cruel servitude."

After fruitless negotiations for peace with the Emperor, Alaric, in the following year, (A.D. 409,) a second time appeared before the walls of Rome, and again withdrew on the submission of the senate, and their compliance with his demands. But, in the next year, (410,) "the crime and folly of the court of Ravenna was expiated, a third time, by the calamities of Rome. The King of the

* Gibbon, ch. xxxi.
Goths, who no longer dissembled his appetite for plunder and revenge, appeared in arms under the walls of the capital; and the trembling senate, without any hopes of relief, prepared, by a desperate resistance, to delay the ruin of their country. But they were unable to guard against the secret conspiracy of their slaves and domestics; who, either from birth or interest, were attached to the cause of the enemy. At the hour of midnight, the Salarian gate was silently opened, and the inhabitants were awakened by the tremendous sound of the Gothic trumpet. Eleven hundred and sixty-three years after the foundation of Rome, the Imperial City, which had subdued and civilized so considerable a part of mankind, was delivered to the licentious fury of the tribes of Germany and Scythia."

"The retreat of the victorious Goths, who evacuated Rome on the sixth day, might be the result of prudence; but it was not surely the effect of fear. At the head of an army encum-

* Gibbon, ch. xxxi. "The awful catastrophe of Rome," the Historian remarks, "filled the astonished empire with grief and terror;" and the credulity of the people led them to exaggerate the afflictions of the Queen of Cities. He discovers a strong disposition to discredit or palliate the horrors of the sack and massacre. Immense numbers were sold into captivity or driven into exile. The Italian fugitives were dispersed through the provinces, along the coast of Egypt and Asia, as far as Constantinople and Jerusalem; and "the village of Bethlehem, the solitary residence of St. Jerome and his female converts, was crowded with illustrious beggars of either sex and every age, who excited the public compassion by the remembrance of their past fortune."
bered with rich and weighty spoils, their intrepid Leader advanced along the Appian Way into the southern provinces of Italy, destroying whatever dared to oppose his passage, and contenting himself with the plunder of the unresisting country. . . . The fruits of a long peace perished under the rude grasp of the Barbarians; . . . and the principal warriors insulted the villas and gardens, once inhabited by Lucullus and Cicero, along the beauteous coast of Campania. . . . No sooner had he reached the extreme land of Italy, than he was attracted by the neighbouring prospect of a fertile and peaceful island. Yet, even the possession of Sicily, he considered only as an intermediate step to the important expedition which he already meditated against the continent of Africa. . . . The design was defeated by the premature death of Alaric, which fixed, after a short illness, the fatal term of his conquests."*

The victorious Goth had now fulfilled his commission; and the hail-storm heralded by the First Trumpet, spent itself before it reached the sea. "The eight provinces which had been most deeply injured, obtained an indulgence of five years, in the relaxation of the tribute and taxation. Crowds of those who had fled before the sword of the Barbarians, were recalled by the hopes of plenty;" and, "in less than seven years, the vestiges of the Gothic invasion were almost obliterated."

About twenty years had elapsed from the sack

* Gibbon, ch. xxxi.
of Rome by the Goths, when the Second Trumpet gave its signal, and, at the invitation of the insurgent Roman General, Boniface, the King of the Vandals threw himself upon Africa, where he was hailed by the persecuted Donatists as a powerful deliverer from the oppressive edicts of the Roman Emperors. Too late, Boniface lamented his error: "the inexorable King of the Vandals sternly refused to relinquish the possession of his prey. The victorious Barbarians insulted the open country; and Carthage, Cirta, and Hippo Regius were the only cities that appeared to rise above the general inundation."

"The long and narrow tract of the African coast was filled with frequent monuments of Roman art and magnificence; . . . and the annual exportation of wheat was so regular and plentiful, that Africa deserved the name of the common granary of Rome and of mankind. On a sudden, the seven fruitful provinces from Tangier to Tripoli were overwhelmed by the invasion of the Vandals. . . . The stern policy of Genseric justified his frequent examples of military executions; he was not always the master of his own passions or those of his followers; and the calamities of war were aggravated by the licentiousness of the Moors and the fanaticism of the Donatists."* . . . "After the loss of a battle, Count

* The Historian regards as incredible, the statements made by the authorities cited, "that it was the common practice of the Vandals, to extirpate the olives and other fruit-trees of a country where they intended to settle," and, "that it was a usual stratagem, to slaughter great numbers of their prisoners before
Boniface retired into Hippo Regius, where he was immediately besieged by an enemy who considered him as the real bulwark of Africa. The maritime colony of Hippo, about two hundred miles westward of Carthage, had formerly acquired the distinguishing epithet of Regius, from the residence of Numidian kings. By the skill of Boniface, and, perhaps, by the ignorance of the Vandals, the siege of Hippo was protracted above fourteen months:* the sea was continually open; and when the adjacent country had been exhausted by irregular rapine, the besiegers themselves were compelled by famine to relinquish their enterprise. The Italian fleet and army having been re-inforced, from Constantinople, with a powerful armament, . . . Boniface boldly marched against the Vandals; and the loss of a second battle irretrievably decided the fate of Africa. He embarked with the precipitation of despair. . . . Eight years elapsed, however, from the evacuation of Hippo to the reduction of Carthage.† . . . After Genseric had permitted his licentious troops to satiate their rage and avarice,

the walls of a besieged city, for the sole purpose of infecting the air and producing a pestilence.” Yet, there must have been some ground for these supposed exaggerations; and in ch. xxxvi. Gibbon himself ascribes the former policy to Genseric.

* “St. Augustin, the light and pillar of the Catholic Church, was gently released, in the third month of the siege, and in the seventy-sixth year of his age, from the actual and the impending calamities of his country.”

† Carthage, “the Rome of the African world,” was surprised by the Vandals, 585 years after the destruction of the city and republic by the younger Scipio.
he instituted a more regular system of rapine and oppression; the lands of the proconsular province which formed the immediate district of Carthage, were accurately measured and divided among the Barbarians; and the Conqueror reserved for his peculiar domain the fertile territory of Byzacium and the adjacent parts of Numidia and Getulia."

"The Vandals and Alani, who followed the successful standard of Genseric, had acquired a rich and fertile territory which stretched along the coast above ninety days' journey from Tanger to Tripoli; but these narrow limits were pressed and confined, on either side, by the sandy desert and the Mediterranean. . . . Genseric cast his eyes towards the sea; he resolved to create a naval power, and his bold resolution was executed with steady and active perseverance. The woods of Mount Atlas afforded an inexhaustible nursery of timber; his new subjects were skilled in the arts of navigation and ship-building; he animated his daring Vandals to embrace a mode of warfare which would render every maritime country accessible to their arms; the Moors and Africans were allured by the hope of plunder; and, after an interval of six centuries, the fleets that issued from the port of Carthage, again claimed the empire of the Mediterranean. The success of the Vandals, the conquest of Sicily, the sack of Palermo, and the frequent descents on the coast of Lucania, awakened and alarmed the mother of Valentinian and the sister of Theodosius; and

* Gibbon, ch. xxxiii.
armaments, expensive and ineffectual, were prepared for the destruction of the enemy. The revolutions of the palace left the Western Empire without a defender. Genseric (having) equipped a numerous fleet of Vandals and Moors, cast anchor at the mouth of the Tyber about three months after the elevation of Maximus to the imperial throne. . . . Rome and its inhabitants (betrayed by the Burgundian mercenaries) were delivered to the licentiousness of the Vandals and Moors, whose blind passions revenged the injuries of Carthage. The pillage lasted fourteen days and nights; and all that yet remained of public or private wealth, of sacred or profane treasures, was diligently transported to the vessels of Genseric. The holy instruments of the Jewish worship, the gold table and the gold candlestick with seven branches, had been ostentatiously displayed to the Roman people in the triumph of Titus. They were afterwards deposited in the Temple of Peace; and at the end of four hundred years, the spoils of Jerusalem were transferred from Rome to Carthage, by a Barbarian who derived his origin from the shores of the Baltic.”*

In the reign of Majorian (A.D. 457), “the imperial navy of three hundred large galleys, with an adequate proportion of transports and smaller vessels, was collected in the secure and capacious harbour of Carthagenae in Spain;” destined for the coast of Africa. “Genseric was saved from impending ruin by the treachery of some powerful

* Gibbon, ch. xxxvi.
subjects, envious or apprehensive of their master's success. Guided by their secret intelligence, he surprised the unguarded fleet in the bay of Carthagena: many of the ships were sunk, or taken, or burnt; and the preparations of three years were destroyed in a single day."*

"The kingdom of Italy, a name to which the Western Empire was gradually reduced, was afflicted, under the reign of Ricimer, by the incessant depredations of the Vandal pirates. In the spring of each year, they equipped a formidable navy in the port of Carthage; and Genseric himself, though in a very advanced age, still commanded in person the most important expeditions. His designs were concealed with impenetrable secrecy, till the moment that he hoisted sail. When he was asked by his pilot what course he should steer, 'Leave the determination to the winds' (replied the Barbarian with pious arrogance); 'they will transport us to the guilty coast whose inhabitants have provoked the Divine justice.' . . . The Vandals repeatedly visited the coasts of Spain, Liguria, Tuscany, Campania, Lucania, Bruttium, Apulia, Calabria, Venetia, Dalmatia, Epirus, Greece, and Sicily; they were tempted to subdue the island of Sardinia, so advantageously placed in the centre of the Mediterranean; and their arms spread desolation or terror from the columns of Hercules to the mouth of the Nile."

At length, (A.D. 468,) "the powers of the Eastern Empire were strenuously exerted to deliver Italy

* Gibbon, ch. xxxvi.
and the Mediterranean from the Vandals; and Genseric, who had so long oppressed both sea and land, was threatened from every side with a formidable invasion. . . . The fleet that sailed from Constantinople to Carthage, consisted of 1113 ships; and the number of soldiers and mariners exceeded 100,000 men. Basiliscus, the brother of the Empress Vorina, was entrusted with this important command. . . . He landed his troops at Cape Bona, about forty miles from Carthage; and the Vandals who opposed his progress by sea or land, were successively vanquished. If Basiliscus had seized the moment of consternation, and boldly advanced to the capital, Carthage must have surrendered, and the kingdom of the Vandals been extinguished. Genseric beheld the danger with firmness, and eluded it with his veteran dexterity. He requested a truce of five days to regulate the terms of his submission: the guilty or credulous Basiliscus consented. . . . During this short interval, the wind became favourable to the designs of Genseric. He manned his largest ships of war with the bravest of the Moors and Vandals; and they towed after them many large barks filled with combustible materials. In the obscurity of the night, these destructive vessels were impelled against the unguarded and unsuspecting fleet of the Romans, who were awakened by the sense of their instant danger. Their close and crowded order assisted the progress of the fire, which was communicated with rapid and irresistible violence. Whilst they laboured to extricate themselves from the fire-
ships, and to save at least a part of the navy, the galleys of Genseric assaulted them with temperate and disciplined valour; and many of the Romans who escaped the fury of the flames, were destroyed or taken by the victorious Vandals. . . Basiliscus disgracefully fled in the beginning of the engagement, returning to Constantinople with the loss of more than half his fleet and army.

"After the failure of this great expedition, Genseric again became the tyrant of the sea; the coasts of Italy, Greece, and Asia were again exposed to his revenge and avarice; Tripoli and Sardinia returned to his obedience; he added Sicily to the number of his provinces; and, before he died, in the fulness of years and of glory, he beheld the final extinction of the empire of the West."

Thus, the more strikingly because unconsciously, has the graphic pen of Gibbon—in describing the phenomenon of the sudden creation of the naval power of the Vandals, and the triumphant career of "the tyrant of the sea,"—illustrated the fearful import and appropriateness of the emblematic prediction. What could more aptly describe the destructive agency of the Vandal fleets, than a figure taken from Etna or Stromboli, a marine volcano, discharging its burning lava into the sea? And how completely was the prediction fulfilled, in the entire destruction of the navy and maritime power of the Western third of the Roman Empire!

While Genseric was still fulfilling his commission, the Third Trumpet had given the signal, at

* Gibbon, ch. xxxvi.
which there fell a flaming meteor on the European waters, which turned them to poison. "In the reign of Attila," says Gibbon, "the Huns again became the terror of the world." His account of this imperial Barbarian, who united under his rude dominion the mighty kingdoms of Germany and Scythia, and comprised also those of Scandinavia, partakes of the character of romance. The whole breadth of Eastern Europe, 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; and the historians describe, in terms expressive of total extirpation and erasure, the calamities they inflicted on seventy cities of the Eastern Empire. Peace was at length established between the haughty Conqueror and the Eastern Romans, whom he despised; and he resolved to direct his invincible arms against the Western Empire. His expedition into Gaul was unsuccessful; he there met with and was repulsed by the Visigoths and their allies. In the battle of Chalons, contemporary writers estimate the number of the slain at 162,000, and 300,000; "incredible exaggerations, which suppose a real and effective loss sufficient to justify the historian's remark, that whole generations were swept away by the madness of kings in a single hour." Yet, according to Gibbon, "neither the spirit nor the forces nor the reputation of Attila were impaired by the failure of the Gallic expedition. In the ensuing spring, (A.D. 452,) he took the field, passed the Alps, and invaded Italy with an innumerable host of barbarians. Aquileia withstood a siege
of three months; it was at length taken by assault, and so completely destroyed, that the succeeding generation could scarcely discover the ruins. The cities of Altinum, Concordia, and Padua were reduced into heaps of stones and ashes. Vicenza, Verona, and Bergamo were exposed to the rapacious cruelty of the Huns. Milan and Pavia submitted, without resistance, to the loss of their wealth. Attila spread his ravages over the rich plains of modern Lombardy, which are divided by the Po, and bounded by the Alps and the Appennine. . . . The deliverance of Italy was purchased by the immense ransom or dowry of the princess Honoria." The state of his army, attacked by disease, may have hastened his retreat. He recrossed the Danube to the royal village near Buda, where, the next year, (A.D. 453,) he was cut off by apoplexy. With his death, the empire of the Huns passed away. "His genius alone had sustained the huge and disjointed fabric." From his invasion of Gaul, not three years had elapsed, and only twelve from his first ravages of the Eastern Empire, when his death delivered the world from this scourge of God and enemy of the human race. His rapid and transitory course is most fitly symbolized by a baleful meteor; and it is remarkable, how it may be traced from the banks of the Danube, along the upper line of that river, and descending the Rhine from Basle to the plains of Belgium, till, on deviating into the valley of the Marne, his progress was arrested; and, in the ensuing spring, he fell upon the Alpine valleys, the lakes of Lombardy, and the basin of the Po.
Thus, the rivers and water-sources of the third part of the Empire were turned to wormwood, and men died because they were made deadly.

The Fourth Trumpet gave the signal for the final act, which Gibbon designates as the "extinction of the Western Empire." The helpless Augustulus, the son of the Patrician Orestes, the last acknowledged Emperor of the West, had been reduced to implore the clemency and protection of Odoacer, the Goth, who had risen in the service of the Empire to be the general of the army and the vicegerent of the State. But "Odoacer had resolved to abolish that useless and expensive office, and Augustulus was made the instrument of his own disgrace; he signified his resignation to the Senate; and that assembly, in their last act of obedience to a Roman prince, still affected the spirit of freedom and the forms of the constitution." In an epistle addressed to the Emperor Zeno, who had lately been restored to the Byzantine throne, they solemnly disclaim the wish of continuing any longer the imperial succession in Italy since, in their opinion, the majesty of a sole monarch is sufficient to pervade and protect at the same time both the East and the West." In their own name, and in that of the people, they consent that the seat of universal empire shall be transferred from Rome to Constantinople; and they basely renounce the right of choosing their master, the only vestige that yet remained of the authority which had given laws to the world. The republic might safely confide in the civil and military virtues of Odoacer; and they humbly request
that the Emperor would invest him with the title of patrician, and with the administration of the diocese of Italy." The prudent Zeno, gratified with the title of sole emperor, "gratefully accepted the imperial ensigns, the sacred ornaments of the throne and palace, which the Barbarian (Odoacer) was not unwilling to remove from the sight of the people."* The precise year is fixed by Gibbon, A.D. 479.

Yet, although the Imperial Sun of Rome was thus extinguished, "the other lesser luminaries," as Bp. Newton remarks, "still subsisted; for Rome was still allowed to have her senate, and consuls, and subordinate magistrates." Odoacer at first suppressed them, but, after an interval of seven years, he restored the consulship of the West; and the civil administration of Italy was still exercised by the Prætorian prefect and his subordinate officers. When Theodoric the Ostrogoth revived in some degree the prosperity of the Italian kingdom, "from a tender regard to the expiring prejudices of Rome, the Barbarian declined the name, the purple, and the diadem of the Emperors."† The civil administration, with its honours and

* Gibbon, ch. xxxvi. "It is true," Sismondi remarks, "Odoacer also took the appellation of king. This was a barbaric dignity, which had not been held incompatible with the command of an army or a Roman province. It denoted rather a ruler of men, than of territory. It was conferred on Odoacer by his soldiers, among whom the Heruli were probably the most numerous, whence he is often represented as king of the Heruli." Sismondi, Hist. of the Fall of the Empire, vol. i. p. 171.
† Gibbon, ch. xxxix.
emoluments, was confined to the Italians, and the people still preserved their laws and customs, and personal liberty. At length, "the succession of consuls finally ceased in the thirteenth year of Justinian, (A.D. 541,) whose despotic temper might be gratified by the silent extinction of a title which admonished the Romans of their ancient freedom;"* and in the year 556, Longinus, being sent by the Emperor Justin II. to govern Italy with absolute authority, changed the whole form of administration, abolished the senates, consuls, and magistrates, and, under the title of Exarch, fixed the seat of his viceroyalty at Ravenna. "The queen of cities and mistress of the world was reduced to a poor dukedom," tributary to the exarchate.

Thus, after a century and a half of almost unexampled calamities, the last vestige of the ancient empire of Rome in the West was destroyed; an event looked forward to by the Christians of the fourth and fifth centuries, as the certain presage of the approaching manifestation of Anti-Christ. Thus, Chrysostom, in his exposition of Daniel's Prophecy, says: "As Rome succeeded Greece, so Anti-Christ is to succeed Rome, and Christ Our Saviour, Anti-Christ." Thus, when Alaric threatened Rome, Jerome, from his monastery at Bethlehem, exclaimed: "The Roman world rushes to destruction, and we bend not our neck in humiliation. The hindrance in Anti-Christ's way is removed, and we

* Gibbon, ch. xl.
heed it not.” And again, after the great Vandal irruption into Gaul, he exclaims: “What shall be safe, if Rome perish?” Evagrius, about A.D. 420, thus adverts to the signs of the times: “The Roman emperors are driven from their kingdoms; wars rage; all is commotion; Anti-Christ must be at hand.” Theodoret, a few years later, from his Syrian bishopric declared, that there required but the resolution of the Roman Empire into ten kingdoms, and then Anti-Christ would be revealed, and the fearful consequences apprehended would follow.*

It is sufficiently evident from these citations, in what sense the pious of those times understood the Pauline prediction in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians. In their anticipations of the fall of the Roman Empire, they appear to have been guided by the symbolic predictions of Daniel, rather than by the as yet imperfectly deciphered language of the Apocalypse. For this very reason, they furnish, perhaps, a more striking confirmation of the true historical import of the emblematic Trumpets, inasmuch as their views were not formed upon the prediction. Nor does it detract from the value of their testimony, that, with their correct anticipation of the fall of Rome and the subsequent revelation of Anti-Christ, were mingled mistaken calculations as to the duration of the world and an approaching millennium. Our Lord’s disciples, in like manner, supposed the

* The passages referred to are cited at length by Mr. Elliott, vol. i. pp. 365—371.
end of the world to be closely connected with the fall of Jerusalem. Had the Apocalypse been read aright, its predictions were adapted to correct these fallacious anticipations, by showing that the reign of Anti-Christ would extend through a long and dreary period, and that the end was not yet.

And now, previously to the sounding of the Fifth Trumpet, as if to mark an interval and a period of transition, the Apostle saw, in his Vision, an angel * flying through the mid-heaven, and heard him proclaim, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the three trumpets which are yet to sound." The solemn interval between the extinction of the old Roman form of government and the events prefigured by the Fifth Trumpet, was, indeed, a period of gloom and dire presage. The Historian winds up his account of the reign of Justinian with "the comets, the earthquakes, and the plague which astonished or afflicted the age." Each year was marked by the repetition of earthquakes, "of such duration, that Constantinople was shaken above forty days; of such extent, that the shock was communicated to the whole surface of the Globe, or at least of

* Instead of the word "angel," in the Received Text, some Codices read aerds, "an eagle," and it has been conjectured, that the original reading might be: "I beheld and heard one as an eagle flying," &c. But the internal evidence seems decidedly against this reading, as being so little in harmony with the parallel visions in ch. xiv. 6—9, and 15—18, as to warrant our abiding by the MS. authorities for the present reading. This remark applies to not a few of the critical emendations of this portion of the sacred text.
the Roman Empire."* The pestilence which burst forth in the fifteenth year of Justinian, after its first malignity was abated, alternately languished and revived; "but it was not till the end of a calamitous period of fifty-two years, that mankind recovered their health, or the air resumed its pure and salubrious quality. The triple scourge of war, pestilence, and famine afflicted the subjects of Justinian; and his reign is disgraced by a visible decrease of the human species, which has never been repaired in some of the finest countries of the Globe."†

Such was the portentous character of the times. Nor was the voice of warning wanting, although the prognostics were misinterpreted as heralding the final judgment, rather than the impending calamities. Gregory the Great (A.D. 590), "the man of the age," was firmly persuaded that the Roman Empire was hastening to ruin; that Anti-Christ was at hand; and that the end of the world must be near; regarding as its preliminaries, so many incursions of barbarians, so many wars and public calamities with which his age was afflicted; and he repeats nothing more often in all his discourses and all his letters, than the coming of the terrible Judge, and the severity of his judgment.‡

* "Two hundred and fifty thousand persons are said to have perished in the earthquake of Antioch, whose domestic multitudes were swelled by the conflux of strangers to the festival of the Ascension."
† Gibbon, ch. xliii. ad fin. According to Procopius, a myriad of myriads (or a hundred millions) perished.
‡ See the extracts and references given by Elliott, vol. i.
It is indeed most strange and remarkable, that, in his violent contest with the Byzantine patriarch for Catholic supremacy, Gregory, who has been styled the first Pope and the last Roman bishop, declared before Christendom, that whosoever styled himself or sought to be called, universal bishop or universal priest, was, in his pride of heart, the precursor of Anti-Christ; that the tendency of this assumption, if acceded to, was to withdraw all members of the Church from its only true Head, Christ Jesus, in order to attach them to himself; and that, as to the Greek patriarch's having so acted, it surprised him not: he saw in the fact only a fulfilment of prophecy, and recognised it as a sign that Anti-Christ was close at hand.* Yet, within ten or fifteen years, this very title was assumed by Boniface, Gregory's successor in the Pontificate, the Greek Emperor Phocas himself conferring it (A.D. 606) upon the Latin Primate.

Towards the close of the sixth century, Rome "had reached the lowest period of her depression." Nature herself seemed to take into her own hand pp. 375—379. Baronius states, that, by an order of Gregory I. the appellation Pope, or παπάς, hitherto the general designation of bishops in the West as well as in the East, was applied exclusively to the Bishop of Rome.

* "In his rival, the patriarch of Constantinople, he condemned the Anti-Christian title of universal bishop, which the successor of St. Peter was too haughty to concede, and too feeble to assume; and the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Gregory was confined to the triple character of bishop of Rome, primate of Italy, and apostle of the West." Gibbon, ch. xiv.
the work of ruin; and a prediction ascribed to St. Benedict, appeared to be on the point of fulfilment, that Rome should be exterminated, not by the heathen, but by tempests, and lightnings, and earthquakes. The Tyber, swelled by continued rains, rushed with irresistible violence into the valleys of the seven hills; and a pestilential disease arising from the stagnant waters of the flood, hastened the depopulation of the city.* The most diligent inquiry has failed to discover who were at this time the acknowledged masters of Rome, or what was the form of her domestic government. "Like Thebes, or Babylon, or Carthage," remarks Gibbon, "the name of Rome might have been erased from the earth," but for "the vague tradition, that two Jewish teachers, a tent-maker and a fisherman, had formerly been executed in the circus of Nero; and at the end of five hundred years, these genuine or fictitious relics were adored as the palladium of Christian Rome."

The era which dates from the death of Justinian, A.D. 565, or from the establishment of the Lombards in Italy a few years afterwards, has been regarded as forming the boundary-line between

* Gibbon (ch. xliv.) speaks of one remarkable visitation of this kind; but Sir John Hobhouse enumerates "a scarcity in the year 604; a violent earthquake a few years afterwards; a pestilence in or about the year 678; five tremendous inundations of the Tyber between 680 and 797; a second famine in the pontificate of Pope Constantine, which continued for six-and-thirty months; and a pestilence in the last year of the seventh century." Historical Illustrations of Childe Harold, pp. 108—110.
the ancient and modern divisions of the history of Europe. But "an epoch in the history of Asia still more important and definite than the subversion of the Roman empire in Europe," is fixed upon by Mr. Hallam as forming the boundary line between the ancient and modern divisions of Byzantine history; an epoch dating from the appearance of Mohammed and the conquests of his disciples; and this line will intersect the reign of Heraclius.* Through the fifty years that succeeded to the extinction of the Western Empire, including the reigns of Zeno, Anastasius, and Justin, the Eastern portion of Christendom was exempted from external wars and suffering. Heraclius, by his victories over the Persians, had retrieved the disasters of the early part of his reign; and a treaty of peace and alliance had been ratified between the two Empires; when the trumpet of the fifth angel summoned a new and terrible enemy from the Arabian desert, commissioned to inflict upon the inhabitants of the eastern division of the Roman world the first of the three remaining penal woes. And so new and unlooked for was the instrumentality employed, as to bear the evident marks of a Providential chastisement.†

* Hallam's Middle Ages, vol. i. p. 162. Mohammed was born, A.D. 578. The era of the Hejira is A.D. 622. The Khilafate was established at Damascus, A.D. 660.
† "While the Emperor triumphed at Constantinople or Jerusalem, an obscure town on the confines of Syria was pillaged by the Saracens, and they cut in pieces some troops who advanced to its relief; an ordinary and trifling occurrence, had it not been the prelude of a mighty revolution. These robbers were the
When the fifth angel sounded, the Apostle beheld, in his Vision, a star that had fallen from the firmament to the earth. It is not said, that he beheld a falling star, which might be understood of a transitory meteor, but that he saw the star that had fallen; and on comparing this emblem with what is prefigured, under the Sixth Seal, by the stars of heaven which fell to the earth, we are warranted in interpreting this fallen star of a prince or ruler deposed from his original dignity or authority, and consequently an actual historical personage. We find a ruler predicted under the image of a star in the remarkable prophecy of Balaam; and Isaiah apostrophises the fallen king of Babylon under the same figure: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!"* To this star fallen from heaven was given, in the Vision, the key of the pit or well of the abyss; on his opening which, there issued, as from the crater of a volcano, a smoke that darkened the sun and the atmosphere; and out of the smoke came forth locusts having stings like scorpions.† The infernal smoke and darkness obviously indicate the prevalence of a system of apostles of Mahomet: their fanatic valour had emerged from the desert; and in the last eight years of his reign, Heraclius lost to the Arabs, the same provinces which he had rescued from the Persians." Gibbon, ch. xlvi. ad fin.

* Numb. xxiv. 17; Isa. xiv. 12.

† Bp. Newton mentions "the remarkable coincidence that, in the seventeenth year of Heraclius, according to an eminent Arabian Historian (Abul-Feraijus), the sun was really darkened, and appeared half eclipsed from October to June."
error and falsehood, emanating from hell, and
darkening the face of society; and to this emblem,
the sudden rise and portentous development of
the Mohammedan imposture strikingly corre-
spond. "That is," says Bp. Newton, "a false
religion was set up, which filled the world with
darkness and error; and swarms of Saracen or
Arabian locusts overspread the earth."

The emblem employed to describe the Saracen
hordes who, impelled by the new fanaticism, burst
forth upon the Roman world, is at once so com-
plicated and so precise as to admit of no other
specific historical application. Besides indicating
their vast numbers, the symbol clearly points to the
Arabian desert as the quarter whence these devas-
tators were to issue; their horse-like appearance
denoted that they were hordes of cavalry; their
lion-teeth, that they would be destroyers of men;*
the apparently incongruous combination of mas-
culine faces with the hair of women, is explained
by the national characteristic of the Arab,—the
moustache and beard with long and uncut hair,
as described by St. John's contemporary, Pliny;†
while, in the turban and cuirass of the Saracen
warrior, we recognise the diadem and breastplate
of the symbolic figure. Not less distinctive is the
restriction put upon the destructive career of the
locust warriors, not to hurt the grass or any green

* So Joel i. 6; ii. 4, &c.
† "Arabes mirtati degunt, aut intonso crine. Barba abraditum,
Hist. vi. 28. See Elliott, vol. i. pp. 409—413.
thing or any tree, which finds its precise counterpart in the Koran. In the invasions of the Goths, Vandals, and Huns, the destruction of the trees and herbage was a marked feature of their barbarous warfare; and accordingly, it is expressly referred to in the prediction.* In those of the Saracens, an extraordinary contrast presents itself. An order was issued by the khalif Abu-Beker, on the first invasion of Syria: "Destroy no palm-trees, nor any corn-fields; cut down no fruit-trees, nor do any mischief to cattle." The limitation of the commission given to the emblematic locusts, to hurt only those who had not the seal of God on their foreheads, and to torment, but not to kill them, was, in like manner, historically fulfilled. Mohammed declared his commission to be only against idolaters; and the state of the Eastern churches at the time of the Saracen conquists, justified but too amply the charge which the Koran brings against Christians, that "they take their priests and their monks for their lords besides God," and worship not only Christ the Son of Mary, but the Virgin Mary also as God. In a letter issued by Abu-Beker, the troops were directed to respect the inmates of monasteries. But, it is added, "you will find another sort of people that belong to the synagogues of Satan, who have shaven crowns: be sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter till either they turn Mohammedans or pay tribute."† The Koran, the tribute, or the sword, was the option

* See ante, pp. 142, 5, 9, 150. † Mod. Trav. Arabia, p. 88.
held out to the Christians. Thus, these locust hordes were commissioned, not to exterminate, but to torment by the degradation and insult, the contempt and bitter hatred, to which those who adhered to the Christian faith were exposed on the part of their Mussulman conquerors and masters; so that, like the captive Jews in Babylon, they were led to deem death preferable to life.* The restriction in the commission may be interpreted also as referring to political extinction. Thus, Bp. Newton remarks: "As they were to hurt only the corrupt and idolatrous Christians, so these they were not to kill, but only to torment, and to bring such calamities upon the earth as should make men weary of their lives. Not that it could be supposed that the Saracens would not kill many thousands in their incursions. On the contrary, their angel hath the name of 'the destroyer.' They might kill them as individuals, but still, they should not kill them as a political body, as a state or empire. They might greatly harass and torment both the Greek and the Latin churches; but they should not utterly extirpate the one or the other."

Their power to torment was to last five months; which corresponds to the literal term of the ravages of locusts, which are observed to live about five months, that is, from April to September.

* Comp. Jer. viii. 3. "And death shall be chosen rather than life, by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family which remain in all the places whither I have driven them."
But, as the months of the emblematic prediction cannot be taken literally, we are warranted in interpreting it of five months of years; that is, one hundred and fifty years; and such was, in fact, the precise duration of the Saracen woe. Reckoning from A.D. 612, when Mohammed first publicly announced his mission, a hundred and fifty years had elapsed, when, by the removal of the seat of the eastern khilifate to Bagdad on the Tigris, Arabia, from being the source and centre, sank into a mere province of the Mohammedan empire; while, in the language of Gibbon, "the Bedoweens of the desert, awakening from their dream of dominion, resumed their old and solitary independence." It was in the year 762, that Almanzor laid the foundations of the new capital; and thither the government and head of the locusts then took its flight far eastward, away from Christendom. This was the era, as Daubuz well calls it, of the settlement of the locusts. About the same time, in the West, "the Christian remnant in the mountains of Spain first began to roll back the tide of war upon their Saracen oppressors."*

There remain to be explained, the emblematic designation of the personage to whom the origin

* Elliott, vol. i. pp. 436—438. So, Bp. Newton. Daubuz first suggested this chronological explanation. The division of the khilifate, in 755, was the first great blow to the Saracen power; and that revolution, Sismondi remarks, did more for the deliverance of Europe from the Mussulman arms, than even the battle of Poictiers. But the removal of the seat of government is by all historians regarded as the era of the decline of the Saracenic power.
of this woe is ascribed, as a fallen star, and what is said of the locusts having a king over them, the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name is Abaddon, or Apollyon, the Destroyer. In support of the application of the former emblem to the person of Mohammed, Mr. Elliott adduces his noble birth, as sprung from the princely house of the Koreish, the hereditary governors of Mecca as holders of the keys of the Caaba, the centre of the old Arabian worship. "The sacerdotal office devolved through four lineal descents to the grandfather of Mohammed;" and his ancestors appeared in foreign and domestic transactions as the princes of their country. But, shortly after his birth, in consequence of the death of his father and grandfather, the headship of the tribe, and the governorship of the Caaba and of Mecca, passed into the hands of another branch of the family; and he was reduced to the condition of a destitute and neglected orphan. He was a fallen star. He had lost the keys of the Caaba; but consulting, says Gibbon, "the spirit of fraud or of enthusiasm, whose abode was not in the heavens, but in the mind of the prophet," he resolved upon forging another key which should open to his followers the portals of true religion and of heaven. In the Koran occurs this remarkable expression: "Did not God give to His legate the power of heaven which is above, and fire which is beneath? With the key, did He not give him the title and power of a porter, that He may open to those whom he shall have chosen?" A key was indeed given to him, which empowered
him to darken the heaven above with the smoke from the fire which is beneath, and to open the way for his followers to conquest. What the Cross was, both as a religious and a military emblem, to Christians, the key became to the Moslem. When the Moors crossed from Africa into Spain, it was displayed on their standard; and the symbol is still to be seen sculptured on the Gate of Justice, in the Alhambra of Granada.

By "the angel of the pit of the abyss," must be understood, not the person of Mohammed, but rather the spirit which he evoked, and which, under his successors, rendered the military propagandists of his doctrines so formidable. "The Arabs, or Saracens," says Gibbon, "had languished in poverty and contempt, till Mohammed breathed into their savage bodies the soul of enthusiasm." "The people of Arabia," remarks another elegant historian, "found in the law of their prophet, not a license, but a command to desolate the world."* The spirit of martial fanaticism by which they were animated, was rightly named Apollyon, Destruction. It was an exhalation from the infernal abyss.

That any Protestant expositor should have failed to recognise the historical fulfilment of this remarkable prediction in the rise and early conquests of Mohammedanism, is astonishing.† The

* Hallam.—Elliott, i. 428.
† The learned perversity of Grotius and Hammond, of Eichhorn, Heinrichs, and Herder, who interpret the locusts of the zealots who spread devastation and slaughter through Judea, a short time previous to the destruction of Jerusalem,—an ana-
immediate connexion of this portentous phenomenon with the overthrow of the Eastern Empire, and with the fulfilment of the Divine threatenings to the apostate churches of the East, forbids the supposition that, in the revelation of future events made to the Beloved Apostle, the most signal occurrence has been passed over. "The genius of the Arabian prophet," remarks Gibbon, "the manners of his nation, and the spirit of his religion, involve the causes of the decline and fall of the Eastern Empire; and our eyes are curiously intent upon one of the most memorable revolutions which have impressed a new and lasting character on the nations of the earth." Had such an event not been prefigured in the visions of the Apocalypse, a more plausible objection might have been founded upon the omission, than any which scepticism has been able to allege against its strictly prophetic character. So exact, however, is the correspondence of the historical fulfilment to the prophetic enigma, that it furnishes one of the clearest proofs, that the "sayings" of this book are "faithful and true," and that the Lord God sent His angel to reveal unto His servants what no created intellect could have foreseen or divined.

chronism of five centuries,—had its object; but one is more surprised to find Dean Woodhouse (whose interpretations, however, are often more mystical than the prediction) referring the symbol to the Gnostics. Vitringa had stumbled strangely in applying it to the Goths. Stuart boldly denies that it is susceptible of any specific historical application, taking no notice of the true and only rational interpretation.
To resolve these visions into poetic invention, is not more rash and profane than absurd, and resembles the incredulous folly which ascribed the miracles of Our Lord to the power of magic.

But this woe was to pass away; and its removal was as remarkably sudden as its appearance had been. The cause of the withdrawment of this plague, is not alluded to. Yet, what is afterwards declared in reference to the succeeding woe, that "the men who were not killed by these plagues, repented not," seems to imply, that the removal of the woe of the fifth trumpet was consequent on at least some partial and temporary reformation. Such was the fact; and it furnishes an instructive explanation of the remarkable interposition of Divine Providence, which allowed to the Eastern Church an interval of mitigation and respite.

In the early part of the eighth century, (Gibbon again being our historical witness,) "in the full magnitude of the abuse (of image worship), the more timorous Greeks were awakened by an apprehension that, under the mask of Christianity, they had restored the religion of their fathers: they heard with grief and impatience the name of idolaters; the incessant charge of the Jews and Mohammedans, who derived from the Law and the Koran an immortal hatred to graven images and all relative worship.* The servitude of the Jews

* "By Cedrenus, Zonaras, Glycas, and Manasses, the origin of the Iconoclasts is imputed to the Caliph Yezid and two Jews who promised the empire to Leo, and the reproaches of these hostile sectaries are turned into an absurd conspiracy for restoring the purity of the Christian worship."
might curb their zeal, and depreciate their authority; but the triumphant Mussulmans who reigned at Damascus, and threatened Constantinople, cast into the scale of reproach the accumulated weight of truth and victory. The cities of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt had been fortified with the images of Christ, his mother, and his saints; and each city presumed on the hope or promise of miraculous defence. In a rapid conquest of ten years, the Arabs subdued those cities and these images; and in their opinion, the Lord of Hosts pronounced a decisive judgment between the adoration and contempt of these mute and inanimate idols. . . . In this season of distress and dismay, the eloquence of the monks was exercised in the defence of images; and they attempted to prove that the sin and schism of the greatest part of the Orientals had forfeited the favour, and annihilated the virtue, of these precious symbols. But they were now opposed by the murmurs of many simple or rational Christians, who appealed to the evidence of texts, of facts, and of the primitive times, and secretly desired the reformation of the Church. . . . In the outset of an unsettled reign, Leo III. bowed before the idols which he despised, and satisfied the Roman pontiff with the annual professions of his orthodoxy and zeal. In the reformation of religion, his first steps were moderate and cautious: he assembled a great council of senators and bishops, and enacted, with their consent, that all the images should be removed from the sanctuary and altar to a proper
height in the churches, where they might be visible to the eyes, and inaccessible to the superstition of the people. . . . By a second edict, he proscribed the existence as well as the use of religious pictures; the churches of Constantinople and the provinces were cleansed from idolatry; the images of Christ, the Virgin, and the Saints were demolished, or a smooth surface of plaster was spread over the walls of the edifice. The sect of the Iconoclasts was supported by the zeal and despotism of six Emperors; and the East and West were involved in a noisy conflict of one hundred and twenty years. It was the design of Leo the Isaurian, to pronounce the condemnation of images, as an article of faith, and by the authority of a General Council: but the convocation of such an assembly was reserved for his son Constantine; and though it it stigmatised by triumphant bigotry as a meeting of fools and atheists, their own partial and mutilated acts betray many symptoms of reason and piety. . . . . This Byzantine synod assumed the rank and powers of the Seventh General Council. After a serious deliberation of six months, the three hundred and thirty-eight bishops pronounced and subscribed a unanimous decree, that all visible symbols of Christ, except in the Eucharist, were either blasphemous or heretical; that image-worship was a corruption of Christianity and a renewal of Paganism; that all such monuments of idolatry should be broken or erased; and that those who should refuse to deliver the objects of their private superstition,
were guilty of disobedience to the authority of the Church and the Emperor.

"The execution of the Imperial edict was resisted by frequent tumults in Constantinople and the provinces. . . . . His long reign was distracted with clamour, sedition, conspiracy, and mutual hatred, and sanguinary revenge: the persecution of images was the motive or pretence of his adversaries. . . . . In every act of open and clandestine treason, the Emperor felt the unforgiving enmity of the monks, the faithful slaves of the superstition to which they owed their riches and influence. . . . . From the chastisement of individuals, he proceeded to the abolition of the order. . . . . With the habit and profession of monks, the public and private worship of images was vigorously proscribed; and it should seem that a solemn abjuration of idolatry was exacted from the subjects, or, at least, from the clergy, of the Eastern Empire."*

The Reformation commenced by Leo, may be considered as dating its completion from the Byzantine synod, held A.D. 754. In the very next year, the division of the Khalifate took place, and "the Colossus that had bestridden the whole South was broken."† The period of the following seven years, from A.D. 755 to 762, is every way remarkable as that of the deliverance of Christendom from the chief terror and persecution of the Saracens. Brief, however, was

* Gibbon, ch. xlix.
† Sismondi, Fall of the Roman Empire, ii. 92.
this apparent demonstration of repentance. The Latin Church had revolted against the edicts of the Imperial iconoclasts; and while the Roman pontiffs were establishing "a dominion founded on rebellion," the Images, the first cause of their revolt, were restored in the Eastern Empire by the Second Council of Nice, summoned by the Imperial murderess, Irene.* The Christian Church, both in the East and the West, now seemed abandoned to spiritual slavery and moral debasement. "During a long dream of superstition," says Gibbon, "the Virgin and the Saints, their visions and miracles, their relics and images, were preached by the monks, and worshipped by the people." The Saracenic woe had passed; but the term of the Khalifate had yet to run out; and throughout the ninth and tenth centuries, a struggle was maintained between the declining power of the Mohammedan dynasties and the Byzantine Empire. To the faithful few who were preserved from the prevailing apostacy, and who studied the sacred page, that period must have appeared a long night during which the Lord delayed his coming. Yet, could they doubt the certainty of the punishments denounced against idolatry? It was written: "One woe is past! Behold, there come two more hereafter."

At length, as the end of the tenth century drew on, (whether attributable in any degree to the construction put upon the Apocalyptic prediction,

* Reckoned as the Seventh General Council, A.D. 787.
or simply to the fallacious calculations of the Millenarians,) a panic apprehension that the end of the world was at hand, seized upon the minds of men, and spread throughout Europe, engendering a spirit of contagious fanaticism. The dreaded year 1000 came, however, and passed over without any attendant calamity; and the alarm had gradually died away, when suddenly, as in the case of the Saracenic woe, and from an equally unlooked for quarter, at the signal of the Sixth Trumpet, a new agency of destruction was let loose upon the Greek Empire.

When the Sixth Angel had sounded his trumpet, the Apostle heard, in his vision, a voice proceeding from the four horns of the golden incense-altar which is before the Throne,—the emblem of that only True Propitiation and Intercessory Priesthood which the idolatrous Church had forsaken and dishonoured,—directing the trumpet-bearing angel to loose from restraint the four angels who had hitherto been bound upon the banks of the great river Euphrates. In a previous vision, St. John had beheld represented, four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding in the destructive winds, which they were not to loose till the faithful servants of God had been sealed in their foreheads. The emblem here introduced is obviously of similar import, although we are not to suppose the same quaternion of angels to be referred to,* since this

* Mr. Elliott, in maintaining this, (vol. i. pp. 464—468,) and interpreting them of superhuman angelic intelligences, loses sight of the emblematic character of the vision.
would be to ascribe to the same identical agency, the Gothic invasions of the Roman Empire and the overthrow of the Byzantine by the Turkish hordes. The idea symbolised by the emblem is that of an overwhelming calamity, like a scattering tempest coming from all sides. We find this figure employed by the Prophet Jeremiah: "And upon Elam I will bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them towards all those winds." (Jer. xliv. 36.) And in the same chapter, it is predicted concerning Hazor: "I will scatter unto all winds them that are in the utmost corners, and I will bring their calamity from all sides thereof, saith The Lord." (ver. 31.) There is no reason to conclude, either in the case of the judgments upon Elam, or in that of the woes denounced by the Sixth Trumpet, that four earthly powers were intended by the figurative language of the prediction, as the instrumentality to be employed in its accomplishment. Nor does there seem to be any propriety in supposing the human instruments to be here symbolised under the figure of angelic agencies. The four angels who were to be loosed, are represented as prepared to slay the third part of men; while the human agency is described as consisting of an army of cavalry, acting, as it were, under the direction of these ministers of destruction. That evil powers or principles are intended, is manifest from the phraseology employed: they were to be let loose. In a subsequent vision, the dragon is represented as being bound for a thousand years, after which
"he must be loosed." We cannot suppose that any heavenly ministers of the Divine vengeance would be spoken of in such terms. We must, therefore, assume that, under this emblem, is prefigured the spiritual agency by which the human instruments of executing the Divine judgments were actuated and impelled. Before we attempt to ascertain the specific import of the emblem, let us again turn to the pages of the secular Historian, for the best commentary upon the prediction.

"Since the fall of the Caliphs, the discord and degeneracy of the Saracens respected the Asiatic provinces of Rome. Twenty-five years after the death of Basil, (A.D. 1050,) his successors were suddenly assaulted by an unknown race of barbarians, who united the Scythian valour with the fanaticism of new proselytes, and the art and riches of a powerful monarchy. The myriads of Turkish horse overspread a frontier of six hundred miles from Taurus to Arzeroum (on the Euphrates), and the blood of one hundred and thirty thousand Christians was a grateful sacrifice to the Arabian prophet. Yet, the arms of Togrul did not make any deep or lasting impression upon the Greek Empire. The torrent rolled away from the open country. . . . . The successor of Togrul passed the Euphrates at the head of the Turkish cavalry, and entered Cæsarea, the metropolis of Cappadocia. (A.D. 1063.) . . . . The final conquest of Armenia and Georgia was achieved by Alp Arslan. In Armenia, the title of a kingdom and the spirit of a nation were annihilated. The loss of this important frontier was the news of a day."
Under the Emperor Diogenes Romanus, (to whose martial hand the alarming progress of the invaders compelled the Empress Eudocia to give herself and her sceptre,) "in three laborious campaigns, the Turks were driven beyond the Euphrates: in the fourth and last, Romanus undertook the deliverance of Armenia. His army amounted at least to one hundred thousand men. . . . On the report of this bold invasion, Alp Arslan flew to the scene of action at the head of forty thousand horse. His rapid and skilful evolutions distressed and dismayed the superior numbers of the Greeks. . . . Had he listened to the fair proposals of the Sultan, Romanus might have secured a retreat, perhaps a peace; but, in these overtures, he supposed the fear or weakness of the enemy, and his answer was conceived in the tone of insult and defiance . . . . The Turkish squadrons poured a cloud of arrows (upon the broken phalanx) at a moment of confusion and lassitude, and the horns of their formidable crescent were closed in the rear of the Greeks. In the destruction of the army and pillage of the camp, it would be needless to mention the number of the slaves or captives. The Byzantine writers deplore the loss of an inestimable pearl; they forget to mention that, in this fatal day, the Asiatic provinces of Rome were irretrievably sacrificed."

It was within three or four years after this, that the valiant Soliman, of the house of Seljook, ac-

* Gibbon, ch. lvii. This battle was fought in 1071. Alp Arslan died in the following year.
cepted from the hands of the Sultan Malek, the son of Alp Arslan, "the royal standard which gave him the free conquest and hereditary command of the provinces of the Roman Empire, from Arzeroum to Constantinople, and the unknown regions of the West." Since the decline of the Empire, the peninsula of Asia Minor had been exposed to the transient, though destructive inroads of the Persians and Saracens; but the fruits of a lasting conquest were reserved for the Turkish sultan. "Accompanied by his four brothers, he passed the Euphrates. The Turkish camp was soon seated in the neighbourhood of Kutaieh in Phrygia; and his flying cavalry laid waste the country as far as the Hellespont and the Black Sea. . . . Constantinople was deprived of the obedience and revenue of the provinces beyond the Bosphorus and Hellespont; and the regular progress of the Turks, who fortified the passes of the rivers and mountains, left not a hope of their retreat or expulsion.* . . . Since the first conquests of the Caliphs, the establishment of the Turks in Anatolia, or Asia Minor, was the most deplorable loss which the Church and Empire had sustained. . . . On the hard conditions of tribute and servitude, the Greek Christians might enjoy the exercise of their religion; but their most holy churches were profaned, their priests and bishops were insulted; they were compelled to suffer the triumph of the pagans, and the apostacy of their brethren; many thousand children were marked by the knife of circumcision,

* A.D. 1074—1084.
and many thousand captives were devoted to the service or the pleasures of their masters. . . . The Turkish ignorance of navigation protected, for a while, the inglorious safety of the Emperor; but no sooner had a fleet of two hundred ships been constructed by the hands of the captive Greeks, than Alexius trembled behind the walls of his capital.”

Contrary, however, to all that might at that time have seemed probable, the total destruction of the Greek Empire was averted for two hundred years, by the military fanaticism of the crusading armies, which stayed the further progress of the Turkman power, and even rolled back for a while the tide of conquest, till the Seljookian kingdom revived under the Ottoman dynasty.

“`It was,” says Gibbon, “on the 27th of July, in the year 1299 of the Christian era, that Othman first invaded the territory of Nicomedia; and the singular accuracy of the date seems to disclose some foresight of the rapid and destructive growth of the monster. . . . The son of Othman subdued the whole province or kingdom of Bithynia, as far as the shores of the Bosphorus and Hellespont. . . . The captivity or ruin of the seven churches of Asia was consummated; and the barbarous lords of Ionia and Lydia still trample on the monuments of classic and Christian antiquity. . . . The Turkish scimitar was wielded with the same spirit by Amurath I., the son of Orchan. . . . He subdued without resistance the whole province of

* Gibbon, ch. lvii.
Romania or Thrace, from Hellespont to Mount Hæmus and the verge of the capital; and Adrianople was chosen for the royal seat of his government and religion in Europe. Constantinople had often in the lapse of a thousand years, been assaulted by the Barbarians of the East and West; but never till this fatal hour had the Greeks been surrounded, both in Asia and in Europe, by the arms of the same hostile monarchy. . . . In the battle of Nicopolis, (A.D. 1396,) Sultan Bajazet defeated a confederate army of a hundred thousand Christians. The far greater part were slain or driven into the Danube. . . . The Roman world (became) contracted to a corner of Thrace, between the Propontis and the Black Sea, about fifty miles in length and thirty in breadth; a space of ground not more extensive than the lesser principalities of Germany or Italy, if the remains of Constantinople had not still represented the wealth and populousness of a kingdom."

At length, the ambition of the victorious Sultan pointed to the conquest of that city. But a truce of ten years was purchased by an annual tribute of 30,000 crowns of gold; and the fall of Constantinople was delayed about fifty years by the memorable battle in the plains of Angora,* which led to the captivity of Sultan Bajazet, and placed his kingdom at the mercy and disposal of the Mogul conqueror.

The death of Tamerlane, three years afterwards, relieved the Turkish provinces from the Mogul

* A.D. 1402.
yoke; and in the brilliant reign of Amurath II., Romania and Anatolia were again united under the Ottoman sceptre. Servia, Macedonia, Thessaly, Albania, and Greece north of the Isthmus, were reduced to subjection; and, in 1422, Constantinople itself sustained a siege from an army of two hundred thousand Turks. A domestic revolt recalled the Sultan to his Bithynian capital; and "while he led his janizaries to new conquests in Europe and Asia, the Byzantine Empire was indulged in a servile and precarious respite of thirty years." The battle of Varna, in 1444, in which the King of Hungary and ten thousand Christians were slain, defeated the last combined effort to check the fatal progress of the Ottoman power. Yet, still, the catastrophe was delayed. Nothing is more remarkable, in the history of this long struggle, than the repeated respite of the Greek Empire, when apparently on the verge of utter destruction, by some unlooked for intervention; in the first instance, by the Crusades; afterwards by the victory of Tamerlane, when, in the language of Gibbon, "the savage would have destroyed his prey, if, in the fatal moment, he had not been overthrown by another savage stronger than himself; and again, by the wars which called off the attention of Sultan Amurath. At length, the fatal hour arrived. The conquest of Constantinople, facilitated by the recent and tremendous discovery of the application of gunpowder to artillery,* was reserved for the accom-

* "The only hope of salvation for the Greek Empire and the adjacent kingdoms would have been, some more powerful
plished and execrable son and successor of Amurath, Mohammed II. On the 6th of April, 1453, the imperial standard of the besiegers was planted before the gate of St. Romanus; and "the sound of the holy trumpet invited a swarm of hungry and fearless fanatics who might contribute at least to multiply the terrors, and, in a first attack, to blunt the swords of the Christians. The whole mass of the Turkish powers is magnified to the amount of three or four hundred thousand."* After a siege of forty days, the fate of the city could no longer be averted. The fortifications which had stood for ages against hostile violence, were dismantled on all sides by the Ottoman cannon. A spirit of discord impaired the remnant of the Christian strength. "The celestial image of the Virgin had been exposed in solemn procession; but their divine patroness was deaf to their entreaties." At day-break on

weapon, some discovery in the art of war, that should give them a superiority over their Turkish foes. Such a weapon was in their hands; such a discovery had been made in the critical moment of their fate. . . . . Nor was it possible to circumscribe the secret within the pale of the Church: it was disclosed to the Turks by the treachery of apostates and the selfish policy of rivals; and the Sultans had sense to adopt, and wealth to reward, the talents of a Christian engineer. The Genoese who transported Amurath into Europe, must be accused as his preceptors; and it was probably by their hands that his cannon was cast and directed at the siege of Constantinople." Gibbon, ch. lxv.

* "The precise definition (of the historian Phranza) of 258,000, does not exceed the measure of experience and probability."
the memorable 29th of May, the Turks assaulted
the city by sea and land, and, after the death of
the Emperor (Constantine Palæologus), who fell
by an unknown hand, resistance and order were
no more. "It was thus," remarks Gibbon, in
concluding his narrative of the siege and con-
quest, "that, after a siege of fifty-three days,
Constantinople, which had defied the power of
Chosroes, the Chazan, and the Caliphs, was irre-
trievably subdued by the arms of Mohammed II.
Her empire only had been subverted by the
Latins: her religion was trampled in the dust
by the Moslem conquerors." The fall of the
Byzantine capital was immediately followed by
the subjugation of the principalities of the Morea;
and Mohammed II. united under his sceptre all
the provinces in Europe that had formerly be-
longed to the Eastern division of the Roman
Empire, and the whole of Asia on this side of
Mount Taurus.*

The reader has thus had brought before him in
rapid review, the story (for the most part in the words
of the great secular Historian) of the first irrup-
tion of the Euphratean horsemen; their subse-
quient encroachments upon the Eastern Empire;
the rapid growth and consolidation of the Turkish
power; the protracted conflict, during two cen-
turies, between the Christian and Mussulman
powers upon the theatre of the Asiatic provinces
of the Roman Empire; and the ultimate triumph
of the Ottoman arms in the final extinction of the

* Gibbon, ch. lxviii.
Byzantine Empire; occupying a period of nearly four hundred years. Now, in the Apocalyptic prediction, the Four Angels on the banks of the Euphrates were prepared or kept ready for the hour and day and month and year, to slay the third part of men. According to Professor Stuart, "the phraseology would seem to intimate, that the executioners of Divine justice in this case, were confined in a place where they were kept ready and at hand to lead on the army of invasion."* But, had this been all that was intended to be intimated, there was no occasion to add, that they were prepared for an exact time. The hour and day and month and year must be intended, according to any rational interpretation, either as a date or as a term of duration. As it cannot be explained in the former sense, it must be construed as a mystical term; and no other plausible interpretation has been suggested, which gives them a chronological import, than that which is based upon the computation of a day for a year. No event answering to the slaying of a third part of men could take place within a day, much less at any particular hour. Mr. Fleming, indeed, proposes to render the passage, "for a certain season, even for a day and month and year;" so that "the sense of the passage is," he remarks, "that the Turks were loosed from Euphrates, as being prepared instruments in the hand of God, for the ruin of the Grecian empire, for a certain hour or season; for, in that period of time, they destroyed the

Eastern Empire."* Taking A.D. 1067 as the initial date, he makes the 391 prophetic years (equal to 386 Julian years) terminate in A.D. 1483, "when Mohammed the Great took Constantinople."† Mr. Elliott, taking the "hour" as equivalent to a fortnight, has laboured to prove, that, reckoning by solar years, from Jan. 18, 1057, to May 29, 1453, there was nearly a precise correspondence, even as to the number of days, between the predicted term and the historical interval. The former date is given by Abulfeda as the day on which Togrul Bey, with his Turkmans, quitted Bagdad to enter upon a long career of war and conquest; and the interval, reckoning the year as consisting of 365 days, will be 396 years, 106 days.‡ This calculation, however, comes short of the fall of the city by twenty-four days; and, for so exact a calculation, it may be thought not quite exact enough. Besides which, there seems

* Had a date been intended, the natural order of the words would have been, "for the year, and month, and day, and hour."

† Fleming's "Rise and Fall," &c., p. 36. An hour is always used indefinitely in this book, he remarks; but days, months, and years always definitely.

‡ Foxe the Martyrologist, who first clearly pointed out the application of the Sixth Trumpet to the Turks, dates their power in Asia from A.D. 1051, when the alliance was formed by them with the caliph of Bagdad. Mede dates the 396 years from the inauguration of Togrul Bey A.H. 449, answering to 1058. He has been followed by Sir Isaac Newton, Whiston, Faber, and Keith, as well as Elliott. The last mentioned Expositor justifies his taking the year in this instance to signify a Julian year, from the adoption of the word eunavds in the place of kaiips, here and here only. Elliott, vol. i. pp. 493—9.
to be no sufficient reason for supposing a Julian year to be here intended. It was not till 1063, that Alp Arslan passed the Euphrates at the head of his Turkish cavalry; and although he made an inroad into Cappadocia, his conquests were confined to Georgia and Armenia; and in the subsequent campaigns, he was thrice driven back beyond the Euphrates by the Roman arms. The struggle with the Greek Empire did not commence till the elevation of Diogenes Romanus to the imperial dignity in 1067;* and the fatal battle which opened the Asiatic peninsula to the Euphratean horsemen, was fought in 1071. If Fleming's calculation of 386 Julian years from 1067 be not deemed satisfactory, it deserves consideration, whether the fall of Constantinople has been properly assumed as the terminal period; since the final extinction of the Empire was scarcely complete, till the Morea, which was indulged with a respite of seven years, was taken possession of by Mohammed, and Trebisond, where the last of the Comnenian race affected to maintain the imperial dignity, had surrendered to the Conqueror. The date of these events is fixed by Gibbon in 1460,1; from which, reckoning back, 391 prophetic years will lead us to Oct. 1070; and 386 Julian years to five years later, when the valiant Soliman, of the house of Seljook, invested with the commission

* It is one of the remarkable coincidences with which history abounds, that, against Diogenes Romanus, the Turkish invaders obtained their first decisive victory; and it was through the gate of St. Romanus that the Conqueror of Constantinople entered the city in triumph.
to subdue and take possession of the provinces of the Roman Empire from Arzeroum to Constantinople, accompanied by his four brothers, passed the Euphrates; from which epoch Gibbon dates their lasting conquests. This appears to have been in the year 1075; and consequently, the 386 years (391 prophetic years) would terminate in A.D. 1461. It must assuredly be deemed not a little remarkable, that the same result should be arrived at by these various methods of computing the interval.

Bp. Newton, indeed, interpreting the prediction of the Ottoman power exclusively,* dates the 391 years from the conquest of Kutahi by Ortagrul in the year 1281, and makes them terminate with the taking of Caminiec from the Poles in 1672, that being "the last victory by which any advantage accrued to the Othman state." He regards the loosing of the four angels as referring to the removal of the check that had been given to the progress of the Turkish power by the crusades of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. To this interpretation, there are two decisive objections. First, the Ottomans, who rose upon the ruins of the Seljookian dynasty, were not locally connected with the Euphrates, the seat of their early greatness being the capital of Bithynia. Secondly, no solid reason can be given for excluding from the prediction, the previous conquests of the Turkish hosts who overran the Asiatic Peninsula, and wrested from the Byzantine Em-

* Mr. Brightman fell into this error, which has been adopted also by Cressener, Daubuz, and Cunningham.
pire its most fertile and flourishing provinces, reducing the Greek Christians to miserable servitude. The Turkish woe had pressed heavily upon this portion of the Roman Empire 242 years before the era of the reign of Othman; and it was destined to last nearly two centuries and a half after the fall of Constantinople, before its destructive power was finally broken. The term of the commission given to the Euphratean horsemen must obviously, therefore, be distinguishable from the duration of the Turkish woe, as the pressure of that woe must be distinguished from the duration of the Ottoman empire.* The commission was, to slay the third part of men; that is, agreeably to what we have seen to be the import of the same figurative language in the preceding Visions, to destroy the Eastern third of the Roman world; understanding by the phrase, the extinction of political life, rather than the terrible slaughter attendant on the Turkish conquests. As, under the calamities of the first four Trumpets, the Western Roman Empire was extinguished, so, under the fifth and sixth Trumpets, the Eastern third comprised in the Greek or Byzantine Empire was first "tormented for five months"† of years by the Saracens, and at length finally conquered by the Turks.

* A recent writer (Mr. Habershon) explains the "hour, day, month, and year" as intended to mark the appointed time for the Turks retaining their capital and empire; which, reckoning 396 years from the fall of Constantinople, will terminate in 1849.

† The five months of the locusts, which can be understood only of five thirtyths of years, serve to fix the meaning of the day, month, and year of the Turkish horsemen's commission.
But there are other points of coincidence between the emblematic description in the Vision and the history, not less striking than the precise chronological indication of the time to be occupied by the fulfilment of the commission. The invaders were to be armies of horsemen, which was peculiarly characteristic of the Turkman armies. They are numbered by myriads, which accords with the Turkman custom of numbering by tomauns (myriads) of horse.* Their personal appearance and array, with breastplates of fire-colour, hyacinth, and sulphur, is a descriptive trait peculiarly characteristic of the Ottoman costume, and the more marked from its contrast to the military dress of the Greeks, Franks, or Saracens. The fire, smoke, and sulphur described as proceeding from the mouths of the lion-headed (that is, devouring) horses, and answering to the tri-coloured breastplates of their riders, is so appropriate a symbol, if understood as alluding to the newly-invented artillery used in the siege and capture of Constantinople, that it is surprising to find any difference of opinion upon this point, among expositors who recognise any correspondence between the prediction and its historical fulfilment.† What is added respecting the tails of the horses, that they resembled serpents having heads with which they inflict hurt, has been ingeniously explained by Mr. Elliott as alluding to the well-known ensign and symbol of governing

† Mede suggests the allusion. Vitringa hesitates to adopt it.
authority among the Turks, from the vizier down to the provincial pasha. It is the ensign of one, two, or three horse-tails, that marks distinctively the rank and degree of the Ottoman pasha; so that the horse-tails of a Turkish army are an appropriate symbol of its destructive power. These same horse-tail heads were, moreover, the oppressors of the subjugated population. "Marvellous prefiguration!" exclaims Mr. Elliott; and indeed, its minute exactness forms the only ground for incredulity as to the intended allusion.

There is yet another remarkable coincidence, if it be no more, between one feature of the prediction and its historical counterpart, which has hitherto been overlooked. If the four angels are to be understood as denoting evil agencies, actuating and impelling the human instrumentality as ministers of the Divine justice, then, we must consider them as symbolising the spirit of the Mohammedan fanaticism, which was the motive and impulsive cause of "the holy war" in which the Turkish invaders engaged, "against the Greeks, the enemies of God and his Apostle."* Now, the Mohammedan world was at that time divided, and still is, between the two hostile sects distinguished as soonee, orthodox, and sheeah, sectaries; the former recognising Abu-Beker, Omar, Othman, and Ali, as

* Gibbon, ch. lvii. Mr. Elliott has observed, that, as there is no necessity to suppose four earthly powers to be prefigured, the interpretation is thereby "freed from the difficulty of showing four Turkman nations answering to the four Euphratean angels, which has so long and so totally encumbered it." Vol. i. pp. 462—8.
the legitimate successors of the Prophet; the latter execrating the first three as usurpers who intercepted the indefeasible right of Ali. The Turks and the Turkmans have always been zealous adherents to the Soonee or orthodox faith, of which a reverence for the first four Khalifs is the distinguishing peculiarity. They also receive and acknowledge the soona, or oral traditions, which rest upon the authority of the four great imaums or doctors, Haneefa, Malek, Shaffeii, and Hanbal, the four pillars of the Soonee faith. Corresponding to this fourfold authority are the four orthodox sects into which the Soonite believers are divided without disturbing the political unity that reigns within the Turkish pale. The Persians, on the contrary, reject and contemn these traditions, and hold as an essential dogma, the illegitimacy and disobedience of the first three Khalifs. Without contending that the quaternion of angels in the Vision were intended to prefigure or to represent either the four khalifs, or the four imaums, or the four sects of the Turkish faith, we may be allowed to point out the correspondence between the fourfold emblem and the distinctive character of that form of Mohammedism of which the Turkish nations have been the principal and most zealous upholders and defenders. In a human composition, there would be seen to be both appropriateness and beauty in such an allusion: why should it be deemed too minute a coincidence to fall within the design of the emblematic prediction?

In passing under rapid review this long and dreary period of history, the inquiry naturally
suggests itself, why were these calamities permitted to desolate the fairest portions of the earth? Why was the Turkish fanaticism suffered to supplant and triumph over the Christian faith, in the very countries where Apostles laboured, and martyrs bled, and the first bloodless victories of the Cross over Pagan superstition were achieved? This is "the mystery of God" which it is one design of the Apocalyptic predictions to unfold. It is not for erring man to interpret the Divine judgments; but the voice of Prophecy, in this instance, precludes all possibility of mistake in ascribing them to the true cause,—the idolatrous apostacy of the professing Christian Church. It is added, ver. 20: "And the rest of the men which were not destroyed by these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, so as to desist from the worship of demons and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood, which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk; nor did they turn from their murders, or their sorceries, or their fornications, or their robberies."

But could this language apply to the Christian world? It has been contended, that those who are described in the above terms, could be no other than heathen, the actual worshippers of false gods and idols; and Professor Stuart rashly asserts, that, if it be absolutely necessary to interpret this passage in a literal way, it must be conceded that such a position is unavoidable. Most remarkable is the decisive and unimpeachable testimony borne by the infidel Historian to a fact impugned by Protestant scepticism or spurious
candour. We have seen, in the extracts given from the pages of Gibbon, how, in the earliest conquests of the Saracens, "an immortal hatred to graven images and all relative worship," inspired, and, in their own opinion, sanctioned their holy wars against the idolatrous Christians;—how, also, as the cities of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt trusted for defence to the images of Christ, his mother, and the saints, it was believed that, by their overthrow, "the Lord of Hosts pronounced a decisive judgment between the adoration and the contempt of those mute and inanimate idols." We have seen, that the temporary reformation which abolished image-worship in the Eastern Church, was followed by the speedy and sudden withdrawmment of the Saracens, and the removal of the seat of the Khalifate beyond the Euphrates. The authoritative restoration of image-worship by the Second Council of Nice, brought again the Greek or Eastern Church, as well as the Latin, under the Divine condemnation pronounced against idolaters. "Unhappily," remarks the Author of "Ancient Christianity," "the iconoclastic zeal stopped short at the idolatry of the Church, leaving its polytheism unreproved, or nearly so. The very enormities of image-worship had served to screen from notice and rebuke, the essential viciousness of the ancient polytheism whence it had sprung. . . . Although the Saracen, far more Christian in creed and in worship, had notably triumphed over these idols wherever he had advanced;—for, along the whole frontier of Christendom, they had been set up, upon towers and
walls, as the invincible champions of the Church;—God's avenger had broken the chain, had trampled all this trumpery in the dust, slaughtering and putting to flight those who had trusted to them. And yet, after all these disgraces, the idols were again lifted upon their pedestals, and a solemn injunction was laid upon all people to bow down and worship them. . . . But what had the great divines of the earlier age said on the same subjects? The chief of them,* in the most solemn phrases, and with a redundant explicitness of language, assures the populace of Constantinople, 'that an empire or a city well furnished with the bones of martyrs might defy the world in arms! Only trust to your saints, fellow-citizens, and you are safe; for do not the invisible powers, mightier as they are than man, do not these tremble and resile? What martial array then need you dread?'—Yes, but here is a difference. Well-instructed Christian people, in the seventh and eighth centuries, were taught to defend their cities with images, while those of the fourth were to do so with relics. The Fathers of the Second Council of Nice put confidence in carved wood and sculptured marble; their predecessors, in crumbling bones, dust, and rags."†

On the capture and pillage of Constantinople by the Latin Crusaders in 1204, immense was the supply of heads and bones, crosses and images, that were scattered by this revolution over the

* Chrysostom.
churches of Europe; and such was the increase of pilgrimage and oblation, that no branch, perhaps, of more lucrative plunder was imported from the East. "The final progress of idolatry" is ranked by Gibbon among the evils which flowed from "the baleful fountain of the holy wars." And what was the conduct of the infatuated inhabitants of the devoted city during the last and fatal siege? "From the monastery, the devout Greeks dispersed themselves in the taverns; drank confusion to the slaves of the Pope; emptied their glasses in honour of the Image of the holy Virgin; and besought her to defend against Mohammed the city which she had formerly saved from Chosroes and the Khazan." "The celestial image of the Virgin had been exposed in solemn procession; but their divine patroness was deaf to their intreaties." They called upon gods that "could neither see, nor hear, nor walk." Although a spurious liberality may scruple to apply the term demonolatry to the Saint-worship of the Greek and Latin Catholics, nothing is more certain than that that worship was but the old polytheism revived under a new nomenclature. The saints of the Calendar, in their titles and attributes, their supposed local presence and influence, and in the reverence paid to their temples and images, were not so much the successors to the old local divinities as the gods of heathen Rome slightly disguised. In some instances, the very statues were the same. The rites and the festivals of the modern and the ancient polytheism closely correspond. The adoration of relics was itself bor-
rowed from the Pagan worship. The miracles by which the Christian demonolatry was supported, were lying wonders imitated from those of the ancient priesthood. And as to the "murders, sorceries," (which may apply either to the pretended miracles, or to the magical rites,) "fornications, and exactions," the state of morals within the Eastern Church, as depicted by contemporary Christian writers, explains and verifies in its literal force, the language of the prediction. Even to the present day, the state of the modern Greek and other Oriental churches, corresponds but too closely to that of the fifteenth century. They have not repented of the works of their hands, in turning from their idolatrous worship, their invocation of images that can neither see nor hear, their magical rites, and unnameable impurities.

What, then, becomes of the confident assertion, that, taken literally, this description could not possibly be applicable to any other than the heathen? By denying the application of the prediction to the judgments upon apostate Christendom, Expositors at once nullify the Divine warning, and deprive history itself of all its awful and salutary import. Strange infatuation, which has led learned Critics to deride as fanciful, the most strongly defined marks of correspondence between the emblematic prediction and the event, while indulging in the most puerile conjectures as to its imaginary reference to Roman or Jewish history!* In this way, it becomes impossible to

* Ewald supposes the horsemen of the Sixth Seal to be Parthians, and the object of their attack, heathen Rome! Professor
establish either the truth of the prophecy or the lesson conveyed by its fulfilment.

Stuart prefers to apply the prediction, with Wetstein, to the invasion of Palestine by the Romans under Vespasian. So, Herder, in what the Professor styles his "delightful book," makes the horsemen from the Euphrates to be "the Roman legions which Titus led from the East." Grotius, Hammond, Eichhorn, and Rosenmüller, give the same interpretation, anxious to turn off the application of the prediction from apostate Christendom. Vitrinsa and Dean Woodhouse include the Saracens among the Euphratean horsemen; a blunder occasioned by their perverse misapplication of the symbols of the Fifth Seal,—the former to the northern invaders of Italy, the latter to the Gnostics!
Vision the Fifth.

THE ANGEL WITH THE LITTLE BOOK—
THE TWO WITNESSES.

The Apostle's attention is now arrested by the resplendent vision of "a mighty angel descending out of heaven," arrayed in a cloud, a rainbow crowning or encircling his head, his face shining like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. In his hand he held an open book; and placing one foot upon the land, and the other upon the sea, this august personage uttered a loud cry like the roaring of a lion, which was responded to by seven voices of thunder, uttering things which the Apostle was directed not to commit to writing. After this, the angel, raising his hand to heaven, (according to the ancient form of taking a solemn oath,*) swears by Him who liveth for ever and ever, that, without further delay or respite, in the days which should be introduced by the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, the mystery of God, as announced to his servants the prophets, should be consummated. That is to say, the mysterious dispensa-

* Compare Dan. xii. 7.
tion relating to the development and long reign of Anti-Christ, the subject of former prophetic communications to the Church, should be brought to a close, and vindicated by the final issue. This solemn determination and announcement appear to be in some manner consequent upon what had been uttered by the seven thunders, as if they had provoked the Divine anger. It seems to be implied also, that a considerable time had already elapsed, which might have the appearance of delay, through the long-suffering of God. In the visions of Daniel, a definite chronological announcement is ushered in with the same solemn pomp of imagery, and is conveyed in like manner by the medium of an angel. The prophet "heard the man clothed in linen swear by Him who liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times and half a time; and he heard, but understood not." Here, the declaration appears to be connected with some glorious intervention presaged by the appearance and significant act of the angel, in taking possession, as it were, of both the land and the sea, which must itself be regarded as having a predictive import. If the utterance of the angel corresponded to the act, his cry would be a proclamation of the supreme authority of the Lord of the whole earth; implying that this had been rebelliously impugned or contravened; and the seven thunders

* Mr. Elliott, renders, "the time shall not be yet, i.e., an interval must still elapse, but in the days," &c. So Bp. Newton. Dr. Bloomfield, with Prof. Scholefield, renders, "that there should be no more delay."
which followed upon this cry, as if wakened by it, we may reasonably assume to have proceeded from the powers of earth, not of heaven; issuing from the political firmament, not from the temple; denunciations, not predictions; in opposition, not in obedient response to the voice of the angelic legate. So Luther interpreted them as "the mimic thunders of Anti-Christ." It is scarcely to be supposed, indeed, that St. John would have been forbidden to record what they uttered, had they been, as some expositors have imagined, of prophetic import, or in harmony with the angelic proclamation.

But, taking this view of the emblematic action of the Vision, we must look for the interpretation in some corresponding events. The descent of this mighty angel has clearly its precise chronological place marked out in the series of predictions. It was after the sixth angel had sounded, but, as it is specifically noted (ch. xi. 14), before the second woe had passed away. The declaration of the angel implies, that some time was yet to elapse before the Seventh Trumpet should sound; an intimation which would have no meaning or propriety, unless the vision denoted something that should take place at the period indicated, some Divine manifestation of a signal and glorious character.

For the mighty angel must, like the other visionary appearances presented to the eye of the Apostle, be regarded as an emblem; and emblems are, for the most part, employed as signs or symbols, not of persons, but of things. When a personal form, the figure of a warrior, of a woman, or of an angel,
is used as a symbol, it denotes a personification; that is, either a concrete idea, such as that of a city or nation, or an abstract idea, as truth, hope, liberty, plenty, power, justice, discord, death. There would seem to be no propriety, therefore, in regarding this "mighty angel" as representing the person of the Lord Jesus, "the Angel of the Covenant."* At the same time, the vision is evidently emblematic of a providential manifestation of the Divine power and glory of the Son of God. Whenever Our Lord himself appears in the visions of the Apocalypse, He is expressly designated by His peculiar titles; as "The First and the Last," as "King of kings and Lord of lords," or as "The Word of God." But, in no instance is the person of Our Lord introduced as an emblem, although emblems are employed to represent His mediatorial character and agency. Whenever persons, individuals, are the subject of prophecy, we find them uniformly prefigured by emblems drawn either from the animal kingdom or from the material universe; as a lion or eagle, a lamp or a star; the emblem being expressive of personal qualities. Thus, when Our Lord is represented under the figure of a Lamb, no one can mistake the idea intended to be conveyed by the emblem. But, inasmuch as the glory of the Godhead cannot be likened to any quality of created objects, and

* Elliott, vol. ii. p. 39. The learned Writer speaks of "the character and person of the angel intervening," as bringing comfort to the heart of the Evangelist; and treats the emblem as a real appearance of Christ to St. John.
no emblem, therefore, can express a true idea of the invisible God, all symbolical representations of the Object of worship are positively forbidden.

It is of the more importance, in connexion with the Vision before us, to bear in mind this general rule of symbolical interpretation, that emblems are the signs of personal qualities, or of abstract or concrete ideas, and that personifications denote, not persons, but things,—inasmuch as this description of the mighty angel descending from heaven might otherwise be construed with some plausibility as prefigurative of one who claimed to be the very vicar of Christ. We are indebted to Mr. Elliott for pointing out the remarkable correspondence between the emblematic prediction and the blasphemous ascriptions to the Roman Pontiff, Leo X., whose accession and coronation were celebrated with unusual pomp and festivity. He cites a description of three paintings which formed part of the pageant on that occasion, as having a singularly illustrative bearing upon the symbolic prophecy. In one, (in the Genoese arc between the castle of S. Angelo and the Vatican,) the Pope appears refulgent with glory, as if the new-risen sun; a rainbow sheds its radiance on the landscape; and underneath is inscribed, "Apertus est orbis, et exivit Rex Gloriae." In a second, (in the arc of the Florentines,) the Pope is represented with one foot on the land, the other on the sea, holding in each hand a key; and the legend is, "Elevata sum, quia penes te patria, parentum, maris, terra, calique regnum esse conspicio." In a third, (in the Via Pontificum,) the Pope sits enthroned,
and two kings, having cast their crowns before him, kneel and worship. These, a lion is represented as blandly licking and fondling; but, upon two that appear armed and hostile in the distance, another lion seems about to spring: the legend explains the emblem, "Prostratis placidus, rebellibus ferox."

"Such," remarks Mr. Elliott, "is the triplet of counterpart paintings in this Leonine pageant, in contrast with the Apocalyptic triplet of symbols in the Vision."* He has given also (from Bonanni's Numismata Pontificum) a copy of a medal struck at Rome on the occasion, in which an angel appears putting a crown upon the head of a lion having his paw upon the globe; and round it is the legend, "Vicit Leo de tribu Judah." Nor were these devices the mere extravagance of adulation under festal excitement. The representation of Leo as a special envoy from heaven, was a favourite conceit of the writers of the time.† In an ode addressed to Leo as the "Greater Luminary of the Church," a splendour dazzling as the sun is described as flashing from his triple crown, with reference to the Divine glory attached to it of an empire over earth, hell, and heaven. The Maronite patriarch, and another of the Oriental ecclesiastics, address him as resplendent like the sun in holiness; and in an ode of Zenobius,‡ addressed to Leo as Apollo, the twofold idea of his being the God of light and of healing

† As in V. Castalio's verses on the occasion:—
"Jam novus in terras alto descendit Olympo
Jupiter."
‡ These and other citations will be found in the notes to Elliott, vol. ii. pp. 61—65.
is dwelt upon. Further, remarks Mr. Elliott, "would we learn the meaning and its realization in actual life, of that most striking representation of the Pope, in the Florentine triumphal arc, as fixing one foot on the land, and the other on the sea, how can we better satisfy ourselves than by marking what passed at Rome in the second year of Leo's pontificate, on occasion of an embassy arriving from the King of Portugal with magnificent presents of animals from the East? . . . . Pleased with the devotedness of the Portuguese king, he made a donation to him, in terms more ample than those of the original grant to Prince Henry, of all countries, provinces, and islands which he might recover from the infidels, not only from Capes Bojador and Non to the Indies, but in the parts yet undiscovered. And both in this act, and in accepting the appropriation to the Papacy of the latter-day prophecies,—indeed, himself in his medals appropriating them,—he stood forth before Christendom as a daring usurper of the rights of Christ."* Nor was it long before the roar of the Papal lion (*Leo Papa*) made itself heard throughout Christendom, in the denunciations and decrees of the General Council which cited the adherents of the Pisan Council and Pragmatic Sanction as schismatics and rebels, and the Bohemian confessors as heretics; imposed a papal censorship upon printed books; forbade all reference to Anti-Christ in preaching; and enjoined inquisitors to proceed with zeal against all heretics.†

How, then, is this remarkable coincidence be-

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* Elliott, ii. 69—75.  
† Ib. 77—85.
tween the Apocalyptic imagery and the historical facts to be explained? Had the Scriptures been at that time generally in the hands of the people, we may conceive of a devout person's being staggered and perplexed at the apparent fulfilment of the symbolical prefiguration in the Papal Anti-Christ. Was the "mighty angel" of the Vision indeed no angel of light, and was the Papal lion really prefigured by the emblem?* What follows in the Vision forbids any such interpretation as this? Was there, then, on the part of Leo and his adulators, a studied imitation of the symbols and language of the prediction? Did Leo personate the angel, as he did Apollo and Christ? Of this, there is no evidence; nor is it at all probable, that any distinct appeal to the Apocalypse would have been at that period ventured upon as sustaining the Papal pretensions. But, if the coincidence cannot be accounted for on either supposition, if the false glories of the Pontificate were not prefigured by the emblem, and there was no mimic fulfilment of the prophecy, the only satisfactory explanation would seem to be that proposed by Mr. Elliott, on the principle of "allusive reference, in visions figuring Christ's revelations of Himself to his true Church, to some thing opposed and in contrast."†

* It is very singular, that Luther should have been led to explain the vision of the mighty angel as prefiguring a mock Christ, the Pope and Popedom. See Elliott, vol. iv. p. 418.
† Vol. ii. p. 48. The learned Expositor refers to the sealing vision of ch. vii., and the incense-offering in ch. viii., as exemplifications of the same allusive contrast.
In other words, the designed application of the prediction to a particular event or period, is marked by a special adaptation, in the symbolical imagery, to some characteristic feature of the times by anticipative allusion. This principle being admitted, the circumstances attending the accession of Leo X., which were in such bold contrast to the true import of the Vision, will be recognised as determining the chronology of its fulfilment.

What, then, was the event which, at that very epoch, fixed the attention of the civilised world, and to which the sublime imagery of the Vision most appropriately answers? What was the main Providential feature and instrumental cause of that wonderful revival of Christianity to which historians give the name of the Reformation? The emblem in the Vision, although not to be regarded as a representation of the person of Christ, or a symbol of his personal advent, is much too glorious to be regarded as prefigurative of any human agency. But how appropriately does it set before us the shining forth of Christ in his Word! Viewed under this aspect, the Reformation was the epiphany of Christ. The

* Mr. Elliott considers the symbol as a prefiguration of "the burst of Gospel light vouchsafed by the Lord Jesus at the Reformation," but he seems to make it almost prefigurative of the person of Luther as "the instrumental originator" of the great Revolution. This is taking a very narrow and partial view of the Reformation itself. Zwingle began to preach the Reformed doctrine in 1516. The great Saxon Reformer did not originate the movement in Switzerland, France, and England. He was a great and glorious instrument, but he was not the Reformation.
sudden kindling up of the light of the Scriptures by means of the reproduction and translation of the sacred volume, and of the new and marvellous facilities afforded by the art of printing, for multiplying copies at a price which placed them within reach of the people, must be regarded as the most extraordinary intervention on the part of the Supreme Head of the Church since the Pentecostal gift of tongues. Although there was nothing supernatural in the mechanical invention itself, yet, taken in connexion with the time of the discovery, the purpose for which it seemed to have been more especially communicated, and the wonderful results, it had all the character of a Divine boon and a moral miracle.* The Scriptures had hitherto been "as

* Foxe the Martyrologist, in his Acts and Monuments, mentions the year 1450 as "famous and memorable for the Divine and miraculous invention of Printing," of which, "what man soever was the instrument, without all doubt God himself was the ordainer and disposer, as He was of the gift of tongues." The era of the invention is somewhat earlier; and the secular celebration of the invention was held at Haerlem in July, 1835; but the Bible was first published in 1450 from metal types. It is interesting to find the venerable Reformer recognising the momentous results of this glorious invention. "Now to consider to what end and purpose The Lord hath given this gift of Printing to the earth, and to what great utility and necessity it serves, it is not hard to judge, whose wisely considers both the time of the sending, and the sequel which thereof ensueth.

"And first, touching the time of this faculty given to the use of man, this is to be marked; that, when the bishop of Rome, with all the whole and full consent of the cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, lawyers, doctors, provosts,
a light shining in a dark place," as a lamp in a secret cell, or in a sepulchre: they were now as the day-star rising on the world. As, in the xith Psalm, the word of God is compared to the natural sun, so, the sun-like radiance of the Angel in the Vision may be considered as aptly representing the light and glory of Divine Truth, while the rainbow is the symbol of the New Covenant; and, in the feet resembling pillars of fire, the attribute of glorious might is associated with the symbols of Truth and Grace.

Can we then be mistaken as to the import of deans, archdeacons, assembled together in the council of Constance, had condemned poor John Huss and Jerome of Prague to death for heresy, notwithstanding they were no heretics, and after they had subdued the Bohemians and all the world under the supreme authority of the Romish see; and had made all Christian people obediencers and vassals unto the same, having, as one would say, all the world at their will, so that the matter now was past not only the power of all men, but the hope also of any man to be recovered:—in this very time so dangerous and desperate, where man's power could do no more, there the blessed wisdom and omnipotent power of The Lord began to work for his Church; not with sword and target to subdue his exalted adversary, but with printing, writing, and reading, to convince darkness by light, error by truth, ignorance by learning. So that, by this means of Printing, the secret operation of God hath heaped upon that proud kingdom a double confusion. God of his secret judgment, seeing it was time to help his Church, found a way by this faculty of Printing, not only to confound his life and conversation, which before he could not abide to be touched, but also to cast down the foundation of his standing, that is, to examine, confute, and detect his doctrine, laws, and institutions, most detestable, in such sort, that, though his life were ever so pure, yet, his doctrine standing as it doth, no man is so blind but he may see, that either the
the open book which was seen in the hand of the Angel, and which appears to be so closely connected with the proclamation which he utters? It was not, like the scroll of prophecy, a sealed volume. It was a book to be eaten as food; a metaphor never used in Scripture but in reference to the word of God.* This book evidently denotes the purpose of the descent of the Angel; and its being open, implies that it was to be published throughout the world. For this end, the Angel took possession of both land and sea, and

Pope is antichrist, or else that antichrist is near cousin to the Pope; and all this doth and will hereafter more and more appear by Printing.

"The reason whereof is, that hereby tongues are known, knowledge growth, judgment increaseth, books are dispersed, the Scripture is seen, the doctors are read, stories are opened, times compared, truth discerned, falsehood detected, and with finger pointed, and all, as I said, through the benefit of Printing. Wherefore, I suppose, that either the Pope must abolish Printing, or he must seek a new world to reign over; for else, as this world standeth, PRINTING DOUBTLESS WILL ABOLISH HIM. But the Pope and all his college of cardinals must understand, that, through the light of Printing, the world beginneth now to have eyes to see, and heads to judge. He cannot walk so invisible in a net, but he will be spied. And although, through might, he stopped the mouth of John Huss before, and of Jerome, that they might not preach, thinking to make his kingdom sure; yet, instead of J. Huss and others, God hath opened the press to preach, whose voice the Pope is never able to stop with all the puissance of his triple crown. By this Printing, as by the gift of tongues, and as by the singular organ of the Holy Ghost, the doctrine of the Gospel soundeth to all nations and countries under heaven, and what God revealeth to one man, is dispersed to many, and what is known in one nation, is opened to all."

* See Jer. xv. 16; Psa. xix. 10; cxix. 103.
uttered a cry which well describes the effect of the promulgation of the Scriptures upon the Papal world. Everywhere, it produced alarm and consternation among the votaries of Anti-Christ; and the thunders which issued from the seven hills of Rome,* were the utterance of rage and fear. It had been found comparatively easy to check the reading of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue by the laity, so long as copies could be multiplied only by the slow and costly process of transcription.† But the invention of Printing defied the authority, and baffled all the efforts of Rome. Tyndal, from whom England first received the English New Testament in a printed volume, fell a victim to the rage of his Royal persecutor. But the lamp he kindled, was never to be put out. The seven thunders rolled by disregarded by the true Church,—agreeably to the Divine intimation of the Vision, "Write them not."

Yet, an answer was returned to the Papal thunders, when recognised as the "infernal voices

* We are indebted to Mr. Elliott for this explanation of the septenary number. He cites as a parallel metaphor, from Euripides, the two-topped lightning, i.e., the lightning from the two summits of Parnassus. Elliott, vol. ii. p. 110.

† In 1229, the Council of Toulouse prohibited the laity from possessing the Scriptures. About 1400, the decree of Pope Alexander V., condemning all translations into the vernacular tongues, caused the suppression to be more strict and general throughout Western Christendom. In England, Archbishop Arundel issued, in 1408, a furious decree, in consequence of which several persons were burned for reading Wickliffe's translation.
of Anti-Christ."* An impression corresponding to the Apocalyptic Angel's solemn adjuration and announcement, became very general among the Saxon, Swiss, and English Reformers; that they were under the Sixth Trumpet-sounding, and that, under the Seventh, Anti-Christ should be overthrown. Mr. Elliott has shewn, by a chain of citations from their writings, that, "commencing immediately from the time of Luther and Zwingle's first heaven-made discovery of the Anti-Christ of prophecy being none other than the Roman Popes, there was also impressed on them, with all the force of a heavenly communication, the conviction of the fated time being near at hand, though not indeed yet come, of Anti-Christ's final fore-doomed destruction, and of God's great prophetic mystery ending; just agreeably, in respect of time as well as of subject-matter, with the Angel's oath heard at this epoch in the Apocalyptic drama by St. John."† But whence was this impression derived? We find as well the Swiss Reformers, Leo Juda and Bullinger (A.D. 1552—1555), as the British, Bishop

* In Luther's "Answer to the execrable Bull of Anti-Christ," June 15, 1520, addressing Christian princes, he says: "Ye have given your name to Christ in baptism, and can ye now abide these infernal voices of such an Anti-Christ?" Cited by Elliott, vol. ii. p. 120.

† Elliott, vol. ii. p. 143. "Pareus, Mede, Vitrings, and almost all the host of other principal expositors that followed, on the Continent and in England, kept up the idea as certain throughout the seventeenth century, that the Reformation had been accomplished under the sixth trumpet, and that the seventh only yet remained to sound."
THE ANGEL WITH THE LITTLE BOOK.

Bale (A.D. 1545) and Foxe (A.D. 1587), referring to the Angel's oath in this Vision, as the ground of their conviction, in connexion with the important discovery, that they were under the Sixth Trumpet-sounding in "God's grand prophetic calendar." It was by means of a light shed upon their minds from the study of the open volume, having all the effect of a revelation from heaven, that they were enabled to read aright the "signs of the times."

By the earliest Protestant interpreters, (with the singular exception of Luther,) this Vision was interpreted as denoting Christ's intervention, by the instrumentality of the Reformers, against the Papal Anti-Christ and Mohammedism; the Angel, as the preachers of the Reformation; and the open book, as the Gospel opened to men by Gospel preachers, with the aid of Printing.* Mede was the first expositor of note who deviated from this sound interpretation, and conceived that the open book in the hand of the Angel was, like the sealed volume opened by the Lamb, a prophetic roll, inscribed with the future history of the Western Church, or, as Bp. Newton styles it, "a codicil to the larger book." This erroneous view has been adopted by Vitringa, Sir Isaac Newton, Bp. Newton, Faber, Cunningham, and some others; and a recent Writer, who generally accords with Mr. Elliott, has revived the idea, that the little book comprehended the prophecy contained in

the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth chapters. The only plausible arguments urged in support of this notion are, that the little book suggests a larger book with which it is contrasted, and, that it is contrary to every canon of interpretation of the Apocalyptic symbols, to make a book the symbol of a book, i.e., of the open Bible. But, in reply to the former argument, it may be remarked, that an open volume cannot be an emblem of the concealed records of the Future, and that the symbolic eating of this scroll has no analogy to the unsealing and gradual unrolling of the book of Prophecy. Nor is there any parallelism in the other features of the emblematic representation. In answer to the other argument, it is sufficient to observe, that the little book is not to be taken separately as a prefigurative symbol, being here an adjunct or a component feature only of the emblem of the "mighty angel;" as in the instance of the flying angel at ch. xiv. 6, bearing what our translators render, the "everlasting Gospel, to preach to them that dwell on the earth;" which presents a much closer parallelism with the passage before us. Further, as a sword cannot be said to be the symbol of a sword, and yet it is obviously a symbol of war or slaughter, so, a book, though not the symbol of a book, may denote the purposes to which a book is applied, the diffusion of knowledge or the propagation of truth. The open book may well be understood,

* "The Seventh Seal," p. 58. See Mr. Elliott's reply to Mede, &c., vol. ii. p. 44.
therefore, as implying the publishing and making known to all the truths of the Gospel by means of the word of Christ.

And this view of the import of the emblem strictly accords with what follows. The Apostle was directed by the voice which he had heard from heaven, to ask the Angel for the little book which he held in his hand; and the Angel delivers it to him with the injunction to eat it up, and he would find its contents sweet as honey in his mouth, but bitter in their effect. The symbolic action receives illustration from a parallel passage in the Visions of Ezekiel. The Hebrew prophet was about to be sent to prophesy to a rebellious people. "And lo! a hand stretched out before him a scroll or roll of a book, upon both sides of which were written lamentations, and mourning, and woe." This he was caused to eat; and it was in his mouth as honey for sweetness, but afterwards he prophesied in bitterness of spirit.* St. John is told, in like manner, after having eaten the little book, that he "must prophesy or preach again before many peoples, and nations, and languages, and kings." It seems clearly implied, that his prophesying was connected with his receiving and swallowing the little book, and that this was to prepare or qualify him for the office. But the Apostle cannot be regarded as taking part in the symbolic action of the Vision, otherwise than in a representative character. If one part of the vision is prefigurative, the whole must be so

* Ezek. iii. 1—5; iv. 14.
construed. If the emblem of the "mighty angel" with the open book had its historical fulfilment in the glorious manifestation of Evangelical Truth which produced the Reformation, then we may conclude, that the eating of the open book as preparatory to the enjoined discharge of the prophetic commission, was fulfilled by the scriptural labours and preaching of the Reformers of different nations, in various languages, and before many kings. That prophesying is to be taken here in the sense of preaching, the use of the same word in reference to the testimony borne by the two Witnesses, as well as its constant import in the New Testament, places beyond question.* The prophesying again, denotes the revival of that Evangelical preaching which had been carried on by the earlier Witnesses, but which had been well-nigh suppressed. Very striking is the wish expressed by Luther in 1520: "Would that we could multiply living books!" "Si vivos libros, hoc est concionatores, possemus multiplicare!"† Sweet to the spiritual taste as was the study of the sacred volume, yet, bitter were the consequences of acting out the part of a faithful preacher and expositor of God's word. We find the Reformers expressing their feelings in lan-

* Comp. Rev. xi. 3; 1 Cor. xi. 4; xiv. 3. So, the early expositors, Primasius and Ambrosius Ansbertus interpret the term prophetare in this passage, as equivalent to prædicare. Foxe cites Thomas Aquinas as an authority for the same rendering. See Elliott, vol. ii. pp. 148—151, notes.

guage strictly accordant with that of the Hebrew prophets, who discharged their mission in bitterness of spirit.* "If," says Luther, "I should write of the heavy burden of a godly preacher, which he must carry and endure, as I know by my own experience, I should scare every man from the office of preaching."† The personal danger, the reproach and opposition, the polemical strife and contention to which they were exposed, required no ordinary fortitude, added to a strong sense of their Divine commission, to encounter and sustain.

And now, further, in continuance of the symbolical action of the Vision, there was given to the Apostle a reed resembling a measuring-rod or staff, with which he was directed to measure off the Temple of God, and the altar-court, and the worshippers therein, leaving out, or separating them from, the outer court. Here, again, the prophecies of Ezekiel furnish an illustrative parallel, in the vision of a glorious personage with a line of flax and a measuring-reed, who took the measurements of the Temple of Jerusalem. That vision had, it is true, a different import, being apparently designed to convey an assurance that the Temple should be rebuilt after its destruction,

* Jer. xx. 9.
† Luther's Table Talk, p. 185. Elsewhere he says: "I would not take the wealth of the world that I should now begin to work against the Pope, when regarding the exceeding heavy care and anguish wherewith I have been burdened. But, when I look on Him who called me thereto, I would not for the world's wealth but that I had begun it." Ib.
if not also to supply (as some expositors suppose) a model for its erection.* In the Apocalyptic Vision, the Temple is symbolical of the living Church of Christ, "built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets," and composed of living stones, "built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit."† The Apostle was directed to separate the spiritual worshippers, who are the True Circumcision, having access to the heavenly altar,‡ from those to whom the outer court was given up,—the heathen intruders or paganized Christians by whom the holy city of the visible Church, the pale of nominal Christendom, was to be trodden or held in possession for the mystical period of two and forty months, i.e. of years.

This allegorical measuring of the Christian Temple, taken in connexion with the corresponding vision of Ezekiel, may, perhaps, be intended to suggest also, the idea of a reparation or building up of the spiritual edifice. The historical counterpart to this symbolical transaction seems to be, the open, formal separation of the Reformed Churches from the Roman pale and the renunciation of the Papal communion. Up to that time, those whom the Church of Rome denounced and persecuted as heretics on account of their adherence to the Evangelical faith, even after they had been led to recognise the Pope as Anti-Christ, appear to have regarded the Church of which he

* Ezek. xl. 3.
† Comp. Eph. ii. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 5; 2 Cor. vi. 16.
‡ Comp. Phil. iii. 3; Rom. ii. 29; Heb. xiii. 10.
was the Head, as actually the true Church, and to have ranked themselves among its members. It was, therefore, a most important step in the progress of the Reformation, when they were led to separate themselves from an apostate hierarchy, by adopting a distinct ecclesiastical organization, which, how faulty or imperfect soever, drew a line between those who acknowledged the Papal authority and those who professedly received the Word of God as the only Rule of Faith. To measure the Church of Christ aright, is to reduce it to the communion of saints or of spiritual worshippers; but the allegorical measuring off of the sacred enclosure cannot have been intended to prefigure any authoritative demarcation, by erring men, of the spiritual temple, or to sanction any particular scheme of ecclesiastical polity.

A mystical meaning has, indeed, been attributed to the measuring-rod put into the hand of the Apostle; such as, in the parallel vision of Ezekiel, and in the subsequent measuring of the holy city in chap. xxi., cannot possibly attach to the instrument. Thus, while, according to one commentator, the rod denoted the pen of the Reformers, by which the ritual, and laws, and symbols of the Evangelic Church were filled up,* the learned Author of "Hore Apocalyptica" zealously contends, that it must mean "the official rod which was the badge of royal or ruling magisterial authority," and that

* Primasius, an early commentator, proposes this explanation of the καλαμος,—"Evangelium quippe arundinis officio scribitur;" a view which Mr. Elliott thinks "not unsuitable to the case." Elliott, vol. ii. p. 184.
what is prefigured by it is, "the authority given to Luther and others of the reforming fathers by the ruling civil power, alike in Saxony and in sundry other countries or cities, for reforming or reconstituting what were thenceforth known as the churches of the Reformation."* But for this, he maintains, "the reformed churches would soon have fallen into misrule and anarchy." This startling position seems to make the warrant of the Reformers as Christ's ministers, depend upon the sanction and countenance of the Civil Magistrate; and although the learned Author endeavours to evade this fatal objection, by distinguishing between the Divine warrant and "the earthly authorization needed in order to its successful execution,"† the interpretation must be regarded as a misplaced attempt to convert the symbolic rod into a polemical weapon, and to press the allegory into the defence of a

* Horæ Apoc. vol. ii. pp. 184—188. "Reply to Dr. Candlish," pp. 4, 23—27. Dr. Candlish, in his "Four Letters" to Mr. Elliott (Lond. 1846), had combated this interpretation with much force of argument; but he would make the rod which the measuring-reed resembled, to be "the sceptre of Christ,"—"the shadow of the high prerogative of judgement belonging to Christ in heaven." A recent American Expositor, Mr. Lord, would make the rod to be "the symbol of the revealed will of God;" and he takes Mr. Elliott to task still more severely. "To resort to the authority of the civil magistrate, or the sword, were to desert the office of a witness. No construction therefore could be more inconsistent with the symbol. . . . In erecting the Protestant Churches into national establishments, instead of fulfilling the office of witnesses, they (the civil rulers) acted the part of the ten-horned Wild Beast." Lord's Expos. of the Apocalypse, pp. 293, 4.

political doctrine at variance with the whole tenor of the Apocalypse,—that of the authority of the Civil Magistrate in matters of religion. But why should any mystery be attached to the rod, in the Vision, more than to the line of flax in that of Ezekiel, when it was the act of measuring, not the instrument, that constituted the symbolical prefiguration, and conveyed the mystic meaning?

Here, the symbolical action of the Vision ends; and what follows is an allegorical narrative, given by the Angelic nuncio who shewed John these things, explanatory of the declaration, that the outer court of the Temple had been given to the Gentiles, and that the holy city should be trodden by them forty-and-two months. It is added: "And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." This period is evidently the same as the two-and-forty months; the new prediction being thus connected, if not with the prefigurative action of measuring off the inner sanctuary of the Temple, yet, with the reason given for the command. The question then arises, when did these two-and-forty months commence? At the time to which we have considered the emblematic action as pointing, under the Sixth Trumpet; that is, at the Reformation? This cannot be, since the ministry of the Witnesses, as will be seen hereafter, had at that time been fully developed. At the time of the Vision? This, if understood of the time at which the Vision was seen, would be the reign of Domitian, which no one can imagine to be intended. But, if understood
of the chronology of the Visions, this must, as we have seen, be placed between the Sixth and the Seventh Trumpet. The supposition, that the Vision is placed at the commencement of the forty-two months, is, therefore, not less inadmissible. The declaration, that the outer court was given to the Gentiles, must imply, that it had been previously abandoned to them; and with reference to that past time, (the declaration being so far retrospective,) we must interpret the giving power to the Witnesses, although spoken of in the future tense, as it was actually future at the time of St. John’s seeing the Vision.

There is nothing, in this part of the Apocalyptic disclosures, then, that enables us to fix the commencement of the forty-two months; but other data are furnished in connexion with the subsequent Visions, which will come under consideration hereafter. Reserving this inquiry, we may now turn our attention to the remarkable allegory of the Two Witnesses, which strangely perplexed the ancient expositors, and has been, in modern times, the subject of many incongruous and absurd conjectures. It is a very significant circumstance, that it was not till the light of the Reformation broke forth, that the true import was perceived.* The patristic notion, founded on

* Attention was now first directed retrospectively to the history of the Witnesses. Bp. Bale's "Image of Both Churches" (1545) includes a brief catalogue of witnesses. In 1556 appeared the Catalogus Testium of the Magdeburg Centuriators. Nearly at the same time was published Foxe's Martyrology. Elliott, ii. 195.
Rabbinical legends, prevailed up to the sixteenth century, that the two witnesses were Enoch and Elijah, or Elijah and Jeremiah, or Moses and Elijah. Some modern expositors have interpreted them as symbolizing the Old and New Testaments.* Luther correctly speaks of them as a succession of faithful Witnesses kept up for Christ; and this interpretation was adopted by most of the Reformers, English and Continental.

The meaning of the allegory might, indeed, have been ascertained from comparing it with the passage in the Visions of Zechariah,† to which it obviously alludes. The Prophet was shown two olive-trees which discharged their oil into the golden lamps of the sanctuary; and these were explained to him as signifying "the two anointed ones who stand before the Lord of the whole earth." It has generally been supposed, that Joshua the high-priest and Zerubbabel are here referred to; the one, the spiritual head of the Temple polity, the other, the chief governor of the nation; not, however, in their personal, but in their representative character.‡ It is, however,

* Frere, Irving, Galloway.
† Zech. iv. 14.
‡ Dr. More combines the old patristic notion with this idea. These witnesses are two, he says, "partly from the types they allude to in the Old Testament." These types are, "Moses and Aaron, Elias and Elisha, Zerobabel and Jesua, three several pairs of holy men that are famous for their conduct of the people in such times as bear also analogy to those of the Two Witnesses, whose prophecy is during the concoulation of the outward court of the Temple by the Gentiles, that is, while it is polluted with idolatry; as Moses and Aaron were over the
forcibly objected, that a civil governor is nowhere in Scripture spoken of as standing before the Lord: those who were anointed for this purpose were, the priests and the prophets, who formed the two-fold ministry of the Jewish Church. At all events, it is not persons, but bodies of men that are referred to. The whole Jewish nation are thus addressed by God: "Ye are my witnesses."* They were such, as testifying before the other nations of the earth to the fact, that Jehovah is the Only True God. The office of these Witnesses is in like manner to testify, in the midst of the Anti-Christian nations, against false worship and an idolatry scarcely less gross than that of Paganism. As the seven lamps (or candlesticks) seen by St. John in the First Vision, are explained as being emblems of seven churches or Christian congregations, there is the less room to doubt that the two candlesticks or lamps here denote collective bodies. Our Lord employed a similar figure, when He said to His disciples, "Ye are the light of the world: men do not light a candle (or lamp) and put it under a bushel." The number two, applied to these Witnesses, receives a natural explanation from the law which required that a charge of idolatry should be sustained by not fewer than two witnesses. "At

Israelites in the wilderness, where they often lapsed into idolatry, Elias and Elisha in their Baalitical apostasy, and Zerubabel and Jesua when they were yet in the Captivity of Babylon." Dr. H. More's Works, p. 403.

* Comp. Deut. xvii. 2—6; Numb. xxxi. 30; Matt. xviii. 16; 1 Tim. v. 19.
the mouth of two witnesses," (that is, as the smallest number,) "shall every word be established." It intimates, that the number would be but just sufficient for the purpose of maintaining a credible testimony by their concurrence. Now, as their testimony was to be maintained through a series of ages, a double line of witnesses, or a succession of witnessing churches, seems clearly to be intended by the prediction.*

The commencement of their testimony, coincident with the desecration of the outer court of the Temple and the occupation of the holy city by the Gentiles, must be dated from the lapse of professing Christendom and its ruling powers into idolatry, and the suppression of the truth by Anti-Christian laws. Now we have seen in the illustration of the preceding Vision, that even the Ante-Nicene age is chargeable with polytheistic practices, in the invocation of saints and the adoration of relics. The worship of images, according to Gibbon, was firmly established before the end of the sixth century; but, throughout that century, the veneration of relics was the chief characteristic of the corrupt worship of Western Christendom; that of images, of the worship of Eastern Christendom. At the very

* Even Stuart, while contending for an absurd application of the allegory to Jewish times, interprets the Two Witnesses as denoting "a competent number of divinely commissioned faithful Christian witnesses who should proclaim the truths of the Gospel." So Mede; and Mr. Elliott cites T. Aquinas as giving a similar explanation:—"Propter sufficientiam testimonii."
commencement of the seventh century, the consecration of the Pantheon at Rome to the Virgin Mary and all the Saints (A.D. 604), afforded, as Mr. Elliott remarks, a notable sign of the substitution of a new form of heathen worship under a Christian name. It was during the seventh century, that, in Eastern Christendom, the adoration of images and pictures of the Virgin and Saints became first, on the scale of the whole nation, a popular passion; and it was about the middle of that century, that the Paulician witnesses had their origin.

The rise of these Reformed Christians dates from the conversion of Constantine, surnamed Sylvanus, in consequence of the perusal of a copy of the Gospels and Pauline Epistles, A.D. 653. After a mission of twenty-seven years, he fell a sacrifice, at Colonia in Pontus, to Roman persecution. "From the blood and ashes of the first victims," says Gibbon, "a succession of teachers and congregations repeatedly arose: they preached, they disputed, they suffered. . . . The feeble Michael I., the rigid Leo the Armenian, were foremost in the race of persecution; but the prize must doubtless be adjudged to the sanguinary devotion of Theodora, who restored the Images to the Oriental Church. Her inquisitors explored the cities and mountains of the Lesser Asia; and the flatterers of the Empress affirmed, that, in a short reign, one hundred thousand Paulicians were extirpated by the sword, the gibbet, or the flames. If the account be allowed, it must be presumed, that many simple Icon-
THE TWO WITNESSES.

Oculasts perished under a more odious name."* This was about A.D. 846. Meantime, in the middle of the eighth century, Constantine Copronymus had transplanted a great number of Paulicians from the banks of the Euphrates to Constantinople and Thrace; and, by this emigration, their doctrine was introduced and diffused in Europe. We have seen that, in the reign of the Emperor Leo, his predecessor, a decided attempt was made to put down Image-worship; and for nearly sixty years, the princes of the Isaurian family gave their countenance to the partial reformation. By the General Council convened by Constantine Copronymus in 754, Image-worship was authoritatively condemned. The enlightened efforts of the Emperor Leo were resisted and anathematised by the Latin Popes; and Pope Gregory II. raised the standard of rebellion in Italy against the Imperial Iconoclast. Finally, Pope Adrian took a prominent part, in conjunction with the Empress Irene, in convening the Second Council of Nice, by which, in 787, idolatry was formally and authoritatively restored and established throughout both the Eastern

* Gibbon, ch. liv. In the following paragraph, speaking of the persecuted Paulicians, the Historian remarks, that the most desperate of rebels are the votaries of a religion long persecuted. "Such have been the Hussites of Bohemia and the Calvinists of France; and such, in the ninth century, were the Paulicians of Armenia and the adjacent provinces." He thus recognises at once the true character of these early Protestants of the Eastern Church, and the close resemblance between them and the Witnesses and martyrs of later times.
and the Western Empire.* From this era, then, we may consider the occupation of the outer court of the Temple and the holy city by the Christian heathen to have decidedly taken place; and thenceforth, those who protested against this Paganised Christianity, prophesied in sackcloth. The true followers of Christ disappear from the so-called Visible Church, and are known to ecclesiastical history only under the name of heretics.† In the emphatic and wonderfully appropriate language of Gibbon, "the visible assemblies of the Paulicians or Albigeois were extirpated by fire or sword; and the bleeding remnant escaped by flight, concealment, or Catholic conformity. But the invincible spirit which they had kindled, still lived and breathed in the Western world. In the State, in the Church, and even in the cloister, a latent succession was preserved of the disciples of St. Paul; who protested against the tyranny of Rome, embraced the Bible as the rule of faith, and purified their creed from all the visions of the

* Not, indeed, without a very remarkable protest of 300 bishops of Western Christendom, in the great council of Frankfort, A.D. 794, assembled under the authority and presidency of Charlemagne, by which the decisions of the Nicene Council were disapproved, and the worship of images was forbidden. Towards the close of the following century, however, under the increasing Papal influence, the Gallicans and Germans gradually adopted image-worship.

† Mr. Elliott has performed a noble service in vindicating the Paulikians and other early witnesses from the malignant imputations of Roman Catholic historians, which have unhappily been revived by certain Anglican divines of the Tractarian school.
Gnostic theology. The struggles of Wickliff in England, of Huss in Bohemia, were premature and ineffectual; but the names of Zwinglius, Luther, and Calvin are pronounced with gratitude as the deliverers of nations."

We must now recur to the account of the Witnesses given by the Angel. After characterising them as the two olive-trees and the two lamps of the sanctuary, the Angel adds: "And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy; and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will." This language manifestly alludes to the miraculous powers exerted by Moses and Aaron, and by Elijah; and seems to denote, that the prayers of the Witnesses would be equally potential, and that the truth of their testimony would be confirmed by similar judgments. The allegorical character of the whole prophecy requires that this language should be taken figuratively. The fire proceeding from their mouths may be interpreted of the Divine judgments by which their warnings were fulfilled; agreeably to the words of The Lord to

* Gibbon, ch. liv. Had it been the design of the Historian, to establish the identity of this line of Reformed and Protestant Christians with the Apocalyptic Witnesses, he could not have employed more fitting terms; and the value of his testimony is enhanced by its being furnished with no reference to the prediction to which it so precisely corresponds.
Jeremiah, "Behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them;"* which was fulfilled in the burning of the city and the overthrow of the kingdom. The "shutting heaven that it rain not," requires obviously to be understood of a spiritual, not a physical drought, since it was to last during the 1260 years of their prophesying; conformably to the striking language in the prophecies of Amos, "The days come, saith The Lord, that I will send a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of The Lord."† Their having power to turn the waters into blood, while alluding to one of the plagues inflicted on Egypt, seems to refer to the bloodshed of the wars by which their persecutors were scourged. Most signal, indeed, was the retribution which, in many instances, avenged the cause of the victims of intolerance. With regard to the earlier Protestants of the ninth century, the language of Gibbon, in describing the results of the Imperial persecutions, is highly remarkable. "A more dangerous and consuming flame was kindled by the persecution of Theodora, and the revolt of Carbeas, a valiant Paulician, who commanded the guards of the General of the East. A Saracen emir introduced Carbeas to the Caliph; and the Commander of the Faithful extended his sceptre to the implacable enemy of the Greeks. During more

* Jer. v. 14. So, ch. xxiii. 29: "Is not my word like as a fire?"

† Amos viii. 11.
than thirty years, Asia was afflicted by the calamities of foreign and domestic war. In their hostile inroads, the disciples of St. Paul were joined with those of Mahomet; . . . . . and the Roman Emperor (Michael) fled before the heretics whom his mother had condemned to the flames. . . . . The edicts of persecution were answered by the pillage of Nice and Nicomedia, of Ancyra and Ephesus; and the Paulicians vied with the Saracens in their contempt and abhorrence of images and relics.”

As, at this period, the Saracen, so, in the eleventh and following centuries, the Seljookian Turk avenged the persecutions of the so-called heretics. The Emperor Basil had succeeded in an expedition against the strong-hold of the Paulicians, and “wasted the land of heresy with fire and sword.” Within five-and-twenty years of his death, his successors were “suddenly assaulted by an unknown race of barbarians;” and the first inroads of the Turkish horsemen were an answer (in Gibbon’s phrase) to the edicts of persecution. The Turkish woe may indeed be regarded as specifically a fulfilment of the prediction relating to the Divine judgments upon the slaughterers of the Witnesses. In this light, Luther himself viewed the Ottoman conquests of his own day, as avenging the cause of the persecuted preachers of the truth.† Nor would it be difficult to shew, that

* Gibbon, ch. liv.
† “The Pope and the Turk have thoroughly revenged us. Upright and true preachers, the world cannot endure. Nay,
retributive national judgments have in every case been consequent upon the attempts to suppress and exterminate the faithful testimony to the truths of the Gospel. The persecution of the Lollards in our own country, was followed by the wars of the Roses and a century of calamities; and from the era of the perfidious revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the glory of the Bourbons and the prosperity of France rapidly declined, till both were merged in the Revolution of 1789.

We cannot, indeed, rank among the Witnesses who prophesied in sackcloth, those who, in self-defence or in resistance to oppression, took up the sword. What are called religious wars, do not belong to martyrology. Those who fall on the field of battle, may deserve to be honoured as patriots and heroes, but not as martyrs or witnesses for God. In fact, when He employs the sword for the punishment of the enemies of the Church, it is that of the Assyrian or the Roman, of the Saracen or the Ottoman. In the establishment of that kingdom which is not of this world, it is not permitted to the servants of Christ to fight. It is written, "Vengeance belongeth to me; I will recompense, saith the Lord."*

The Angel, after thus characterizing the Witnesses, proceeds to announce what forms the main subject of the prediction. "And when they shall have completed their testimony, the Wild Beast they hurt and murder them. Therefore they must have such as bereave them of body, soul, wealth, and honour. Oh, right, right!"—Luther's Table Talk.

* Rom. xii. 19.
that is to ascend out of the abyss, shall make war against them. And he shall overcome them, and shall kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the broad place of the Great City, which is spiritually called Sodom, and Egypt, and (the city) where the Lord was crucified. . . . . And after three days and a half, the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet."

The war which the Wild Beast was to wage against the Witnesses, is obviously distinguishable from the earlier persecutions: it is marked by the time at which it is represented as taking place, viz. when they shall have fulfilled their testimony; by its apparent complete success; and by the subsequent revival of the martyred Witnesses.

With regard to the time, a difficulty arises from the construction which has been put upon the declaration, that, when they shall have fulfilled their testimony, the Wild Beast shall make war against them; as if this was not to take place till the expiration of the 1260 days. It is evident, however, that the reign of the Beast, which extends throughout the same mystical period, continues long after the death and revival of the Witnesses, and that these must be supposed to discharge their office subsequently to that event. To remove this difficulty, some expositors render the passage, "While they shall perform their witnessing or testimony,"* or, "when they shall have been fulfilling" it. Mr. Fleming† suggests a different explanation, founded on a distinction between

* So Dr. H. More, Daubuz, and Boothroyd.
† Fleming's Rise and Fall of the Papacy, p. 40.
the forty-two months of their prophesying or pro-
claiming the truth, and the period of their witness-
bearing by martyrdom or suffering: it is, he con-
tends, of the latter that the declaration must be
understood, that, when their testimony by suffering
(μαρτυρία, not προφητία) shall have been fulfilled,
they shall be overcome by the Wild Beast and
put to death, their testimony being for the time
extinguished.* But this explanation is inadmis-
sible on two grounds; first, because it makes
the period of suffering to be fulfilled before
the war under which the witnesses were appa-
rently exterminated; and, secondly, it is not in
accordance with fact, that their witness-bearing by
suffering was fulfilled at the time of the Reforma-
tion. Mr. Fleming himself notices, that there
had been many persecutions since, although not
universal ones. A third explanation, suggested by
Mr. Elliott, seems to remove every difficulty. He
interprets the fulfilling of their testimony, as re-
lating to the completeness of the testimony itself,
as a distinct protestation against each of the suc-
cessively developed errors of the Apostacy.† And
the correctness of this interpretation is confirmed
by its coincidence with the historical fact, that it
was not till the twelfth century, that Rome and the

* Mr. Elliott remarks, as an objection to this opinion, that
μαρτυρία is nowhere used distinctively, in Scripture, as a testi-
mony unto death.

† This is, he remarks, very nearly the interpretation given
to the words by an ancient father, Hippolytus, in his tract on
Anti-Christ,—"When they shall have preached all these things,"
Papacy were distinctly recognized by the Waldensian and other Christians as the predicted Babylon and Anti-Christ. And then it was, that the Papacy roused itself collectively in the third Lateran General Council of 1179, and declared war against them.* The fires of persecution had, indeed, been kindled at Turin, the scene of Bp. Claude’s apostolic labours, and in the neighbouring cities, as early as the tenth century. About the middle of the eleventh, Cologne witnessed the martyrdom of several heretics whose sentiments were, there is no room to doubt, essentially scriptural. In the twelfth century, the Cathari or Puritans abounded in Germany, Flanders, Lorraine, Southern France, Savoy, and the Milanese; and a small company of German refugees found their way from Gascony to England, where they perished under penal severities and hardships. The name of Lollard was taken from that of a Waldensian pastor who flourished about the middle of the thirteenth century. The beginning of that century witnessed one of the bloodiest tragedies ever acted upon the theatre of the civilized world; a war of extermination against the subjects of the Count of Thoulouse, and, in fact, the whole Pro-

* Mr. Elliott cites from Mede the observation, that “never before the twelfth century had suspicion arisen of the Papacy being Anti-Christ;” and Bp. Hurd’s comment: “Mr. Mede seems to have proved, that the true doctrine of Anti-Christ was, and was intended to be, a mystery or secret till the twelfth century.” No important pontifical edicts for the extirpation of heresy have been discovered, earlier than the reign of Pope Alexander III., A.D. 1163. See Waddington’s History of the Reform. vol. i. p. 356.
vençal nation, under a sweeping charge of heresy. French, English, Italians, Germans, a motley and savage horde, led by an abbot, poured themselves like an inundation upon the countries devoted to vengeance, and the entire population was swept away by the sword. The few who escaped the general slaughter, sought refuge in distant countries, and, like the Christians scattered abroad by the first persecution, "went everywhere preaching the word," and sowing the seeds of the future Reformation. Between 1179 and 1250, the institution of the Franciscan and Dominican orders, the establishment of the infernal tribunal of the Inquisition, the anathemas of successive Pontiffs, the decrees of the fourth Lateran General Council (in 1215), and of several provincial councils, all directed to the suppression of heresy, and, finally, the ferocious edicts of Frederick II., "Emperor of the Romans,"* adjudging heretics to infamy, confiscation, and death, and, if obstinate, death by public burning,—were the combined instrumentality by which this war of extermination was waged against the witnesses for Christ and the Gospel.

* In a letter to the Pope, the Emperor "condemned such as were convicted of heresy to the fire, but allowed the bishops to show mercy where they thought proper, provided the tongues of those who were pardoned were cut out, so that they might not again blaspheme." M'Crie's Reform in Italy, p. 3. An imperial edict of this tyrant, addressed to all his princes, prelates, and nobles, directing proceedings against the heretical of every class, bears date, Padua, Feb. 22, 1243. A similar edict had been issued by Louis, King of the French, dated Paris, April, 1228.
At length, as the fifteenth century drew to a close, after a furious renewal of the crusades against the Waldenses of Dauphiny and Piedmont, and the purer section of the surviving Hussites in Bohemia, the predicted conquest of the Wild Beast appeared to be well nigh achieved. About the middle of that century, Paul II. (elected in 1463) actually dissuaded the King of Hungary from prosecuting the crusade against the Turks, in order to make war upon the Hussites of Bohemia; promising him the crown of that kingdom as his guerdon.

In 1498, Pope Innocent III. commanded all archbishops, bishops, and vicars to obey his inquisitors, and induce the people to take up arms in the crusade against the Vaudois, granting indulgences to all who should engage in the holy war, with authority to appropriate to their own use whatever property they might seize. It was then that 18,000 regular troops burst upon the valleys of Piedmont; and had not a feeling of compunction visited the sovereign, Philip of Savoy, the work of destruction would probably have been complete. Then, too, was accomplished the actual extirpation of the Christians of the Val Louise in High Dauphiny.* It was, moreover,

* "Having retired into the caverns of the highest mountains, the French King's lieutenant commanded a great quantity of wood to be laid at the entrance of those caverns, to burn or smoke them out. And some were slain in attempting to escape. Some threw themselves headlong on the rocks below; some were smothered. There were afterwards found within the caverns, 400 infants stifled in the arms of their dead mothers.
in 1478, that, by an arrangement between the King of Spain and the Pope, that "reform" of the Holy Office took place, which rendered it so terrible an engine of persecution and murder in that country. In the first year alone, 2000 victims were burned. This was its prelibation of blood. The computation of Llorente, founded on official documents, is, that, from this re-organization of the Inquisition to the commencement of the Reformation in 1517, 13,000 persons were burned for heresy, besides 8700 burned in effigy, and 169,000 persons condemned to penances. Not only in Spain, in France, in Piedmont, in Flanders, but also in Germany, Bohemia, and the mountains of Calabria, the blood-hounds of the Inquisition pursued and tracked the Waldenses in all their settlements and missions. About the year 1467, it is stated by Comenius, the Historian of the Bohemian Church, the Waldenses in Austria and Moravia had complied so far as to dissemble their religion and turn to Popery in profession and outward compliance. "The Taborites,* in the mean time, upon their refusing to do so, were so completely destroyed, that it was much that seventy of them could get together to consult about continuing their church, and about finding out some qualified person to be their minister, for they had none left in the year 1467. And so low

On the whole, 3000 persons, it is believed, perished on that occasion in the valley."—Perrin in Gilly's Life of Neff, p. 90.

* The followers of Huss who retired to a rocky hill ten miles from Prague, named Tabor, which they fortified and made their stronghold.
was the Church of Christ then, that, when the hidden remains of the Taborites (who were called Speculani, from their lurking in dens and caves) sent out four men to travel, one through Greece and the East, another to Russia and the North, a third to Thrace, Bulgaria, and the neighbouring places, and a fourth to Asia, Palestine, and Egypt; they did all indeed safely return to their brethren, but with sorrowful news,—that they found no Church of Christ that was pure or free from the grossest errors, superstition, and idolatry. This was in the year 1497. And when they sent two of their number two years afterwards, viz. Luke Prague and Thomas German, to go into Italy, France, and other places, to see if there were any of the old Waldenses left alive; they returned with the same melancholy news that the former had done,—that they could neither find nor hear of any remaining. Only they were informed of the martyrdom of Savanarola (who suffered in the year 1498); and they were told of some few remains of the Piedmontois that were scattered and hid among the Alps, but nobody knew where. Now, a few years after this, even the few remains of the Taborites were found out and persecuted, hardly any escaping; so that, in A.D. 1510, six suffered together publicly; and, the year following, that famous martyr, Andreas Paliwka, who was the last of that period.”

* Fleming’s “Rise and Fall.” The learned Writer proceeds to remark, that, “from the death of this martyr, in the end of the year 1511, or the beginning of 1512, to the dawning of the Reformation by the preaching of Carolastadius and Zwinglius,
The sixteenth century opened with the most gloomy prospect. "Europe reposed in the deep sleep of spiritual death, under the iron yoke of the Papacy." No danger seemed to threaten the Roman pontiffs, whose power was de facto paramount. Even in England, there were no open witnesses against the Papal system, owing to the terror inspired by the barbarous executions of 1511—18.* The remnant of the Bohemian Hussites alone attracted sufficient notice to be the subject of a Papal Bull, issued, with the approbation of the Lateran Council in its eighth session, December, 1513, by which those "heretics" were summoned to appear and plead before the Council at its next session in the following spring, unless they should have previously done so before a Papal legate. The appointed day (May 5) arrived; the Council met; but no intimation was given of any answer to the summons. "Throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, Christ's witnessing servants were silenced; they appeared as dead. The Orator of the Session ascended the pulpit, and, amidst the applause of the assembled Council, uttered that memorable exclamation of tri-

there was an interval of only about three years and a half; which answers as near as can be to the three days' and a half of the unburied state of the Witnesses." He observes, at the same time, that the Spirit's entering into the Witnesses appeared most remarkably, when Luther opposed the Pope publicly in 1517.

* The persecution of the Lollards of Buckinghamshire appears to have been carried on, with little interval, from 1506 to 1528.
umph,—never pronounced before, and certainly never since,—‘Jam nemo reclamat, nullus obsistit!’ ‘There is an end of resistance to the Papal rule and religion: opposers there exist no more.’ So did ‘they from the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations,’ assembled in Rome, the plateia of Anti-Christendom, look on Christ’s Witnesses as thenceforth not excommunicate and accursed only, but dead. It seems scarcely possible,” adds Mr. Elliott, whose language we have adopted, “that we can be mistaken in regarding it as the precise commencing date of the predicted three years and a half during which Christ’s Witnesses were to appear as mere corpses in the face of Christendom: it was May 5, 1514.”*

Nothing can be more appropriate than the designation of the local scene of this triumph over the slain Witnesses, as the forum, the central area and mart† of the Great City; the same, unquestionably, that is afterwards spoken of as “the Great City which reigneth over the kings of the earth,” and as “Babylon the Great,” but which is here characterized as being “spiritually (i.e. figuratively) called Sodom, and Egypt, and the city where the Lord was crucified.”‡ These ex-

† “Forum et emporium spirituale.” Vitranga.
‡ So Dr. H. More supplies the ellipsis: “that is, the prophet-murdering Jerusalem.” Works, p. 400. A learned Jansenist commentator, Quesnel, has given a somewhat different turn to the passage. “Wherever reign impurity, abominations, brutal passions, there is Sodom. Wherever good people are persecuted,
pressions cannot be limited in their application to the Papal metropolis, but are evidently intended to describe the moral character and spiritual condition of the apostate hierarchy: they imply that the Church was foul as Sodom, the Egypt or land of bondage in which the people of God were held in spiritual slavery, and the Jerusalem that crucified The Lord afresh in persecuting the members of His body.* The forum of this “great city” must be the seat of government, the central meeting-place of nations, the mart of spiritual merchandise. What the Platea Lateranensis, the Piazza before the Lateran church, was to the metropolis itself, Rome was to Papal Christendom; the central area or Great Square. Here, accordingly, was assembled that very Lateran Council which exulted over the slain bodies of the

there is Egypt. Wherever the members of Christ suffer, there is Calvary; there Jesus Christ is on the Cross; there is filled up the measure of his sufferings.”

* How strictly applicable this description is to the Church of Rome in the sixteenth and preceding centuries, the records of the time and the Papal edicts unequivocally evince. The ancient expositors, who had no prophetic hypothesis to establish, perceived that the literal Jerusalem could not be intended, since that is never called “the Great City.” Mr. Elliott has cited three testimonies in proof of this: 1. the Epistles of Paula, &c., in Jerome—“ Civitas magna hic mundus intelligendus est, qua spiritualiter appellatur Sodoma et Egyptus . . . . Aegyptum autem nunquam pro Jerusalem legitimus, sed semper pro hoc mundo.”

2. Berengaud in Ambrose—“ Simulque considerandum quia ubicunque in hoc libro Civitas Magna ponitur, Babylonem quae est civitas Diaboli, et ex omnibus reprobis constat, significat.”

3. Tichonius—“ In plateis civitatis magna, id est in medio ecclesiae.”

slaughtered Witnesses. The merry-making and sending of gifts mentioned in the prediction, literally took place on this occasion;\* and the joy and self-gratulation expressed at the close of the Council, strikingly answered to the Apocalyptic picture. In the language of an elegant Historian of the Reformation, "the pillars of the Papal strength seemed visible and palpable; and Rome surveyed them with exultation from her golden palaces. The assembled princes and prelates separated from the council with complacency, confidence, and mutual congratulations on the peace, unity, and purity of the Church."\+  

But short was their triumph. On the 31st of October, 1517, precisely three years and a half from the day on which the Orator of the Lateran Council pronounced his pean of exultation, Luther posted up his theses at Wittenberg, and thereby struck the first blow of the Saxon Reformation. Six years afterwards, Pope Adrian, in a brief addressed to the Diet at Nuremberg, wrote: "The heretics Huss and Jerome are now alive again in the person of Martin Luther." In the very phraseology of the prediction, the Romish writers speak of the sudden resurrection of the Albigensic witnesses in the Lutheran and Calvinian heretics.\‡  

\* See, for historical details illustrative of this, Elliott, vol. ii. pp. 399, 400.  
\+ Waddington's Hist. of the Ref., vol. i. pp. 8, 9.  
\‡ Elliott, vol. ii. So Mariana: "Lutheranas, Calvinianas, ceterasque pestes in Albigensisbus impugnari; in quibus revixisse videntur Albigenses majori impudentiæ."
That the killing of the Witnesses must intend a
total suppression of the public profession of the
Truth throughout the dominions of the Beast, has
been generally admitted by all Protestant exposi-
tors of any note. "For," remarks Dr. Cressener,
"since it is not any bodily death of the Witnesses,
it must be a suppression of that which is the
mystical life of the Witnesses; and that is, their
testifying to the Truth. And so, their continuance
in a state of death for three years and a half, can
signify nothing else but the perfect state of silence
in which the Church continues in the regions of
the Beast during that space of time." "Wherefore,"
he concludes, "the killing of the Witnesses must
be at an end as soon as ever the profession of the
True Religion is effectually suppressed in all
places where the Roman Church is the ruling
religion."*

* Cressener's "Judgments of God," pp. 91, 93, 103. A
correct interpretation of the symbolic language is, of course, to
be distinguished from a proper historical application of the pre-
diction, as to which Expositors have differed. Bullinger, Bale,
Foxe, and Brightman agree generally in referring the death and
resurrection of the Witnesses to the persecution of the Hussites,
and their revival in Luther and the Reformers, though differing
in the details of their explanation. Mede conjectured that the
prediction referred to what was still in his time future. Vitringa
is in advance of Mede, considering it as having been partially
fulfilled. Bp. Newton adopts the same view, grounding his con-
clusion upon the double mistake of assuming, that the suppression
and resurrection of the Witnesses would not take effect till
toward the end of their testimony and of the 1260 years, and
that it would be "the last persecution." Yet, he admits, that
the learned Mr. Fleming, writing at a time when the Protestant cause was menaced with peculiar danger, and a general despondency appears to have prevailed, was emboldened to affirm, that it was "morally impossible that the Witnesses can ever be so entirely slain as they have been before, whatever particular and provincial persecutions they may be under for a time, and whatever formidable appearances there may be against the Protestant interest everywhere." Whatever room for doubt upon this point there might seem to be a hundred and fifty years ago, when it was a question whether the Turkish woe was yet past, to dispute at the present time the complete fulfilment of the prediction in the circumstances preceding and attending the great religious revival of the sixteenth century, seems to indicate either a perverse bias or a most unreasonable scepticism. In fact, as will be shown hereafter, the chronological mark supplied by the cessation of the Turkish woe, precludes all doubt that both the death and the resurrection of the Witnesses were

these events must be accomplished before the sixth trumpet should end, and the second woe be past. Dr. Cressener, in like manner, regarding the resurrection, though not the death of the Witnesses as yet future, and near at hand, inferred, that the second woe could not have passed, because it was not to end till after that event. Dr. H. More doubted not but "the Reformation of the English Church was one eminent specimen completion of the prophecy of the rising of the Two Witnesses, and of that voice from Heaven, (that is to say of the sovereign power,) saying unto them, Come up hither." Works, p. 477.
to take place before the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, and, consequently, that they cannot possibly relate to any future event.

To return to the exposition of the prediction. After the Witnesses have been slain, it is stated, that their dead bodies shall be exposed in the broad place of the Great City, and that they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in sepulchres. This circumstance has generally been interpreted as denoting an aggravation of the cruelty of their persecutors; and Mr. Elliott refers to an edict of the Lateran Council, excluding the corpses of heretics from burial, ("an indignity borrowed from those inflicted by the Roman Pagan persecutors on the early Christian martyrs," ) as a fulfilment to the very letter of what was predicted."* Yet, as forming part of an allegorical prediction, it is not very apparent, how, taken literally, the circumstance can be considered as in harmony with the symbolical death and resurrection of the Witnesses. And if taken symbolically, it cannot be satisfactorily explained of an edict which could not affect in any way the testimony of the martyrs, or that profession of the Truth which it was sought to exterminate.

A learned Writer of the seventeenth century has suggested an explanation more congruous with the application of the prediction to the suppression of the mystical life or testimony of the

Witnesses. "At the first," he observes, "one would be apt to look upon the hinderance of burial by these people to be a high instance of malice in them against the slain Witnesses, according as it is almost everywhere in Scripture represented to be, when mentioned with the dead bodies of the saints. But it is to be considered, that the dead bodies of the Witnesses do in this place signify, the members of the Church in a state of perfect silence, without any outward profession of the truth; and then, the putting them into graves must signify a still higher mischief in that kind, or the utter extinction, disappearance, and annihilation of the silenced Church. This is confirmed by what is made to be the usual signification of lying unburied in a mystical sense, among the Eastern nations, whose ways of speaking are generally agreeable to the usage of Scripture. The being dead in a mystical sense, without any signification of being buried, does with them denote hopes of health and recovery; but the being dead and buried signifies the irrecoverable ruin of a man.* According to this, the hinder-

* The learned Author refers, in proof, to the 130th of the Apotelesmes of Apomasar or Achmetes the Arabian; "a collection of the ancient Interpretations of Prophetical Dreams or Visions, that were in use among the Kings of Persia and India; highly approved for its use in the schemes of this book, by the two most eminent critics in these matters, Grotius and Mr. Mede, though the greatest adversaries to one another in their applications of this prophecy." Dr. H. More, in his "Synopsis Prophetica," also refers to this work, and makes copious use of it in his "Alphabet of Iconisms or Symbols." See More's Works, pp. 232, 406.
ance of the dead bodies of the Witnesses from being put into graves, must necessarily signify, the not suffering the silenced Church to be wholly lost and annihilated. And since with this it is said also, that those of the peoples and nations did see the dead bodies all this while, this does plainly intimate the oppressed Church to be in a visible state; and the hindering of their burial must therefore signify the keeping the Church up in a visible, though ruined condition. And then, considering also, that they were to rise again within three days after, the hinderance of their burial must necessarily denote the keeping them in a readiness for their resurrection: as, on the contrary, the setting a watch, and the making all sure about the sepulchre of Our Lord, (to whose death, and resurrection, and ascension this account of the Witnesses does unquestionably refer,) was a design in his enemies to put an end to all hopes of his resurrection. All these considerations may assure any man, that the hinderance of the burial of the dead Witnesses was an act of great charity and friendship. These friends of the oppressed Church must then be such as were of a party contrary to that of the Beast who killed the Witnesses.”

* Cressener’s “Judg. of God,” pp. 94—97. The learned Writer proceeds to argue, that, under the terms “they (or some) of the peoples and nations,” there is an intimation of a select sort of people distinct from the whole mass of those nations and people over whom the Beast is said to have had power; that is, “some parts of Christendom freed from the Roman yoke, who encourage and give protection to those who flee to them.” It is
THE TWO WITNESSES.

Whether this explanation be deemed in all respects satisfactory and unquestionable or not, it is, at least, accordant both with the symbolic character of the prediction and with the fact. May we not say, that there were those who watched as it were the corpses of the slain, not unmindful of the prophetic anticipation of the martyr Huss, that "gospel preachers better than himself should rise up, in whom, awaking as it were from the dead, and rising from the grave, he should rejoice with exceeding joy?"* In the writings of the Reformers, their living witness for the truth was embalmed, and prevented from being consigned to forgetfulness. And in this form, they may be said to have revived and lived again.

After the spirit of life from God had entered into the slain Witnesses, and they stood upon their feet, it is said, "great fear fell upon those who beheld them." Such was, indeed, the effect, Luther being witness, of the firm attitude assumed by the reformed body, when leagued together under the name of Protestants. Here, a remarkable transition occurs in the narration, and, instead of the future tense, which has hitherto been employed by no means clear, indeed, that the words ὁμ ἀφνοια con-
nnect with ἐκ τῶν λαθύν, κ.τ.λ. Yet, "the dwellers upon the earth," who rejoice over the slain witnesses, are mentioned at v. 10, as if distinct from the parties spoken of in the preceding verse. Dr. H. More also interprets their not being buried as a pledge of their resurrection.

* See Merle D'Anbigne's Hist. of the Reform. vol. i. ch. 6. Elliott, vol. ii. p. 406, where is given a copy of the medal commemorating Huss's martyrdom, with the legend, "Centum revolutis annis Deo respondebitis et mihi."
by the Angel, St. John speaks as if he beheld, in emblematic representation, what he proceeds to record. He* "heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in the cloud, and their enemies beheld them. And at the same time there was a great earthquake. And the tenth part of the city fell. And in the earthquake were slain seven chilııads, names of men. And the remnant were affrighted, and they gave glory to the God of heaven." This change of tense is significant as indicating a return to the chronological order of the Visions, which had been interrupted where the Angel gives the reason for the direction to measure the Temple. What the Apostle now speaks of in the present tense, as hearing and beholding, is thus seen to connect with the Vision of the "mighty angel," the symbolic action of eating the little book, and of measuring the Temple; and the time of the fulfilment of the Vision is definitely indicated by what is immediately added: "The second woe is past."

That the ascension of the Witnesses must, in order to correspond to their mystical resurrection, be taken in an allegorical sense, as denoting a visible exaltation and triumph, is manifest; and a passage in the prophecies of Isaiah will illustrate and justify this interpretation of the figurative language. In reference to the ambition of the king of Babylon, the prophet says: "For thou hast said in thy heart, I will ascend into

* So the various reading, which is supported by strong evidence.
heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High."* It must be, as Dr. Cressener remarks, "some visible advancement, because their enemies beheld them ascending;" and it must be understood of political power or advancement upon earth, because the Wild Beast continues in power after the ascension of the Witnesses, and they continue their prophecy to the end of his reign. The overthrow of the tenth part of the mystical city by the earthquake, which is represented as following their ascension, implies, that the rest of the city was to remain entire. And by the tenth part of the city, one of the ten horns of the Wild Beast, which are ten kingdoms, must be intended; and its fall will imply its separation from the Roman jurisdiction. The cloud in which the Witnesses ascend, may perhaps be understood as denoting the special intervention of Divine Providence. Mr. Elliott suggests, that the definite article prefixed to the word in the original (ἐν τῇ υπέφελῃ), implies a reference to some previous mention of a cloud, and that "this must needs be the self-same cloud of the covenant angel's investiture." As an emblem,

* Isa. xiv. 13, 14. It has been strangely objected by Dr. Candlish, in his "Four Letters" to Mr. Elliott, that this is but the boastful language of a heathen king; but it is rather the hyperbolical language of poetry, describing in Oriental phrase the ambition of the Assyrian monarch. It is admitted by the learned objector, at the same time, that, throughout the Apocalypse, the heaven or firmament represents the region of influence or seat of power, as distinguished from the earth, "the seat of action, the stage of events."
a cloud generally imports political elevation, or
great power and dignity.*

And what were the corresponding facts? Not
only did the Witnesses revive and obtain a firm
political standing, to the consternation of their
enemies, under the significant and glorious name
of Protestants, but they were soon raised, at the
Imperial call, to the high places of political power
and dignity. By the celebrated Treaty of Passau,
Aug. 15, 1552, confirmed at Augsburg in 1555, not
only was full toleration secured to Protestantism,
but Protestants, equally with Romanists, were ad-
mitted to sit as judges in the Imperial Chamber.
Thus were the former advanced to power in the
very face of their enemies. And at the same time,
England, one of the ten parts of the Great City,
fell off from the Papacy. The memorable act by
which all papal authority in ecclesiastical affairs
was utterly abolished out of this realm, was passed
Nov. 3, 1534. The accession of Edward VI.,
under whose brief reign the Reformation was con-
summated in England, occurred shortly after the
Treaty of Passau. By the same earthquake, or
great political schism, the Seven United Provinces
of the Netherlands (territorial chiliads, giving
titles to their chiefs†) were also separated from

* Dr. H. More, in his "Alphabet of Prophetic Iconisms,"
cites several passages from Achmetes, shewing, that, according
to the Persians, Egyptians, and Indians, "the riding upon clouds
and ascending into heaven, signifies honourable prosperity, and
success against our enemies, and enlargement of power and dignity."
Works, p. 233. So he interprets this passage at p. 407.
† Mr. Elliott has the merit of suggesting this solution of the
Rome and Spain. They proclaimed their union and independence in 1579: in 1609, after a sanguinary struggle of seven-and-thirty years, their independence was acknowledged, and the Protestant Republic of Holland was ranked among the powers of Europe.

"And the remainder were struck with terror, and they gave glory to the God of heaven." As to the precise import of this closing part of the prediction, expositors have raised a difficulty, to which undue importance has been attached. The question is, whether both clauses refer to the same or to different parties. It is certain, that consternation was produced by the destruction of the Spanish Armada, and by other reverses sustained by the Papal powers; and there were those who recognized the hand of God, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

One objection which has been raised against this interpretation of the prediction, here deserves notice. The Witnesses were to prophesy during the 1260 years, clothed in sackcloth; but how, it has been asked, can this be reconciled with their political elevation before the expiration of that period? To this, it may be replied in the first place, (with Mr. Elliott,) that the apparent incongruity is not greater than that which presents itself in the ensuing Vision: a woman is represented as in the heaven, and yet, prophetic enigma. Its correspondence to the fact is too striking to admit of doubt as to the correctness of his interpretation, especially in the absence of any other plausible explanation. See his argument at length, vol. ii. pp. 418—425.
as crying out from the paroxysm of her pain, and as in peril from a seven-headed dragon. The political establishment of Protestantism was not, in fact, incompatible with its being still subject to the hostility of the Papal powers; nor did the faithful ministry of the Witnesses cease to partake of its prophetic character as a testimony against the prevailing apostacy. The sackcloth garb was the dress of the prophet; and this, Professor Stuart suggests, may be the meaning of the emblem; although, "if there be united with this meaning, the emblem of a mournful state of the country or nation, the description is the more significant."* Within the dominions of the Wild Beast, or that part of the Great City which has not fallen, the condition of the Witnesses has continued to be one of humiliation and mourning. Protestants have been at different periods subjected to cruel local persecution; and the state of the Church of Christ has never been such as to allow the faithful witnesses of Christ to put off their sackcloth.

That the resurrection as well as the death of the Witnesses has been fulfilled, and is not to be

* Stuart, vol. ii. p. 228. So Fleming concludes, that "the witness-bearing of the Saints continues in a large and general sense for 1260 years, and that for the most part in sackcloth, because of the constant troubles they meet with from that restless enemy." Dr. Cressener observes: "'Tis enough to give them the denomination of their being the Witnesses in sackcloth for their whole time, that they were all in a state of humiliation under the Beast, till just about the latter end of their prophecy, and that some of them continued to be so till the very last time of it." "Judgments," &c. page 105.
referred to any future event, seems placed beyond all doubt, as has been already noticed, by the chronological mark so significantly introduced in immediate connexion with the political earthquake: "The second woe is past; behold, the third woe cometh quickly." Now, that the Turkish woe is past, can no longer be disputed. The first check to the Ottoman conquests was given by the great naval battle of Lepanto in 1571, a few years after the United Provinces had shaken off the yoke of Spain and of the Papacy; and the next, by the expulsion of the Ottomans from Transylvania in 1600. But the war which began in 1678, the victories obtained by John Sobieski in 1683, and by Prince Eugene in 1697,* followed by the Peace of Carlowitz in 1698, humbled the pride, and exposed the weakness, of the haughty Mussulman power whose armies had once made all Christendom tremble. Such was the construction put upon the aspect of Turkish affairs at the time of the accession of William III., by a learned Writer of the day (Cressener), whose calculations, though in some respects erroneous, led him correctly to infer, that the termination of the second woe, though not the fall of the Turkish Empire, must be close at hand.† His prognostic was most exactly fulfilled. After "a long breathing

* Rycaut (on the Turkish Empire) says, that 1697 was the epoch viewed by the Turks themselves as that of the fated limit to the extension of their Empire. Elliott, iii. 289.

† "And does not the present posture of the Turkish affairs extremely agree with this? The least that can come of the late humiliation of them must in all likelihood be, the keeping
time," (such as he sagaciously anticipated it would require, before the unwieldy monarchy could recover itself from the weakness to which it had even then been reduced,) the war of 1770 against Austria and Russia united, called the Ottoman force again into the field, only to sustain a series of defeats; and the peace dictated by Prince Romanzoff in 1774, proclaimed to all the world, that its day of power was past.

The cessation of the Turkish or second woe cannot then be fixed later, as Mr. Elliott has shewn, than that year. It is added, "Lo! the third woe cometh quickly." Accordingly, the announcement is followed by the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, preparatory to the pouring out of the Seven Vials which constitute the last woe, "for in them is filled up the wrath of God." (ch. xv. 1.) Upon this signal note, "loud voices in heaven were heard proclaiming, The kingdoms of this world are become subject to Our Lord and to his Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever. And the four-and-twenty elders who sat before God on their thrones, prostrated of them in perpetual peace and quiet, and so prove the end of the second woe. I must indeed confess, that I do not think it necessary that the end of the second woe should be the utter ruin of the Turkish Empire; for I see that the Saracens, who were unquestionably the first woe, are said to be passed away as they were the first woe, long before the end of the Saracen Empire; that is, at the time when they ceased to be any longer a torment and vexation to the Roman Empire, which was near 200 years before the last end of their own Empire. . . . But all things concur to verify the prophecy about the passing away of the second woe within a very short time." Cressener, pp. 132, 135.
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themselves in adoration before God," giving thanks that now the Almighty Jehovah was about to assume (that is, to manifest) His great power, and to establish His reign; and that the time was now come, as so announced, when the dead should be judged or vindicated, and a reward be given to the prophets and saints, and to all the faithful, small and great, and when those who destroyed the earth should be themselves consigned to destruction. This time of consummation must be understood of the period which the Seventh Trumpet ushered in, agreeably to the declaration of the Angel, ch. x. ver. 7; although the elders speak of what should take place as if already past: "The nations were exasperated, and thy wrath came upon them." And so, the establishment of the kingdom of Christ, and the subordination of all power and rule to His everlasting dominion, are spoken of, in the language of joyful anticipation, as even now accomplished. The precise import of the expressions referring to the judgment of the dead and the recompense of the saints, will come under consideration hereafter, in connexion with the symbolical predictions of the Seven Vials. What follows, appears also intended to indicate in a general way, what was to ensue after the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, both as regards the throwing open of the gates of the heavenly Temple, and also with respect to the commotions, wars, and earthquakes that were contemporaneously to shake the world.*

* So Stuart interprets the passage: "The remainder of the verse indicates the work of destruction that followed the blast
For, at ch. xv. 5, where the interrupted chain of historical prefigurations is resumed, immediately before the Seven Angels bearing the Seven Vials are seen coming out of the Temple, there is a recurrence to this mystical opening of the Temple, and a repetition of the same emblematic phenomena. These preliminary symbols of lightnings, voices, thunderings, and earthquake correspond to what are in like manner described as taking place between the opening of the Seventh Seal and the Seven Trumpet-bearing Angels preparing to sound. (Ch. viii. p. 6.)

But now the visionary scene changes, and a distinct series of figurative representations is introduced, (occupying the following three chapters,) having for their object, further to illustrate the condition of the Church during the mystical 1260 days, and the nature of that Power which was to wage war against the Two Witnesses and to overcome them. These Visions are necessarily retrospective, and synchronize with those of the Seals and the Trumpets, describing the protracted conflict between the Church of Christ and her Bestial foes.

of the Seventh Trumpet. The lightning and thunder alone might be nothing more than the ensigns of God's awful presence and majesty, as in ch. iv. 5. But here are all the indications of catastrophe which are found in ch. xvi. 18—21, excepting that the Writer has not announced the actual destruction itself so plainly and fully here as there.” Stuart, vol. ii. p. 244.
Vision the Sixth.

The Woman and Male Child, and the Dragon.

There now appeared to the Apostle a great sign or emblem in the firmamental heaven; a female figure clothed with sunbeams, the moon under her feet, (perhaps the crescent-moon, corresponding to a crescent-shaped sandal,*) and wearing on her head a coronal of twelve stars. And she appeared to be in the pains of labour. Before her stood another emblematic form; a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on each head a diadem; and his tail swept from the firmament a third part of the stars. He stood watching his opportunity to devour the offspring of the woman at the moment of its birth. And the woman brought forth a male child, destined to rule the nations with a rod of iron; and it was immediately caught up from the power of the dragon to the throne of God. And the woman escaped, and fled.

* "Lunatis calceis." Elliott, iii. 8. The idea apparently intended to be conveyed is exaltation,—above the moon; i.e. superior to secondary political influence, as being clothed with the sun indicates the possession of imperial protection and favour.
The first of these emblems can be rationally interpreted only of the Christian body, the true Church of Christ, which, agreeably to the familiar personification of nations and cities as matrons, is represented as labouring with a political birth. On comparing the allegory with the language of the ancient prophets, there can be no doubt as to its import. Thus, in the remarkable prediction of Micah; "Out of thee (Bethlehem Ephratah) shall come forth he that is to be a ruler in Israel. . . . Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then, the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand and rule in the strength of the Lord." (Mic. v. 2—4.) Again, in the prophecies of Isaiah, we meet with the same figure: "Before she travailed, she brought forth: before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? . . . Shall a nation be born at once? for, as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." (Isa. lxvi. 7, 8.) The male child is here the emblem of a nation born at once; and this political birth denotes the sudden restoration of a people to their country, or to their national liberty. Such was clearly the import of the prophecy. Using a similar figure, St. Paul represents Nature herself as travailing in pain, "waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. viii. 19, 22.) And the same inspired writer speaks of the Christian Church, in contrast with the Jewish, as "the Jerusalem which is above, the free mother of us all." (Gal. iv. 26.) In the
Apocalyptic vision, the Church is not, however, represented as in a depressed condition previously to the hour of her deliverance; for, according to analogy, we must understand the symbols of splendour and dignity with which the woman is invested, as denoting either secular power and rule, or the favour of secular rulers;* while the firmament, in which she is seen, also implies political elevation.† Yet, she is threatened by a formidable enemy, who dreads the expected crisis, when she who travailed should have brought forth a ruler. This cannot be understood of an individual, without doing violence to the allegory;‡ and, as we have seen in the corresponding

* Comp. Gen. xxxvii. 9. "Behold, the sun, and the moon, and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And his father said, Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow ourselves to thee?"

† By "God and his throne," the Divine protection and intervention seem intended, conveying the idea of security, rather than of advancement.

‡ It is not a little remarkable, however, that the allegory should receive a striking illustration in the repeated plots of the pagan party against the life of Constantine. The following account is given by Lactantius. "Constantius, on becoming dangerously ill, sent letters, as he had repeatedly done before, desiring Galerius to release his son Constantine, who had been held by Diocletian and Maximian as a hostage, and allow him to return to him. But Galerius wished nothing less, for he had often attempted to destroy him by treachery, not venturing on anything against him openly, for fear of provoking a civil war, or exciting the hatred of the soldiers. Under pretence of exercise and sport, he exposed him to wild beasts, but without gaining his ends, as he was protected by that Divine hand that afterwards freed him from the Emperor's toils in the crisis of
passage in the prophecies of Isaiah, the birth must be that of a body politic or community. A nation sprung from the Church, or, in other words, the body of professing Christians, was to be called into political existence, who, in spite of their heathen foes, was destined to obtain the ascendency. But the Church herself was not to share in this elevation or this rule over the nations, but was still to be persecuted by the fallen dragon power, and to take refuge in the wilder-

his danger. For, having often, when he could no longer evade it, given him a seal towards the close of the day, and ordered that, on receiving directions, he should early on the following morning set out, he either himself retained him on some pretence, or sent forward letters to Severus to retain him. Constantine, foreseeing that that would be repeated, immediately on the Emperor's falling asleep after supper, hastened to depart, and using all the public horses through several days' journey, fled with the utmost haste. The next day, the Emperor, after designedly delaying to rise till noon, commanded that he should be called, and, on being told that he had gone the previous evening, began to rage, and ordered post horses that he might cause him to be brought back, and hearing that he had taken them all, could hardly refrain from tears. But Constantine, advancing with the utmost celerity, went to his father, who was near death, and who, having recommended him to the army, transferred the government to his hands. And Galerius, though reluctant, was induced, from the fear of a civil war, to ratify his election, and send him the purple.” Eusebius gives a similar account. Mr. Lord, from whose pages we take this extract, applies the emblematical prediction specifically to Constantine. Bp. Newton also thinks, that Constantine was particularly intended; but, while the learned Prelate explains “the throne of God” as signifying “ordained by God,” referring to Rom. xiii. 1, the American Expositor construes it as denoting Constantine's usurping the Divine prerogative.
ness. Such is the simple interpretation of the emblems, to which we are led by comparing it with the symbolic language of the ancient prophecies, apart from their historical application.

The second emblem denotes a persecuting anti-Christian power; and the seven heads of the Dragon identify it with the imperial power of Pagan Rome. Towards the close of the second century, a dragon was in fact adopted as one of the imperial ensigns. It was, moreover, about the time of Diocletian, towards the end of the third century, that the diadem, instead of the laurel crown, became the distinctive badge of Imperial supremacy. What is said of the Dragon's tail sweeping down a third part of the stars, would seem to restrict his power to a third part of the political firmament. The figure is illustrated by a parallel passage in the prophecies of Daniel, in which a horn that had branched or sprouted from one of the four horns of the he-goat, is represented as casting down some of the host and of the stars;* which is interpreted of the powers of the Jewish State. We must, therefore, understand the emblematic description as intimating, that, in the third part of the Roman Empire, to which, at the period designated, the persecuting power was limited, those who held sway, or who were the chief luminaries of the State, would be deposed or destroyed. The crisis indicated must have been, when the Dragon, or pagan power of Rome, was still in the political heaven, but when the

* Dan. viii. 10.
Christian Church was contemporaneously enjoying a considerable degree of power and ascendancy; when, precisely, the pagan Dragon exercised the supremacy in one-third of the Empire, while the Church was secure and ascendant in the other two.

Such a crisis did actually exist at the commencement of the fourth century; and it was that of the last struggle of imperial Paganism to retain supremacy, and to crush Christianity. The Roman Empire had then for the first time become tripartite under three Emperors; and "the Roman Senate assigned to Constantine the first rank among the three Augusti who then governed the Roman world." * In two-thirds of the Empire, the European and Asiatic divisions, the Christians enjoyed toleration, and, to a certain extent, Imperial favour. In the Asiatic third, they were still, under Maximin, exposed to persecution in all its cruelty. "The old Roman pagan power," (to adopt the language of Mr. Elliott,) "concentrated for the time in Maximin, Emperor from the Nile to the Bosphorus, with a Satanic enmity animating it against the Gospel and the Church, appeared like the great red dragon in the Vision. Infuriate at the now imminent prospect of the Christian body attaining establishment in the Empire, Maximin renewed the persecution against Christians within the limits of his own dominion; prohibiting their assemblies, and degrading, and even killing their bishops. And, as

* Gibbon.
the vital blow against the Christian cause and Church needed to be struck, as he thought, at the Emperors who had adopted and patronised it, he made war against them, and rushed furiously to the conflict. Before the decisive battle, Maximin vowed to Jupiter, that, if victorious, he would abolish the Christian name. His fury, as we know, was in vain. He was defeated by Licinius (on the 30th of April, A.D. 313); and three or four months after, died, like Galerius, in agonies, confessing himself vanquished. His death, says Gibbon, delivered the Church from the last and most implacable of her enemies."

"The assurance that the elevation of Constantine was intimately connected with the design of Providence," remarks the great Historian, "instilled into the minds of the Christians two opinions which, by very different means, assisted the accomplishment of the prophecy. Their warm and active loyalty exhausted in his favour every resource of human industry; and they confidently expected that their strenuous efforts would be seconded by some Divine and miraculous aid. The enemies of Constantine have imputed to interested motives the alliance which he insensibly contracted with the Catholic Church, and which apparently contributed to the success of his ambition. . . . The gratitude of the Church has exalted the virtues and excused the failings of a generous patron who seated Christianity on the throne of the Roman world. The exact balance of

the two religions continued but a moment; and the piercing eye of ambition or avarice soon discovered, that the profession of Christianity might contribute to the interest of the present, as well as of a future life. The hopes of wealth and honours, the example of an Emperor, his exhortations, his irresistible smiles, diffused conviction among the venal and obsequious crowds which usually fill the apartments of a palace. The cities which signalised a forward zeal by the voluntary destruction of their temples, were distinguished by municipal privileges, and rewarded with popular donatives. . . . When Constantine embraced the faith of the Christians, he seemed to contract a perpetual alliance with a distinct and independent society; and the privileges granted or confirmed by that Emperor, or by his successors, were accepted, not as the precarious favours of the Court, but as the just and inalienable rights of the ecclesiastical order. While the civil and military professions were separated by the policy of Constantine, a new and perpetual order of ecclesiastical ministers, always respectable, sometimes dangerous, was established in the Church and State."*

Thus was the symbolical prediction realised, that the Church should, after her long agonies, give birth to an ecclesiastical power, "headed and represented by Constantine;" related to the Church herself, yet so distinct from her, that, after the exaltation of her offspring to political

* Gibbon, ch. xx.
supremacy, she herself was compelled to seek refuge in the wilderness. So “short-lived,” remarks Mr. Elliott, “is the association of Christ’s true Church with the splendours and honours of this world!”

The struggle did not end, in the figurative heaven, with the Dragon’s failure to prevent the man-child’s birth. “There was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the Dragon; and the Dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not; nor was a place found for him any longer in heaven.” This figurative language seems to correspond to what occurs in the prophecies of Daniel, relating to Michael, one of the chief angels, and captain of The Lord’s host, who is represented as coming to the aid of the angel who was fighting with the prince (or angel) of Persia.* This angelic war can scarcely be regarded with propriety as symbolising a military contest or a political struggle, but rather refers to that actual conflict with the powers of darkness of which St. Paul speaks, Eph. vi. 12: “We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickednesses in heavenly places.” In this conflict with invisible powers, good angels take part with the Christian warrior. That this is the nature of the struggle intended, is clear from what is subsequently declared: “They overcame through the blood of the Lamb, and through the word of their testimony.”

As the result of this moral conquest, the great Dragon and his angels were cast out of the firmament: their power, as exerted by means of an ascendant priesthood and political rulers, was taken away. The names given to the Dragon as the symbol of the Evil Power that was the soul of Paganism, "the spirit that worked in the children of disobedience," are very significant: he is "the Old Serpent" who "deceived Eve by his subtlety" (2 Cor. xi. 3); the same that is called Diabolus or Devil, that is, the accuser and slanderer of God's servants (ver. 10); and the Satan, or the Adversary of Christ, by whom, as the author of idolatry, the heathen world were deceived. And, by his angels, we may well understand the demons whom the heathen worshipped, or the priests, who, to maintain their authority, kept up the system of satanic imposture. It would seem to be the design of the passage, to mark the true character and origin of the pagan idolatry. Nor was the meaning of the symbol unrecognised at the time of the fulfilment of the prediction.* Constantine, in a letter to Eusebius, writes of "that Dragon having been deposed from the governance of

* "From comparing Ezra iv. 5—24, with Zech. iii. 1," Mr. Elliott remarks, "it seems probable, that the vision which represented Satan, the great adversary, accusing the Jewish High Priest in the court of Heaven, corresponded and had reference to the accusation of the Jews before the Persian king's court, by their Samaritan adversaries, Satan's earthly agents; a case very parallel with the present, and which would justify the Constantinian Christians in their judgment." Elliott, vol. iii. p. 25, note.
affairs by God's providence." And he struck a
medal, in which he is himself represented with
the Cross, trampling on the Dragon.

When the Dragon and his ministers were de-
posed, the Apostle heard, in vision, a loud voice
saying in heaven, "Now is come the salvation,
and the power, and the reign of Our God, and the
dominion of His Christ;—for the Accuser of our
brethren has been cast down, who accused them
before God day and night. And these have over-
come him by * (or in virtue of) the blood of The
Lamb and by the word of their testimony, having
disregarded (or been prodigal of) their lives, even
to death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and those
who dwell therein." This voice, uttered from the
heaven, had its signal counterpart in the con-
gratulations and exultation of the Church, which
ensued upon Constantine's establishment of Chris-
tianity. "Let us," says Lactantius, "celebrate
the triumph of God with gladness; let us com-
memorate His victory with praise; let us make
mention in our prayers, day and night, of the
peace which, after ten years of persecution, He has
conferred on His people."† Eusebius represents
the victors, on the precipitation of Maxentius and
his attendants into the Tiber, as adopting the
song of Moses on the overthrow of the Egyptians
in the Red Sea; and on the fall of Licinius, he

* Stuart thinks, we cannot avoid the conclusion, that διά, in
this passage, stands before nouns in the accusative which de-
signate the means by which the victory was obtained; a "sense
altogether appropriate for Christian martyrs."
† Eusebius, book x. e. 1—3.
represents the Church as uniting in thanksgiving for the deliverance, and in congratulations at the overthrow of idolatry and the establishment of Christ's kingdom. "We may now," he says, "appropriately respond to the inspired command to sing a new song, inasmuch as, after such direful spectacles and narrations, we now have the happiness to see and celebrate what many holy men and the martyrs for God desired to see on earth, and did not see, and to hear, and have not heard. But, advancing more rapidly, they attained far superior gifts in heaven, being caught up to the paradise of celestial joy; while we acknowledge the gifts we enjoy are greater than we deserve, and contemplate with wonder the largeness of the Divine bounty." He proceeds to represent the whole population, freed from the domination of the tyrants, and relieved from oppression, as acknowledging the only True God, the protector of the pious, and those especially who had placed their hope in Christ, as filled with inexpressible joy;—the ministers of religion everywhere delivering commemorative addresses, and the whole multitude offering praises and thanksgiving to God.

The reference which is made in the prediction, to the cruel accusations brought against the Christians, is fully explained by the ecclesiastical historian. When the persecution which had been suspended on the fall of Maxentius, was renewed under Maximin, with the avowed purpose of exterminating the Church, it is expressly mentioned, that the pagan magistrates and people plotted against them in extraordinary ways, suborning
the most profligate accusers, and traducing them by the most infamous imputations. And again, when Licinius, in 319, renewed the war, he began by encouraging false accusations against the bishops.* Eusebius tells us how, in the retrospect of the past persecution, though conducted by pagan princes, and on the accusations of earthly adversaries, they recognised the instigation and secret acting of their invisible enemy, the Accuser of the brethren, the Old Serpent, the Devil; and, in the casting down of these pagan enemies, the casting down of the Devil. He narrates very fully, how, of those who had suffered unto death, public commemoration was made, as of heroes that had conquered, specially by the doctrine of the Cross, in the most excellent combat of witnessing and martyrdom; and how, as a further tribute to their innocence and worth, the property confiscated from them was restored to their surviving relatives or to the Church; how, again, to the confessors still living, a meed of praise was awarded, and Imperial orders were issued for their liberation from prison, exile, or the mines, for the restoration of their goods, and their re-admission to every civic honour and privilege. In the edicts that were issued, they were bidden to return rejoicingly from their places of suffering, amid the public congratulations and applause, as if in literal fulfilment of the call to rejoice, which St. John heard in the Vision, and of the prefigurative song of triumph.†

The words which follow, denouncing woe to the

* Eusebius, book ix. c. 4, 5, 6. Life of Constantine, i. 51.
† Elliott, vol. iii. pp. 23—27.
inhabitants of the earth and the sea, "because the Devil is come down to you, having great wrath," forms no part of that song; and no such ominous anticipations mingled with the rejoicings of the Church. Yet, we must regard the denunciation as the utterance of the same voice in the visionary heaven. Its general import is explained by what is immediately added: "When the Dragon saw that he was cast to the earth, he persecuted the Woman that had brought forth the male child." After Paganism had been deposed from its political ascendancy, it continued to exert its malignant influence by the instrumentality of the fallen priesthood, in exciting persecution of the true Church. What is said of the Devil as knowing that he had but a short time, evidently refers to the brief interval between the political overthrow of Paganism and its final extirpation. "The exact balance of the two religions," according to Gibbon's representation, "continued but a moment;" but the ruin of Paganism was not consummated till the reign of Theodosius, when "the temples of the Roman world were subverted about sixty years after the conversion of Constantine." The "last struggles of superstition and despair" were made in the shape of "audacious libels;" and the writings of fanatic teachers of the school of Plato, "betray the most furious animosity, and contain the sharpest invectives against the sentiments and conduct of their victorious adversaries." But "so rapid, yet so gentle, was the fall of Paganism, that, only twenty-eight years after the death of Theodosius, the faint and
minute vestiges were no longer visible to the eye of the legislator."* The knowledge that their time was short, was but a correct anticipation upon the part of the Pagan priesthood, not implying any absolute knowledge of future events; and it is, in this sense, ascribed to the Devil.

But the woe which is here predicted as about to befall the inhabitants of the earth and sea, must indicate something distinct and altogether different from the persecution of the Woman, and seems to imply some judicial calamity of which the Devil was the immediate instigator or author. Mr. Elliott thinks, it may denote "either the Arian heresy raised up within the Empire to be the disturber and persecutor of the Church, or else the Gothic scourge which, first of all external judgments, fell on the Christianized Roman world. If the latter, then the development of the Gothic woe under four successive trumpets, may be compared with that of the last woe under seven successive vials." But, against this interpretation, there lies the obvious objection, that this woe must be understood as taking place in the brief period between the political establishment of Christianity and the extirpation of Paganism. It may be well understood, however, of the calamities which befell the inhabitants of the Roman Empire in the reign of Valens, and which were ushered in by a violent and destructive earthquake, that shook the greater part of the Roman world, followed by as destructive inundations. "The terri-

* Gibbon, ch. xxviii.
fied subjects of Rome," Gibbon remarks, "considered these alarming strokes as the prelude only of still more dreadful calamities; and their fearful vanity was disposed to confound the symptoms of a declining empire and a sinking world."* In the reign of Valens, an immense horde of Gothic barbarians was imprudently allowed to settle in the heart of the Empire, the consequences of which soon made themselves felt in the Gothic war. In the battle of Adrianople, ("which equalled, in the actual loss, and far surpassed in the fatal consequences, the misfortune which Rome had formerly sustained in the fields of Cannæ," above two-thirds of the Roman army were destroyed. "The tide of the Gothic inundation rolled from the walls of Adrianople to the suburbs of Constantinople." Thence, laden with the spoils of the wealthy suburbs and the adjacent territory, the Barbarians slowly moved to the mountains which form the western boundary of Thrace; and, "having no longer any resistance to apprehend from the scattered and vanquished troops of the East, spread themselves over the face of a fertile and cultivated country as far as the confines of Italy and the Hadriatic Sea." Twenty years after the death of Valens, who perished miserably after the battle of Adrianople, the vehement Jerom, as Gibbon styles him, deplores the calamities inflicted by the Goths and their barbarous allies on his native country of

* Gibbon, ch. xxvi. The earthquake occurred on the morning of July 21, A.D. 365, in the second year of the reign of Valentinian and Valens.
Pannonia and the wide extent of the provinces from the walls of Constantinople to the foot of the Julian Alps; the rapes, the massacres, the conflagrations, and, above all, the profanation of the churches that were turned into stables, and the contemptuous treatment of the relics of holy martyrs; and, transported beyond the bounds of sober narrative, he affirms, that, "in those desert countries, nothing was left between the sky and the earth; that, after the destruction of the cities and the extirpation of the human race, the land was overgrown with thick forests, and that the universal desolation described by the prophet Zephaniah was accomplished in the scarcity of the beasts, the birds, and even of the fish."*

This woe, extending from A.D. 378 to 382, might well be included (agreeably to Mr. Fleming's view) under the calamities of the First Trumpet, did not the reasons already adduced lead to the conclusion, that the events symbolized by that Trumpet were subsequent to the death of Theodosius and the consummation of the downfall of Paganism. But it answers with chronological exactness to the indication of its occurring in the short time previously to that event;† and, as it was inflicted by Pagan nations, to whom had been revealed, by their fellow-countrymen in the service of the court or the army, the weakness of

* Gibbon, ch. xxvi.
† "The final capitulation of the Goths may be dated four years, one month, and twenty-five days after the defeat and death of the Emperor Valens."
the Roman Empire,* it appears to be appropriately ascribed to the rage of the deposed Dragon.

It forms a strong objection to the other explanation of the woe, (suggested by Mr. Elliott,) which refers it to the disorders consequent upon the rise of the Arian heresy, that it seems to confound with general calamities the persecution of the true Church. It is true, that the effects of the fierce ecclesiastical dissensions between the Orthodox and the Arian factions, were most calamitous to society at large; and that the Pagans in many instances took part with the heretics in the persecution of their opponents. But it is on this account the more necessary to discriminate between the contests of religious factions struggling for secular ascendancy, and the persecution directed against those who are emblematically represented by the Woman that had brought forth the male child. The long and memorable struggle between Athanasius and his Arian enemies, partook of the character of a contest for power, as much as for truth. The primate of Egypt, supported by his hundred bishops, repeatedly resisted the Imperial power; and, when forcibly displaced from his episcopal throne by his infamous rival, George of Cappadocia, the Emperor Constantius "congratulates the deliverance of Alexandria from a popular tyrant." "The Pagans of Alexandria, who still formed a numerous and discontented party, were easily persuaded to desert a bishop whom they feared and

* Gibbon, ch. xxvi.
esteemed.”* But the seditious and sanguinary tumults and civil conflicts which disgraced the reign of the Sons of Constantine, at Alexandria, at Constantinople and at Rome, were those of hostile sectaries and ecclesiastical factions. “The writer who should impute these tumults solely to a religious principle,” it is justly remarked by Gibbon, “would betray a very imperfect knowledge of human nature;” they must be ascribed to a fanaticism altogether alien from the spirit and maxims of the Gospel. Gregory of Nazianzen pathetically laments, that “the kingdom of heaven was converted by discord into the image of chaos, of a nocturnal tempest, and of hell itself.” “The divisions of Christianity suspended the ruin of paganism;” and it is the remark of Milner, that “Arianism seemed well-nigh to have avenged the cause of fallen idolatry.” Yet, it must be admitted, that the spirit of persecution displayed itself with equal malignity in the heretics and in the orthodox, in the Arian and in the Catholic factions; and if we ascribe to Satanic instigation the heresy and the religious animosities which it kindled,† it is impossible to recognize in the combatants on either side the characteristics of the saint and the martyr. These intestine con-

* Gibbon. It is added, in a note: “The Emperor, or his Arian secretaries, while they express their resentment, betray their fears and esteem of Athanasius.”

† Mr. Elliott cites from Tichonius, an ancient expositor, the remark on ver. 17: “Draco, cum vidisset non posse continuari persecutiones quas per Paganos solebat immittere, haereses concitavit.”
tests were suspended and rebuked by the temporary restoration of the Pagan polity by Julian, which "revealed a multitude of pretended Christians who, from motives of temporal advantage, had acquiesced in the religion of the former reign."* And perhaps we may regard the calamities which befell the Empire in the reign of Valens, as a judicial visitation, as well upon the divided and secularized Church as upon those who had defied the judgments of God by open apostacy.

The Apostle, now repeating, or rather resuming, what he had stated respecting the flight of the persecuted Mother of the male child towards the wilderness, (for the contest in heaven is introduced parenthetically,) proceeds to add, that, in order to aid her flight to the place prepared for her, "two wings of the great eagle" were given to her; that the Serpent then threw out after her, from his mouth, water like a river,† for the purpose of overwhelming her; but that the earth aided the Woman by opening its mouth, and swallowing up the flood which the Dragon had ejected; and the Dragon, still enraged against the Woman, turned away to make war with the remainder of her offspring who keep the commandments of God, and adhere to the testimony of Jesus.

This is allegory, whether conveyed to the Apostle by emblematic representation or by the

* Gibbon, ch. xxiii.
† An allusion evidently to the habits of the crocodile, the leviathan or dragon of the Hebrew Scriptures.
medium of language. The bestowment of two wings upon the Woman, recals a similar passage in the prophecies of Zechariah, which is even more enigmatical: "Then I lift up my eyes, and behold, there came out two women, and the wind was in their wings, for they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lift up the ephah between the earth and the heaven . . . to build it (or her) a house in the land of Shinar." (Zech. v. 9—11.) Here, the wings are said to have resembled those of a stork, a migratory bird; and the idea naturally suggested is that of an emigration facilitated by some remarkable intervention. In the Apocalyptic allegory, the wings are described as those of the great eagle; not a migratory bird, but the inhabitant of Alpine regions and inaccessible heights;* and the figure seems to correspond to the place prepared for the woman in the wilderness to which she is represented as fleeing. The same idea of an actual emigration is naturally suggested. Vitringa, adopting this interpretation of the figure, explains it of a flight made from the Eastern Empire, where Arianism first prevailed, to the comparatively barbarous nations of the Franks, the Anglo-Saxons, and other northern tribes; while Mr. Elliott, who rejects this explanation, thinks that Vitringa "had better have referred to Constantine's Christian Missions into Armenia, Georgia, and Abyssinia, to make his hypothesis tenable." The meaning of the figure, however, is one thing; the historical application,

* See Ezek. xvii. 3.
another. To Mr. Elliott's interpretation, which makes the wings given to the Woman an emblem of political protection, and her flight a change of state, not of place,—a mere vanishing of the true spiritual Church, in its distinctive features, from public view,—there lies the insuperable objection, that it violates the allegory, and involves the contradiction, that the disappearance of the Church was favoured by the very protection extended to it: it is, moreover, not to be reconciled with what is stated of "a place prepared" for the Woman, where she was to be nourished twelve hundred and sixty days. This must be understood of a place of refuge to which the eagle's wings were to bear her, after her escape from the flood ejected by the baffled Dragon in his vindictive pursuit. Such must be the import of the allegory, whatever difficulty there may be in applying it to the circumstances so prefigured.

And yet, it is surprising that any doubt should have arisen upon this subject. For, not to speak of the emigrations of the Paulicians by land and by sea, and of their fastnesses in the mountains of Cappadocia and Armenia, where those early witnesses long maintained themselves;* there is the clearest historical evidence, that the Alpine and Sub-Alpine valleys of Piedmont, Dauphiny, and Switzerland have afforded shelter to adherents to the evangelical faith, if not prior to the era of the great Gothic invasions, yet, from a period coeval with the time of Claude of Turni.† Now,

† Ib. pp. 211, 228, 317, 360.
the commencement of the 1260 days of the Woman's predicted sojourn in the wilderness, cannot (as will hereafter be shewn) be fixed earlier than the close of the eighth century. So that the date to which the history of the Waldensian Churches ascends, as well as the local circumstances of their position, corresponds very precisely to the prediction. An extant document in the dialect of the Vaudois, entitled, "The Noble Lesson," which is a simple exposition of the Christian doctrine in verse, contains internal evidence of having been written in the twelfth century; and this refers to the use of the term Vaudois as a term of reproach then applied to these "brethren" by the Romanists; while it intimates that the same Apostolic doctrine which the poem teaches, had been transmitted, though by the line of a few, and those persecuted for their faith, from the time of certain teachers that had followed the Apostles, to that day.* The Vaudois are, in fact, believed to be descended from those refugees from Italy who abandoned their beautiful country, and "fled, like the Woman mentioned in the Apocalypse, to these wild mountains."† The writer who employed this comparison, seems not to have perceived, that their flight was the fulfil-

* "One thousand one hundred years have been fully completed, Since it was written that we are in the last time."

Reckoning from the date of St. John's Epistle, which is obviously referred to, this would make the date of the poem about 1160 or 1170. See Elliott, ii. 329—334.

ment of the prediction. The Creator seems indeed, it has been remarked, to have constructed these retreats for what He designed them to be, the asylum of a persecuted flock; an idea which has been made the subject of one of the most beautiful and spirited hymns in the language:—

"For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,  
Our God, our fathers' God."

Thus, literally, was there a place in the wilderness prepared of God for the persecuted Church.

It must have been before the Woman had reached her place of refuge, that the Serpent cast forth the flood that was intended to overwhelm her. The figure of a flood or inundation is used by the Hebrew prophets to describe a sudden and impetuous invasion. Thus, Isaiah, in prophesying against Samaria, predicts, that "a strong and mighty one" shall come against them "like a flood of mighty rushing waters." (ch. xxviii. 2.) And in a passage often cited: "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." (ch. lxi. 19.)*

Here, the reference to hostile invaders cannot be mistaken. An irruption of pagan nations must therefore be intended by the Apocalyptic prediction, by which the very existence of pure Christianity was threatened, subsequently to the political overthrow of the Roman pagan power, but previously to the commencement of the mystical 1260 days. The language of Gibbon, in

* So Jer. xlvi. 7, 8. Dan. xi. 22.
describing the invasion of Italy by Radagaisus, in the reign of the Emperor Honorius (A.D. 406), seems adapted to justify the application of the prophecy to that event.* "While Italy rejoiced in her deliverance from the Goths, a furious tempest was excited among the nations of Germany, who yielded to the irresistible impulse that appears to have been gradually communicated from the Eastern extremity of the Continent of Asia. . . . Another barbarian, the haughty Rhodogast, or Radagaisus, marched from the northern extremities of Germany almost to the gates of Rome. . . . The savage Radagaisus was a stranger to the manners, the religion, and even the language of the civilized nations of the South. The fierceness of his temper was exasperated by cruel superstition; and it was universally believed, that he had bound himself, by a solemn vow, to reduce the city into a heap of stones and ashes, and to sacrifice the most illustrious of the Roman senators on the altars of those gods who were appeased by human blood. The public

* That of Orosius (cited by Elliott) is not less remarkable: "Radagaisus, omnium antiquorum præsentiumque hostium immanissimus repente totam inundavit Italianam." Mr. Elliott has extracted also an eloquent passage from a modern writer, Gorres, strikingly coincident with the prediction. "Long had the floods of the Germanic migration, rising higher and higher, been arrested by the mounds of the Eastern and Western Empires; and when the Asiatic Huns came to swell the tide of invasion, resistance was rendered impossible. The Western Empire was overflooded. Christianity had to contend, when the inundation came down, with a new species of heathenism." Elliott, iii. 50, note.
danger, which should have reconciled all domestic animosities, displayed the incurable madness of religious faction. The oppressed votaries of Jupiter and Mercury respected, in the implacable enemy of Rome, the character of a devout Pagan; loudly declared that they were more apprehensive of the sacrifices, than of the arms of Radagaisus; and secretly rejoiced in the calamities of their country, which condemned the faith of their Christian adversaries." What was the issue? Before the walls of Florence, the greater part of the barbarian host found their grave. Surrounded with a strong line of circumvallation thrown up by the Roman general (Stilicho), who came to the relief of the city, "the imprisoned multitude of horses and men was gradually destroyed by famine, rather than by the sword;" and "the famished host of Radagaisus was in its turn besieged." . . . "The famished Germans who escaped the fury of the auxiliaries, were sold as slaves, at the contemptible price of as many single pieces of gold: but the difference of food and climate swept away great numbers of those unhappy strangers; and it was observed, that the inhuman purchasers, instead of reaping the fruits of their labour, were soon obliged to provide the expense of their interment."* Thus, literally, did the earth "open her mouth and swallow up

* Gibbon, ch. xxx. Radagaisus himself was ignominiously beheaded; and "more than one-third of the various multitude of Sueves and Vandals, of Alani and Burgundians, who adhered to the standard of their general," perished. The remainder threw themselves upon the fertile provinces of Gaul. See p. 144.
the flood which the dragon had cast out of his mouth."

The allegory has, indeed, been somewhat differently interpreted, but with less obvious propriety. Mr. Elliott cites, as illustrating his interpretation, the language of Schlegel: "When the wild waters of that mighty inundation had begun gradually to flow off, then the Germanic tribes, being incorporated with the Romanic nations, laid the deep, firm soil on which modern European society was to spring up and flourish."

"The barbarians of Scythia and Germany," says Gibbon, "subverted the Empire, and embraced the religion of the Romans;" and thus, (according to Mr. Elliott,) the Arianism, as well as the Paganism of the invading flood was absorbed, as it were, into the soil, and disappeared.* But, unhappily, the idolatrous corruption of Christianity which ensued, forbids our viewing this absorption of the foreign paganism as the aid afforded to the Woman in her flight, or as being any succour given to the true Church. The sequel of the prediction is, that the Woman escaped from being carried away by the flood, only to flee to the place prepared for her; and the Dragon, enraged

* Elliott, iii. p. 53. The learned Writer seems to identify too closely the Christian heresy and paganism. He cites too as credible, the statement of Orosius, that the invasion of the barbarous heathen nations was invited by Stilicho, in the hope, by their means, to raise his son Eucherius to the throne, who was reported to be an enemy to the Christians, and threatened to signalize his reign by the restoration of paganism. Gibbon has shown the improbability of the calumny.
against the Woman whom he had sought in vain to destroy, turned to wage war against the remnant of her offspring who "keep the commandments of God and adhere to the testimony of Jesus."

There is one apparent difficulty attending the preceding explanation of the allegory. If the Dragon is the symbol of the Roman pagan power, how can it be represented as ejecting from its mouth a flood of alien and barbarous heathenism? These invaders did not proceed from Pagan Rome, but were impelled by a foreign impulse to make their descent upon the ancient dominion of the fallen dragon power. Is there not, then, some incongruity in this part of the allegory?

The solution of this difficulty is supplied by a distinction which has generally been overlooked, but which the phraseology of the prediction seems to indicate, between the dragon form of the Serpent, which is the Pagan persecuting power, and the Serpent itself as the Satanic principle of Paganism, or the power which deceived the whole world. The Dragon is said to be the Old Serpent and Satan, as being one with that Evil Power which warred against Michael and his angels. But, that *that* is only one form of Satan, is proved by the symbolic heads and horns which restrict the application of the emblem to Rome as the seat of its power. Now, it is observable, that, in first speaking of the flood cast out to destroy the woman, the Apostle does not say, that it proceeded from the seven-headed dragon, but from the mouth of the Serpent; and this
change of expression must be significant; for, almost immediately afterwards, the dragon is again introduced as warring against the seed of the woman. The dragon was an emblematic form which appeared to the Apostle: the serpent is but a figurative name for an invisible power.

The symbolic action of ejecting the flood could scarcely be the subject of pictorial or visionary representation.* It is simply a metaphorical prediction of what should take place. At ver. 16, the earth is indeed said to have swallowed up the flood which the Dragon had ejected; as if to mark the essential identity between the Serpent and the Dragon; yet, it was not from the seven heads of the Dragon in its visible and localised form, (that is, the Roman Pagan Power,) that this flood proceeded, but from the Serpent that deceiveth the whole world.

Should this explanation not be deemed perfectly satisfactory, we may conclude, that the dragon here, as in a subsequent vision, may be taken more generally as a symbol of military power actuated by the spirit of murder, the Mars or Moloch of war.

* The personification of the Earth, and the expression, “opened its mouth,” show that this part of the allegory, at least, was conveyed by narration, not by emblematic representation.
Vision the Seventh.

THE SEVEN-HEADED WILD BEAST — THE TWO-HORNED WILD BEAST — THE LAMB AND HIS FOLLOWERS—THE TRIPLE PROCLAMATION.

I. THE SEVEN-HEADED WILD BEAST.

The Apostolic Prophet was now transported in vision to the sea-shore,* and beheld, rising out of the sea, an emblematic monster, resembling the Dragon in the marked feature of having seven heads and ten horns, but, instead of a draconic body, it had the form of a leopard or panther, with bear's feet and a lion's mouth.† To this Wild Beast, the Dragon surrendered, as to a successor, "his power, and his throne, and great authority." If, then, the seven-headed Dragon denoted the Roman imperial power during the Pagan ascendency, the seven-headed panther must be under-

* Professor Stuart renders the original expression, "I was stationed." Mr. Elliott adopts the various reading, ἔστηκε, he stood; i.e., the dragon; but without sufficient warrant or obvious propriety.

† παρθένος, Stuart contends, denotes the panther; but naturalists are not agreed as to the specific difference between the two animals.
stood as denoting the same Imperial power under another dynastic form, subsequent to the overthrow of Paganism; the seven heads, as afterwards explained, implying, that Rome was to be alike, under both forms, the seat and centre of its dominion. The ten horns of the Roman beast, in the vision of Daniel, are explained as denoting ten kings or kingdoms; and the same explanation is given of the horns of the Apocalyptic monster.* In the dragon form, the seven heads were crowned, but not the horns. In the panther form, the ten horns were surmounted with ten diadems, while upon the heads, in lieu of the symbol of Imperial power, were inscribed names of blasphemy. The import of this significant distinction would seem to be, that what were provinces of the ancient Empire, became, under the modern, separate and independent kingdoms; while Rome, though no longer the seat and centre of Imperial government, was nevertheless to retain a sovereignty founded upon pretensions of a blasphemous character; and we must suppose the title of blasphemy inscribed upon the monster's heads, to correspond to the blasphemies which proceeded from its lion mouth. In all respects, the emblematic descrip-

* It is deserving of remark, that the fourth beast in the Vision of Daniel, which unquestionably denoted the Roman Empire, is described only in general terms, as diverse from the other beasts and very terrible, its shape not being specified. That it combined the forms of the other three, is a gratuitous conjecture; and the marked feature of wings was indubitably wanting. We might rather suppose it to have been a dragon form, answering to the amphibious character of a great military and naval power.
tion answers precisely to the Franco-Romanic or Romano-Germanic Empire which took its rise in the eighth century.

The singular triple combination of bestial forms in the emblem, requires, however, further explanation. Obvious as is the fact, it has received little attention from commentators, that the animals selected as emblems of particular empires, have generally been characteristic of the territory itself. The Assyrian lion, the Egyptian crocodile, and the Macedonian goat, are instances of this primitive and almost universal rule, which receives abundant illustration from heraldry. The combination of the body of a lion with eagle's wings, the emblem of the first of the four kingdoms in the Vision of Daniel, is found in the sculptures of Persepolis; and it is stated by Sir Robert Ker Porter, that, in all the Persian legends, the countries north of Elborz are typified under the figure of the eagle or griffin.* There are also seen, representations of a combat between a lion and a bull, which are explained by the same writer as emblems of the conquest of Cyrus over the Babylonian Empire. The bull would naturally denote a territory famous for its herds, a rich grazing country, like Mesopotamia; while the lion and the bear are frequently referred to in the Hebrew Scriptures as infesting the pastoral districts of Syria and the wooded banks of the Jordan. The combination of one or more animal forms, evi-

dently denotes the union of different countries by annexation or conquest.

Now, to represent the Empire of Charlemagne, no single animal could be so appropriate as a complex form corresponding to its heterogeneous elements. Only two-thirds of the Western Empire of Rome were subject to him; but, adds the Historian, "the deficiency was amply supplied by his command of the inaccessible or invincible nations of Germany." The triple division of the composite Empire, comprising Germany, Italy, and France, was distinctly recognised by the forms observed at the Imperial Diet.* The leopard might, therefore, be most appropriately designated as having the feet of a bear, while its lion-mouth singularly coincides with the title of the Leonine city, bestowed by Leo IV. upon the Vatican.†

At the period referred to, the commencement of the ninth century, the Western Empire, Gibbon remarks, "was not unworthy of its title; and some of the fairest kingdoms of Europe were the patrimony or conquest of a prince who reigned at the same time in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, and Hungary." "Charlemagne was the first who united (all) Germany under the same sceptre. . . The Empire of the Franks extended, between east and west, from the Ebro to the Elbe or the Vistula;

* At the diets of the Empire, the seals of the triple kingdom were borne in state by the Archbishops of Mentz, Cologne, and Treves, the perpetual arch-chancellors of Germany, Italy, and Arles" (Rhodanic France). Gibbon, ch. xlix.

† The arms of Guienne were a leopard; those of the Celtic tribes of Belgium, a lion. See Elliott, vol. iv. p. 65.
between north and south, from the Duchy of Benevento to the Eyder, the perpetual boundary of Germany and Denmark." . . . . The petty sovereigns of the British Isles and the Gothic kingdom of the Asturias "revered the power or virtue of the Carlovigian monarch, implored the honour and support of his alliance, and styled him their common parent, the sole and supreme Emperor of the West."*

The sudden and unlooked for revival of the Western Empire in the person of Charlemagne, and the coincident establishment of the Papal domination, correspond so marvellously and precisely to the predictions alike of Daniel and St. John, that it is strange there should be any difference of opinion upon this point among Protestant expositors. Gibbon, the best of commentators upon the Apocalypse, has clearly indicated their mutual connexion, and unconsciously explained the prediction. "The mutual obligations of the Popes and the Carlovigian family, form the important link of ancient and modern, of civil and ecclesiastical history. The most essential gifts of the Popes to the Carlovigian race were, the dignities of king of France and of patrician of Rome. . . . The power and policy of Charlemagne annihilated an enemy (in the Lombard), and imposed a master. In his first visit to the capital, he was received with all the honours which had formerly been paid to the Exarch, the representative of the Emperor. . . . Nor was the Frank content with those

* Gibbon, ch. xlix.
vain and empty demonstrations of respect. In the twenty-six years that elapsed between the conquest of Lombardy and his Imperial coronation, Rome, which had been delivered by the sword, was subject, as his own, to the sceptre of Charlemagne. The people swore allegiance to his person and family; in his name, money was coined, and justice was administered; and the election of the Popes was examined and confirmed by his authority. Except an original and self-inherent claim of sovereignty, there was not any prerogative remaining which the title of Emperor could add to the patrician of Rome."*

The date of this memorable compact between the Emperor and the Pope, is thus remarkably notified by the same Historian. It was "after the Nicene synod, and under the reign of Irene," (the restorer of image-worship and monkery in the Eastern Empire,) "that the Popes consummated the separation of Rome and Italy by the translation of the Empire to Charlemagne." It was on his fourth and last pilgrimage to Rome, that the Imperial title was formally conferred upon the Son of Pepin by Leo III. "On the festival of Christmas, the last year of the eighth century, Charlemagne appeared in the church of St. Peter. After the celebration of the holy mysteries, Leo suddenly placed a precious crown on his head, and the dome resounded with the acclamations of the people, 'Long life and victory to Charles, the most pious Augustus, crowned by God the

* Gibbon, ch. xlix.
great and pacific Emperor of the Romans.' "* This "great event of the translation or restoration of the Empire," (as the Historian styles it,) stands out broadly as one of the chief landmarks of history; and by a writer who had no theory to establish, it is shewn to be immediately connected with the rise of the Papal power, while nearly contemporaneous with the formal restoration of idolatry by the Nicene Council, and the commencement of a furious persecution of the iconoclasts, the first Protestant witnesses.

Now it is said, that "there was given to the Wild Beast a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies,"—a leonine mouth; and power was given to him, to be exercised for two and forty months. This is indisputably the same period during which the holy city was to be trodden down by the Gentiles, and is equivalent to the 1260 days during which the Witnesses were to prophesy in sackcloth, and the Woman was to have a place of refuge provided for her in the wilderness. The time is differently indicated, under the form of days and months, in order to shew that, by days, years of twelve months of thirty days (according to the computation in Daniel's prophecies) are intended;† and it is evident from ch. xii. 14, as compared with ver. 6, that a time, times, and half a time, that is, three years and a half, import the same mystical sum.

* Gibbon, ch. xlix.
† Cressener, p. 115. Fleming, p. 16. The prophetic 1260 years are equal to 1242 Julian years.
of 1260 years. We have thus a period of specific
duration marked out by four symbolic circum-
stances strictly synchronical; namely, 1. the
treading down of the holy city forty-two months;
2. the reign of the Wild Beast forty-two months;
3. the prophesying of the Two Witnesses 1260
days; and, 4. the concealment of the mystical
Woman for 1260 days, or three "times" and a half.
That, by days, years are intended, and, by years,
cycles of years, is clear from the nature of the
events predicted, which could not take place
within the brief period of three years and a half;
and, where the whole agency is symbolical, it
would be inconsistent and contrary to analogy,
to regard the measure of time as otherwise than
symbolical.

In endeavouring to fix upon the epoch from
which to date the commencement of the 1260
years, expositors have generally started with
some theory as to the time of its termination,
and have reckoned backward to some specific
point in history; or have arbitrarily fixed upon
some isolated circumstance, having no relation
to the fourfold prediction,* as determining the
date. The true epoch must unite the four his-
torical marks answering to the emblematic
indications; that is to say, the establishment of
idolatrous worship; the persecution of those who
first witnessed against it; the disappearance and
secret preservation of the True Church; and,
the collateral reign of the temporal power symbol-

* "Nobilis quaternio vaticiniorum." Mede.
ized by the Seven-headed Wild Beast. We have seen, that the development of the Apostasy, in its more prominent features of doctrine and worship, was simultaneous with the decadence and desolation of the Western Roman Empire, and the rise of the Papal domination; that Image-worship was formally and authoritatively restored and established throughout both Eastern and Western Christendom, by the second Council of Nice, (in which Pope Adrian acted conjointly with the Empress Irene,) in 787; that a cruel persecution of the iconoclasts ensued, the "visible assemblies of the Paulicians or Albigeois being extirpated by fire or sword, and the bleeding remnant escaping only by flight, concealment, or Catholic conformity;" that the history of the Waldensian refugees in the recesses of the Alpine wilderness, ascends to about the same period; and finally, that, at this same era, the Western Roman Empire was restored in the person of Charlemagne; an event which forms the link between ancient and modern history, and between the civil and the ecclesiastical annals, inasmuch as the revival of the Empire was the consolidation of the temporal power of the Popes, to whom the mutual compact secured the rich donation of their triple principality.*

Here, then, we have all the circumstances concurring to shew, that the fulfilment of the fourfold prediction must be dated from the close of the

* The Roman territory, the Exarchate, and the Lombard kingdom.
eighth century. The precise year, it may be difficult to fix upon. The period so particularly mentioned by Gibbon, (Christmas, A.D. 800,) is that of the coronation of Charlemagne as Emperor of the Romans. He had previously been recognised as Patrician of Rome and King of France; and the rise of his Empire must be dated from the conquest of Lombardy in 774. It was however, according to Gibbon, after the Nicene synod (A.D. 787), and under the reign of Irene, that the formal transfer of Rome and Italy to the Frank Augustus took place, by which the seven-hilled seat of the dragon was raised from the mere see of a bishop to be once more the metropolis of empire.

On the death of Charlemagne, his dominions were divided by treaty between his three sons; and the Empire seemed for a time to be dissolving into its heterogeneous elements. "The empire of Charlemagne," remarks Dr. Robertson, "was a structure erected in so short a time, that it could not be permanent. Under his immediate successor, it began to totter, and soon after fell to pieces. The crown of Germany was separated from that of France; and the descendants of Charlemagne established two great monarchies so situated as to give rise to a perpetual rivalry between them. . . . At length, the German branch of the family of Charlemagne became extinct; and his feeble descendants who reigned in France, had sunk into such contempt, that the Germans, without looking towards them, exercised the right inherent in a free people, and,
in a general assembly of the nation, elected Conrad, count of Franconia, emperor."*  
For a time, the Imperial power seemed to be extinguished; and this is precisely what is implied by one feature of the prediction which has hitherto divided and baffled commentators. "I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the Beast." It is generally admitted, that, by one of the heads, a form of government must be understood; and accordingly, Bp. Newton, assuming it to be the Sixth Head, that of the Cæsars or Emperors, which was as it were wounded to death, when Rome was reduced to a poor dukedom, tributary to the Exarchate, makes the healing of this head to have been effected "by the pope and the people of Rome revolting from the Exarch, and proclaiming Charles the Great, Augustus and Emperor of the Romans. Here," he adds, "the wounded Imperial head was healed again, and hath subsisted ever since. At this time, partly through the Pope, and partly through the Emperor, supporting and strengthening each other, the Roman name again became formidable, and all the world wondered after the Beast." Mr. Elliott contends for a very different interpretation.† According to his theory, it was the seventh governing head (or form of

* Robertson's Charles V. Introd. View, sect. iii.
† Elliott, iii. p. 11. The learned Author urges it as an objection against the interpretation of the Wild Beast as the Western secular Empire, that "the line of Western Emperors is not continuous, even from Charlemagne." Ib. p. 160.
government) of Pagan Rome, that was stricken to
death by Theodosius; and it was in the rise of
Papal superstition and supremacy, that the deadly
wound of the last Pagan head was healed. Nei-
ther of these interpretations is satisfactory. The
Apostle saw one of the heads wounded to death,
and this after the emerging of the Wild Beast
from the sea under the complex panther or
leopard form, to which the dragon ceded his seat
and power; and it was in this form that the
deadly wound was healed. Consequently, it must
have been the existing governing head; that is,
the form of government existing at the time to
which the Vision relates. Now, if the rise of the
seven-headed monster from the sea has been cor-
rectly interpreted as prefiguring the revival of the
Western Empire under Charlemagne, it was
necessary, if the prediction was to embrace all
the essential characteristics of that Empire, that
its temporary extinction should be indicated.
The Imperial head was apparently stricken to
death. According to Gibbon, "the whole term of
seventy-four years may be deemed a vacancy,
from the abdication of Charles the Fat (the last
Emperor of the Carlovingian race) to the establish-
ment of Otho the First."* For about forty years,
there was no coronation of an Emperor in the
West; and although, after the election of Conrad,
Count of Franconia, Henry of Saxony and his
descendants were raised in succession to the
Germanic throne by the suffrages of their coun-

* Gibbon, ch. xlix.

X
trymen, it was not till the middle of the tenth century, A.D. 962, that the integrity of the Western Empire was restored by the conquests of Otho the Great, who, at the head of his victorious army, crossed the Alps, subdued the kingdom of Italy, delivered the Pope, and permanently fixed the Imperial crown in the name and nation of Germany.* From that era, it became a fixed law of public jurisprudence, that the prince elected in the German Diet became, from that instant, sovereign of Italy and Rome, but that he might not legally assume the titles of Emperor and Augustus, till he had received the crown from the hands of the Roman Pontiff.† Those

* "Elated with his success, he assumed the title of Caesar Augustus. A prince born in the heart of Germany, pretended to be the successor of the emperors of ancient Rome, and claimed a right to the same power and prerogatives." Robertson's Charles V., Introd. View, sect. iii.

† In a very able article on "the Germanic Empire," in the Edinb. Review, July, 1848, its connexion with Italy is adverted to as a question that has been fiercely debated by historians and jurists. "The whole truth of the matter," says the writer, "was this: If the imperial title, as could hardly be denied, was derived from the sovereignty of Italy, it was almost a necessary inference, that the old imperial prerogatives had descended with it. The title, whencesoever derived, could be no other than that of the Roman chiefs of the Western world. As the Asiatic subjects of the Comneni styled themselves Romans, so, the inheritance of the Germanic kings became the 'Holy Roman Empire,' the Emperor-designate became King of the Romans, the laws of Justinian were supposed to be obligatory on the Franks of the Rhine, the relations between the German people and their elected sovereign were conceived to be defined by those of Constantine and his subjects; and at last, the descendants of
German sovereigns who could appear with an army at the gates of Rome, were crowned emperors in the Vatican. Strange, that a German potentate should affect to be a successor of the Cæsars, and yet, consent to be indebted to the pontifical sanction for the legitimacy of his imperial title as derived from the sovereignty of Rome and Italy! How wonderful is the verification of the Apocalyptic prediction, by events in themselves so unlikely, after the seat of empire had been removed from the banks of the Tiber, apparently for ever!

So it was, that, in this revived form, the deadly wound inflicted on the Imperial head of the Wild Beast was healed. In the fourteenth century, the Romano-Germanic Empire, bestowed by the Pontiff upon Charles IV., is compared by Gibbon to that of Augustus. “Although the German Emperor himself was no more than the elective and impotent magistrate of an aristocracy of princes, yet, in the diets of the Empire, a hundred princes bowed before his throne, and exalted their own dignity by the voluntary honours which they rendered to their chief or minister. Nor was the supremacy of the Emperor confined to Germany: the hereditary monarchs of Europe confessed the pre-eminence of his rank and dignity: he was the first of the Christian princes, the temporal head of the great Republic of the West. To his person, the title of Majesty was long appropriated; and he

a Styrian chieftain were accepted throughout Europe as the hereditary possessors of the undoubted throne of the Cæsars.”
disputed with the Pope the sublime prerogative of creating kings and assembling councils.”*

There scarcely needs other commentary upon that characteristic of the emblematic monster,—"having ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns."

In determining, however, the precise application of the ten horns to as many kingdoms, there is some apparent difficulty, arising from the fluctuations in the distribution of political power, and the unsettled state of European society. At the period of the dissolution of the Roman Empire in the West, in the middle of the sixth century, the state of things is thus depicted by Gibbon: "The Saxons fiercely struggled with the natives for the possession of Britain; Gaul and Spain were divided between the powerful monarchies of the Franks and Visigoths and the dependent kingdoms of the Suevi and Burgundians; Africa was exposed to the cruel persecution of the Vandals and the savage insults of the Moors; Rome, and Italy as far as the banks of the Danube, were afflicted by an army of Barbarian mercenaries, whose lawless tyranny was succeeded by the reign of Theodoric the Ostrogoth. All the subjects of the Empire who, by the use of the Latin language, more particularly deserved the name and privileges of Romans, were oppressed by the disgrace

* Gibbon, ch. xlix. In the cathedral of St. Ambrose at Milan, the German Cesar was crowned with the iron crown which Tradition ascribed to the Lombard monarchy; and in the Vatican, he was again crowned with the golden crown of the Empire.
and calamities of foreign conquest; and the victorious nations of Germany established a new system of manners and government in the Western countries of Europe."*

We have here enumerated, as co-existing on the platform of the dissolved Empire: 1. Britain under the Anglo-Saxons. 2. France under Clovis. 3. Spain under Euric and his successors.† 4. Burgundy, which appears to have comprised originally, Franche Comté and Savoy, Switzerland, and part of the Netherlands. 5. Africa, (and Sardinia) under the Vandals. 6. Italy under the Ostrogoths. To these may be added, 7. The Lombards. 8. The Bavarians. 9. The Suevi. 10. The Allman Franks of Franconia. Two centuries later, in the time of Charlemagne, we find, as grand divisions of the Western Empire, the kingdom of Neustria or Western France; that of Austrasia or Eastern France; Aquitaine or Southern France; the principality of Arles or Provence, occupying the basin of the Rhone; and Burgundy; all, with Suabia, Franconia, and Thuringia,‡ united under the Imperial sceptre. Spain was divided between the Gothic kingdom of the Asturias and the Moorish kingdoms. Italy, into Lombardy, the Exarchate, the Roman State, and the principality of Beneventum, answering nearly to the modern kingdom of Naples. Britain was

* Gibbon, ch. xxxviii.
† See Dunham's Spain, vol. i. pp. 106, 180.
‡ "The Dukes of Suabia, Franconia, and Thuringia were the three great vassals of the Austrasian Crown." Dunham's Germanic Empire, vol. i. p. 9.
still under her Saxon dynasties. But, during the Middle Ages, the various kingdoms and territories were continually undergoing a mutation of name, boundary, and ownership, which perplexes the historical geography of modern Europe. The races and peoples who, during the life of Charlemagne, remained aggregated under his vast domination, seemed to become animated with a spontaneous movement of mutual repulsion and revolt, as soon as the Frank Cæsar had gone down, in imperial robes, to his tomb in the cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle. "Gaul," remarks the Historian of the Norman Conquest, "aimed at separation from Germany; Italy, at separation from both. Each of these great masses of men, in its movement, drew with it the portion of the conquering people which dwelt in its bosom as mistress of the soil, invested with the titles of power and honour, Latin or German. Frank drew the sword against Frank, brother against brother, father against son. Three of the grandsons of Charlemagne fought against each other in the centre of Gaul; one at the head of an army of Gauls and Gallo-Franks, another followed by Italians, the third commanding an army of Teutons and Slaves. This domestic dissension of the royal descendants of the Frankish Cæsar, was but a reflection of the quarrel between those nations; and it was this circumstance which rendered it so protracted and so pertinacious. The kings made and unmade ten divisions of that Empire which the peoples desired altogether to dissolve."*

* Thierry's Norman Conquest, pp. 86, 7.
In the twelfth century, when the Popes had possessed themselves of the Imperial prerogative, Gibbon remarks, that "the nine kings of the Latin world might disclaim their new associate, unless he were consecrated by the authority of the Supreme Pontiff."* The nine kings were those of France, England, Scotland, Castile, Aragon, Navarre, Sweden, Denmark, Hungary; and their new associate was Roger, the first king of Sicily. But for their common Papal head, these temporal sovereignties had no bond of union. What can be more wonderful than that, amid the revolutions of fourteen centuries, the regal horns should generally have kept up their mystic number, a new one springing up in the place of any that were broken off or torn away?

"And the whole world wondered after the Wild-Beast, and worshipped the Dragon, because he had given authority to the Wild-Beast." That is, in giving him up "his seat," inasmuch as it was Rome, the throne of the dragon, the possession of which gave empire to the Wild-Beast; and in doing homage to the modern Cæsars, homage was in fact rendered to the pagan emperors, of whom they claimed to be the successors. For, as the fall of paganism had been attended with the removal of the seat of government to the Eastern capital, Rome had never been the throne of Christian empire. So that, as Mr. Elliott justly remarks, "the transition from the draconic state of

* Other enumerations, applying to different epochs, all agreeing in the characteristic number, are given by Bp. Newton, Mr. Elliott, and Mr. Birks.
Rome and its empire, to the ten-horned bestial, was direct, and without any other form or head intervening, according to the Apocalyptic representation, though not without the intervention of the Dragon's fall." The historical fact is precisely indicated by Gibbon: "In the beginning of the twelfth century, Rome was revered by the Latins as the metropolis of the world and the throne of the Pope and Emperor, who from the Eternal City derived their title, their honour, and the right or exercise of temporal dominion."

It only remains to shew, that what is said, in the subsequent verses, of the blasphemies proceed-

* "By one of those counsels which to the world are inexplicable," says a Roman Catholic writer, "Constantine takes his throne, carries it to the extremities of Europe, to the borders of the Euxine, in order to leave to the Pontifical Majesty all that ancient Rome with its natural might and ineffable glories; and that being done, never more shall earthly Prince sit at Rome. When Theodosius divides between his two sons the empire of the East and of the West, it is at Milan that the Emperor of the West shall reign,—it must not be at Rome. In vain the Heruli and the Ostrogoths seek to establish a new kingdom of Italy; it is at Ravenna that they fix the capital. In vain the Lombards approach to Rome; it is not there that they may dwell, but at Pavia. Kings and Emperors shall go no more to Rome, but as travellers." (Conférence de Notre Dame de Paris, par le R. P. Henri Dominique Lacordaire, tome i. p. 85, 4ème Conférence, 1835.) This boast is not strictly true. Rome could not have recovered its imperial honours, had not the revolt of the Popes been followed by the transfer of their allegiance to a new Emperor of the West; and Rome, in acknowledging the Frank Caesar, regained the rank of a metropolis. The sui-dissi occupant of St. Peter's Chair could never have maintained his metropolitan supremacy, except as bishop of the Imperial capital.
ing from the lion-mouth of the Wild Beast, his warring against the saints and conquests over them, and the extent of his authority, are susceptible of explanation in accordance with this view of the historical import of the emblem. First, it is said, "there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies;" *(an expression which occurs, Dan. vii. 8, in reference to the "little horn" which grew up among the ten horns of the fourth wild-beast;) and it is added: "he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." This has generally been applied exclusively to the Papal pretensions; but if, by blasphemy, is intended the arrogation of the prerogatives and attributes of God, and the assumption of a power over the consciences of men, which belongs to Him alone, it is certain that the charge equally applies to the Imperial rulers. Thus, Bossuet, in his Defence of the Romish Church, remarks: "Whoever carefully examines the laws of the Theodosian and Justinian codes against heretics, will see, that they are the source of the decrees against them which the Church, aided by the edicts of princes, enacted in the third and fourth Lateran councils. . . . . To the laws of the ancient emperors, subsequent princes added

* Mr. Elliott cites similar expressions from Sophocles and Shakspeare. Ζεύς γὰρ μεγάλης γλάσσης κόμπους ὅπερ εχθάλησεν. ANTIG. 127.

"Here's a large mouth indeed,
That spits forth death and mountains, rocks and seas."

KING JOHN.
such as were suited to the exigencies of the times, and permitted many things to the ecclesiastics against heretics, in order that the reverence due to the clergy might be more fully enforced against the contemptuous.”* Bellarmine, in like manner, vindicates the punishment of incorrigible heretics by the secular powers, both with temporal penalties and with death, by referring to the precedent of the decrees and laws of the Emperors, “which the Church has always approved.” In legalizing the Roman Church, and adopting the canons of the councils, and the edicts of the Theodosian and Justinian codes against heretics as laws of their kingdoms, the Christian monarchs formerly undertook to execute the judicial decisions of their synods and bishops; the popes and bishops were, therefore, accustomed, in every age, to devolve upon them the infliction of their penal sentences. Thus, it was the civil powers that burned the martyrs of Orleans and other cities in the South of France in 1017. It was the kings of France, and the dukes of Savoy, that slaughtered the Albigenses in the twelfth, and the Waldenses in the following centuries; the kings of England that persecuted the Wickliffites and Lollards; the king of Hungary that made war on the Bohemians; and the Emperor of Germany that consigned Huss and Jerome to the flames. The civil rulers assumed the right, moreover, independently of the

* Cited by Lord, “Exposit. of the Apocalypse,” p. 375. The Theodosian Code, revived by Justinian, is full of the greatest severities against heretics, and inquisitors were appointed to find them out. See Cressener’s “Judgements,” &c., pp. 62, 3.
command of the Church, to prescribe the faith and worship of their subjects, and to punish all dissidents with forfeitures, exile, tortures, and death.*

Further, if "to equalize a creature with the Creator, or his dwelling-place with the eternal temple, is to blaspheme God and His dwelling-place," then, the rulers symbolized by the Wild-beast were involved in this impiety; for they not only sanctioned the invocation of saints, and enforced image-worship,—blaspheming those who dwell in heaven, by representing them as receiving a homage due to God only,—but they took an active part in procuring the canonization, by the Pope, of deceased persons who had lived in their dominions. The first papal canonization was that of Udalric by Pope John XV. A.D. 993.† It appears to have been, however, but an adoption or imitation of the old Pagan apotheosis; and the sovereign Pontiff exercised, in these blasphemous edicts, the Imperial

* The decree of Louis of France, 1228, and one of Frederick II., Emperor of the Romans, and King of Jerusalem and Sicily, dated, Padua, Feb. 22, 1243, for the extermination of heretics, have been already referred to.

† It was at the solicitation of Henry of England, that king Edward was canonized in 1163, and Thomas à Becket in 1173. It was at the instance of the king and nobles, that Richard, bishop of Chester, was canonized in 1261; at that of Philip of France, that St. Ivo was canonized in 1346; at that of Alfonso, king of Aragon, that St. Bernard was canonized in 1450; at that of the Emperor Frederick, that St. Catharine was canonized in 1461; and at that of the Emperor, the kings of France, Hungary, and Sicily, and other princes, that Cardinal Bonaventura was, in 1482, "solemnly enrolled in the company of the holy confessors, pontiffs, and doctors, whom the holy Church of God worships." See Lord, pp. 377—9.
prerogative of the Pontifex Maximus of old Rome. Nor is it to be forgotten, that the powers usurped by the Popes, were originally founded upon Imperial concessions, so that they but exercised the power of the Wild Beast, or, in other words, the Imperial authority.

With regard to the extent of the power thus symbolised, it is designated as a dominion "over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations; and all the inhabitants of the earth," it is said, "shall worship the Beast, whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life." The former phrase is of frequent occurrence in the prophecies of Daniel, and in other parts of the Old Testament, where it cannot be taken strictly;* and it may here, therefore, with propriety be understood of Western Christendom, or "the Apocalyptic earth." The exception corresponds to the fact, that the persecuted remnant of true worshippers alone disputed the blasphemous pretensions and despotic authority of the secular and ecclesiastical rulers of the Empire and its dependent kingdoms. All fell down and worshipped the golden image, but those who, like the three Jews in Babylon, were prepared to yield their bodies, rather than serve any God except their own God, or, with the Apostles, to obey God rather than men.†

The prediction closes with a solemn warning, introduced with the formula which occurs in each of Our Lord's addresses to the Seven Churches;‡

* Dan. iii. 7; iv. 1, &c. † Dan. iii. 28; Acts v. 29.
‡ We may, perhaps, on this account, conclude the words to have been uttered by the angel, rather than added by St. John.
"Whoso leads into captivity, shall be himself made captive: whoso slays with the sword, shall fall by the sword. In this is evinced the patience and faith (or fidelity) of the saints." That is, (as Stuart paraphrases it,) "patience under the persecuting hand of the tyrant; faith, to believe what is here promised in respect to his approaching doom." It may be intended to intimate, that the true Witnesses of God were not to have recourse to the sword or to force, in order to deliver themselves out of the hands of persecuting tyrants, or they would involve themselves in the evils they attempted to escape; but, in meekness and faith, they were to content themselves with bearing their testimony for God to whom "vengeance belongs." In this sense, it will correspond to Our Lord's declaration, when he commanded Peter to put up his sword into its sheath: "for all they that take the sword, shall perish by the sword."* The words may be taken, therefore, as combining at once a caution against distrust of God, and a threat of Divine retribution. In like manner, the Prophet Isaiah denounces, on the one hand, woe against those who should "go down to Egypt for help," and trust in cavalry for succour, instead of looking to the Holy One of Israel;† and, on the other, woe to the spoiler and the deceiver, for he should himself be spoiled and deceived.‡ Considered as a prediction, in the history of the long

* Matt. xxvi. 52.
† Isa. xxxi. 1.
‡ Isa. xxxiii. 1. "The two ideas meant to be expressed are, those of violence and treachery, as the crying sins of arbitrary powers." Alexander on Isaiah, i. p. 541.
struggle between the Emperors and the Popes, it received the most striking and exemplary fulfilment.

It may be proper to notice one objection to the preceding explanation of the emblem, which has been urged by Mr. Elliott as a proof of its incorrectness: "the Beast was to last 1260 years in acknowledged supremacy; whereas the Holy Roman Empire, from A.D. 800, the date of its establishment by Charlemagne, to 1806, the date of its termination, lasted, at the utmost, but 1006 years."* It will appear, however, hereafter, that the supposition of its having terminated at the period referred to, is altogether erroneous. Napoleon claimed, indeed, as Emperor of the French and King of Italy, to have revived in his own person, the Empire of Charlemagne; and his temporary usurpation can with no propriety be considered as having put an end to the Empire, which reverted at his fall to the Austrian potence, any more than his deposition of Pius VII. put an end to the Papal sovereignty.

II. THE TWO-HORNED WILD BEAST.

And now the attention of the Apostle is drawn to the Vision of a second Wild Beast, which appeared to rise, not out of the sea, like the preceding one, but out of the land. It was two-horned like a lamb, but had the voice of a dragon. And "it exerciseth the whole authority of the former Wild Beast in his presence, and causeth

the earth and its inhabitants to do homage to the Wild Beast whose deadly wound was healed."

The Dragon had been represented as giving up his power and throne to the Seven-headed Wild Beast, as to a successor. This two-horned Beast exercises the same power as the Imperial Wild Beast, but as its vicegerent, in its presence or in its name. Although its rise is subsequent to that of the former, it must therefore be contemporaneous with it. Its rising out of the land, not out of the sea, seems to denote, that, whereas the revived Western Empire was of external or foreign origin, this power should spring up within the Roman territory, and be of native or indigenous origin.* Its lamb-like horns, though, agreeably to the prophetic usage, they must be regarded as emblems of power, seem to bespeak an assumed character of mildness or harmlessness in contrast with its dragon voice. They may therefore be well interpreted as denoting the spiritual or ecclesiastical power of the Pontificate. Dr. H. More, while he considers the two horns like a lamb as signifying "the outward pretext of succession from Christ and his Apostles, and of having a

* Bp. Newton says: "As the first beast rose up out of the sea, that is, out of the wars and tumults of the world, so, this beast groweth up out of the earth like plants, silently and without noise." Unfortunately, this mystical exposition is at variance with the fact. The temporal power of the Popes, founded upon rebellion, grew up, as Gibbon remarks, out of the calamities of the country,—certainly not without noise and tumult. Mr. Elliott would make the first Wild Beast rise out of the mystical "flood" (so he interprets τῆς θαλάσσης, ch. xiii. 1) ejected by the dragon, and absorbed by the earth.
power from them to rule and discipline the Church,” thinks, that “the two horns of the Episcopal mitre may also be glanced at, as the seven heads (of the former Beast) signify as well seven hills as seven kings;” a fancy in which the learned Writer is supported by two of the most eminent Jesuit Expositors.* That the emblem denotes a hierarchical power in close alliance with the Imperial, and of anti-Christian character, is clear from the designation elsewhere applied to the two-horned Beast as the “False Prophet.” A very remarkable approximation to the true import of the emblems, is found in a treatise on Anti-Christ by Hippolytus, Bishop of Porto, who suffered martyrdom between A.D. 240 and 250. Of the two Apocalyptic Beasts, he says, “the former or seven-headed Beast means the Roman Empire wounded to death by a sword; the other, or two-horned lamb-like Beast, Anti-Christ, inclusive of his False Prophet, who would revive as it were the ghost or image of the old Empire, just as Augustus once did by his new laws and constitution.” This solution of the prophetic enigma appears to have been lost sight of, or abandoned for mystical

* More’s Works, p. 287. Acosta’s language is highly remarkable: “Duo cornua Episcopalis dignitatis puta Mitras sive Infuliae (hac enim est bicornis) insignes sunt. Videtur ergo quod hic Pseudopropheta erit Episcopus quisquis Apostata et simulato Religionis.” Cornelius à Lapide, inclining to this interpretation, maintains that it is no reproach to Episcopacy. Others have interpreted the two horns as denoting the spiritual and the temporal power of the Pontiffs,—the secular and regular clergy,—the Eastern and Western Patriarchates, &c.
interpetations, by subsequent writers, till Joachim Abbas, towards the close of the twelfth century, propounded a singular exposition, in which there is a similar approach to the true import. In the first Beast, he recognises a combination of Daniel's four Beasts; and though he interprets these erroneously, he yet appears to have perceived that a persecuting secular power was intended. The second Beast, he says, plainly signifies a false prophet, or pseudo-prophetic sect or body. These false prophets, issuing out of the bosom of the Church, may confederate with the former Beast, Daniel's eleventh horn, and make the earth worship it. "But why two Beasts? Because, as Christ is both king and priest, so, Satan may put forth the first Beast to usurp his kingship; the second, his priestly dignity; the latter having at his head some mighty prelate, some universal pontiff as it were over the whole world, who may be the very Anti-Christ of whom St. Paul speaks as being extolled above all that is called God and worshipped, sitting in the temple of God, and showing himself as God. This may be while making use of the strength of the first Beast for his purpose."

This discovery once made, it was not long before it was followed up by the application of the prophecy to the Roman Pontiff. "Scarcely

* Elliott, vol. iv. p. 392. The original of this most remarkable passage is given in a note: "Ita Bestia qua ascendet de terrâ habitura sit quendam magnum Prelatum, qui sit similis Synonis Magi, et quasi Universalis Pontifex in toto orbis terrarum; et ipse sit ille Anti-Christus de quo dicit Paulus, Quod extollitur," &c.
had Joachim rendered up his last breath among his brethren,” remarks Mr. Elliott, “when Almeric and his disciples declared that Rome was Babylon, and the Roman Pope, Anti-Christ. The idea was echoed by not a few among professed Romanists; and so it travelled down through the thirteenth century, to be stereotyped, in the fourteenth, for all literary posterity, in Dante’s ‘Inferno’ and the Epistles of Petrarch.” The same idea, quite independently taken up by the Waldensian Christians of the thirteenth century, was transmitted by them to the Wicliffites and Hussites of the fourteenth and fifteenth, till the truth of the discovery, as generally recognised and openly proclaimed by the Reformers of the sixteenth, became an admitted principle. Mr. Elliott, indeed, whose researches have thrown so much light upon the exposition of the Apocalypse, rejects as “palpably incorrect,” the view of the Ten-horned Beast which has obtained the concurrence of “almost all the more modern expositors;” pronouncing it “one of the most plain as well as most fatal of Protestant expository errors.” His objections, however, cannot be sustained; and this is, perhaps, the greatest flaw in his invaluable work.*

* See Elliott, vol. iv. pp. 27, 28. His two main arguments are, that Rome was the seat of the Pope, not of the Emperor, and, that the world did not worship the secular Emperors of the West. To the former, Gibbon’s words furnish a sufficient reply: “In the beginning of the twelfth century, Rome was revered by the Latins as the metropolis of the world and the throne of the Pope and Emperor, who, from the Eternal City, derived their title, their honours, and the right or exercise of temporal dominion.” See ante, page 312. As to the second, it would be difficult to show that the homage claimed by the Emperor was less abso-
We now again turn to the records of secular History, to show that the explanation of the first Beast as the revived Empire of the West, and of the second Beast as the Papacy, is the only one that answers to the emblematic prefiguration in all the circumstances indicated.

Up to the reign of Leo the Iconoclast, "in ecclesiastical rank and jurisdiction, the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Pope of Rome were nearly equal. The genius and fortunes of the Popes," Gibbon remarks, "again restored the supremacy of Rome. It is agreed, that, in the eighth century, their dominion was founded on rebellion, and that the rebellion was produced, and justified, by the heresy of the Iconoclasts. . . . . The most effectual measure of rebellion was, the withholding the tribute of Italy." The second and third Gregory were condemned by the Emperor as the authors of this revolt, which he in vain attempted to subdue by force; and in the language of the same Historian, "the liberty of Rome, which had been oppressed by the arms and arts of Augustus, was rescued, after seven hundred and fifty years of servitude, from the persecution of Leo the Isaurian." The style of the Roman Inute, or partook less of religious obedience, than the worship paid to the Pope, itself borrowed from that rendered to the Pagan Caesars. Mr. Elliott explains the first Beast as denoting the Papacy or Papal Empire; the second, as the Papal clergy. This is substantially the theory of Pareus of Heidelberg. It ignores the fact, that the Papal power was based upon and rose out of the Imperial; that, of the Holy Roman Empire, the German Caesar was the recognised secular head; and that the General Councils represented "the republic of Europe" with the Pope and Emperor as its joint head.
senate and people was revived, and the bishop naturally came to be regarded as the first magistrate or prince of the city. The independence of the Popes* was, however, alike equivocal and precarious. Threatened by the Lombards, Pope Stephen III. crossed the Alps, to invoke the aid and protection of Pepin; and Rome was twice saved by a French army. "Since the revolt of Italy and the loss of the Exarchate," remarks Gibbon, "the distress of the Romans had exacted some sacrifice of their independence. Yet, even in this act, they exercised the right of disposing of themselves; and the decrees of the senate and people successively invested Charles Martel and his posterity with the honour of Patrician of Rome."† The donation of the Exarchate was the first fruit of the victories of Pepin, which he conferred on the Roman Pontiff "for the remission of his sins." This splendid donation was granted in supreme and absolute dominion; "and the world beheld for the first time a Christian bishop invested with the prerogatives of a temporal prince,—the choice of magistrates, the exercise of justice, the imposition of taxes, and the wealth of the palace of Ravenna." By accepting this donation, however, the Roman prelate recognised the right and sovereignty of the donor. Even after Pope Adrian I. had obtained from Charlemagne the confirmation of the alleged donation of Constantine, the papal lordship continued to be only

* Gregory III., chosen A.D. 731, is reckoned as the first of the independent Popes.
† Gibbon, ch. xlix.
an honourable species of fief, held, on a feudal tenure, by the first bishop of the Empire; and his successor, in acknowledging the Frank monarch as Emperor of the West, transferred to him nothing but his allegiance, which had been nominally rendered to the Greek Cæsars. The successors of Leo III. enjoyed a very limited and precarious sovereignty. "The Roman pontiffs of the ninth and tenth centuries were insulted, imprisoned, and murdered by their tyrants;" and to such indigence were they reduced, that they were unable "either to support the state of a prince or to exercise the charity of a priest." The characters of most of these mitred rulers of the Latin Church were infamous; but, in the language of Gibbon, "the scandals of the tenth century were obliterated by the austere and dangerous virtues of Gregory VII."* (A.D. 1073), with whom originated the daring project of converting the Western Empire itself into a fief of the Church. Yet, this ambitious hierarch was driven from the papal throne, and died in exile at Salerno. The consummation of this bold usurpation was effected by his successors.

"Under the Emperors of the Franconian and Suabian lines, whom the Germans, by their voluntary election, placed on the Imperial throne, a new face of things," remarks Dr. Robertson,

* The notorious Hildebrand, styled by Gibbon, "the founder of the Papal monarchy." It is highly remarkable, that Eberhard, Bishop of Salzburg, in the Council of Ratisbon, A.D. 1240 declared, that Hildebrand, 170 years before, had "laid the foundation of the Babylonian empire of Anti-Christ."
appeared, and a scene was exhibited in Germany, which astonished all Christendom at that time, and in the present age appears almost incredible. The Popes, hitherto dependent on the Emperors, and indebted for power as well as dignity to their beneficence and protection, began to claim a superior jurisdiction; and, in virtue of an authority which they pretended to derive from heaven, tried, condemned, excommunicated, and deposed their former masters. Nor is this to be considered merely as a frantic sally of passion in a pontiff intoxicated with high ideas concerning the extent of priestly domination and the plenitude of papal authority. Gregory VII. was able as well as daring. His presumption and violence were accompanied with political discernment and sagacity... He began his rupture with Henry IV. upon a pretext that was popular and plausible. He complained of the venality and corruption with which the Emperor had granted the investiture of benefices to ecclesiastics. He contended, that this right belonged to him as the head of the Church: he required Henry to confine himself within the bounds of his civil jurisdiction, and to abstain for the future from such sacrilegious encroachments on the spiritual dominion. All the censures of the Church were denounced against Henry, because he refused to relinquish those powers which his predecessors had uniformly exercised. The most considerable of the German princes and ecclesiastics were incited to take arms against him. His mother, his wife, his sons, were wrought upon to disregard all the ties
of blood as well as of duty, and to join the party of his enemies. Such were the successful arts with which the Court of Rome inflamed the superstitious zeal, and conducted the factious spirit of the Germans and Italians, that an Emperor, distinguished not only for many virtues, but possessed of considerable talents, was at length obliged to appear as a supplicant at the gate of the castle in which the Pope resided, and to stand there, three days, barefooted, in the depth of winter, imploring a pardon, which at length he obtained with difficulty. This act of humiliation degraded the Imperial dignity. Nor was the depression momentary only. The contest between Gregory and Henry gave rise to the two great factions of the Guelfs and the Ghibellines; the former of which, supporting the pretensions of the popes, and the latter defending the rights of the emperors, kept Germany and Italy in perpetual agitation during three centuries. A regular system for humbling the emperors and circumscribing their power, was formed, and adhered to uniformly throughout that period. The popes, the free states in Italy, the nobility and ecclesiastics of Germany, were all interested in its success; and notwithstanding the return of some short intervals of vigour, under the administration of a few able emperors, the Imperial authority continued to decline. During the anarchy of the long interregnum subsequent to the death of William of Holland, (A.D. 1256,) it dwindled down almost to nothing. Rodolph of Hapsburg, (A.D. 1273,) the founder of the house of Austria, and who first
opened the way to its future grandeur, was at length elected emperor, not that he might re-establish and extend the Imperial authority, but because his territories and influence were so inconsiderable as to excite no jealousy in the German princes, who were willing to preserve the forms of a constitution the power and vigour of which they had destroyed. Several of his successors were placed on the Imperial throne from the same motive; and almost every remaining prerogative was wrested out of the hands of feeble princes unable to exercise or to defend them."

In these passages, a general view is given of the manner in which, as the Imperial power declined, the Papal rose in its pretensions, and in its actual strength and ascendancy. But this took place, not by a steady and uninterrupted process. The Papal power attained its zenith under the execrable Innocent III., (A.D. 1198,) to whom is ascribed the deliverance of Rome from a foreign sovereignty: he invested the Prefect with a banner instead of a sword, and absolved him from all oaths and service to the German Emperor.

In the civil wars that ensued, the pride of the Pontiffs was greatly humbled; and at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the so-called apostolic throne was transported from the Tiber to the Rhone. The great schism of the West, during which rival pontiffs fulminated against each other their anathemas and the louder thunderers of war, lasted from the disputed election of

* Robertson's View of Europe, sect. iii.
Urban VI. in 1378, to the elevation of Martin V. to the undivided pontificate in 1417; during which interval, the history of Rome is but slenderly connected with that of its nominal Pontiffs.

The accession of Martin V. is the epoch of the restoration of the temporal power of the Popes. The Imperial prerogative of coining money, after being exercised for nearly three hundred years by the Senate,* was first assumed by this Pontiff; and his image and superscription introduce the series of the papal medals. Frederic III. (A.D. 1452) was the last sovereign of Germany who was crowned at Rome; his successors being content to rest their imperial title, as head of the Roman empire, on the choice of the Electors of Germany; and thus, the Pontiff was spared the necessity of doing homage in the presence of a superior. It was not, however, till the beginning of the sixteenth century, that the Popes acquired the absolute dominion of the city of Rome, of which Sixtus IV. (A.D. 1480) has been, from his architectural improvements, considered as the restorer or second founder. Under his pontificate, the city was still distracted and devastated by the domestic conflicts of the rival noble houses. The present capital, as a town, dates only from the end of the fifteenth century. In 1580, the ancient statutes, collected and methodised in three books, were adopted, with the approbation of Gregory XIII., as the

* The title and image of the Emperors appear on the Papal coins down to those of Leo IX., A.D. 1050. In those of Paschal II., A.D. 1099—1118, this badge of dependence disappears.
civil and criminal law of the city; and, in imitation of the policy of the Cæsars, the Roman pontiffs have affected to maintain the forms of a republic, while exercising the absolute powers of a monarchy. The sixteenth century witnessed a renewal of the quarrel between the Court of Rome and the Emperor: and the sack of the city by the troops of Charles V., in 1526, (under the pontificate of Clement VII.,) is affirmed to have been more destructive, and attended by circumstances of greater brutality, than that of the Goths.*

Up to this time, the spiritual supremacy and the temporal power of the Popes had been so blended, that it was found difficult to separate them even in imagination. But, when they came to take part more frequently in the contests among princes, and to engage as either principals or auxiliaries in every war kindled in Europe, this veneration for their sacred character began to abate, and an impulse was given to the progress of that mighty revolution which was effected by the doctrines of the Saxon and Helvetic Reformers.

From this sketch of the history of the Papal monarchy, it will be seen, that it has borne a relation to the Imperial power, which exactly corresponds to the emblematic representation in the

* "Rome, though taken several different times by the northern nations, who overran the empire in the fifth and sixth centuries, was never treated with so much cruelty by the barbarous and heathen Huns, Vandals, or Goths, as now by the bigoted subjects of a Catholic monarch." Robertson's Charles V., B. iv. The accounts are suspected, however, of exaggeration.
prophetic vision.* At the period to which the rise of the Seven-headed Wild Beast must be referred, and from which the mystical forty-two months must be dated, the temporal domination of the Popes cannot be considered as having come into existence. But it is evidently to the Papacy as a political power, that the rise of the two-horned Wild Beast refers, not to the development of those spiritual pretensions which the Bishops of Rome had put forward long before. It was not till the pontificate of Gregory VII., a hundred and eighty years after the era of Charlemagne, that the Papal Anti-Christ can be considered as having reached maturity. The pontifical power of the Popes was, however, neither circumscribed by the limits of their temporal sovereignty, nor dependent upon it. "When their spiritual jurisdiction was most extensive, their secular dominion was extremely limited. They were powerful pontiffs, formidable at a distance; but they were petty princes, without any considerable domestic force."† And at the time when the Papal monarchy may be considered as at the height of its secular grandeur, the spiritual power which had made all Christendom tremble, was already on the decline. Further, it is to a power co-extensive with that of the first Wild Beast, that the emblem must refer; and this cannot be said to have been exercised by the Popes as temporal sovereigns. Nor, again, is "the power

* "But that this two-horned beast does exercise all the power of the first beast before him, is to admiration fulfilled in the Pope's playing the Emperor." More, p. 280.
† Robertson.
of the first Beast" which the second Beast exercised before him, so as to cause the earth to do homage to that power, to be understood of the Imperial power in its secular character, or in reference to secular affairs, but in its ecclesiastical supremacy.

What, then, are we to understand by "the Image" which was made to the Beast by the inhabitants of the land, and to which the two-horned Wild Beast had power to give breath? That which the Image represented, according to the view above taken of the emblem, must be, the revived Western Empire in its ecclesiastical constitution, or the supreme ecclesiastical power. It is plain, then, that a representative body must be intended by the figurative expression, the words representation and image being nearly synonymous.* Such was the Germanic Diet, or general assembly of the Empire, the powers of which extended to every thing relating to the common concerns of the Germanic body. The General Councils, which it was originally an act of the Imperial prerogative to convene, were, in like manner, a representation of the whole constituent Christian body,—an image of the Church Catholic. Constantine, having divided the administration of the Church into external and internal, and reserved to himself the external, relating to the outward state and discipline of the Church, did in his

* The Roman barons of the twelfth century "endeavoured," says Robertson, "to restore some image of their ancient liberty, by reviving the institution of the Roman senate, in which they vested supreme authority."
Imperial character call and preside in the first General Council,—that of Nice.* All the early councils, prior to the separation of the Greek and Latin Churches, were convened under the sanction of the Emperors. But, in Western Christendom, although Charlemagne and some of the German Emperors laid claim to the prerogative, it was assumed by the Popes, and finally conceded to them by the Western princes. Accordingly, the four Lateran General Councils, A.D. 1123, 1139, 1179, and 1215, and the eight following, including that of Trent, A.D. 1545, were all held under the sanction and presidency of the Roman Pontiffs. At the most famous General Council of the middle age, the fourth Lateran, above a thousand bishops and abbots attended, and ambassadors also from most of the Christian Courts, thus representing all the ten Western kingdoms of the Papacy.† Although it was at the invitation of the Popes that these councils were held, it rested with the sovereign princes and ecclesiastical authorities of the several countries of Christendom to respond to the invitation, and send delegates to attend the council. It was they who “made the image,” or

* Gibbon supposes the Provincial synods of the second century to have “borrowed the model of a representative council from the Amphictyons, the Achaean league, or the assemblies of the Ionian cities.” Tertullian speaks of the council as “ipse representatio totius nominis Christiani.” Mr. Elliott cites several passages in which άξιονετέω implies, to represent. See H. A. iii. 185—195.

† “The republic of Europe, with the Pope and Emperor at its head, was never represented with more dignity than in the Council of Constance.” Gibbon.
constituted the representation, at the bidding of the Pope, who exercised therein the *usurped Imperial prerogative*; and it was, again, the Pope who presided, who proposed the subjects of debate, and whose ratification gave effect to the decisions. So it was, according to the prediction, that the two-horned Wild Beast, or the Papacy, "had power to give life to the Image," or representative body, so that it should speak, and to determine and cause that all who would not do homage to its authority should be put to death. The extirpation of heretics was, in fact, a main object of the Popes in convoking councils. Whosoever refused to submit to and abide by the decrees adopted, was anathematised and excommunicated; and by the Canon law, generally received in Christendom, an excommunicated heretic was out of the protection of the law, and, as such, liable to be put to death by any one. The third Lateran Council pronounced an anathema against the *Cathari, Publicani*, and other like heretics; and forbade that any should harbour them while alive, or give them Christian burial when dead. By Canon 3 of the Fourth Lateran Council, the secular powers were expressly subordinated to the spiritual, for the purpose of exterminating such heretics; and crusades, with the usual promise of a plenary remission of sins to the crusader, were stirred up against them.*

* Held under Innocent III. in 1215. "We excommunicate and anathematisate every sect that exalts itself against the holy orthodox Catholic faith which we have set forth, and condemn all heretics, under whatever name they are reckoned; and on being condemned, they are to be resigned to the secular powers
THE TWO-HORNED WILD BEAST.

It is added: "And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark on their right-hand or on their forehead, so that no man might buy or sell, unless he had the mark, the name of the Wild Beast, or the number of his name." This figurative language obviously alludes to the ancient practice (still in use among the Hindoos) of imprinting or branding an emblematic mark upon the forehead or the hand, in token of the master or the god whom the individual served or worshipped.* The Roman slave was stigmatised with his master's name or mark on the forehead; the Roman soldier bore the Emperor's name or mark on the right-hand. By the number of the name is to be understood, the sum of the numerical value of the letters constituting the name. Thus, the Egyptian mystics designated their god Thouth by the number 1218, because of their place, to be punished with proper inflicts, the clergy being first degraded from their order. . . . . Catholics who, assuming the sign of the cross, shall gird themselves to the extermination of heretics, shall enjoy the indulgence, and be fortified by the sacred privilege, which are conceded to those who go to the relief of the holy land." These enactments were incorporated in the decretals of Gregory IX., and became the law of the church. Lord on the Apocalypse, p. 436. See also Elliott, vol. ii. pp. 377, 378; vol. iii. p. 200.

* To this St. Paul evidently alludes, Gal. vi. 17:—"I bear in my body the stigmata of the Lord Jesus." "Stigmata vocant quae in facie, vel in alia part corporis inscribuntur; qualia sunt militum in manibus." Ælius, cited by Elliott. The devotees of Bacchus branded themselves with the ivy-leaf. The Hindoo bears the mark of his god on his forehead. Chrysostom reproves the Christians of the fourth century for binding their head and feet with charms and amulets, and the names of rivers and the great Alexander's brazen coins." Quart. Rev. No. clvi. p. 373.
the four Greek letters composing his name, according to their arithmetical value, made up that number. Jupiter was invoked under the number 717, the sum of the letters composing the title, Ἄρχη, the Beginning or First Cause; and Apollo, as Ἑυς, good, or Υγ, shower-giving, under the number 608. Both Barnabas and Clement of Alexandria, falling into the same fancies, speak of the virtue of the number 318, as answering to the letters I H T, the common abbreviation for Jesus crucified; while Irenæus notices the remarkable number 888, as that of the name Ἰησοῦς, Jesus.* Whatever be the name to which the number in the prediction refers, the import of the declaration must be, that no one would be allowed to enjoy any civil privileges, who was not recognised as a worshipper or servant of the Papal Idol,—of that authority which, "exalting itself above whatever is called God or worshipped, has enthroned itself in the temple of God as a deity,"† i.e., assuming the Divine prerogative. The blasphemous language of the Papal decretales and the Canon law, applying to the Pontiffs the title of a vice-God and a God upon earth, combined with the arrogant and impious pretensions advanced in the Papal

* Elliott, iii. pp. 203—207. Gems and amulets bearing these mystic numbers, were worn as charms and preservatives against evil.

† 2 Thess. ii. 4.—" adversus omne quod dicitur Deus aut numen . . . acsi dixisset Paulus, Omne quod cenetur divinitas et σίβασμα, hoc est in quo Dei veneratio consistit." Calvin. See Bp. Jewel's exposition of this passage, cited in a subsequent page, with which accord the views of all the Reformers. The
edicts, and the idolatrous homage received by the Popes enthroned upon the high altar itself, in St. Peter's, have supplied a fulfilment of this prophecy to the very letter.

The name, however, must evidently appertain to the first Wild Beast, whose Image is the object of worship. The number of the Wild Beast, which is that of his name, is stated to be the number of a man, and the number to be 666. As the first Wild Beast is described as bearing upon his heads a name of blasphemy or impious arrogance, it would seem a reasonable conclusion, that the same name or title is referred to in the numerical enigma. Yet, if so, we must reject, as inappricable, the various solutions that have been hitherto suggested. Irenæus, who flourished towards the close of the second century, mentions three different names as having been proposed; namely, Ἀρείων, Ευανθάς, and Τετάρατος. The first of these, he speaks of as “very probable, because the last kingdom (in Daniel's prophecy) has this title, for they are Latins who now reign.” But he gives the preference to the last, as a generic name of idols, among both the Greeks and the Barbarians, a name given to the Sun, and one, therefore, of blasphemy or idolatrous apostacy. Yet, he is by no means confident that this gives the true solution, but adds: “We will not run the hazard of fanciful or sinister interpretations of Grotius, Hammond, Vitrins, Le Clerc, Whitby, and Wetstein, who explain the “man of sin” to be Caligula, Simon Magus, Simon son of Gioras, Titus, are enumerated and refuted by Bp. Newton, as well as by Dr. H. More; and too evidently spring from an unhappy anti-Protestant bias.
afirming anything too positively of the name of Anti-Christ. For, if his name were to have been openly declared at that time, it would have been mentioned by him who saw the Revelation; for it was seen not long ago, but almost in our age, near the end of the reign of Domitian."* Hippolytus, in the early part of the third century, in his treatise upon Anti-Christ, notices the names Τειταί and Ευανθεα, but rejects them both in favour of Δατειως; giving as his reason, that "they who now reign are Latins; and the name transmuted into that of an individual," becomes Δατειως.† This explanation has been very extensively adopted by subsequent commentators; and Mr. Elliott professes himself unable to conceive of any name more appropriate and in every point satisfactory. "In the time of Irenæus," indeed, he remarks, "though the then reigning emperor and nation might be called Latins; yet, the appellative so applied was unusual; the nation being Romans, the language only called Latin. But so it was, that, a few centuries after, when the Western Empire had broken up into ten barbaric kingdoms, with Rome as their common religious centre and capital, preparatory, according to prophecy, to the development of Anti-Christ, the Easterns separating themselves from the nations of the West, instead of the national appellation of Greeks, that more properly belonged to them, strangely appro-

* Lardner, vol. ii. p. 167. This testimony is justly regarded as most important, if not absolutely decisive, in fixing the date, as well as establishing the apostolicity of the Apocalypse.
priated to themselves the appellative of Romans ('Pomfian'); and affixed to those Western kingdoms connected with Rome, the appellative of Latins. Nor did the latter fail to accept and adopt the title. So that it became thenceforward the peculiar distinctive title of the Roman Empire in its last form, including both body and head, the two beasts, and the beast's image. It was the Latin world, the Latin kingdom, the Latin church, the Latin patriarch, the Latin clergy, the Latin councils. To use Dr. More's words, "they Latinize in everything. Mass, prayers, hymns, litany, canons, decretals, bulls, are conceived in Latin. The Papal Councils speak in Latin. Women themselves pray in Latin. The Scriptures are read in no other language than Latin. In short, all things are Latin."*

Plausible as this solution may seem, it fails to satisfy all the requirements of the desired interpretation. For, in the first place, there is nothing impious or blasphemous in the name, Latin; it involves no arrogant assumption of supremacy, such as that upon the Seven-headed Beast expressed. Secondly, it is not the name of a man,† nor of any empire, but of a race and language; and, though used much in the same way as the terms, Frank and European, to distinguish the states and kingdoms of Western Christendom, was never applied either to the revived Western Empire, or to the Papal power. In fact, what Irenæus

† As the title of an individual, the article would be indispensable, which would destroy the numerical calculation.
remarked, in the reign of Commodus, "they are Latins who now reign," could not hold good of the Frank and German sovereigns of the middle ages. Moreover, the Roman Pontiff claimed a supremacy equally over the Latin and the Greek Churches. The appellation, "the Latin Man," would be a title of reproach, rather than of honour, as applied to the Roman Pontiff; it cannot, therefore, be reasonably supposed to be intended by the name which his votaries were to bear upon their right-hand or their forehead.

For similar reasons, we must reject the title (proposed by Mr. Clarke), Ἡ Δατυχ βασιλεία,* "the Latin kingdom," as well as Ἡ ιταλικά ἐκκλησία, "the Italian Church,"† as wholly inapplicable to either the Empire or the Papacy. Others have imagined that they had discovered the title of blasphemy in the word Ἀποστάτης; but, though that word is as old as the time of Irenæus, the contracted form of σ and τ, as standing for the numeral τ or θ, (which the solution requires,) had not then come into use. Apart, however, from this objection, the term is wholly inapplicable to the power designated by the Seven-headed Wild Beast or to his worshipped Image, and is not in any sense a distinctive or characteristic appellative.

There has certainly been displayed more inge-

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* This title, which Mr. Elliott seems half inclined to adopt, in preference to Δατεύως, was suggested to obviate an unfounded objection to the orthography of the latter. Dr. More has refuted this objection, (Works, p. 311,) citing Irenæus against Grotius.

† Elliott, iii. 215, notes.
nuity than wisdom in the numerous conjectural solutions of the enigma which have been suggested by ancient and modern expositors. Some of the most plausible are Latin appellatives or titles; but, in the imperfect numerals of the Latin language, there is no example of such enigmatic calculations of early date; nor is it reasonable to suppose that the Apostle, writing in Greek, and using Greek numerals, would refer to a name in another language.* It may help to account for the failure of all solutions hitherto suggested, that they have not been founded upon a correct view of the prophetic emblems, and of the relation of the second Wild Beast to the former one, but have been, for the most part, either mere guesses in the dark, or forced accommodations to a particular theory. The object of the Romish expositors in their absurd solutions, has manifestly been, to divert the application of the prophecy from the Papacy to some other enemy of the Church of Christ.

All that can reasonably be required of the

* In Latin, there have been proposed, 1. *Vicarius Generalis Dei in Terris*, which Mr. Faber states to have been the appellation given to the Pope in the Council of Trent, and the numeral letters in which amount to 666. 2. *Vicarius Filii Dei*. 3. *Dux Cleri*. 4. *Paulo V. Vice Deo*—which, when suggested by Bp. Bedell, was "noised abroad at Venice as certain evidence that the Pope was Antichrist." In Hebrew, *Romith* has been proposed; and its corresponding to *Lateinos*, both in import and in its numerals, has been strongly insisted upon. Bossuet proposed *Diocles Augustus*. Other Romish writers have suggested *Luther* and *Mohammed*, *mis-spelt* in Greek letters. See Elliott, iii. 215—218.
Biblical expositor in this instance, is, that he should illustrate the terms and design of the enigma in connexion with the power designated by the Wild Beast, so as to give a right direction to inquiry, without himself venturing upon conjectural solution. Now, if the preceding explanation of the prediction be correct, the name, when the secret is discovered, will be found to designate the pretensions of the Imperial Ruler to ecclesiastical supremacy in connexion with Rome as the seat and centre of power; pretensions which, with other Imperial prerogatives, have been arrogated by the Pontiffs in exercising the power of the First Beast before him. Of this description is the title of Pontifex Maximus, originally borne by the chief priest of old Rome, whose authority and dignity were the greatest in the Republic, and who was looked upon as the arbiter or judge of all things, civil as well as sacred, human as well as Divine; whose power, almost coeval with the foundation of the city, "was an omen," says Polydore Virgil, "and sure presage of that priestly majesty by which Rome was once again to reign as universally as it had done before by the force of arms."* "With much more reason and a

* Middleton's "Letters from Rome." Dr. H. More refers to a singular statement, on the authority of Bp. Downham, that the word Mysterium was formerly inscribed upon the Papal tiara, "questionless in imitation of the inscription on Aaron's mitre, all his investments and ornaments being so industriously imitated in the pontifical habiliments;" and although this "be now turned into Julius Pontifex Maximus, yet it is not," he adds, "the less probable that it was glanced at in the description of the harlot." Works, p. 316.
much better plea," remarks Dr. Middleton, "might the sovereign pontiff style himself the successor of the Pontifex Maximus, than of St. Peter;" and of all the sovereign pontiffs of Pagan Rome, it is very remarkable, that Caligula was the first who ever offered his foot to be kissed by any who approached him. The assumption of this Imperial title by the Roman pontiff, was, therefore, at once the arrogation of the highest temporal authority,* and the usurpation not less of the Divine title and prerogative of the only High-priest over the Temple of God, who is passed into the heavens. Although this title does not supply a solution of the numerical enigma, (either in Latin or in Greek,) it may yet indicate the character of the name referred to; a name in some sense of blasphemy, a title of supremacy, and distinctively Roman; and one which, while designating the Wild Beast as the object of homage, belonged to an individual, so that the number was that of a man. When it is deciphered, the solution will, in all probability, be so evident as to admit of no further question.†

* See Elliott, iii. 128.
† Bp. Jewel, in his Exposition of 2 Thess. ii. 7, refers to a passage in the Sibylline Oracles, in which the predicted "king of pride," or Anti-Christ, is described as having a white head; and it is said, "he shall be called by a name much like to Pontus." "That is," says the learned Commentator, "shall be pontifex, a bishop." The white head, he explains by the white mitre of silver.
III. THE LAMB AND HIS FOLLOWERS.

But, if the power symbolised by the Two-horned Wild Beast, caused all, both small and great, to receive the mark of homage and submission, and persecuted to death all who refused, what was to become, under such circumstances, of the true Church of Christ? This inquiry might naturally suggest itself to the mind of the inspired Apostle, in the prospect of the predicted reign of the Anti-Christian power through the long and dreary period of twelve hundred and sixty years. As, therefore, in a former Vision, he heard proclaimed the number of the faithful servants of God who should, in every tribe or section of the Christian Israel, be sealed by the Spirit of God, intimating that God would reserve to Himself "an election of grace" amid the corruption of faith and practice which followed the political establishment of Christianity; and as, again, he was directed to measure off the inner sanctuary of the Temple with its true worshippers, in the visionary transaction which introduced the prophecy respecting the double line of Witnessing ones; so, here, a consolatory scene is presented to him. He looked again, and, in place of the Two-horned Wild Beast, and in contrast with the former emblems, he beheld the representation of a Lamb standing upon Mount Sion, surrounded with a multitude of his followers,—a hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and His Father's name inscribed upon their foreheads. This evidently alludes to the previous Vision, ch. vii. ver. 4;
the definite article, however, is not employed, because it is not the same identical company that is now presented to the Apostle, but only a corresponding proportion of chosen and faithful ones out of the total number of professing Christians.* In what way this number was intimated to him, is not explained; probably by the angel who showed him these things. Or, as in a dream, an impression might be produced upon his mind in connexion with the spectacle, which had the effect of an oral suggestion.

The question has been raised, where the Apostle stood, when he beheld this spectacle; and the Vision has been treated as if he saw Christ himself, in the shape of a lamb, standing upon the familiar locality of the hill which was occupied by the citadel of Jerusalem. Such a construction of the Vision proceeds upon a mistaken view of the character of emblematic representations.† What the Apostle had shown to him, was significant of circumstances and events in the distant futurity. It was not the person of Christ that was presented to him, but an emblem of the character of Christ as Head of his Church,—"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," in contrast with the unclean and ferocious wild-beasts, the heads of the Imperial and Papal polities. In the Received

* The implied proportion, we have seen, is equal to about 1 in 50.
† Stuart, after remarking, that John's seeing the Lamb on Mount Zion, "necessarily indicates a change of place," adds, as if on second thoughts, "or, it may be resolved by the consideration, that the Apocalyptist sees simply in prophetic ecstasy."
Text, the article is absent: it is not said, "The Lamb," as referring to the emblem of Our Lord previously exhibited with the mystic symbols of his Divine attributes, but, "a Lamb," as referring to the moral characteristics of His example. And this emblem must have been presented to the Apostle's imagination as a picture, or as a hieroglyphic, rather than as a scene. We are not to suppose, that he counted the 144,000, or that he read upon their foreheads the Divine name.

While he beheld this emblematic representation, a sound, which seemed to proceed from the firmament, burst upon his ears, like the deep and solemn murmur of the multitudinous waves of the sea, or the fall of dashing waters, and like the roll of echoing thunder. He heard also, mingling with this,* a sound of harpers singing to their harps; (for the expression denotes their accompanying their harps with their voice;) it was "a new song," or one upon a new occasion of triumph; and they sang it before the Throne, and before the four living creatures, and before the elders. That song, no one could learn, except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth: that is, no others could take part in it, because it was peculiar at once to their circumstances and to their character. It was not the song of the heavenly worshippers, since it is said to have been sung before them, or in their presence; for,

* The Received Text seems in this, as in most other cases, recommended by internal evidence. The various reading has the appearance of injudicious emendation.
"The saints on earth and all the dead,
But one communion make."

But the harpers were evidently mortals, separate from the heavenly company. The Apostle did not, apparently, behold the harpers: the mighty chorus came upon his ear as from the distant firmament. Yet, as it was evidently the song that was to be sung by the 144,000, and as they are not represented as so engaged when seen as the company of The Lamb on Mount Sion, we are led to the conclusion, that a distinction is intended between the visible emblem and the emblematic voices, in point of time. That is to say, the emblematic representation of the True Church, is intended to synchronize with that of the Imperial and Papal Beasts during the 1260 days, as, so to speak, a standing description,—the three emblems forming a triple vision; whereas, the new song is symbolical of some occasion of rejoicing and thanksgiving; some event analogous, as Mr. Elliott suggests, to the choral harpings and songs which attended the cleansing and re-dedication of the Temple in the reign of Hezekiah, in the time of Ezra, and under Judas Maccabæus.* And such an event presents itself in "the glorious Reform- ation."

Now it is undeniable, that the rise of metrical psalmody not only was a marked feature, but exerted a very important influence in promoting

* See 2 Chron. v. 11; xxix. 16, &c.; Ezra iii. 10; Neh. xii. 7; 1 Macc. iv. 54. Elliott, iii. 265. The learned Writer fancifully interprets the new song of the Protestant Confessions.
the spread of the Reformation, and in strengthening the hold of its doctrines upon the popular mind. Congregational singing was, indeed, no invention of the Reformers. The Albigenses, during the hottest season of their persecutions, are represented as cheering themselves, in the very prospect of death, with singing the psalms and hymns of their Church. The Bohemian brethren published a hymn-book with notes, from which it is evident, that the melodies they used, originated in the chants to which the ancient Latin hymns of the Church were sung.* In this country, psalmody was cherished by the disciples of Wickliffe; and in the reign of Henry VIII., "some poets, such as the times afforded, translated David's Psalms into verse; and it was a sign by which men's affections to that work of Reformation were everywhere measured, whether they used to sing these or not." Bishop Jewel writes thus to Peter Martyr: "A change now appears visible among the people, which nothing promotes more than the inviting them to sing psalms. This was begun in one church in London, and did quickly spread itself not only through the city, but in the neighbouring places: sometimes, at Paul's Cross, there will be six thousand people singing together."† Roger Ascham, writing from Augsburg, in 1551, says: "Three or four thou-

* Latrobe's Music of the Church, p. 63.
† A clause in the Act of Uniformity, 1548, authorised the practice of using any psalm openly, "in churches, chapels, oratories, and other places."
sand singing together at a time in a church in this city, is but a trifle." From the year 1524, Luther began to publish hymns in the German language; and the Protestant nations accustomed themselves to sing them, not only in their places of worship, but also in their houses, in their family meetings, over the tombs of their fathers and the cradles of their children. The sixty-three hymns of the Reformer of Wittenberg gave birth to a prodigious number of other religious songs, especially in the eighteenth century.* Psalm-singing soon came to be considered on the Continent as an open declaration of Lutherism;† as, in England, the practice, at first so generally popular, was abandoned to the Puritans, and became at length almost a peculiarity of Nonconformity and Methodism. It has certainly, from the time of the Reformation, been a characteristic feature of

* Luther was himself a fine composer, and some of his noble harmonies have been naturalised in our psalmody. Indeed, in the first extant Version of the Psalms in English metre, by Sternhold and others, 1562, the "apt notes to sing them withal," are chiefly German melodies, many of which are still in use in the Lutheran and Reformed churches. In 1570, these melodies were harmonised for four voices by William Damon. In 1621, appeared Ravenscroft’s collection, the harmonies in which were contributed by twenty-one English musicians, including John Milton, the father of the Poet.

† The "infectious frenzy of psalm-singing," as Warton calls it, spread at one time through all ranks and classes in both France and Germany, and formed, apparently, "one of the chief ingredients in the happiness of social life." But the fashion and "frenzy" soon passed away, when the heretical tendency of psalmody had awakened the jealousy of Rome.
evangelical worship; and nothing has more powerfully contributed to the preservation of a Scriptural standard of doctrine and a high tone of devotional sentiment in our churches, than the psalmody and hymnology of the seventeenth century.

That the choral thunders and harpings of the Apocalyptic Vision prefigured the joyous psalmody of the Reformed churches, can hardly, then, be deemed a fanciful supposition. At the same time, the prediction may rather be regarded as having had its fulfilment in the spiritual joy and devout thanksgiving of which that psalmody was the outward expression, while the figurative description (as in other instances) was literally realised in the attendant circumstances.

The Elect number of the "redeemed from the earth," are now described by their distinguishing characteristics, in which there may be observed a tacit contrast with the spurious pretensions of monkish, ascetic piety: "These are they who may truly be said not to have defiled themselves with women, for they have preserved their virginity." This has been interpreted as having reference to spiritual fornication, and as intimating that they had not defiled themselves with saint-worship or idolatry.* But it admits of a more striking application to that purity of life of which clerical

* So Stuart. "How can we well doubt, that παραδεκανός is here to be understood in the tropical or moral sense? The defilement avoided is the ἧπτελετα to which Great Babylon invites, as described in ver. 8." Stuart, vol. ii. p. 293.
celibacy is but the outward simulation. The word rendered "virgin," παρθένος, is sometimes used as an adjective, and is applied by St. Paul (1 Cor. vii. 25,) to unmarried persons. But Christianity rejects and discountenances the doctrine which attaches the idea of merit or purity to a single life; the "forbidding to marry" being mentioned by St. Paul among the heresies which should be brought into the Church. (1 Tim. iv. 3.) Of this prediction, the virtue attributed by the Romish Church to the vow of celibacy and to monasticism, is a precise fulfilment. It seems, then, a very appropriate allusion that is implied by the declaration, if we understand it as intended by way of contrast. These, not the monks and nuns of the Apostacy, are the true priests and virgins of God, whose lives are blameless, and who have kept themselves unspotted from the world.

The next characteristic is, that "they follow The Lamb whithersoever He leads;" intimating the fidelity of their obedience, but more especially, as the Lamb is the title of Christ in his suffering character, fidelity under reproach and persecution,—bearing the Cross.* They are then said to have been "redeemed from among men as first-fruits to God and The Lamb;" † implying at once their consecration to God, and that they are the earnest of the harvest. Finally, "in their mouth was found no guile or falsehood; spotless, therefore, are they before the throne of God:" which may be understood as denoting not only

* Mark viii. 34; Heb. xii. 2; xiii. 13.
† Comp. James i. 18; Jer. ii. 3.
their blameless integrity, but also their faithful confession of the truth; on which account, agreeably to the promise of Our Lord, they would stand approved before the Father as His acknowledged followers.*

IV. THE TRIPLE PROCLAMATION.

And now there followed, in the Vision, a triple series of proclamations by three angels, who appeared, one after another, flying through the mid-air. The first was charged with the preaching of an eternal message of joy, or, in other words, the eternal truths of the Gospel, among every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people; and he cried with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come; and worship Him, the Creator of heaven and earth, and the sea, and sources of waters." The second proclaimed the fall of Babylon, the Great City, which had made all the nations drink of the intoxicating cup of her lasciviousness. And the third denounced the everlasting wrath of God upon all the worshippers of the Wild Beast or of his image, and upon all who should bear the mark of his name. And "herein," it is added as a comment, "is occasion for the saints' patience or constancy, who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus;" or, "herein it will be exemplified."

* Matt. xi. 32. The rejection, in some critical editions; of the words, "before the throne of God," which are in the Received Text, and seem required to complete the sense,—is another suspicious emendation.
THE TRIPLE PROCLAMATION.

Now, if we regard this symbolical representation as prefigurative of what would take place, we must interpret the appearance of the Angel-heralds as emblematic of some corresponding human agency. Accordingly, the first angel has been regarded by most expositors as symbolical of evangelical preachers, although they have differed widely as to the era referred to.* The symbol "teaches," remarks Professor Stuart, "in a most vivid manner, the complete success of evangelization, notwithstanding the powers of earth and hell are opposed, and shews in a forcible way the certain triumph of the Christian cause." But the proclamation is also one of solemn warning, calling upon the nations to worship God alone, for "the hour of His judgment" was at hand. And, from the ensuing declaration relating to the fall of Babylon, it may be inferred, that the predicted judgment would especially concern the nations of apostate Christendom. The revival of evangelical preaching denoted by the first symbol, must, therefore, be antecedent to the fulfilment of the denunciation; and not only so, but also to the denunciation itself. By the declaration, "Babylon is fallen," we are not to understand, indeed, that the event had taken place; nor even that it was immediately to ensue, since, in that case, there would be no time allowed for obeying the

* Daubuz explains it of the evangelical preachers at the end of the fourth century, particularly Augustine and Vigilantius; Mede applies it to the eighth and ninth centuries; Vitringa, to Luther and the Reformers of the sixteenth; Elliott, to the evangelical missions of the nineteenth.
proclamation of the third angel. The prediction of Isaiah concerning ancient Babylon, (ch. xxi. 9,) in which occur these same words, "Babylon is fallen,"—was not fulfilled till some centuries afterwards. The absolute certainty of the impending event is all that is implied. But the symbolic proclamation must intend, that the publication of the evangelical message and of the command to worship God alone, was to be followed by a public announcement of the approaching doom of the mystical Babylon. It is not necessary to suppose, however, that the messengers symbolized by the first angel had fulfilled their office, before the second announcement took place; or that any distant interval was to elapse between the second proclamation and the third. Rather, the triple proclamation may be regarded as one successive protest and warning, more and more distinctly expressed, and rising in emphasis and energy.

Now, unquestionably, the initial fulfilment of this prediction may, at all events, without doing any violence to the symbolic language, be dated from the epoch of the Reformation; if, indeed, the emblem be deemed not so applicable to the comparatively private proclamations of the truth, and denunciations of the Romish idolatry, during the preceding century.

"In proportion as the Reformation drew nigh," remarks Dr. Merle D'Aubigné, "were the voices multiplied that proclaimed the truth. . . . The Reformation had taken root, not only among the doctors of the Church, but also among the people. The opinions of Wickliffe, issuing from Oxford,
had spread over all Christendom, and had found adherents in Bavaria, Suabia, Franconia, and Prussia. In Bohemia, from the very bosom of discord and war, had come forth at last a peaceful and Christian community, reminding the world of the primitive Church, and giving powerful testimony to the grand principle of Gospel opposition, that Christ, and not Peter and his successors, is the rock on which the Church is founded. Belonging equally to the German and Slavonic races, these simple Christians had sent forth missionaries into the midst of the various nations who spoke their language, noiselessly to gain over followers to their opinions."* "Thus was there, in every class, something that announced the Reformation. Warnings appeared on every side; and events were hastening on, which threatened to destroy the work of ages of darkness, and to 'make all things new.' The hierarchical form, which the efforts of many centuries had stamped upon the world, was shaken, and its fall was nigh. The light that had been just discovered, spread a multitude of new ideas through every country with inconceivable rapidity. In every grade of society, a new life was in motion. . . . The time-worn colossus of Rome was tottering under its own weight. The ancient spirit of chivalry was dead; and its place was supplied by a new spirit, which breathed at once from the sanctuaries of learning and from the homes of the lowly. The

* History of the Reformation, B. i. c. 6. "Nicholas Kuss, who was twice visited by them at Rostock, began in 1511 to preach openly against the Pope."
printed word had taken wings that carried it as the
wind wafts the light seed, even to the most distant
places. The discovery of the two Indies extended
the boundaries of the world. Everything an-
nounced a great revolution."*

In this description of the state of society in
Western Christendom on the eve of the Reform-
ation, we might almost suppose that we were
reading an exposition of the emblem of the an-
gelic intervention. If the present day may be
regarded as pre-eminently "the era of evangelic
missions and Bible diffusion,"† beyond all pre-
cedent in point of degree, still, the first great steps
towards the universal diffusion of the Scriptures,
were the labours of the early Translators and the
invention of Printing, which brought the word of
God within reach of the common people, and
rendered its suppression thenceforth impossible;‡
while a corresponding zeal was displayed by all
the friends to the Reformation, to give the widest
possible circulation to the sacred volume. The
publication of the Scriptures was, in fact, as we
have already remarked, the distinguishing feature
of the great revival of Christianity in the fifteenth
and sixteenth centuries; and to no other period
can the prediction be so appropriately applied.§

* Hist. of the Reform. B. i. c. 9.
† Mr. Elliott (iii. 428—437), by what we cannot but deem a
strange anachronism, so applies the prediction.
‡ See ante, pages 214—217.
§ It is a remarkable fact, and may serve to confirm this
view of the prophecy, that, in the thirteenth century, there
appeared a remarkable work under the title of "The Everlast-
ing Gospel," attributed to the celebrated Joachim, Abbot of
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It was then also, as we have seen, that, in fulfilment of their testimony, the fall of Babylon was first openly proclaimed by the Witnesses to be prefigurative of the doom of the Papacy. "In 1207, we find," says Mr. Elliott, "The Waldensian Arnold asserting and defending, in a public disputation at Carcassonne, the proposition, that Rome was the Babylon and Harlot of the Apocalypse. About A.D. 1250, Reinerius tells us, that this representation of Papal Rome, and of the Pope being the head of all errors, was one of the Waldensian heresies;" and somewhat later, perhaps a century or more, the whole theory is developed in their treatise on Anti-Christ. Then, the mighty truth was proclaimed by Wicliffe and his followers. "The days of Wiclif," says Mr. Le Bas, "were passed in incessant warfare against this 'Master of the Emperor, this fellow of God, this Deity on earth,' and against the whole army of clerical satellites and slaves who conspired to bow the neck of Europe under his dominion. And, whatever may, at any period, have been his respect for the Pope in the ideal perfection of his character, of the actual Pope, he scruples not to

Sora, in Calabria, as if in counterfeit fulfilment of the prediction. Joachim's Commentary on the Apocalypse (of which Mr. Elliott has given us a syllabus) is both curious and valuable. But the "Introduction to the Everlasting Gospel" (published about 1250) was the impious production of a Franciscan friar, who maintained that this new Gospel was intended to supersede the New Testament: and that St. Francis was the angel whom St. John saw flying in the mid-heaven. See Mosheim, Cent. xiii. Pt. II. ch. 2, § 33. Elliott, vol. iv. p. 372. Joachim is styled by Fleury, Abbot of Curacio, near Cosenza.
pronounce, that he is the veriest Anti-Christ."*

The testimony of Walter Brute, A.D. 1391, as preserved by Foxe the Martyrologist, is still more remarkable; for, on being called to answer before the Bishop's Court at Hereford, for affirming, among other things, that the Pope is the very Anti-Christ, he based his defence upon the Pope's answering alike to the chief of the false Christs prophesied of by Christ as to come in his name,—
to the Man of Sin prophesied of by St. Paul,—and to the Second Beast, or Beast with the two lamb-like horns in the Apocalypse; the city of Papal Rome answering also to the Apocalyptic Babylon. He admits this to have been a mystery long hidden; but its being only recently revealed was not unaccordant with God's dealings and declaration. And he concludes his exposure of the real Anti-Christ, "lying privy in the hid Scriptures of the prophets," by earnestly pressing the warnings against worshipping the Beast and his image, and receiving his mark on the forehead or the hand.†

At the Reformation, the truth of this discovery of the import of the prediction, was generally recognised and openly proclaimed by the founders

* Elliott, vol. iv. p. 409. Le Bas's Life of Wiclif, p. 333. In the piece entitled, "The Great Sentence of the Curse expounded," Wicliffe uses the following language: "Certainly, some men understand that the cruel man-slayer of Rome is not Peter's successor, but Christ's enemy, and the Emperor's master, and poison under colour of holiness." Tracts and Treatises, p. 32.

† Elliott, iv. 410—414.
of the several Protestant churches. "On this principle," remarks Bp. Warburton, (viz. that "the Man of Sin could be no other than the man that fills the Papal chair,") "was the Reformation begun and carried on; on this, the great separation from the Church of Rome was conceived and perfected."* In Luther's Preface and Notes to the Apocalypse in his German Bible, A.D. 1534, the First Beast of chap. xiii. is explained to mean, "the Papistic secular revived Roman empire; the Second Beast, the Pope's ecclesiastical or spiritual empire." Many of the great Saxon Reformer's attempts at exposition are fanciful and erroneous; but it is highly remarkable, that, in one of his writings, speaking of "the tyranny of the Pontiff, who, without law, to gratify his own arrogance, has ever lightened and thundered with ample puffed-out cheeks," he adds: "These are the great-swelling and loud-trumpeted words of which St. Peter speaks; these are the seven thunders of Papal intimidation in Apoc. x."*

About the middle of the sixteenth century, Bullinger, the Reformer of Zurich, published an Exposition of the Apocalypse in Latin, in which, while erroneously making the First Wild Beast of Chap. xiii. the old Pagan Roman Empire, he interprets the Second to be the Papal Anti-Christ, the same as Daniel's "Little Horn" and St. Paul's "Man of Sin," rising up under Gregory I. and his successor, Boniface, to be universal bishop; the two lamb-like horns indicating his claims to

* Elliott, iv. 415.  † Ib. 417. See ante, page 207.
both sacerdotal and royal supremacy; and the
three angelic heralds of Ch. xiv., he interprets of
Gospel preachers then existing.* Bale, Bishop
of Ossory, in the reign of Edward VI., published,
about the same time, his Apocalyptic Commen-
ty; a work displaying more erudition than sound
judgment, and remarkable chiefly as explaining the
144,000 and the three flying angels with special
reference to the time of the Reformation, and the
earth’s harvest and vintage as close at hand. Suc-
cceeding Protestant interpreters followed much in
the same track;† differing in their interpretations of
the First Wild Beast, but concurring in identifying

* Elliott, iv. 423, 4. “One must be blinder than Tiresias,” says
Bullinger, “not to see the predicted Anti-Christ in the Popes.”
The Image of the Beast, he makes to be the new Roman or
Western Empire, “which is but the shadow of the old one.”

† Elliott, iv. 427—32. 1. Fulke, Master of Pembroke Hall,
Camb. “Prelections on the Apocalypse,” 1557. 2. Chrytræus, of
Wittenberg, 1563. 3. Augustin Marlorate, 1574. 4. John Foxe
the martyrologist, 1587. 5. Brightman, 1600. 6. Downman, Bp.
of Derry, “A Treatise proving that the Pope is Anti-Christ, in
two books; the latter against Bellarmine;” 1603. 7. Broughton,
Hugh, 1610. 8. Pareus, of Heidelberg, 1615. To which
may be added—9. “An Epistle to Divers Papists in England,
proving the Pope to be the Beast in the xiiith Revel., and to be
the Man exalted in the Temple of God. 2 Thess. ii. 4.” By
11. Cowper, Bp. of Galloway, 1623. These bring us down to Mede,
whose “Clavis Apocalypptica” appeared in 1627; and who has
been regarded as the founder of the modern school of Chiliasta.
Many of his explanations, however, are singularly arbitrary
and unsatisfactory; a remark which must be applied also to
Daubuz’s “Perpetual Commentary on the Apocalypse,” 1720;
and to Vitringa’s “Anacrisis Apocalypseos,” 1705. See Elliott,
vol. iv. Appendix, Part I.
the Second with the Papacy. Pareus, Professor of Divinity at Heidelberg, in 1618, approached nearer to the true interpretation, in making the First Wild Beast to be the Popedom with reference to the Pope's usurped imperial power and authority, and the Second Wild Beast, the Papal Anti-Christ in his character of a seducing prelate. The first preaching angel, he explains as referring to Wickliffe; the second, as Luther; the third, as all faithful preachers since Luther. Finally, Mede proposed the solution which regards the First Wild Beast as the Roman Secular Empire, or decemregal body of Western Christendom under the Pope, as the Beast's last ruling head; the image of the Wild Beast as the shadow and revived ghost of the old Roman Empire; and the Second Beast as the Pope and the Papal clergy. The three flying angels, Mede makes to be—the first, Vigilantius and the early iconoclastic emperors; the second, the Waldenses; the third, Luther.

Whatever errors and diversities of opinion existed among the Biblical expositors of the sixteenth century, as to the precise import of the Apocalyptic predictions, there was entire harmony in their views of the idolatrous character of the Romish doctrines, and of the identity of the Papacy with the predicted Anti-Christ. These views are im-bodied in all the Protestant Confessions, and are still more broadly expressed in the Anglican Homilies. But no where is the Protestant testimony more fully and strikingly exhibited, than in the writings of Bp. Jewel, whose "Apology," published in 1562, rapidly spread through-
out Europe, was translated into the French, German, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and Greek languages, and was accounted as the public Confession of the catholic and Christian faith of all English Protestants. In his Exposition of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, he shews the predicted Man of Sin, the "little Horn" of Daniel's fourth beast, and the Apocalyptic Beast, to be the same Anti-Christ; and cites from Bernard, the remarkable declaration, made four hundred years before, "The Beast that is spoken of in the Revelation, is got into Peter's chair." In expounding ver. 8 of ch. ii., the learned Apologist says: "But who may better disclose this mystery and the fall of Anti-Christ, than John the Evangelist, who leaned on Jesus' bosom, whom Jesus loved, and who was endued with wisdom from above? Let us hear him." He then cites the Vision of the three angels, ch. xiv. 6—11, and portions of the xvith and following three chapters. After which he proceeds:

"Thus have I, by occasion of the Apostle's words, spoken of the coming and of the kingdom of Anti-Christ; and lest we might be deceived as touching his person, I have said what he should be, what things he shall do, of what estate he shall be, what countenance he shall carry, in what place he shall sit, at what time shall be his coming, by what means he shall prevail, who they are that shall believe in him, what power shall beat him down, what end he shall have, what triumph shall follow upon his fall.

"I have told you, that he shall be the over-
throw of the world, the confusion of the Church, the son of perdition; that he shall destroy himself, and be the destruction of others. I have told you, he shall be a reverend father, and wear a mitre, and be a bishop and a bishop of bishops; so saith Gregory, so Jerome, so Augustine, and Bernard, and others. And cannot we tell who it is that calls himself, a universal bishop, the bishop of all churches? Do we not hear of such a one? Do we not know him? Whatsoever he be, wheresoever he dwell, what countenance soever he bear, he is Anti-Christ.

"I have told you, he shall sit in the temple of God, in the consciences of the people; that the people shall hear, credit, follow, and honour him as if he were God, and think it sin and damnation to break his law. I have told you where he shall be stalled, where his chief place shall be, whence he may be seen. St. John saith, he shall sit in a city built upon seven hills: that city is the city of Rome; Rome is so built; Rome is set upon seven hills. The Sibyl saith, Anti-Christ shall sit by the water of Tiber, and Tiber is a river that runs by Rome. Joachim Abbas saith, Anti-Christ is long since born at Rome, and shall be advanced in the apostolic see. He is born, and shews himself, not at Babylon, not at Constantinople, but at Rome. These are plain speeches. If any man doubt this, let him read their books: they are extant abroad. Anti-Christ shall sit in Peter's chair, and Rome shall be the seat of his kingdom.

"I have told you, he shall come when the state
and majesty of the Empire shall be weakened. Anti-
Christ shall possess the Emperor's land, and bear
the sword, and wear his crown, and shall make the
Emperor fall down and worship him and kiss his
feet. Hath there ever been any such bishop in
the world? If ever there were any such, St. Paul
saith, the same is Anti-Christ.

"I told you, the world shall fall down and
reverence him, and shall seek life and salvation at
his hands. John saith, they shall cry, Oh! who
is like the Beast? Who is like our holy father?
Who is so wise, so learned, so holy? They shall
follow him whithersoever he shall lead them;
they shall eat whatsoever he will give them; and
they which shall do thus, are such as have no
feeling, no care, no love to the truth of God;
therefore God forsaketh them, and leaveth them
to follow lies. I told you, he shall prevail by
falsehood and by feigned miracles; by bulls, by
pardons, by purgatories, and by such other
devices and shifts of Satan. I told you, he shall
be contrary to Christ, in sacraments, in sacri-
fice, in prayers, in life, in doctrine, in religion,
in the whole form and order of the Church. He
shall shut that which Christ hath opened, he shall
open that which Christ hath shut; he shall
curse that which Christ hath blessed, and bless
that which Christ hath cursed. No man shall
be accounted faithful, no man catholic, no man
the son of the Church, no man may be saved,
without him; such credit and countenance shall
he bear.

"I told you, he shall be confounded and beaten
down by the force and power of God's mighty word. His word is omnipotent: it shall disclose the works of darkness; it shall hew down idolatry, superstition, and the whole kingdom of Anti-Christ, as our eyes do see this day. Blessed be God, the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, His mighty hand hath wrought these things; He hath triumphed through the name of His Christ; He will bless the things He hath begun; He will overthrow the whole power of Anti-Christ by His presence, and by the glory of His coming. Then shall it appear who is the successor of Peter, who is the true vicar of Christ, and who is Anti-Christ."

In the latter paragraph, it will be observed, Jewel speaks of the overthrow of Anti-Christ as already in part achieved. Vitringa (improving upon Mede) explains the first flying angel as denoting Luther, Zwingle, and the other fathers of the Reformation; the second angel as symbolical of the voice of triumph over the Popedom at the Treaty of Passau, in the second period of the Reformation, and of the disruption of the English Church from Rome.* The tenth part of the city having then fallen, the fall of Babylon might be said, in that event, to have already commenced. In fact, it has been alleged as an objection to this interpretation of the prediction in ch. xi., that, instead merely of a tenth part of the city falling at the Reformation, one-half of the kingdoms of Europe then became professedly Protestant and Anti-Papal.

* Elliott, iv. 466.
The objection has no weight, inasmuch as only one of the ten kingdoms of the Papacy, that is England, was formally and finally divorced from it, till the United Provinces subsequently established their political independence by throwing off the yoke of Spain. But the fact to which the objection points, affords additional reason for dating the commencement of the fall of the Papacy or mystical Babylon from the Reformation, notwithstanding its partial recovery from the blow then struck at the Papal power, and the political reverses which Protestantism was destined to sustain.* That is to say, the initial fulfilment of the prediction may be referred to the events which took place at the time of the Reformation, in the sixteenth century, while the consummation of the fall of Babylon is to be regarded as still future.

The third of the flying angels is interpreted by Vitringa as referring to the Protestant doctors in the third period of the Reformation, at a time of affliction to Christ's Church, such as even then existed, especially with reference to France and the French Reformed Churches. With more propriety, the emblem may be regarded as denoting the

* "In fifty years from the day on which Luther publicly renounced communion with the Church of Rome, and burned the bull of Leo before the gates of Wittenberg, Protestantism reached its highest ascendancy; an ascendancy which it soon lost, and which it has never regained. . . . Fifty years after the Lutheran separation, Catholicism could scarcely maintain itself on the shores of the Mediterranean. One hundred years after the separation, Protestantism could scarcely maintain itself on the shores of the Baltic." Macaulay.
warning voice which, from the days of Jewel, was more and more distinctly raised against a participation in the guilt of the Romish apostacy, and submission to the authority of the Tridentine Council. One of the Anglican Homilies has for its title and subject, "Against Peril of Idolatry;" and Dr. Henry More, in his elaborate exposure of the "Mystery of Iniquity," in which he delineates "the true idea of Anti-Christianism" as realized in the Church of Rome, vindicates himself and the Reformers from the imputation of uncharitableness in "applying to so great a share of Christendom as the Roman Church, those prophecies that have been by ancient interpreters, and are by the Romanists themselves, understood of Anti-Christ." For, he remarks, "as there is no doctrine wherein the Romanists and we differ more true, so there is none anything near so potent for the bearing off all their assaults against us, as this of their Church being that City of Babylon which the people of God are expressly commanded to come out of, lest they partake of her sins and of her plagues."* And referring to this very denunciation of "most direful and ever durable torments to those that worship the Beast and his Image, that is to say, that submit themselves to that revived and enjoined idolatry," he adds: "Which commination I would have them seriously to consider, that think it so indifferent a thing to be Papist or Protestant, as if such

* More's Works (Pref. to Synopsis Prophetica), p. 197. (1664.)
tragical menaces as these were mere scarecrows and idle mockeries."* "There are two things almost equally strange to me," observes the Rev. Robert Fleming, in his remarkable discourse on "The Rise and Fall of the Papacy;"—"that the Jews should own the verity of the Old Testament, and particularly of Daniel's prophecy, and not see that the Messiah is come; and, that the Papists should believe the divinity of the New Testament, and particularly of the Revelation, and not see that their Church is Anti-Christian. But, while I admire the wilful stupidity of both these parties, I cannot but admire also the wisdom of God in making use of both these in his providence, to confirm to us the verity of Christianity in prophesying both of the one and the other so long before, and in continuing them to this day as standing monuments of the divinity both of the Old and the New Testaments."†

Considered, then, as prefigurative of the Protestant testimony against the worshippers of the Wild Beast, the emblematic representation has clearly been already fulfilled.‡ At the same time, the duty of bearing this same testimony, and of making the same solemn, earnest cry of protestation, must be considered as equally devolving upon evangelical Christians in the present day.

* More's Works, p. 386.
† Fleming's Discourse, p. 62.
‡ Mr. Elliott has strangely erred in fixing upon 1827 as the time when it was first fulfilled by the Reformation Society, &c. !
Vision the Eighth.

THE HARVEST AND THE VINTAGE.

The Apostle's attention is now arrested by a voice from heaven, commanding him to write—"Happy are the dead who die in The Lord henceforth; yea, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their toils, and their works follow them." The purport of this declaration, or, rather, the immediate intention with which it is here introduced with so much solemnity and emphasis, has been very differently explained. Regarding it as antithetical to the threatened punishment of the worshippers of the Wild Beast in the preceding context, Professor Stuart interprets it as a proclamation, for the encouragement of Christians, of the blessedness of the martyrs and of all the faithful; but he considers it, also, as plainly intimating, by the expression "henceforth," that persecution was then raging, and that it would still continue for some time. Viewed in this light, however, the declaration would seem rather intended to introduce the ensuing Vision of the Harvest and the Vintage, as pre-indicating the fearful nature of the predicted judgments, and as implying, that many should be involved in those calamities, who, never-
theless, dying in The Lord, should be blessed. There is a passage in the prophecies of Jeremiah, which may be compared with it, although it does not contain the same consolatory assurance: "Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him; but weep sore for him that goeth away, for he shall return no more, nor see his native country." (Jer. xxii. 10). Still more apposite is a passage in Isaiah, "The righteous is taken away from the evil to come: he shall enter into peace." (Isa. lvii. 1, 2.) The declaration before us, taken in connexion with what follows, seems to be of similar import, with the additional assurance that their works should follow after them, their labours should not be lost.*

And now there appeared to the Apostle another Vision of four angels. He looked and beheld a white cloud, upon which was seated one in human form, wearing a golden crown, and holding in his hand a sharp sickle. A second angel, coming forth from the Temple, cried with a loud voice to him who was seated on the cloud, to thrust forth his sickle and reap the harvest of the earth; and he did so. That is to say, he cast his sickle upon the earth, and the symbolical action indicated the fulfilment of the command; "the earth was reaped." Then came forth another angel from the heavenly Temple, also bearing a sharp sickle; and to him a

* Mr. Elliott takes a strangely opposite view of the passage, as "indicating the near approach of the grand epoch of blessedness predicated in Scripture of departed saints, at the coming of Christ;" and thinks, "the intimation implies a settlement of the great pre-millennial question!!" ch. iv. p. 73.
fourth angel, having in charge the fire of the altar, cried with a loud voice to thrust forth his sickle, and gather the vintage of the earth; and he did so, and cast the gathered clusters into the great wine-press of the Divine wrath.

As in the preceding Vision, we must regard these angelic forms as symbolizing a human agency.* The golden crown is the symbol of imperial dominion; and the white cloud may be interpreted, as in a previous instance, † of political elevation. Analogy requires that, if such be the import of the emblems in former Visions, we should adhere to the same interpretation in the present instance. But the question arises, Of what nature is the prefigured harvest of the earth? Is it one of mercy,—a gathering in of the corn into the garner, or one of judgment, like the vintage that ensues? From a parallel passage in Joel, (cited by Mr. Elliott in support of the latter interpretation,) it may be confidently assumed, that both the symbolical harvest and the vintage are of the same calamitous character. "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 fats overflow, for their wickedness is great." (Joel iii. 12, 13.) The original word implies that the harvest is dried up, rather

* Nothing can be more improper than to interpret the angel seated on the cloud, as denoting Our Lord, and to suppose him to be receiving directions when to put forth his sickle.
† See p. 258.
than ripe; and thus conveys the idea of a field overgrown with weeds, "dried up in preparation for burning, rather than white in preparation for harvest."* In the Epistle to the Hebrews, there occurs a similar figure in application to such as have apostatized, and thereby crucified the Son of God afresh: "That land which yields only thorns and briars, being of no value, is nigh to desecration, and its doom is to be burned." (Heb. vi. 8).

As, however, the symbolic action in the Vision, is ascribed to two different angels, we must conclude, that the harvest and the vintage, though of the same character, prefigure distinct events, both as to the agency employed, and also with respect to the subjects of the predicted judgments. What is stated of the wine-press being trodden without the city, seems to denote that the Roman territory would not be the very scene or theatre of the fearful transaction; and the mystical space of 1600 furlongs, or two hundred miles, must be taken to indicate an extent of geographical territory analogous to that of the mystical City.

It has already been noticed, that Bishop Bale, in the reign of Edward VI., interpreting the preceding Vision of the Reformation, inferred, that the predicted harvest and vintage were then close at

* Mr. Elliott cites this remarkably apposite sentence from an encyclical letter of Pope Gregory X.: ""Agerque potius arescere videatur ad ignem, quam aldescere inveniatur ad messem." So Bernard, in his Letter to Pope Eugenius, employs similar phraseology: "Leva oculos et vide regiones, si non sunt magis sicca ad ignem, quam alba ad messem." So Tichonius: "Arruit messis terra, id est ad combustionem parata est." Elliott, iv. 78.
hand. Most modern commentators (and among them Mr. Elliott) are disposed to regard the events predicted as still future.* But a presumption against this opinion arises from two considerations. First, if the Vision of the three herald angels is correctly referred to the epoch of the Reformation, it seems unlikely that the immediately ensuing Vision should, after the lapse of three centuries, remain altogether unfulfilled. Secondly, if the judgments prefigured by the pouring out of the Vials are supposed to have reference to the events attending and consequent upon the French Revolution, and to be at least in part fulfilled, there is a palpable inconsistency in supposing the events symbolised by a previous Vision to be yet future. The interval between the Reformation and the French Revolution, comprising two centuries and a half, was too important to be wholly passed over, (as it would be on this supposition) in the emblematic prefiguration. Accordingly, by more than one Protestant commentator, the intervening events are supposed to be the subject of the Vision of the Seven Vials. Thus, Dr. Cressener, in 1689, contended, that “the eminent vexations of the Roman party ever since the Reformation, especially that ocean and those rivers of blood which were shed from the beginning of the Dutch

* Daubuz interprets the harvest as meaning the Reformation; the vintage, of the wars and victories in Queen Anne's time over the Papists. Dr. Cressener considers the Vials as beginning before the time of the harvest or vintage, and identifies the latter with the Seventh Vial. Mr. Elliott supposes “the treading-floor” to be the Armageddon of ch. xix.
Commonwealth to the end of the Swedish war in Germany, were as eminent plagues to the party of the Beast, as the first Trumpets were to the Roman Empire," and, as they were "no ways signified by any of the seven first plagues, must be signified by the Vials."* In like manner, the Rev. Robert Fleming, writing a few years later, concurs with Dr. Cressener in supposing, that "the first Vial, which fell upon the earth, to the tormenting of the subjects of the Beast, began with the Reformation, in 1516, and continued to the year 1566." The second, which he supposes to have lasted from that period to the year 1617, he explains of the reverses sustained by the Spaniards, especially as a maritime power, when "the sea became blood to the Romanists;" referring especially to the loss of their vast armada.* The third Vial, he considers as referring to that sanguinary religious war which, commencing in 1617, "shook all the Empire, and frightened Europe;" and as terminating with the Peace of Munster in 1648. The fourth Vial, poured out upon the Sun, he supposed to denote "the humiliation of some eminent potentates of the Romish interest," and principally the houses of Austria and Bourbon. "We see it poured out," he says,

* Cressener, p. 287.

* "And what was there ever more notoriously answerable to this (the second Vial), than that ocean of blood that was shed in the Low Countries, in France, in sea-fights betwixt England and Spain, and the Dutch, besides other lesser effusions of it in Scotland and other countries during the reign of Queen Elizabeth of England? And all upon the account of Religion." Cressener, p. 202.
"in the eclipse of the Austrian family, by the loss of Spain and its dependent principalities, as also in defeating the wicked designs of the three confederate monarchs of Poland, Denmark, and Russia." But the most remarkable feature of this conjectural interpretation of the Vial, which the learned Writer supposed to be at that time in the course of fulfilment, is his anticipation, that it would run out about the year 1794, and that "perhaps, the French monarchy might begin to be considerably humbled about that time; that, whereas the French king takes the Sun for his emblem, and this for his motto, 'Nec pluribus impar,' he may at length, or, rather, his successors, and the monarchy itself, (at least before the year 1794,) be forced to acknowledge, that, in respect to neighbouring potentates, he is even singulis impar."* "We may justly suppose," he afterwards adds, "that the French monarchy, after it has scorched others, will itself consume, by doing so, its fire, and that which is the fuel that maintains it; wasting insensibly, till it be exhausted at last towards the end of this (the seventeenth) century, as the Spanish monarchy did towards the end of the sixteenth age."

These conjectural thoughts, modestly put forward by the Writer as guesses at the future, were founded upon sagacious reasoning. Considered, however, as interpretations of prophecy, they are open to two objections. First, in the application

* Dr. Cressener had noticed the adoption of this emblem and motto by the king of France, as very well suiting with the application of this part of the prophecy to that king, "if other considerations should make it probable." Judgments, &c. p. 209.
of the symbolical language of the Vials to the events they were supposed to designate, there is a vagueness, a want of specific adaptation, which strikingly contrasts with the wonderful precision observable in the emblematic predictions of the Seals and the Trumpets, when interpreted by the corresponding events. Secondly, adopting Mr. Fleming’s general view of the Vials, that, “as the Trumpets did raise Anti-Christ up, the Vials must pull him down,” it is an objection not easily disposed of, that, by the sanguinary wars of the seventeenth century, the Protestants, as Dr. Cressener admits, were almost as great sufferers as the Roman party.* “The religious wars in Bohemia and France, in which none but the party of the Beast was victorious, could not,” he argues, “be part of this sea of blood, because they were neither general nor judgments upon the Beast, as all the Vials are.” The same remark will equally apply to the proposed interpretation of the other Vials.

But, if we reject as arbitrary and erroneous, that interpretation of the Vials which supposes the first three to have received their fulfilment in the terrible slaughter and desolating wars of the

* Cressener, p. 203. The learned Author makes light of this objection, which is fatal to his theory; but it is scarcely necessary now to show the untenableness of his chronological arrangement, which makes the fifth Vial begin the third woe, and postpones the death and resurrection of the Witnesses till after the first four Vials. Mede, upon different grounds, makes the first six Vials range under the sixth Trumpet; an error refuted by Dr. H. More, Works, p. 378.
seventeenth century, we are thrown back upon the alternative of either concluding them to be altogether passed over in the Apocalyptic predictions, (although so intimately connected with the cause of Religion and the history of the Church of Christ,) or otherwise supposing them to be referred to under the emblems of the Harvest and Vintage, agreeably to the proper chronological order of the prophecies.

Let us, then, examine more closely the character of those events, as depicted in the pages of the historian, in order to see whether any correspondence may be detected between the terrific emblems and the nature and extent of the calamities.

There is, perhaps, no other portion of the historic record of the Divine dispensations, which it is so painful to retrace, and so difficult to interpret aright, as the tragical sequel to the Reformation. The reflections with which Dr. Merle closes his profoundly instructive and graphic narrative, in reference to the catastrophe of the struggle in Switzerland, may serve to explain, indeed, in some degree, the appalling mystery;—for, after all, history is darker and more hard to unravel, than prophecy. "The Reformation," he remarks, "that had deviated from the right path, was driven back by the very violence of the assault into its primitive course, having no other power than the Word of God. An inconceivable infatuation had taken possession of the friends of the Bible. They had forgotten that our warfare is not carnal; and had appealed to arms and to battle. But God reigns: he punishes the churches and the
people who turn aside from his ways. . . . But, if God teaches his people great lessons, He also gives them great deliverances. The bolt had fallen from Heaven. The Reformation seemed to be little better than a lifeless body cumbering the ground, and whose dissevered limbs were about to be reduced to ashes. But God raises up the dead. New and more glorious destinies were awaiting the Gospel of Jesus Christ."*

With the epoch of 1531, according to the pious and learned Writer, the history of the Reformation, properly so called, terminates, and that of Protestantism begins.† "The Reformation was accomplished in the name of a spiritual principle. It had proclaimed for its teacher, the Word of God; for salvation, faith; for king, Jesus Christ; for arms, the Holy Ghost; and had by these very means rejected all worldly elements. . . . . If the Reformation, having attained a certain point, became untrue to its nature, began to parley and temporize with the world, and thus ceased to follow up the spiritual principle that it had so loudly proclaimed, it was faithless to God and to itself. Henceforward, its decline was at hand."†

The history of Protestantism is, for the most part, that of a political struggle, attended, in different countries, by various results. For nearly a hundred years, the continent of Europe was desolated by religious wars. In 1566, the attempt to enforce

* Hist. of the Reformation, b. xvi. c. ult.
† "The work of faith has there (in Germany and German Switzerland) attained its apogee: that of conferences, of interims, of diplomacy begins." Pref. to vol. iv. † Ib. b. xvi. c. 1.
the decrees of the Council of Trent by the establishment of the Inquisition in the Netherlands, led to the first popular rising, in which the churches of Flanders were pillaged, and, under the influence of a frantic zeal, great excesses were committed. The exasperated tyrant resolved upon vengeance; and a civil war commenced, "which raged without cessation for upwards of forty years in those devoted countries, and which is universally allowed to be the most remarkable that ever desolated any isolated portion of Europe."* Deserted by the confederate leaders of the patriotic party, the unfortunate Protestants were left the prey of their implacable tyrant. Thousands emigrated; and England and Germany swarmed with Dutch and Belgian refugees.† In May, 1587, the execrable Duke of Alva entered the devoted country; and his first measure was, to establish a special tribunal, which received from the people the designation of the Council of Blood. Its atrocious proceedings are almost unparalleled in horror and cold-blooded cruelty. "The people were driven to frenzy. Bands of wretches fled to the woods and marshes; whence, half-famished and perishing for want, they revenged themselves with pillage and murder. Pirates infested and ravaged the coast; and thus, from both sea and land, the whole extent of the Netherlands was

* Grattan's Hist. of the Netherlands, p. 121.
† "Elizabeth of England opened all the ports of her kingdom to the Flemish refugees, who carried with them those abundant stores of manufacturing knowledge which she wisely knew to be the elements of national wealth." Ib. p. 129.
devoted to carnage and ruin. The chronicles of Brabant and Holland abound in thrilling details of the horrors of this general desolation, with long lists of those who perished. On the recorded boast of Alva himself, he caused 18,000 inhabitants of the Low Countries to perish by the hands of the executioner, during his less than six years' sovereignty in the Netherlands."* Of the numbers who perished in the civil war which followed, it is impossible to form an estimate. The patriot army, under the Prince of Orange, was, in the first campaign, unsuccessful. To the horrors of an exterminating warfare, were added, the destructive effects of frightful inundations,† and, in 1574, the visitation of a plague, which devastated great part of the Netherlands. At one period, the Prince of Orange, having lost three brothers in the war, and despairing of being able to relieve his countrymen, proposed to the patriots of Holland and Zealand to destroy the dikes, submerge the whole country, and abandon to the waves the soil which refused security to freedom. In the sack of Antwerp by the Spaniards, 7000 citizens perished by the sword or in the waters of the Scheldt. The Pacification of Ghent, in 1576, produced only a brief suspension of the horrors of war. When, at length, in 1585, the power of Spain was re-established in the provinces now comprised in the kingdom of Belgium, "the chief towns were found almost depopulated; the thou-

* Grattan's History of the Netherlands, p. 130.
† In that of 1571, in Friesland alone, 20,000 men perished. Grattan, p. 135.
sands of villages which had covered the face of the country, were absolutely abandoned to the wolves, which had so rapidly increased, that they attacked not merely cattle and children, but grown-up persons. The dogs, driven abroad by hunger, had become as ferocious as beasts of prey, and joined in large packs to hunt down brutes and men. Neither fields, nor woods, nor roads were to be distinguished by any visible limits. All was an entangled mass of trees, weeds, and grass. The prices of the necessaries of life were so high, that people of rank, after selling everything to buy bread, were obliged to have recourse to open beggary in the streets of the great towns.”*

The Spanish Herod died miserably of a loathsome and painful disease, in Sept. 1598, at the age of seventy-two; but it was not till eleven years afterwards, that a truce was concluded for twelve years between Spain and the United Provinces which had thrown off her yoke.

While the ferocious despot of Spain was inflicting these unutterable calamities upon the Netherlands, previously the most flourishing portion of Europe, France was being made the scene of a succession of troubles not less terrible. The efforts of the Cardinal of Lorraine to introduce the Inquisition into Paris, were defeated by the firm resistance of the Parliament; but a similar tribunal was established, known by the name of the “Chambre Ardente,” and the persecution of the Protestants had now become a leading prin-

* Grattan, p. 176.
ciple of the State policy. Unhappily, goaded on by fresh demonstrations of injustice, and apprehensive of some fatal attack, Admiral Coligny, the Prince of Condé, and other eminent persons who had embraced the Reformed faith, began to form serious designs of preparing a plan of defence. An unsuccessful rising, "the conspiracy of Amboise," of which more than 1200 persons were the victims, followed by a similar movement at Lyons, served only to afford too plausible a pretext for charging the so called heretics with treasonable designs. At length, both parties took up arms, and prepared for a trial of strength. The Protestant forces were defeated in several battles; and in 1570, a precarious peace was signed. Such were the circumstances which preceded and ushered in the horrible massacre on the eve of St. Bartholomew, 1572. About 2000 Huguenots are believed to have been slaughtered in Paris on the first day. The Louvre flowed with blood. On the following morning, the enormities of the preceding day were renewed; and "although the harvest of slaughter had been plentifully gathered already, care was taken to glean whatever few scattered ears might remain behind."* In fulfilment of the royal orders, the same sanguinary atrocities were enacted in other parts of the kingdom. About thirteen hundred Huguenots of both sexes perished in Lyons; and the Rhone

was choked by the floating corpses, so that the astonished inhabitants of distant villages on its banks, imagined that some great battle had been fought. A thousand were massacred at Orleans; five hundred at Rouen. The persecution lasted for two months; and while De Thou estimates the whole number that perished at little below 30,000, Sully raises it to 70,000; and a Roman Catholic Archbishop of Paris, while execrating the deed, to nearly 100,000.*

Intelligence of the massacre was received at Rome with impious demonstrations of savage joy; public thanksgivings were offered up by the Pope and Cardinals; salvoes of artillery were fired; the streets were illuminated; and a commemorative medal was struck, having on one side the head of Gregory XIII., and on the reverse an angel, holding in one hand a cross, in the other a sword, and putting to rout a fugitive host, with the inscription, "Ugonottorum Strages, 1572." In a panegyrical narrative composed within a month after the catastrophe, under the sanction of the Cardinal of Lorraine, the writer (Capilupi) uses this language: "To say the truth, not only are the enactors worthy of everlasting glory, but no one can doubt that they were elected and set apart by the all-powerful Redeemer to minister His eternal will. Through their means, He brought to perfection a work which must be affirmed to proceed from His infinite sovereignty."†

† In Smedley, ii. p. 38. Capilupi distinctly affirms, that the
Thus did the Head of the Papacy identify himself with this execrable act of royal perfidy and enormous wickedness.

But here we may pause to notice the startling correspondence between the representation on the Papal medal and the Apocalyptic emblems. One is apt to take for granted, that an angel must be intended to denote a good, not an evil agency; yet, in the instance of the four angels that were bound by the river Euphrates, we have seen, that evil powers or principles are clearly intended; and nothing more seems necessarily implied by the emblem, than a providential instrumentality of whatever character. "He maketh the winds His angels, and flames of fire His ministers." (Psal. civ. 4.) In the Vision of the Harvest, however, the form which appeared bearing the sickle of destruction, is not expressly called an angel, (although this may be thought to be implied by the words which follow,—" another angel," ) but is distinguished by the insignia of regal dignity and power. He is represented, nevertheless, as acting at the command or instigation of an angel proceeding from the Temple. And this, it may be contended, must denote a good angel. Yet, how can we understand it to denote a good, in the sense of a beneficent agency? The general lesson of the Revelation is, that all things take place " according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," and with His wise per-massacre was premeditated, conceived, and put in train, many months beforehand. Mr. Elliott has given a copy of the medal, vol. iii. p. 159.
mission; but it is "by wicked hands," and by "the wrath of man," that His purposes of judgment and mercy are accomplished. By the angel's proceeding from the Temple, it is not necessary, then, to understand more than this; that the Divine commission was given to the minister of destruction. Yet, if we may take the Temple as significant generally of the professing Church, (the true worshippers being confined to the inner court,) the angel may be emblematical of the very principle of false religion which is personified in the emblem of the Papal medal, and is illustrated by the blasphemous language of the Papal panegyrist. "For Satan himself," says the Apostle, "is transformed into an angel of light; therefore it is no great thing, that his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness." (2 Cor. xi. 14.)*

It is necessary, however, to pursue the history yet further. A general dispersion of the Huguenots succeeded to the massacre. Those who expatriated themselves, found refuge in England, the Palatinate, and parts of Switzerland. Many abjured the Reformed faith, and made their peace with Rome. A remnant more firm of purpose, fled to the strong-holds in the Cevennes, to Sancerre, Montauban, Nismes, and La Rochelle, determined upon the maintenance of their faith at all hazards, and under every extremity. The French king meanwhile established four armies in the field; and, his insidious offers having been

* Or, perhaps, the principle of allusive contrast may be thought to furnish a more satisfactory explanation. See ante, page 212.
rejected, war was (for the fourth time) openly declared against the Huguenots. During the reign of Henry III., the effeminate and licentious successor of Charles IX., the civil war continued to be prosecuted with intervals of precarious peace. Meantime, in the South of France especially, the Huguenots increased in numbers and political strength, and found in Henry of Navarre a powerful protector. It was not, however, till 1598, that the celebrated Edict of Nantes secured free toleration to the Reformed Faith;* and this continued, till its revocation in 1685, to be the charter of the Gallican liberties.

The history of civil wars, even when the occasion of them has been connected with Religion, does not belong to Martyrology; and the calamitous events we have been retracing, afford a striking fulfilment of the declaration, "He that killeth with the sword, shall be killed with the sword." In Switzerland, in the Netherlands, in France, the attempt to maintain the cause of the Reformation by force of arms, failed. "If my kingdom were of this world," said Our Lord, "then would my servants fight." But His kingdom cannot be advanced by the sword. If His disciples are persecuted in one city, they are directed to flee into another; and it is remarkable, that, by this means, not only have large numbers of pious and faithful emigrants escaped, at different times, from the overwhelming calamities of their country, but the true faith has been both preserved and propagated,

* The very year in which the execrable Philip II. of Spain died.
from age to age, chiefly by such holy refugees. At one time the Low Countries, at another time the Palatinate, now the recesses of the Alps, and now the mountains of Calabria, have afforded shelter to the persecuted. Holland has been the asylum of English Reformers and Puritans; and England has, in happier times, given a home to the Protestant refugees of France; while, in the wilderness of the western world, the Pilgrim Fathers found a place which seemed specially prepared by God, where the Church might be nourished in security.

During the calamitous period we have been retracing, extending from about 1566 to the beginning of the seventeenth century, the persecution of the True Witnesses was carried on, by the powers in league with the Papacy, in Spain, in the Venetian territory, in the Neapolitan dominions, and in some parts of the Empire; but the most prominent feature of this dismal portion of history is, not martyrdom, but war and massacre. In these sanguinary conflicts, the Protestants were chiefly the victims. It might seem that judgment had "begun at the house of God:" the punishment of those who rejected the Gospel, was to follow. This was "the harvest," to be succeeded by "the vintage." The rank growth of the Protestant or Reformed Churches but too loudly called for the sickle, to separate the tares from the wheat. To such times, how appropriate the declaration, "Blessed are the dead who die in The Lord, for they rest from their labours!"

Under the reigns of the Emperors Ferdinand I.
and Maximilian II., (A.D. 1558—1567,) Germany had enjoyed religious peace. Under Rodolph II., ecclesiastical animosities assumed a character of violence, which laid the foundation of the disasters of the succeeding reign. In Austria, Bohemia, and Hungary, numerous insurrections were produced by the intolerant measures of the Government; and a Protestant confederacy was formed in defence of the common cause, of which the Elector Palatine was the acknowledged head, while the Catholic States entered into a league of which the Duke of Bavaria was the head. Worldly views were more powerful than religious considerations with the leaders on both sides. Thus, the causes were already in operation, which led, in 1617, to the breaking out of the Thirty Years' War,—"one of the most disastrous that ever afflicted a country,—a contest of principles, not less than of personal ambition; one which shook Europe to its extremities, and must be remembered as long as books remain to record it."*

The accession of Ferdinand II., on the death of the Emperor Matthias, in 1619, was the signal for the commencement of those disorders which afforded occasion and pretext for the terrible vengeance taken by the victorious sovereign upon the Bohemian States who had disputed his claims. By one sweeping decree, 700 of the noblest families were proscribed; and though their lives were reluctantly spared, their estates were confiscated. The ban of the Empire was now published against

the Elector Palatine and his chief adherents; and the Palatinate was divided among the Catholic princes. In the two campaigns which ensued, the Protestant States of Lower Saxony were subdued; and the Danish King, Christian IV., who had placed himself at the head of the confederacy, was not only expelled from the Empire, but made to tremble for his hereditary dominions, until the treaty of Lubec, in 1629, restored peace between the two parties. Ferdinand, now unchecked by any enemy powerful enough to resist him, abolished the exercise of the Protestant religion in Bohemia; exiled or put to death the more influential dissidents; and forced the common people to change their faith for the creed of their sovereign. "Above 30,000 families, comprising the most laborious and useful of the population, preferring their consciences to their country and friends, sought refuge in the Protestant States. These vindictive measures inflicted on the kingdom a blow from which it never recovered."* In fact, the Bohemian nation may be considered as having lost, with its political independence, its very existence: even its language was superseded.

* Dunham's Germanic Empire, vol. iii. pp. 201, 202. (A Roman Catholic writer.) Pelzel, the Romanist historian, says: "History scarcely presents an instance where a whole nation was so much changed and altered in the short space of fifteen years, as was that of Bohemia during the reign of Ferdinand II. In 1620, all the Bohemians were Protestants, a few of the nobility and monks excepted: at the death of Ferdinand, they were, externally at least, all Catholics." Reformation and Anti-Reformation in Bohemia, vol. ii. p. 269.
by the German, so that it became thenceforth known as the farmers' or peasants' dialect. In Moravia, Silesia, and Poland, the Protestants were the victims of similar persecutions.

Thus, throughout the dominions of the Emperor, as in Spain, the Netherlands, France, and Italy, the suppression of the Reformed faith, if not its actual extirpation, seemed to have been accomplished. The scythe of war had passed over the fruitful field, and left nothing but the trodden and ensanguined stubble. It is impossible to contemplate the wide-spread moral desolation, without being forcibly impressed with the conviction, that the Protestant Churches, by having recourse to the sword, had merged the character of witnesses in that of warriors, and thereby forfeited the special protection of Heaven. They had put their trust in princes, in an arm of flesh; and that political alliance proved, in the end, the source of their weakness and the occasion of their ruin. Of the numbers of Protestants who perished by the sword or in other ways, in the wars, massacres, persecutions, and attendant calamities of the seventy years extending from 1566 to 1630, it is impossible to obtain a correct estimate; but it could scarcely have been less than from a million and a half to two millions.

The sword had not done its work, but it was now to be turned with retributive justice upon the enemies of the Protestant cause. Just when that cause seemed to have reached the lowest state of depression, Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, suddenly took the field as head of the Protestant
league, and, supported by France, out of enmity to the House of Austria, entered upon a career as brief as it was brilliant, and destined to be for ever memorable in the annals of Germany. He penetrated into the very heart of the Austrian States, into Bohemia and Bavaria, humbled one by one the Catholic Electors, thus laying the Empire at his feet, and at length, in the great battle of Lutzen, A.D. 1632, "died in the arms of victory." The war was prosecuted, notwithstanding, with vigour and determination on both sides; but the crafty Emperor succeeded in sowing jealousy and dissension among the Reformed princes, and the victory obtained by the Imperial general at Nordlingen, counterbalanced the previous advantages gained by the Protestants. In 1635, the Elector of Saxony, in a treaty at Prague, was reconciled to the Emperor; and other members of the league, one by one, gave in their adhesion to this pacification. Nevertheless, in the reign of Ferdinand III., who succeeded his father on the Imperial throne in 1637, the war was renewed with fury, but with no decisive advantage on either side. Germany seemed rapidly hastening to internal ruin. The excesses committed on every side by ferocious bodies of foreigners, destroyed all social security, and all parties began to call for peace. For this purpose negotiations were opened; but, from the vicissitudes of the war, which was still continued, from the alternate elation of the one party and the depression of the other, as well as from the dissensions of the Germanic body itself, six years elapsed from the opening of the preliminaries, before the
treaty of 1648, known as the Peace of Westphalia, put a stop to the ravages of war, and imposed a permanent restraint upon religious dissensions and mutual persecution in Germany.

Thus terminated the so called religious wars which had afflicted the Empire from the epoch of the Reformation; but the insatiate ambition of the French king, Louis XIV., which prompted him to aspire, on the death of Ferdinand III., to the Imperial crown, led to a continuance of savage hostilities throughout his protracted reign.* "In the Palatinate (of the Rhine), the Reformed Religion was irretrievably ruined. Louis, the great protector of the Protestants in Germany, not content with banishing them from France,† resolved to extirpate them from the Palatinate. He everywhere persecuted them, laid their churches in ashes, and transferred them to the Catholics; and when, at the treaty of Ryswick in 1685, the Protestants naturally urged the restitution of their worship, in conformity with a fundamental law recognised in that of Westphalia, their demand was openly resisted by France." "The accounts given by historians of the conflagrations and unheard-of cruelties of the French army, under the command of the Marshal Duras, in the countries contiguous to the Rhine and the Neckar, are dreadful beyond description. The remonstrances and

* "The infamy of the French councils at this period," Dr. Dunham remarks, "is so extraordinary, that, unless it were apparent even from the national writers, it would be utterly incredible." Vol. iii. p. 231.

† The Edict of Nantes was revoked in 1685.
entreaties of the Margrave of Baden were fruitless; his capital and many other towns and villages were totally destroyed. The beautiful country of the Elector Palatine was in a still more deplorable condition. . . . . They stripped the very altars of the village churches; and the distressed inhabitants, after giving their all to the insatiate conquerors, were barbarously driven naked from their dwellings, and their wives and virgin daughters dishonoured. The French minister, the Marquis de Louvois, at last ordered, in the name of His Most Christian Majesty, the whole country, a district of more than thirty miles in length, to be destroyed by fire. The populous cities of Heidelberg, * Manheim, Frankenthal, Spires, Oppenheim, Creutzenach, Alzey, Ingelheim, Bacharach, Sinzheim, Bretten, and many others, were reduced to ashes. A circumstance that added to the misery of the unfortunate fugitives, was, that this horrid scene was perpetrated in the midst of a severe winter, when the ground was covered with snow. The infirm, the aged, and helpless infants, who were unable to escape, were either sacrificed with their paternal dwellings to the flames, or perished by the frost."† To the horrors of foreign invasion succeeded domestic oppression and intolerance; to escape from which, thousands emigrated to other parts of Germany, and a still greater

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* This beautiful city was twice taken and laid in ashes, in 1688, and again in 1693; and on both occasions, the inhabitants were treated with atrocious brutality by the French troops.

† Potter, cited by Dunham, iii. 240—2. "The Palatinate was at one time almost wholly peopled by Calvinists."
number to the United States of America. "Such were the benefits," remarks the Historian in bitter irony, "which the cause of the Reformation derived from its friendly league with Catholic France!"

In France itself, the Protestants, from the death of Mazarin in 1661, were, for a quarter of a century, exposed to the most perfidious and vexatious persecution, increasing in severity, and attended, in some of the provinces, with unutterable horrors and barbarities;* till at length, in 1685, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes divested them of all semblance of toleration, and deprived France for ever of half a million of her best citizens. Measures of violence and cruelty against the remnant of the Huguenots, were renewed in 1723, and again in 1744, which led to fresh and ruinous emigrations wherever escape was possible. Thus were the corrupt and profligate Court and Church of France filling up the cup of wrath which was so soon to be poured out upon the devoted nation.

The peace of Utrecht, in 1713, gave Europe a respite from the horrors of war; but the death of the Emperor Charles VI. gave rise, in 1740, to fresh disputes of monarchs. And now Frederick, the king of Prussia, first appeared on the stage of European politics in the character of a new and dangerous competitor.† Taking advantage of the unsettled state of the Empire, he seized upon Silesia by force of arms, and, in

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* More especially in Bearn and Poitou.

† Prussia was first raised to the rank and name of a kingdom in 1701.
alliance with France, carried on a desultory and wasting warfare in prosecution of his ambitious purposes, till, in 1748, the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle confirmed him in the possession of Silesia, and secured a seven years' peace. This was followed by the famous seven years' war, in the course of which the Prussian monarch witnessed the invasion of his dominions by overwhelming armies of Austrians and Russians, while the French were acting aggressively on his western frontier. In these critical circumstances, his ruin seemed inevitable; but, by a series of military successes, at an immense cost of blood and treasure, he repelled and humbled the combined forces, and made Europe tremble at the very moment that his fate seemed to all appearance sealed.* The dreadful devastation produced by this obstinate conflict, maintained through seven successive campaigns, in Saxony, Silesia, Bohemia, and the adjacent provinces, which either were the actual seat or bore the burthen of the war, has never been wholly repaired. By the treaties of 1763, peace was once more re-established throughout Europe. In 1777, in consequence of a fresh dispute with Austria, Frederick once more poured an overwhelming army into Bohemia, which laid

* The rapid growth of the Prussian monarchy is one of the most remarkable political phenomena of modern times. In little more than a century, it has been raised by conquests and by conventional arrangements, from a mere province, to be the second among the Protestant powers, and, in efficient strength and revenues, the fifth in Europe. Of the population, about two-thirds are Protestants and one-third Catholics.
waste the country to the walls of Prague; but peace was restored in 1779. This was the last German war, except with Turkey, before the era of the French Revolution.

The prominent feature of this series of destructive wars, occupying, with brief intermission, nearly half a century, (i.e. from 1740 to the death of Frederic, miscalled the Great, in 1786,) is the part assigned by the providence of God to a Protestant power, suddenly created, and marvellously sustained in its single-handed combat against the Empire and its allies. And in connexion with this fact, it is remarkable, that the countries laid waste by the sword, were those parts of the Empire which had witnessed the extinction of the light of the Reformation, and the cruel persecution or banishment of the Protestant people. Are we not warranted, then, in regarding these calamities as partaking of a retributive design and character? If, in the language of the Hebrew Prophets, Assyria was the rod of the Divine anger, may we not view the military power of Prussia as a sickle in the hand of the angel of his justice, and these latter wars as the vintage after the harvest? Or rather, as the commencement of the vintage; for, if we consider the harvest as comprising the series of European wars from 1560 to 1713, a period of a century and a half, it may seem to require us to assign a corresponding period to the fulfilment of the emblematic vintage. Nor would there, perhaps, be any inconsistency in regarding it as in part synchro-
some recent expositors, to the bloody vintage at Waterloo in 1815.*

At all events, it must be observed, that the gathering of the vintage, and the treading of the wine-press, are two distinct emblematic actions, and must therefore relate to distinct historical events. The declaration, that the blood from the wine-press came up to the horses' bridles for 1600 furlongs, or 200 miles, must be taken in a mystical sense, not being susceptible of literal fulfilment. If the wine-press is emblematic, the measurement of the extent of the slaughter must also be symbolical. The observation was first made by Mr. Mede, that, from the city of Rome to the furthermost mouth of the Po, is exactly two hundred Italian miles, or 1600 furlongs; and he supposes the States of the Church to be literally intended as the scene of this destruction. But a literal interpretation is not congruous with the symbolical character of the prediction.† A recent writer with more propriety suggests, that "the symbolical extent means nothing less than the whole length of the Papal kingdoms." "And it is remarkable," he adds, "that Napoleon carried his victorious arms through every part of Papal Europe, and drenched every kingdom of

* Bogie's "Crisis," p. 56.
† Professor Stuart, who, of course, rejects the literal interpretation, remarks, "that the reason for choosing the number 1200 (1600) may, probably, be found in the usually computed breadth of Italy." Mr. Elliott supposes a square of 1600 furlongs to be intended; but his exposition of this Vision is wholly unsatisfactory. Vol. iv. 84.
the Church with blood. Thus far, the wine-press was to be trodden; and thus far, he victoriously waded through a sea of blood. From Portugal to Catholic Poland, from the Mediterranean to the Baltic, he crushed the Papal States. Not a part of the Church, however small, escaped his keen eye; not a cluster appeared, but there the sickle was applied. But when, urged on by boundless ambition, he passed from Catholic Poland to Greek Russia, he went beyond his length, he crossed the prescribed limits of his commission, and blood flowed no longer at his will. The Greek Church was not the vine to be gathered: a harder wood turned the edge of the sickle. He was obliged to retrace his steps, and keep within his bounds. He wrought hard, and finally ended the bloody vintage at Waterloo, in Catholic Belgium, in 1815. The vintage was ended; the instrument was no longer wanted; and he was thrown aside as a useless tool."

* Bogie's "Crisis," p. 56.
Vision the Sixth.

THE SEVEN VIALS.

The visionary scene again changes, and there appeared in the heaven a new and marvellous emblem; that of seven Angels standing prepared to pour forth from their bowls the seven plagues of the third and last predicted woe. But, before they came forth from the Temple, and preparatory, therefore, to the appearance of this "sign," the Apostle beheld the victorious company of the faithful standing by a vitreous sea mingled with fire, (an expression strikingly descriptive of a flood of burning lava,) and singing to their harps a hymn of praise answering to that of Moses and the nation of Israel on the overthrow of Pharaoh in the Red Sea. This reference to the song of Israel on the occasion of that signal deliverance, seems to determine the emblematic import of the vitreous sea, and to distinguish it from the crystalline sea before the Throne (ch. iv. 6), in the vision of the heavenly Temple, which has been supposed to correspond to the brazen sea or laver of that of Solomon.*

* See p. 53, ante. Mr. Elliott notices the absence of the definite article, as shewing that the sea before the throne cannot
fire, conveying the terrific idea of an eruption from a volcano, is evidently the emblem of the destruction that had overtaken the persecutors of the Church, as the Egyptian host were whelmed beneath the waters of the Red Sea. It seems difficult to account for the introduction of the reference to the Song of Moses, upon any other view of the import of the emblem. By their singing the Song of the Lamb, is intimated their sharing, as His followers, in the triumph of their heavenly Leader; and there may be an allusion to the doxology at ch. v. 12, and vii. 10. What follows, expresses the occasion and theme of their hymn of praise: the righteous judgments of God had been made manifest, and, as the glorious issue, all nations should be brought to come and worship before Him. Although not cited from the Song of Moses in Exod. xv., it is observable, that that Song contains several parallel expressions, and that its spirit is imbodied, as it were, in the Apocalyptic hymn. The phrase, "harps of God," is equivalent to Divine harps, or harps employed in the service of God; as we read, 1 Chron. xvi. 42, and 2 Chron. vii. 6, of "musical

here be alluded to, as well as the circumstance of its being mingled with fire. Besides which, if the harpers represent the faithful opponents of the Beast on the earthly scene of action, as he correctly judges, and not the departed spirits in Paradise, how could they be standing by the temple sea? In fancying, however, that some literal sea, some topographical landscape was depicted in vision, Mr. Elliott loses sight of the emblematical; and he ends by doubting, in his third edition, the correctness of his own imaginative construction. Vol. iii. p. 423.
instruments of God;" and the emblem must be understood of the praises and public worship of the Christian Israel, who are here described as having triumphantly withstood* the power of the Wild Beast and his Image, and thereby escaped the judgments that had befallen them. But, as the judgments referred to are those of the ensuing Vials, we must understand this Vision of the harpers as anticipative, and as intended generally to intimate, (as in the case of the Vision of the sealed 144,000,) that God had reserved to Himself a people who should not be partakers of these plagues.

After this, the Apostle looked, and beheld the sign in heaven, which he had already mentioned (at ver. 1) as the main subject of the Vision: the Temple of God was thrown open; that is, the gates of the Temple; and forth came the seven angels commissioned to inflict the seven last plagues, habited as priests, whose functions were occasionally judicial.† It is intimated, that they received the mystical bowls of Divine wrath from one of the four living creatures before the Throne. That is to say, one of the living creatures had given them these seven bowls; for so we must construe the passage, since the angels must be supposed to have received them within the Temple, before they came forth from the Temple-gates. Nor is it necessary to imagine that what is stated

* Stuart remarks, that the English idiom comes very near the original: "come off conquerors from the wild-beast," &c.
† See Numb. v. 18.
to have taken place was a visible transaction. But what did it denote? Evidently, that these judgments were to vindicate the cause of the spirits of the just whose blood had been shed upon earth,* as is intimated by what follows, ch. xvi. ver. 3. It is added, that the smoke from the glory of God filled the Temple, so that no man was able to enter it, till after the fulfilment of the angelic commission. The allusion is to what is recorded, 2 Chron. v. 14; that the house of The Lord was so filled with the cloud of the glory of The Lord, that the priests could not stand to minister; and the import of the symbolic language is, that no priest might enter to intercede, or, in other words, that no remission of Divine justice was to be exhibited, till the whole of the predicted judgment should be accomplished.†

On collating this introduction to the Vision of the Seven Vials with the close of ch. xi., it will be evident, that the prophetic narrative which is there suspended, in order to allow of the interposition of a distinct series of emblematic predictions, is now resumed.‡ The Seventh Angel had already sounded his alarm, which was to give notice of the third and last woe; but what immediately ensued, is there mentioned only in general terms. Loud voices proclaimed the

* Elliott, iii. 303. The Author remarks, that “this is the first mention of any of the saintly company in the heavenly presence taking part in the actings of the apocalyptic drama.” Yet, may they not be said to have taken part in inviting the Apostle to “come and see?”

† So, Stuart, ii. 308.

‡ See page 264.
glorious result, and the thanksgivings of the blessed arose in anticipation of the approaching triumph of the kingdom of Christ. It follows, that "the Temple of God was opened," so as to discover "the ark of his covenant." And here, the words are repeated, "the Temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened,"* as if to mark the resumption of the narrative at the exact point of time indicated; that is, after the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, and within a brief interval after the cessation of the Turkish woe.

What, then, is implied by the opening of the Temple and the discovery of the Ark in the interior sanctuary? Mr. Elliott interprets it as intimating, that there would be at this time indications of the opening of Christ's Church to the world, and of God's manifestly thinking upon His covenant to fulfil it; that there would be a discovery to the world of the holy mysteries and Divine tutelary presence which the Ark symbolised, and an opening of the gates of the Church, "in the way of invitation," to all people, agreeably to the anticipation of the song of the harpers: "All nations shall come and worship before thee."†

* "That part of the Temple which belongs to the tabernacle of testimony, viz., where the testimony of God, his covenant and his commandments, is kept."—Stuart. Thus explained, the expression evidently looks back to the discovery of the ark of the covenant in the open Temple, at ch. xi. 19. St. Stephen speaks of "the tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness." Acts vii. 44.

† Elliott, iii. 287, 407. Mr. Elliott refers to Isa. xxvi. 2, Psa. cxviii. 19, and Acts xiv. 27, as illustrating the symbolical expression.
Another interpretation regards the opening of the Temple, and the exhibition of the Ark of the covenant, as denoting, that the mysteries of the Divine administration are finished, and that thenceforth the reasons of its procedure are to be better understood.* And this may at least be anticipated as the result of what is here emblematically predicted.

But what is the era from which we must date the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet? We have seen that the decisive termination of the Turkish woe cannot be fixed later than the year 1774, when, after a war signalised by repeated victories on the part of Austria and Russia, a peace, the terms of which were dictated by Prince Romanzoff, proclaimed that the day of the Ottoman power was passed.† In 1789, hostilities were, however, renewed, and proved still more disastrous to the Porte: fortress after fortress was reduced; until Belgrade, which had once been the bulwark of Christendom, again fell into the hands of the Emperor, and until the frontier towns of European Turkey were in the hands of the two Imperial Allies. "It seemed, indeed," adds the Historian, "that the intention of both to share the vast provinces from the Bosphorus to the Adriatic, and from the Danube to the Grecian Archipelago, was about to be realised, when the important events occurring in Western Europe, arrested the triumphant progress of the Austrian arms."‡ What were

* Lord, 309. † See page 262. ‡ Dunham's Germanic Empire, iii. 262.
those events? The very circumstances which were to introduce the third woe. The second woe had manifestly passed. But the time was not yet come for the drying up of the Euphrates,—for the extinction of the Turkish power; and therefore, an arrest was laid upon the arms of the conqueror, in order to avert its impending overthrow.

The year 1789 will always stand out in history as one of the most remarkable epochs in the annals of modern Europe. In that year, the French Revolution "burst forth like a volcano, enveloping the heavens in a volume of pitchy darkness, that left nothing to be distinguished but by the reflection of its own disastrous lustre." At length, the lava began to roll over the surrounding nations. Infidel France, putting forth an energy of malignant power that appalled the world, sent forth her fourteen armies, "the new Saracens of Europe," to scourge with every form of misery the Papal states. The strongest bulwarks gave way; the Alps became a highway before them; and the empire of Charlemagne was restored in the person of the French General.

The suddenness of this eruption corresponded to that of the Saracen and Turkish woes. Yet, there were not wanting ominous presages and anticipations, similar to those which Gibbon records as having been, in the reign of Justinian, precursive of the coming calamities. Alluding to these terrific elemental visitations, which might seem a literal fulfilment of the symbolical description of the phenomena attending the sounding
of the Seventh Trumpet,—"lightning, and voices, and thunderings, and earthquake, and great hail,"
—the Christian poet and moralist thus interpreted the signs of the times:—

"The world appears
To toll the death-bell of its own decease,
And, by the voice of all its elements,
To preach the general doom. When were the winds*
Let slip with such a warrant to destroy?
When did the waves so haughtily o'erleap
Their ancient barrier, deluging the dry?
Fires from beneath and meteors from above,†
Portentous, unexampled, unexplained,
Have kindled beacons in the skies. The old
And crazy earth has had her shaking fits
More frequent, and foregone her usual rest.
Is it a time to wrangle, when the props
And pillars of our planet seem to fail,
And Nature with a dim and sickly eye‡
To wait the close of all? But, grant her end
More distant, and that prophecy demands
A longer respite, unaccomplished yet;
Still, they are frowning signals, and bespeak
Displeasure in His breast who smites the earth,
Or heals it, makes it languish or rejoice."

Cowper's Time-Piece.

For above three years, from 1783 to 1786, Calabria was convulsed and desolated by continual earthquakes. But the most singular and portentous phenomenon was the extraordinary hail-

* Alluding to the hurricanes that had ravaged the West Indies.
† August 18, 1783.
‡ Alluding to the fog that covered both Europe and Asia during the whole summer of 1783.
storm of July, 1788, by which, throughout great part of France, the rich prospects of an early autumn were, in the space of an hour, changed into the dreary aspect of universal winter. Speaking of this extraordinary tempest, Alison remarks: "Even the elements contributed to swell the public discontent, and seemed to declare war on the falling monarchy. A dreadful storm of hail, in July, 1788, laid waste the provinces, and produced such a diminution in the harvest as threatened all the horrors of famine; while the severity of the succeeding winter exceeded anything which had been experienced since that which followed the disasters of Louis XIV." And another writer says: "Added to the public discontent and political dissensions, it produced such an effect upon the people in general, that the nation seemed to have changed its character; and, instead of that levity by which it had been distinguished, a settled gloom now seemed fixed on every countenance."*

Such were the physical phenomena of the times, which might seem to symbolise the mighty political convulsion that ensued. "Already," said Mr. Burke, in the year 1790, "in many parts of Europe, there is a hollow murmuring under ground, a confused movement that threatens a general earthquake of the political world." Before we proceed to notice the specific character of the events which ensued, it will be proper to ascertain the import of the emblematic Vials.

The Apostle heard a loud voice which proceeded

from the Temple, commanding the seven angels to go forth and pour out the vials, or bowls, of Divine wrath upon the earth.* And when the first angel poured out his vial, there broke out a noisome and evil ulcer upon the men who had the mark of the Beast, and on the worshippers of his Image. In this figurative plague, there is an evident allusion to one of those literal infictions with which Pharaoh and Egypt were miraculously visited. The same term (in the Septuagint), αλκος, is used at Exod. ix. 6, of the boil that broke forth on the Egyptians, upon Moses' sprinkling the ashes of the furnace, and is used of the leprosy and other loathsome contagious eruptions. A general allusion, or rather a designed analogy, to the Egyptian plagues, is observable in the judgments of the other Vials; which corresponds to the reference to the Song of Moses as sung by the harpers by the fiery sea, and to the designation of the Great City of the Papacy, as "spiritually called Egypt." Mr. Elliott has cited the opinions of several medical writers, that "the botch of Egypt" was the small-pox; and it is a remarkable fact, that this terrible scourge was fatally prevalent during the last thirty years of the eighteenth century. Louis XV. died of the small-

* The word φιάλη is used, in the Septuagint, in reference to the bowls used for the offering of meal or of incense, (Exod. xxvii. 3; Numb. iv. 14; Nehem. vii. 70,) and to a vessel of oil, 1 Sam. x. 1; but, in the latter instance, the Hebrew pakh signifies a flask or pitcher. Josephus states, that Lake Phiala is so named from the roundness of its circumference, resembling a bowl or cup.
pox, caught from an unfortunate victim of his pleasures; and his grandson, Louis XVI., on ascending the throne, was, together with the rest of the royal family, attacked by the same loathsome malady.

In this, as in other instances before mentioned, it would seem as if the emblem in the prediction was repeated in the shape of an actual occurrence or physical phenomenon, literally answering to the figurative description, and immediately pre-cursive of the actual fulfilment. Thus, it is not to be supposed, that the judgment symbolised by the First Vial, consisted in the breaking out of a physical disease, inasmuch as this exposition would not harmonize with the metaphorical sense in which the other plagues must be taken; but the coincidence between the prophetic emblem and the occurrence, was adapted, and might be designed, to waken the attention of men to the prediction itself; giving to the figurative language a peculiar appropriateness and emphasis, and converting the physical phenomenon into a sign of the impending calamity.

What is intended by the figure, then, must be some sudden and terrible development of evil principles in the body politic; and the same figure is employed by the ancient prophets. Thus, Isaiah uses it to describe the corrupt state of the "sinful nation" of Israel: "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but only wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores."* The Vial's being poured out

* Isaiah i. 5, 6. Mr. Elliott refers to a similar use of the
upon the land, may seem to denote, too, that the calamity was of indigenous or internal origin. Or, if the marked correspondence between the first four Vials and the first four Trumpets, as regards the local scene of the several judgments, requires us to understand the word, earth or land, in the same sense or application, in both passages, in contradistinction to the sea and the sources of rivers, then it will denote the fertile plains of Gaul, the Rhine country, and Northern Italy, which were desolated by the barbarous hordes summoned by the first Trumpet, and upon which were manifested the dire effects of the first Vial.

Such being the import of the symbolic representation, its appropriate application is obvious, in reference to the sudden development and contagious spread of the pestilential principles of the French Republic, during the reign of terror and the ascendency of an atheistic fanaticism. The causes of the Revolution had long been in operation. The poison of deep-seated corruption and irreligion had been at work in the social system, undermining the very constitution of society, before it put on so virulent an aspect of outrageous crime. It is unnecessary to dwell upon either the atrocities or the horrors of the period. To adopt Mr. Elliott's language in summing up his illustration of its characteristic features, "if the Apocalyptic figure of a noisome and grievous metaphor in application to disease of the body politic, from Demosthenes and Thucydides. Tichonius, on this Vial, says: "Mortalis peccata ulcera."
sore indicate the outbreak into painful ulceration of corruptions previously existing in the body politic of them that worshipped the Beast's Image and bore his mark, the figure was fulfilled in the history of the French Revolution. Whether we consider the horrors and sufferings arising out of the national atheism, licentiousness, revolutionary democratism, or bloodthirstiness, then exhibited; they were but the evolution into violent action of the corrupt principles, religious, moral, social, and political, infused and cherished long before in the nation; and, indeed, for the most part, as a part of its religious system."

The second angel poured out his bowl upon the sea, and it became as the blood of a dead man: as, at the sounding of the second trumpet, the burning mountain cast into the sea turned the third part to blood. The third angel poured out his bowl upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood; as, when the third angel blew his trumpet, a burning star fell upon the third part of the rivers, and they became wormwood or poison. The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and power was given to it to scorch men with fire; and so, at the blast of the fourth angel, the third part of the sun was smitten, and of the other heavenly luminaries. This close parallel or correspondence between the two series of emblematic representations, may be taken to indicate, that, both as to the nature of the infictions, and the character of the Divine

* Elliott, iii. 323.
judgments, the later plagues bore an analogy to those of the Trumpets; and, as we must construe the symbols in the same sense, the scene or theatre of the calamities would seem to be the same. Thus, by the sea, we must understand either, agreeably to Scripture usage, the islands and peninsulas, and the shores of the Mediterraneaun, or, symbolically, maritime power and commerce.* Now it is a fact which answers to both interpretations, that, in February, 1793, commenced a naval war which lasted for above twenty years, with no intermission, but that of the short and delusive peace of Amiens, and in which all the ships, and maritime commerce and power of the Papal nations, were swept from the sea by the English victories, and all their smaller colonies were taken from them.† The history of the world does not present a parallel period of naval war, destruction, and bloodshed. Mr. Fleming, supposing the Second Vial to have been fulfilled in the struggles of the sixteenth century, remarks, that "the sea became blood to the Romanists," when, in 1588, "the Spaniards lost their vast armada, and did ever after decline in their power." But how much more signal was the extinction of the

* "The abundance of the sea," Isa. lx. 5. It has been strangely objected, that this is to treat the sea, not as a symbol, but as a literal term; whereas the sea is here, as elsewhere, a geographical symbol, or an emblem of maritime dominion.

† From 1793 to 1815, there were destroyed altogether, nearly 200 ships of the line, between 300 and 400 frigates, and an almost incredible number of smaller vessels of war and merchantmen. Elliott, iii 330.
maritime and commercial power of France and Spain, by the British fleets in the last naval war!

The Third Vial was poured out upon the basins of rivers and the sources of waters; that is, upon the valleys of the Rhine and the Upper Danube, and the regions in which the European waters have their source. Admitting this to be the correct reading of the symbols, the historical application will scarcely be questioned. In 1798, conflicts between the French and Austrian armies took place at Mentz, Worms, and Spires, all on the middle Rhine, the very towns that Attila long before desolated; a second division of the French army occupied the valley of the Meuse; and a third advanced into Savoy as far as the Alpine frontier of Piedmont. In the following years, the carnage was renewed, with varying success, on the middle Rhine and its tributaries. The year 1796 is memorable as that of Napoleon's first Italian campaign against the allied Sardinians and Austrians. "Its course is to be traced from Alpine river to river, along the whole of the North of Italy, from Coni on the Stura, to Venice. In the progress of the contest, every river was made a position and battle-field. Who can estimate the carnage? The Alpine fountains of waters were indeed turned into blood. At length, in 1797, after Venice itself had felt the sprinkling of the Vial, and shuddered under the terrible menace of the Conqueror, 'I will prove an Attila to Venice,'—resistance was suspended, and submission made by Austria. And so, the treaty of
Campo Formio was concluded, by which the whole valley of the Rhine, from its source in Switzerland to its mouth in Holland, was all ceded or virtually subjected to France, and also Piedmont and Lombardy. But the Vial had not yet exhausted itself. In 1799, on war recommencing, the fountains of waters became the scene of the celebrated Italian campaign of Suwarow, and they were again, stream after stream, turned into blood, as the French were repulsed along the whole line of their former victorious progress, from Verona and Mantua to the maritime Alps and the western sources of the Po. Again, in 1800, they were made the scene of Bonaparte’s second Italian campaign; a campaign memorable by the passage of the St. Bernard and the decisive and terrible battle of Marengo. Moreover, the Danube, the other great frontier river of the old Roman world and Papal Christendom, began now to feel the outpouring of the Vial. The war was directed by Moreau to Ulm, the first great fortress on the Upper Danube, and thence, still by the line of the Danube, to Ingolstadt; until, in the winter following, the victory of Hohenlinden on the Iser, one of its tributaries, having decided the German campaign, and Moreau advancing down the Danube towards Vienna, peace was again sued for by Austria, and for three years re-established. Nor was it broken by the war of the third German coalition in 1805, except to bring down the residue of the Vial of wrath on the same fated river and the countries watered by it. The campaign of Napoleon is traced along
the Danube, from Ulm and Ingoldstadt down to Vienna and the old adjacent camp of Attila. And, the German Emperor having been forced to retire northward from his capital, the battle of Austerlitz, a town on the Littawa, one of the tributaries of the same great German river, ended the wars, and broke the power of Austria. In the whole history of European wars, from the first rise of the ten Papal kingdoms in the sixth century, there is not recorded any one war in which these three valleys (or basins) of the Rhine, the Danube, and the Po, had such a Vial of wrath, or anything like it, poured out upon them." *

Nor was it without cause, or before the iniquity of the countries visited with these terrible calamities was full, that the modern Attila was employed as the scourge of Divine retribution. The Apostolic Prophet heard the angel of the waters say, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, who art, and wast, the Holy One, because Thou hast thus adjudged; for they have shed the blood of saints and of prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink, as they have deserved." And a voice from the altar, as from one of the martyrs of other days, gave response: "Even so, Lord God Almighty, faithful and righteous are thy judgments." What an appropriate comment upon these words is supplied by the pathetic sonnet of Milton, occasioned by the horrible massacre of the Vaudois in 1665:—

* Mr. Elliott's graphic language has here been borrowed. Vol. iii. pp. 334—339.
"Avenge, O Lord! thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Ev'n them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipp'd stocks and stones,
Forget not; in thy book record their groans,
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, who roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks. The moans,
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant, that from these may grow
A hundred-fold, who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe."

The persecutions of the seventeenth century had been perfidiously renewed by the King of Sardinia at the beginning of the eighteenth, in flagrant infraction of a treaty between Sardinia and England in 1704, which stipulated that the Protestants in the valley of Pragela should be left in the free exercise of their religion. In 1794, a plot was formed for a general massacre of the Protestant inhabitants of the valley of Lucerne, which was happily discovered and prevented. When, in 1797, that valley, along with the rest of Piedmont, came under the power of Napoleon, he ordered the pastors to be enrolled with the French clergy, and placed the Vaudois upon a footing of perfect equality, in point of civil rights, with the other subjects of the Empire.

The King of Sardinia did not, however, stand alone among the Papal sovereigns, as the persecutor of those who adhered to a purer faith. The princes of the Empire, and more especially
the House of Austria, had been deeply involved in the same guilt. In Lombardy, in Switzerland, in the Palatinate, in Bohemia and Moravia, and in the Austrian Netherlands, the Waldenses, the Hussites, and the Protestants, had been successively the victims of its cruel intolerance. "Indeed," remarks Mr. Elliott, "in the valleys of the Rhine, the Danube, and the Po, there are but few of the localities famed as scenes of carnage and bloodshed in these wars of the Revolution, which may not have other and holier recollections associated with them in the mind of the Christian traveller, as scenes of the martyrdom or the sufferings of witnesses for the Lord Jesus." The apparently retributive character of these German and Italian wars of the Revolution, has drawn from the secular historian, Alison, the remark, that "the impartial justice of Providence apparently made that terrific period the means of punishing the national sins of both the contending parties." That such was, indeed, the character of these events, cannot be doubted by any one who recognises in them the fulfilment of the prediction, and of the language of the angel who poured out his bowl upon the waters.*

The fourth angel is described as pouring out his bowl upon the sun, the effect of which was, not the obscuration of the emblematic luminary, (this at least is not expressed,) but its putting forth a scorching and fiery heat, which caused men

* Such is the most natural and probable explanation of the phrase, "the angel of the waters."
to blaspheme the name of God. In the parallel emblem of the Fourth Trumpet, the eclipse of the sun has been interpreted of the extinction of the Empire, in the western third, by the abolition of the name and office of Emperor of the West in the person of Augustulus, the sun being the emblem of the Roman Imperial power. According to analogy, the supreme Imperial authority would seem, therefore, to be here indicated; and if this be the correct interpretation, the historical application suggested by Mr. Elliott may seem strikingly to correspond. "In 1806, the year after the battle of Austerlitz, we read of the renunciation, by the German Emperor, on Napoleon's requirement, (just as by Augustulus on Odoacer's order,) of his title of Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and of Germany. So, the Holy Roman Empire, as it was called, having lasted a thousand years from the time of Charlemagne, was declared to be no more, and the Imperial sun of Papal Christendom was darkened; the Emperor Francis retaining the Imperial title simply as sovereign of his hereditary Austrian dominions. By the stipulations of the treaty of Presburg, and the formation of the Confederation of the Rhine, the old Germanic imperial constitution was revolutionized, and its princes were made altogether independent of the Germanic Emperor."*

* Elliott, iii. 341, 2. The Rhenish Confederation was dissolved in 1815, and a new federative system established, which restored the ascendancy of Austria, being a partial revival of the old constitution.
There are, however, several objections to this interpretation of the symbolic action. In the first place, as already observed, it is not said, that the sun was darkened under this Vial; secondly, its having a power given to it to scorch men with fire, does not accord with the historical application to the extinction of the title of Emperor of Germany, which makes the Imperial power to be the subject, not the agent of the penal infliction; and, thirdly, no corresponding suffering was produced by the organic change in the German constitution, and the titular alteration of the style of the Emperor. To obviate the second objection, Mr. Elliott would ascribe the scorching power to the angel that poured out the vial; and he expresses his surprise that commentators should have been so generally drawn aside from the true meaning as to suppose the symbolic sun of the Vision to be the agent that caused it. Yet, even upon this construction of the passage, it must have been by means of the sun, and through the scorching property imparted to it, that the angel exerted this power. The idea conveyed by the figure seems to be, that the ruling power symbolized by the genial source of light and heat, was transformed into a destructive and insupportable despotism; and there is no inconsistency in supposing the symbolic sun to be at once the sufferer and the inflicter of suffering under this judgment.

For these reasons, it seems most agreeable to analogy and to historical fact, to apply the emblem to the Imperial power in the person of
Napoleon, who certainly became, for the time, the supreme power in the Papal hemisphere, and who, as Emperor of the French and King of Italy, on assuming the iron crown, claimed to be the restorer of the empire of Charlemagne. The abolition of the title of Emperor of Germany, was an act of homage to the Conqueror, of whom the German kings and princes were but the vassals; the sovereignty being transferred from the House of Austria to the wearer of the iron crown, who, for the brief period of his sway, reigned without a competitor or a rival.* It is singular, that Mr. Elliott himself, while identifying the emblematic sun with the German Emperor, ascribes the scorching heat to "the earthly agency of Napoleon."

Ephemeral as it was in duration, the French Empire must always be regarded as one of the most remarkable phenomena in history. In point

* "For the moment, Europe had never witnessed so magnificent a spectacle of dominion as Napoleon's Court at Erfurt. He was surrounded by the monarchs and princes of the Continent in person. The Emperor of Russia, with his brother Constantine, daily attended his levees; the Emperor of Austria sent an ambassador to apologise for his absence at the feet of this universal King; marshals, dukes, princes, and prelates formed his circle. The days were spent in the occupations suitable to this display of royalty; in riding over fields of battle, negotiating treaties, and deciding the fates of kingdoms. Prussia was forgiven at the intercession of Alexander; a new code was vouchsafed to Holland; a peace was proposed to England; and the German powers were haughtily commanded to be still and obey." Croly's George IV. p. 356.
of geographical extent, being almost confined to Europe, it cannot be compared with either the old Roman or the Macedonian; but, as to real power, wealth, and resources, it probably far exceeded any empire of antiquity. The population of the Roman Empire in the reign of Claudius, is estimated by Gibbon at one hundred and twenty millions; "the most numerous society that had ever been united under the same system of government." The Empire of Napoleon, comprising France, the Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland, great part of Germany, Spain, and Portugal, could not have included less than ninety or a hundred millions, all free men, and in an advanced stage of civilization; whereas, in the Roman Empire, the slaves were nearly equal in number to the free. But, with the brilliancy, this splendid creation united the transitoriness of a meteor.* It is a mere point in the chart of history. It had reached its zenith in 1808; and in 1812, it received the shock which eventually led to its overthrow. This ephemeral Empire has, however, left the most permanent traces of its existence in the shattered strata of the political structure of society. It has broken up the feudalism which everywhere cramped and fettered the national mind, and has loosened the hold of every iron prejudice that retained the nations in intellectual bondage. The convents were dissolved; the dungeons of the

* In this respect, it strikingly corresponds to the Carolingian empire, and to that of Attila.
Inquisition were thrown open; the spells of the Papal anathemas were destroyed; the people of the Continent, though neither ripe for civil liberty, nor worthy of it, have been roused from their deadly lethargy. If they have not learned to be men, they have ceased to be children. The masque, the carnival, and the pantomimes of the Church have greatly lost their charm. The reign of Napoleon has, throughout Europe, become an era which can no more be forgotten than the Deluge, because its traces are constantly before the people. The monarchs of the Continent have been striving to repair and restore the forms of the old constitutions, with some apparent and temporary success; but they have been building upon the alluvial deposit of a flood that will return and sweep away the flimsy creation.*

In illustrating the figurative declaration, that "power was given to scorch the men with fire," Mr. Elliott and others suppose, that there may be an allusion to the wars of Napoleon, and to the fire of his artillery; but the true idea appears to be, the scorching and withering effect of this Imperial Sun upon the countries which it illumined with its false glory. It is in this sense

* When, in 1815, the sovereigns of the Continent assembled at Vienna to make their arbitrary territorial arrangements, Europe, it has been remarked, "seemed, as if by the subsidence of a deluge, to be left for a new organization." "It was the fabric from the hands of the Congress which shook in 1830, and which shakes in 1848. The Allied Powers constructed an edifice which the diplomacy of Europe has ever since been engaged in transforming, to meet those precise requirements which the Congress neglected." Edinb. Rev., Oct. 1848, pp. 521, 2.
that the sun itself received the effects of the Vial.* The military glory of Napoleon, which dazzled the French nation, drank up and consumed the resources of the country. Sir Walter Scott, speaking of the Conscription, remarks, that "it drained the very life-blood of the people." To this day, indeed, the personal appearance of the French peasantry attests the physical deterioration produced by the perpetual drain of the able population to recruit the armies poured forth upon Europe. Between 1793 and 1813, the conscriptions are stated to have amounted to upwards of four millions of men. The intolerable effects of this cruel law, executed with undiscriminating and relentless rigour, spread misery and suffering through all classes, and produced bitter but unavailing complaints. Yet, Napoleon was the idol of the army; and the nation appears not yet to be completely weaned from its passion for military glory. They worshipped the luminary which scorched them with its fire, and "blasphemed the name of God, who hath power over these plagues, but repented not to give Him glory."

"The fifth angel poured out his bowl upon the

* Mr. Fleming, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, supposing this Vial to apply to the French monarchy, observed: "Whosoever is denoted by the Sun here, is made use of as the devil is, both to torment others and to be tormented himself in so doing. . . . . We may justly suppose, that the French monarchy, after it has scorched others, will itself consume by doing so; its fire and that which is the fuel that maintains it, wasting insensibly, till it be exhausted at last;"—he conjectured, towards the end of that century.
throne of the Wild Beast, and his kingdom was enveloped in darkness;" (an evident allusion to that of Egypt, Exod. x. 21;) "and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven on account of their pains and their sores, yet repented not of their deeds." Here is an obvious reference to the effects of the First Vial, indicating that the grievous ulcers were not healed; and we may therefore infer, that the judgments of the Five Vials, though successive, were to continue together. Thus, the darkness by which the effect of the preceding plagues was aggravated, was not the cause of the pain, but rather of consternation and perplexity.

By the "throne of the Beast," which is identical with the seat of the Dragon, (chap. xiii. 2,) there can be no question that the Imperial City, the Seven-hilled seat of Empire, is intended; and this judgment, therefore, must be understood as befalling the Papal power. It has been fulfilled to the letter. Rome was threatened with a visit from the Republican army in 1797, when Pius VI. saved himself and the capital, only by the formal cession, in the treaty of Tolentino, of the legations of Ferrara, Bologna, and Romagna, (Peter’s patrimony,) together with the city of Ancona, the payment of above £1,500,000 sterling, and the surrender of military stores, and a hundred of the finest paintings and statues in the Vatican.* On their march towards Rome, the French entered

* The French ambassador wrote from Rome to Bonaparte: "The payment stipulated by the treaty of Tolentino has totally
THE SEVEN VIALS.

Loreto, and rifled its celebrated chapel of all the treasures that had not been previously sent away. On the 15th of Feb. 1798, the Pope himself, while receiving on his throne, in the Sistine Chapel of the Vatican, the congratulations of his cardinals on the anniversary of his election, was arrested by the French military, his ring of investiture was torn from his finger, his palace rifled, and he was himself carried a prisoner into France, only to die there an exile in the August following. The temporary success of the Russian general, Suwarrow, afforded an opportunity of temporarily repairing the ruin of the Papal throne, and of electing a successor. In 1804, the new Pope, Pius VII., was summoned to Rome, to witness and sanction the coronation of Napoleon as Emperor, but more as a vassal than as a sovereign pontiff. Next year, the Emperor's coronation at Milan, as king of Italy, took place. His object was, to make the Pope subservient to his ambitious plans; but, upon his refusal to take an active part in the war against England, Napoleon no longer hesitated to issue the two celebrated decrees of Schoenbrunn and Vienna, deposing the Pope from his temporal authority. The first of these was to the following effect: "Whereas the temporal sovereign of Rome has refused to make war against England, and the interests of the two kingdoms of Italy and Naples ought not to be interrupted by a hostile power; and whereas the donation by Charlemagne, our illustrious pre-

exhausted the old carcase; we are making it consume by a slow fire." Alison's French Revolut. vol. iii. p. 548.
decessor, of the countries which form the ho.
see, was for the good of Christianity, and not for
that of the enemies of our holy religion: we there-
fore decree, that the dutchies of Urbino, Ancona,
Macerata, and Comorino, be for ever united to the
kingdom of Italy." The sea-ports of the Papal
territory were forthwith occupied by French
troops; but Pius VII. was permitted to remain
for a time in undisturbed possession of Rome
itself. On his return from Spain, however, Napo-
leon determined to complete his work in Italy,
before he engaged in a fresh campaign against
Austria. In February, 1809, General Miollis
accordingly took military possession of Rome, the
Pope still remaining in the Vatican, attended by
his own guards. On the 17th of May, Napoleon
issued from Vienna his final decree, declaring the
temporal sovereignty of the Pope to be wholly at
an end, incorporating Rome with the French
Empire, and declaring it to be his second city.
A pension was settled on the holy father, and a
committee of administration was appointed for
the civil government of Rome. On receiving the
ratification of this Imperial rescript, the Pope
instantly fulminated a bull of excommunication
against Napoleon and his adherents, expressed
after the ancient model, and with the old haughty
Papal pretensions. Shortly afterwards, some
disturbances occurred at Rome, which led Miollis,
on the pretence that a life sacred in the eyes of all
Catholics might be endangered, to arrest Pius in
his palace at midnight, and send him away, under
a strong escort, to Savona. Intelligence of this
decisive step reached Napoleon soon after the battle of Wagram; and he was inclined at first to disapprove of the conduct of Miollis as too precipitate; it was now, however, impossible to recede, and the Pope was conveyed, by his order, across the Alps to Grenoble. His reception there was so much more reverential than Napoleon had anticipated, that he was soon re-conducted to Savona, where he was detained nearly two years. Meantime, Napoleon entered into negotiation with his prisoner, with a view to procure from him some formal relinquishment of his temporal claims. Pius VII. long resisted all his efforts, but at length, in August, 1811, conceded the main point. On the approach of an English fleet, the Roman Pontiff was removed, in January, 1812, to Fontainebleau, where he signed a new Concordat, of which the preliminary condition was, his separation for ever from Rome. He continued there a prisoner, though treated personally with respect, and, indeed, with magnificence, during more than five years; until, on the darkening of his own fortune, the Imperial jailer was compelled to adopt a different line of policy.

In 1814, the judgment ended; the vial was exhausted. The Pontiff was restored by the Allied Powers to his liberty and his kingdom. Rome's final destruction was not to come from the hand of man. But the judgment had produced no reformation: "they repented not of their deeds." It was an ominous prognostic, that, in his proclamation from Cesena, May 5, 1814, shortly before re-entering Rome, Pius VII. applied to himself the
blasphemous title of "God's Vicar upon earth." A few days afterwards, he solemnly crowned at Ancona a miraculous image of the Virgin. His arrival at Rome (May 18) was speedily followed by the re-establishment of the order of the Jesuits, as "the most experienced rowers to whom the bark of St. Peter might be most wisely committed." In character with these proceedings, he haughtily refused to sanction the toleration of Protestant worship in France, renewing the solemn anathematization of Protestants on the Maundy Thursday; and, in brief after brief, he denounced Bible Societies for circulating the Scriptures in the vulgar tongues of all nations, as "giving reason to fear that, instead of the Gospel of Christ, it might be found to be the Gospel of men, or the Gospel of the devil."

The sovereigns of Roman Catholic Europe exhibited a similar infatuation. "The restored Governments of Southern Europe," remarks M. Ranke, "repented of their former insubordination to Rome. They thought they had thereby unchained the tempest by which themselves had been overthrown, and beheld in the Pope their natural ally."* In France, the restored Bourbons dedicated their kingdom to the Virgin as their patroness, re-introduced the Jesuits, and persecuted their Protestant subjects. In Spain, Ferdinand "the embroiderer" re-established both the Jesuits and the Inquisition. In Piedmont, the King of Sardinia, to whom the Vaudois had been

* See Elliott, vol. iii. p. 373.
basely and cruelly consigned by the Treaty of Vienna, revoked the protection which had been extended to them by Napoleon. Everywhere, throughout Catholic Christendom, the "lying miracles" which had ceased during French ascendancy, recommenced; and the idolatrous shrines were again frequented by crowds of devotees. The Romish Church appeared to have learned nothing from the Divine chastisements. "They repented not of their deeds."

"The sixth angel poured out his bowl upon the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, in order that the way of the kings from the eastward (sun-rise) might be prepared." As the Nile is often employed as the emblem of Egypt, so, the Euphrates is repeatedly referred to as a symbol of the power of Assyria.* Here, in strict accordance with Scriptural analogy, it must be taken as denoting the empire founded by the Euphratean horsemen of the Sixth Trumpet. The Euphrates has been, from the earliest times, the highway of commercial traffic. That is to say, the passage of the Euphrates being in the great line of route by which, from time immemorial, intercourse has been maintained between the East and the West, its banks have been the site of the capitals of

* "Behold, the Lord bringeth up upon thee the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria." (Isa. viii. 7.) "That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry thy rivers." (Isa. xlv. 27.) "A drought is upon her waters, and they shall be dried up, for it is the land of graven images." (Jer. I. 38.) "And I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry; and Babylon shall become heaps." (Jer. li. 36.)
empire, the focus of civilization, and the pathway of conquest. The drying up of its waters must imply, therefore, the exhaustion of all the political sources of wealth and power which contribute to the strength and greatness of an empire; and what is added implies, that every political barrier would thereby be removed, which has hitherto obstructed the way of the Eastern kings; that the Euphrates would be dried up as a political boundary. Who are intended by "the kings from the East," has been regarded by expositors as a point of no small difficulty. Mr. Elliott, however, suggests a natural and satisfactory explanation. In the hymn of the harpers, in the preceding chapter, it forms the subject of triumphant anticipation, that all nations shall come and worship before The Lord God Almighty, because His judgments are made manifest. With these anticipations as to the conversion of the heathen world to Christianity, and the confluence of its princes and people to worship in the Christian Temple, all prophecy agrees. "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts; yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him." (Psa. lxxii. 10, 11.) "And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." (Isa. lx. 3.) In these and other passages, kings and nations are used convertible as parallel or equivalent expressions; and, by the kings from the East, Eastern nations generally are, no doubt, intended in the Apocalyptic Vision. Now, Moham-medism regnant and supreme has been, it must
be admitted, the most formidable obstruction to the Christianization of the Eastern world, while the Turkish power has been the great bulwark of the Mohammedan religion. By its laws, it was death to a Mussulman, to apostatize from his faith and become a Christian. "What then," remarks Mr. Elliott, "so signal a removal of obstructions to the conversion of the East, as the drying up of the flood of the Turkman host? What so notable a preparation of the way for princes and peoples from the East to come and worship?"*

And how remarkably have recent events corresponded to the prediction of the effects to be produced by the Sixth Vial! The open revolt of Ali Pasha of Ioannina in the summer of 1820, would not have resulted in any permanent diminution of the Ottoman power,† had it not determined, more than any other known event, and indeed precipitated, the first irregular movements in the cause of Greek independence. In April, 1821, the insurrection beginning in a rash and ill-conducted enterprise in the Dacian provinces, which was soon suppressed, had become general in the Morea; and Hydra, Psara, and Spezzia had embarked in a naval campaign against the Porte. An irruption of the Prince Royal of Persia into

* Elliott, iii. 408. The Author cites from Zegerus, a similar explanation of the expression: "Significatur apertam esse viam omnibus liberé currendi ad Christum."

† Mr. Leake, indeed, expresses his opinion, "that the Porte, during his reign, was more truly master of Greece than it had ever been before."
the Asiatic provinces of Turkey, in 1821 and 1822, favoured the cause of the insurgents; but, at the close of the fifth campaign, the cause of the Greeks was still in jeopardy, and the contest seemed almost as far as ever from a decisive termination. By sea, the Greek islanders had encountered and vanquished superior Ottoman and Egyptian fleets; but the tide of success seemed to be turned against them by the Egyptian armament of Ibrahim Pasha, the ravager of the Morea, when, in September, 1827, the combined fleets of England, France, and Russia, in contravention of their usual principles of policy, attacked and destroyed the Turco-Egyptian fleet in the battle of Navarino, and thereby saved Greece, and prepared the way for further disasters about to fall on the devoted Empire.

In the mean time, the revolt of the Janizaries at Constantinople, occasioned by a renewed attempt* to force upon them the nizam jedefed, or new military discipline, had led to the horrible massacre of July, 1826, which extinguished for ever that once formidable military order, originally instituted for the purpose of extending the Ottoman dominion over foreign nations. They had long ceased to excite terror, except to their Imperial masters, having degenerated into a licentious and enervated body of militia, jealous of their privileges, and

* A former attempt on the part of Sultan Selim, acting under French influence, to introduce the new system in 1807, occasioned a formidable revolt of the Janizaries, which led to three sanguinary insurrections, fatal to two monarchs, in eighteen months.
impatient of all control. Still, they were the descendants and representatives of those troops which had once been to the Porte its chief arm of conquest; and their destruction may be considered as a significant indication that the day of Ottoman power was past. In the spring of 1828, the enfeebled empire was again involved in an unequal contest with Russia. From the Caucasian frontier, the Muscovite general pursued his victorious career to Erzerom; while another army, advancing from the north, in its second campaign crossed the Balkan, entered Adrianople, and threatened the capital itself. In October, 1829, peace was again obtained, by the sacrifice of the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, and the concession of independence to Servia. In the same year, Algiers was taken by the French, and converted from a dependency of the Porte into a colony of France. This was followed by the declaration of independence on the part of the Pasha of Egypt, and his attempt to possess himself of Syria. The Sultan's armies were defeated in the three great battles of Hems, Nezib, and Iconium; and the interposition of the Allied Powers in 1840, again saved the Ottoman power from impending destruction, by driving the Egyptians out of Syria, and forcing back Mehemet Ali within his own pashalik.* It has thus become evident, that

* In 1812, the invasion of Russia by the French had saved the Ottoman empire from the danger which then threatened to overwhelm it, as the events consequent upon the French Revolution of 1789 had previously arrested the triumphant progress of the Austrian arms.
nothing supports the tottering empire of the Head of Islam in Europe, but the policy of the sovereigns of Christendom.

The drying up of the sources of the Turkish power, has not been, however, brought about entirely or mainly by foreign conquests or by internal revolt. Depopulation had long been silently going on in the once flourishing and fertile provinces; and to political causes of decline had been added, the Divine judgments of earthquake, famine, and pestilence. "Five hundred villages," says Mr. Walpole, "are now found in the district of Mardin (in Mesopotamia), which once possessed sixteen hundred. Three hundred were once comprehended in a part of the pashalik of Aleppo, now containing less than one-third of the number. Many towns are mentioned in the history of the Khalifs, which no longer exist: the sites of others may be traced on the route from Bagdad to Mosul.

The reservoirs and canals by which the infertility of Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and Babylonia, under the Saracens and Mamlouks, was augmented and improved, have been neglected. A melancholy illustration of the depopulated state of large tracts of country, is afforded by the view of those extensive cemeteries so frequently passed by the traveller in his route. Scarcely any vestiges of the villages which once flourished near them, are now seen. The incursions of robbers, the calamities of war and pestilence, have compelled the inhabitants to remove to other districts. The countries between the Tigris and the Euphrates, once distinguished for
their populousness, are consigned to ruin and neglect; and the inhabitants retire to villages on the banks of rivers, where they are less harassed by the predatory attacks of the Arabs."* The Syrian coast has been desolated chiefly by earthquakes. The great earthquake of 1822 threw down the walls of Aleppo, and 14,000 persons are said to have perished in the ruins. Antioch, and the other towns and villages in the province, suffered from the same dreadful calamity. In the same year, the cholera broke out at Bassora, and, ascending the Tigris to Bagdad, swept off a third of the population. In 1831, Mecca and Medina were depopulated by a similar visitation; and Bagdad, the ancient seat of the Khalifate, was visited with the triple scourge of the plague,† a flood, and a sanguinary civil war. In Constantinople itself, the devastations of disease are silently but constantly proceeding. "An unthinking ob-

* Walpole's "Memoirs relating to Turkey," p. 9. Dr. Walsh gives a striking description of the state of Nicea, which, so late as 1677, was a flourishing town, now silent and desolate as Tadmor. "There is a lovely and fertile plain fifteen miles long, and no one to cultivate it; a lake-like and inland sea, full of fish, and no one to eat them; and the magnificent walls of a city, more than eight miles in circumference, and no one to inhabit it." Walsh's Constantinople, vol. ii. p. 189.

† A letter from a resident Missionary gives the following affecting account:—"The commission of the destroying angel has been awfully severe. Fifty thousand have perished by the plague. To the horrors of disease has been added the desolation of a flood. Part of the inhabitants attempted to escape into the country; but they were arrested by a sudden inundation of the Tigris, by which numbers perished." Cited by Elliott, iii. 407.
server," says Mr. Turner, "would form a high opinion of the prosperity of Turkey, from the rapidity with which the numbers who perished in the plague of 1812, were supplied in Constantinople and its neighbourhood; but the traveller would find villages and whole tracts of country emptied to furnish them. The capital is peopled at the expense of the exhausted country; and it is the same ruinous want of system in the government, which depopulates the provinces of the empire, and gathers multitudes on the banks of the Bosphorus."* "It will be no exaggeration to say," remarks Dr. Walsh, (Chaplain to the British Embassy from 1821 to 1831,) "that, within the last twenty years, from 300,000 to 400,000 have been prematurely swept away in this one city in Europe, by causes which were not operating in any others,—conflagration, pestilence, and civil commotions."

It surely must be regarded as a signal fulfilment of the prophecy, that the Turkish power, upheld by European policy, should thus be exhausted and dried up by internal causes of decay.† Nor is it less remarkable, that every Mohammedan power should exhibit a similar exhaustion and decline. Persia presents, in this respect, a counterpart to Turkey. In India, Affghanistan, Bokhara, Barbary, and Morocco, the same process has been going on. The Moors, many years ago, were known to have long entertained forebodings of the year

* Turner's Tour in the Levant, vol. i. p. 91.
† Lamartine has said, "Turkey is dying out for want of Turks."
1844 as the 1260th year of the Hejira.* Whatever may have been the ground for this superstitious impression, it is a singular coincidence, that, in that year, at the requisition of the European powers, the law of the Koran which rendered it a capital crime to embrace the Christian faith, was formally abrogated by the Porte. The language of the Earl of Aberdeen, in his despatch to the British Ambassador at the Porte, will shew the importance attached to this concession: "Her Majesty's Government require the Porte to abandon, once for all, so revolting a principle. They have no wish to humble the Porte by imposing upon it an unreasonable obligation; but, as a Christian Government, the protection of those who profess a common belief with themselves, from persecution and oppression, on that account alone, by their Mohammedan rulers, is a paramount duty with them, and one from which they cannot recede. Your Excellency will therefore press upon the Turkish Government, that, if the Porte has any regard for the friendship of England, if it has any hope that, in the hour of peril or adversity, that protection which has more than once saved it from destruction, will be extended to it again, it must renounce, absolutely and without equivocation, the barbarous practice which has called for the remonstrance now addressed to it." The concession was not obtained till after long negotiation;

* From A.D. 622. But 1260 prophetic years, being equal to 1242 Julian years, would extend to A.D. 1864. Yet, the Muslim tradition may be the echo of the Christian prophecy.
but at length, on the 21st of March, 1844, the following "official declaration of the Sublime Porte, relinquishing the practice of executions for apostacy," was issued: "It is the special and constant intention of His Highness the Sultan, that his cordial relations with the High Powers be preserved, and that a perfect reciprocal friendship be maintained and increased. The Sublime Porte engages to take formal measures to prevent henceforward the execution and putting to death of the Christian who is an apostate." This was followed with a "declaration of His Highness the Sultan to Sir Stratford Canning," at his audience on the day following: "Henceforward, neither shall Christianity be insulted in my dominions, nor shall Christians be in any way persecuted for their religion."*

Thus has the greatest political obstacle to the conversion of the Mohammedan world been formally and finally removed; and in this sense, by the drying up of the Euphratean inundation which had overspread the whole Eastern Empire, the way of kings and nations from the East has been prepared.

After the sixth angel had poured out his bowl upon the Euphrates, the Apostle's attention was called to a distinct representation. There ap-

* The papers containing the correspondence relating to this subject, were presented to Parliament, May 3, 1844. In communicating the Royal approbation to Sir Stratford, Lord Aberdeen says: "You have brought to a successful close a question of which the importance cannot be too highly rated."
peared to him, either as proceeding or as having proceeded from the mouths of the three emblematic forms of the Dragon, the Wild Beast, and the False Prophet, (the latter evidently the same as the two-horned Beast, or the Papacy,) three unclean spirits in the shape of frogs.* These are explained to denote "spirits of demons, working miracles or signs, going forth to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them to the battle of the great day of Almighty God." This announcement is followed by a peculiarly solemn warning. "Behold, I come (suddenly) as a thief: happy is he who watches and keeps on his garments, lest he should (have to) walk out unclothed, and men should behold his exposure." It is added, (evidently in anticipation of the result of the operation of these evil agencies,) that the place to which the kings of the earth were to be gathered for the conflict, was called in the Hebrew, Armageddon. In other words, they were to be gathered, as intimated in the xxth chapter, for the purpose of destruction; for such is the import of the term. Like other appellatives in the Apocalypse, the name must be understood in a mystical sense, not as denoting any place, but in allusion to the famous scene of ancient conflict and slaughter, which, no doubt, took its actual name from the historical event. That Armageddon is only a Greek form of Hor Megiddo, "the field of destruction," is so obvious, that one cannot but feel surprise

* As it is not stated, that they were seen to proceed from their mouths, perhaps we may understand the words as intimating simply that they had proceeded, &c.
that any doubt or difference of opinion should have been expressed upon that point.*

The fulfilment of this prediction is evidently prefigured by a subsequent Vision, and must, therefore, be referred to a period posterior to the pouring forth of the Seventh Vial. It is simply the going forth of the three unclean spirits, that is described as taking place in the interval between the pouring out of the Sixth and of the Seventh Vial. The solemn warning, accordingly, must be understood as pointing to the judgments under this last Vial, and to the catastrophe indicated by the coming of "Him who is faithful and true, and who in righteousness doth judge and make war." The admonition is intended to guard the servants of Christ against being beguiled and deceived by the lying spirits who should exert this fatal influence. Whatever the evil principles are, which are thus referred to, they are such as it would require watchfulness to resist, in order not to be lulled into a false security. The wide diffusion and ascendancy which it is intimated they would obtain, seem to require the lapse of a considerable period from their promulgation, previously to the conflict to which the prediction points; and hence, the greater necessity for the caution to watch against the insidious danger.

The general nature of these evil principles or agencies may, perhaps, be safely inferred from their emblematic parentage. Proceeding from

* Megiddo was a town of Manasseh. See Judges v. 19; 2 Kings xxiii. 29. The true etymology is given by Grotius and Vitrings,
the mouth of the Dragon, the Wild Beast, and the False Prophet, they must bear a relation to the systems of Anti-Christian polity which are designated by those emblems. Now the Dragon, in the preceding Visions, is the emblem of the evil principle that was the soul of the Roman paganism. In that system, the malignant spirit of heathenism displayed itself in open and direct antagonism to Christianity, while its prominent characteristic, as a political power, was its martial genius, that of a military despotism. The Wild Beast to whom the Dragon ceded his power and his seat, is the personification of the revived Imperial power, assuming ecclesiastical supremacy, and carrying on the war against the true Church, not like the Dragon, as the open adversary of the Christian faith, but in the name of Christianity itself. The spirit which proceeded from its mouth must, therefore, signify the evil principle of spiritual despotism, as exercised by secular rulers in virtue of their assumed Imperial prerogative. As to the third demoniacal spirit, which proceeded from the False Prophet, we can scarcely err in connecting it more immediately with the Papacy or the apostate priesthood.*

* Mr. Elliott, taking the dragon to denote "the Devil abstractedly," arbitrarily explains the spirit which proceeded from its mouth as signifying infidelity in combination with democracy, the other two denoting the principle of Popery and the Oxford priestcraft! This is one of the least satisfactory portions of his Exposition. Mr. Cuninghame supposes the three spirits to be, Atheism, Despotism, and Popery; Mr. Bickersteth, Infidelity, Lawlessness, and Popery. With regard to Infidelity, it is passing strange, that any one conversant with the prevalence
By this very remarkable prediction, (which the more deeply concerns the Christian world as bearing upon the aspect of the present times,) it is evidently intended to put the Church of Christ upon its guard against some extraordinarily rapid and wide diffusion throughout society, of three unholy and Anti-Christian principles, by which the rulers of the world are represented as becoming so infatuated as to league together against the cause of Almighty God.

But here, as the steady lights of history begin to fail us, and we seem entering into the twilight of the future, it is more especially necessary to tread with caution, lest we overstep the path of the expositor, and lose our footing in following the false lights of political speculation. Were there not reason to conclude, that the incipient fulfilment of the prediction has taken place, it would be alike unwarrantable and perilous to attempt its historical interpretation; and whatever anticipations it may suggest to the thoughtful observer of the times, a broad line of demarcation should be drawn between retrospective and conjectural exposition.

The danger of blending political opinions with the application of predictions to passing events, has been abundantly evinced by the mistaken construction put by contemporary expositors upon

of Deism in the eighteenth century, the precursor of the Atheism of Voltaire and Frederick, and the French Encyclopedists, should regard its revival as a characteristic of the present religious age. As to Tractarianism, it may be regarded as a mere emanation from Popery.
the events connected with the French Revolution, and by the fallacious nature of all their expectations. It would seem to be next to impossible, to look upon the events of the day otherwise than through a distorting medium. Mr. Elliott has only added another to the numerous instances in which the bias of opinion has had the effect of warping the judgment of the expositor. Strange to say, he would identify the demon from the Dragon's mouth with the democratic spirit of Reform; a misconception the more palpable, inasmuch as that spirit is diametrically opposed to the draconic spirit of the old idolatry, or to that which kindled the fires of persecution, and is at utter variance with the Anti-Christian pretensions of spiritual despotism. The infatuation which is represented in the prediction as falling upon the rulers of the earth, can have nothing in common with a popular agitation.

There is, however, one prominent feature of the present times, to which secular politicians have for the most part seemed to be blinded, but which corresponds so precisely to the emblem as to justify its being pointed out as a marked fulfilment of the prediction: namely, the very extraordinary activity and portentous influence of the revived order of the Jesuits. In interpreting the unclean spirit from the mouth of the False Prophet as specifically denoting the spirit of Jesuitism, we are guided by abundant evidence from notorious facts. Nor is the exposition altogether novel. Vitringa supposed the three frogs issuing forth contemporaneously, to mean the Jesuits;
and Daubuz explained the emblem as denoting the monks and papal clergy of the time.* Their mistake lay in referring the three evil principles to a common source in the Papacy, overlooking the marked distinction implied by the triple emblem.

The Jesuits were re-established by Pius VII. in 1814; but it is only within the last ten or twelve years, that they have resumed a prominent part in political affairs, and openly discovered their ambitious determination to regain their former ascendancy. In France, their pretensions have brought them into hostile collision with the University and with the Government. They were the chief movers in the revolution which separated Catholic Belgium from the Protestant Netherlands. In Switzerland, they have been the chief instigators of the dispute between the Cantons, which has involved the Federal Republic in civil war. In Italy, they stand charged with being at least accessory to a treasonable conspiracy.† In Syria and the East, their intrigues have been directed to the object of thwarting and opposing the Protestant missions. They instigated the French Government to the perfidious occupation of Tahiti. In the United States, in British India, in all the British Colonies, as well as nearer home, in Cochin China, and in China itself, the

* The latter cites Artemidorus as thus expounding the figure:

Βότραχοι δὲ ἄνδρας γένεις καὶ βωμολῶχους προσημαίνωσι.

"Frogs signify impostors and flatterers."

† Written in October, 1847.
spirit of Jesuit propagandism and intrigue is at this moment actively engaged in opposition to the faith and principles of the Reformation, and to the best interests of mankind.

What then, it may be asked, is the historical explanation of the other portions of the triple emblem? If, in some parts of Europe, there have been movements in favour of popular liberty, there has unquestionably taken place a simultaneous revival of spiritual despotism. It is not a little remarkable, that, at the very time that the Ottoman Sultan was abrogating the intolerant law which forbade the conversion of any Mohammedan to the Christian faith, the Austrian Emperor was issuing an ordinance interdicting, under the severest penalties of fine and imprisonment, any Austrian Catholic subject from embracing Protestantism, without having previously obtained express permission from the Government; such permission to be granted only under special circumstances, and not till the competent authorities shall have admitted the necessity for such a change.* But not in Austria only have the secular powers placed themselves in opposition to the free profession and propagation of the Gospel. In Spain, Portugal, Naples, Sardinia, a similar spirit of intolerance has manifested itself; and even in Prussia, with a modified toleration of different churches, has been combined, on the part of the State, an absolute spiritual despotism. But, in France, the change is still more striking. The

attempts of the French courts of law to nullify the free toleration and recognition of the Protestants of France by the Code Napoleon and the Charter, in several recent instances, are flagrant indications of the spirit of despotism which has insinuated itself into the governmental system of Louis Philippe. "It is not Italy, nor Spain, nor Austria, but France," remarks M. Gaussen, "that is the grand supporter of Popery." France has been the destroyer of Tahiti. France has placed herself, under Louis Philippe, at the head of the Popish propagandist movements, as Patroness and Defender of the Roman Catholic or Marian faith in both hemispheres. France has been the antagonist of constitutional principles in Greece, the ally of Austrian despotism in Italy, the supporter of the Jesuit party in Switzerland. This novel attitude of a Government that has sprung out of a popular Revolution, so contrary to everything that could have been anticipated, must be regarded as one of the most striking phenomena of the times.*

The spirit issuing from the mouth of the

* Mr. Elliott conjectures, that France "may be expected to prove the chief secular power employed by the three spirits to head their project of gathering the kings of the earth to the battle of the great day of God Almighty." He adduces, as confirmatory of this view, the curious heraldic fact, that three frogs are the old arms of France, being the symbol of the Franks, in allusion to their native marshes. They appear, along with the three fleurs de lis, on the armorial shield of Clovis, and on a banner in the ancient tapestry in the cathedral of Rheims. Whatever may be thought of the learned Author's conjecture, it is startling to find the Apocalyptic emblem, representing the spirits which
Dragon, which must be distinguished from the principles of spiritual despotism and the Papal priestcraft, may, as already intimated, be recognised in the anti-Christian principle of War, the spirit of military despotism, prompting the lust of conquest, or in the martial passion that seems to be reviving, whether it discover itself in hostile aggressions or in armed revolt and civil warfare. Or, if the Dragon be regarded as more especially the emblem of the old Pagan persecuting power as openly warring against the Christian faith, there are not wanting in the events of the day, indications of this spirit; as in the banishment of the Zillerthal Protestants from Austria, and in the intolerant edicts which have led to extensive emigrations, from Germany, Prussia, and even Holland, to Australia and the United States, of Evangelical Protestants, seeking to escape from persecution, and preferring exile with religious freedom to the yoke of tyranny in their native land.

Such are the evil principles which are undeniably, at the present time, at work in political society, influencing the councils of sovereigns, exerting the strength of an infatuation which might seem to be the effect of judicial blindness, and preparing the way for future conflicts. And it is with regard to the predicted issue of the operation of these evil principles in some tremendous collision, that the servants of Christ go forth to gather the kings of the world to battle, actually employed as the arms of a military power, and blazoned upon an ancient banner. See Elliott, vol. iv. p. 64.
are admonished to watch:—“Behold, I come as a thief.”

“The seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air (or atmosphere). And there proceeded a voice out of the Temple of heaven, from the Throne itself, saying, It is done.”* This, being the last of the seven plagues, is the termination of the third woe. Like all the preceding ones, it must be supposed to be inflicted upon the enemies of the True Church; and its being poured upon the atmosphere, seems to intimate its universal, or, at least, very wide extent. The effects which follow are, first, “voices, and thunders, and lightnings,” symbolical of a tremendous political agitation; next, “a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth,—so extensive and so great;” thirdly, the results of the earthquake are stated to be, the tripartite division of the Great City, the fall of “the cities of the nations,” the fulfilment of the special predictions of Divine judgment upon Babylon, and the disappearance of every island and mountain; and fourthly, there follows a tremendous plague of hail, causing those upon whom it fell, not to repent, but to blaspheme.

Interpreting these symbols by what we have seen to be their import in former Visions, we are led to infer, that they prefigure a European revolution more extensive and prodigious than any that has hitherto occurred; in which the Papal commonwealth shall be divided, politically, into three distinct ecclesiastical states or commun-

* “Actum est,” i.e. All is accomplished: the mystery of God is about to be consummated. See pages 205, 6.
ties;* and the cognate ecclesiastical systems shall also be overthrown. The doom of Babylon is more fully described in the succeeding Vision. The same language that occurs in this prediction, as to the islands and mountains, is employed in the description of the Sixth Seal, (ch. vi. 14,) and must, of course, be interpreted, in the same manner, of political convulsions and a change in the aspect and structure of society, such as attended the overthrow of the old Roman Paganism. And finally, the great hail-storm, a figure which recals the seventh Egyptian plague, has been thought to indicate a judgment immediately from heaven; but, agreeably to its import in the Gothic woe of the First Trumpet, it seems rather to point to a hostile irruption of a foreign (perhaps a northern) enemy, and to presfigure the devastation and intolerable suffering occasioned by the iron storm and dread artillery of war. To venture upon any further exposition, any conjectural application of the fearful prediction, would be but a presumptuous attempt to lift the veil of futurity. "Whosoever," to adopt the language of Mr. Elliott, "after fearful wars and convulsions, a tripartition like this shall take place in the European commonwealth, it must be regarded as the alarum-bell to Christendom."

* Vitringa conjectures, that one-third will consist of adherents to the Papacy; another, of those who renounce the Pontifical authority, but adhere to the Romish superstition; a third, of those who will pass over to the Protestant Church.
The preceding observations were penned in the Autumn of 1847; and it has been thought proper to lay them before the reader without any alteration, as a simple exposition of the prophetic page, which had suggested itself antecedently to that sudden and universal political movement in European society, which has been very generally recognised as the initial fulfilment of the outpouring of the Seventh Vial.*

The records of modern history, indeed, present nothing parallel to the sudden and simultaneous insurrection of the oppressed nations of Europe against their rulers, originating, without concert, from causes altogether distinct and diverse. As remarked by Burke, in the year 1790, there had been "a hollow murmuring under ground, a confused movement, threatening a general earthquake of the political world." The accession of Pius IX., (June 16, 1846,) under circumstances

* A volume under the title of "The Seventh Vial," "with special reference to the present Revolutions in Europe," has recently appeared, in which eloquent expression is given to this prevailing opinion. "It is not many months," observes the Writer, "since the profound tranquillity of the Western world, and the probable continuance of that tranquillity, were proclaimed from the thrones of England and France on almost the same day. Yet, all the (apparent) securities have been found of little avail. There have been tumults, insurrections, conflicts, all over the Continent. The shocks of earthquake-revolution have followed each! other with astounding rapidity; and the firmament is already darkened by the impending horrors of a European war,—the gathering of the symbolic hail-storm which is to fall on men. In the comments of the daily journals, we are constantly meeting with the symbols of the Apocalypse." "Seventh Vial," pp. 326, 331.
which took all the powers of Europe by surprise, was the signal of mighty changes, which had been rendered inevitable by causes leaving no choice between Reform and Revolution. In the following year, the popular modifications of the Papal Government, the formation of an Italian commercial league, and the liberal policy of the King of Sardinia, had seemed to give promise of a peaceful adjustment. The civil war of the Swiss Cantons threatened at one time to disturb the general peace of Europe; but this was happily terminated (in November,) by the defeat and submission of the insurgents. Still, the demonstrations made by Austria in Northern Italy, the menacing aspect of popular discontent, as indicated by the Reform banquets in France, and the constitutional movements in Prussia and different parts of Germany, afforded premonitory symptoms of impending changes. These were as "the voices, the thunders, and the lightnings," which indicated the disturbed state of the political atmosphere.

Yet, lulled in false security, the monarchs of Europe and their ministers disregarded the warning; and, not dreaming of danger, while sternly refusing any popular concessions, neglected every wise precaution, and made no provision for any reverse. Scarcely had the year 1848 opened, when, as if the fire from the mystic censer had fallen upon Etna, and ignited the atmosphere, all Sicily became wrapped in the flames of civil war. In Palermo, after three days' fighting, the people proclaimed a Provisional Government, calling for
the Constitution of 1812. Before the end of the month, the insurrection had spread to Naples, and its King had been compelled to concede a Constitution to the demands of his subjects. Ten days afterwards, the King of Sardinia issued a proclamation containing the basis of a popular constitution. The reign of the new King of Denmark was opened with a similar concession. These changes were, however, unaccompanied with violence. Meantime, throughout Germany, there were signs of disquiet. Serious riots occurred at Munich; disturbances of an agrarian character took place among the Austrian peasantry (of the Ober Steyer-mark); and, in Bohemia, there were manifestations of great discontent. It is important to remark, that all these indications preceded the Revolution of February in the French capital.

Thus far, no fatal shock had been given to any of the existing Governments; no throne had been subverted. But, on the 22nd of February, the popular insurrection in Paris broke out, which, through what some writers represent as a combination of accidents, had, on the third day, subverted a dynasty, and replaced the throne with a Republican Government. The French King and his Minister, who, on the 21st, had anticipated no danger, found themselves, on the 25th, reduced to the condition of friendless fugitives and exiles. Scarcely more than a fortnight had elapsed, when, with equal suddenness, a popular revolution at Vienna, (March 13 and 14,) led to the equally sudden and ignominious flight of
Prince Metternich, the virtual ruler of Austria, and the presiding genius of the Continental despotisms. On the 18th of the same month, after a week of great commotion and severe fighting, a similar revolution was effected at Berlin. On the same day, Milan revolted against the Austrian yoke, and drove out the viceroy. On the day following, the Italian flag was hoisted in all the towns of Northern Italy. The King of Sardinia now openly espoused the popular cause, and, having addressed a proclamation to the people of Lombardy and Venice, crossed the frontier at the head of his troops. By the middle of March, the Dutchies of Schleswig and Holstein had revolted against the Danish Government; and all the secondary German powers,—Bavaria, (whose king had abdicated in favour of his son,) Wirtemberg, Baden, the Hesses, Saxony, Brunswick, and Hanover, as well as the Dukes of Weimar and Gotha,—had conceded, at the demands of their subjects, popular constitutions and the freedom of the Press. In pursuance of the steps taken by the Frankfort Diet in the same month, a German Constituent National Assembly met in June, and established a Provisional Central Government, placing at its head the Archduke John of Austria as Vicar of the Empire. The revolt of Slavonia and Croatia, and the civil war in Hungary, increased still further the complication and disorder of the affairs of the Austrian Empire, which had thus to sustain at once four several revolutions,—the German, the Italian, the Magyar, and the Slavonian. Such was the position of affairs in
the summer of 1848. From the Mediterranean to the Baltic, from the Atlantic to the Black Sea, a chain of revolutions had changed, at least for the time, the entire political aspect of Papal Europe. Taking the phrase literally, it might be said, "the cities of the nations fell." Rome, Naples, Palermo, Florence, Turin, Paris, Milan, Vienna, Prague, Berlin, have each participated in the effects of the social convulsion. Under the metaphor of Cities, however, political and ecclesiastical systems are doubtless prefigured. It is too soon to speak of these as having been subverted by the violent shock which they have sustained. Already a re-action has taken place; counter revolutions have restored, in some measure, the powers which had been apparently prostrated; and nothing wears the appearance of a definitive arrangement. The political atmosphere is still troubled; the whole surface of society yet vibrates with the convulsive movement; and "men's hearts failing them for fear," are "looking after those things which are coming on the earth." It may be, that Europe has hitherto felt but the first shock of that mighty earthquake, which has shaken, but not subverted, the "cities of the nations." The division of the Great City into three parts, may be consummated by the definitive separation of Germany and Austria from Italy; but it would be rash to speak of such a division of the "holy Roman Empire" as being at present accomplished. There yet seems impending over Eastern Europe, that dreadful hail-storm which forms part of the symbolical description. But human sagacity
has uniformly been foiled, when it has attempted to fill up, by anticipation, the grand outline of the prophetic picture.

Again, whether the Seventh Vial shall receive its fulfilment within a brief period corresponding to the duration of the preceding Vials, or whether, as winding up the mystery of Divine Providence, it may extend over the present and the succeeding century, it is impossible to determine. That, under the Seventh Vial, must be included both the Judgment upon the Mystical Harlot, and the great conflict which forms the subject of the ensuing Vision, may be inferred from the introductory declaration of the Angel, "It is done," taken in connection with the previous announcement, that "in the days of the voice of the Seventh Angel the mystery should be consummated." And as, possibly, an interval of many years may elapse between the overthrow of the Great City and the catastrophe prefigured in the nineteenth chapter, it is reasonable to conclude, that a period of considerable duration will be occupied by the awful series of events which have been ushered in by such portentous phenomena.*

This expectation is also warranted by the analogy supplied by the past. God's time is generally longer than man's time; although, when the hour strikes, the suddenness of the event always takes the world by surprise. The Reformation seemed, at the time, to be the immediate precursor of the fall of Babylon; and the tenth part

* Some recent writers venture to fix upon 1866 for the termination of the Seventh Vial.
of the City actually fell. But the Reformation itself was arrested and put back; and three hundred years of wars and calamities rolled away before the Seventh Angel sounded. It is evidently indicated by what is subsequently declared (at ch. xix. v. 20,) that, notwithstanding the overthrow of the "cities of the nations," the kings of the earth will hold or recover their dominion, and that, subsequently to the fall of Babylon, the Wild Beast will retain his power and his character, in alliance with those kings, and with the False Prophet by whom all who bear his mark are deceived.

These considerations seem to justify the expectation, that the events predicted will occupy a considerable period, in accordance with the conclusion to which we have been led by the interpretation of the arithmetical enigma of 1260 days, that the term of the Wild Beast will not have run out till the beginning of the twentieth century. The present aspect of affairs may seem to favour a different anticipation; but the reader, having before him the data upon which that calculation is founded, will be armed against the prevailing tendency to antedate the fulfilment of the Divine promises.

In the mean time, considering the activity and subtlety of the deceptive principles symbolised by the demons which have gone forth to infatuate the rulers of the world,—principles which are now actively at work in society,—Christians have peculiar need of being on their guard, that they may neither be beguiled nor surprised. "He that believeth, shall not make haste;" but,—"Behold, I come suddenly: blessed is he who watcheth."
Vision the Tenth.

THE JUDGMENT UPON THE MYSTICAL BABYLON

As, after the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, the prophetic narrative was suspended in order to introduce a symbolical personification of the True Church of Christ, invested with emblematic radiance, and raised to political elevation,—a condition too soon exchanged for that of a fugitive seeking concealment in the wilderness; so, after the Apostle had witnessed the out-pouring of the Seventh Vial, he was transported in spirit to a different scene, where he beheld an emblematic representation of the False Church, designated as "the Great City," the mystical Babylon. The obvious design of this distinct vision is, to illustrate the general intimations conveyed in the preceding predictions, as to the character of the Mystery of Iniquity, and the doom of all its adherents.

One of the Seven Angels who had poured out the bowls of the Divine wrath, summoned the Apostle to come and see the judgment about to be executed upon "the Great Harlot seated upon many waters;" an expression alluding to the actual position of ancient Babylon upon the
Euphrates (Jer. li. 18); but explained by the angel as signifying "peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues." That is to say, the confluence of waters symbolized a great spiritual emporium, the resort of all nations. Yet, the scene of the Vision is described as a wilderness or desert. So, Babylon stood in the midst of a mighty desert; and Rome itself is surrounded with the bare and pestilential Campagna. There, "seated upon a scarlet-coloured monster, covered with names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns," the Apostle beheld "a woman in purple and scarlet apparel, decked with golden ornaments, precious stones, and pearls, and holding in her hand a golden cup, filled with the wine of her spiritual harlotry."* The picture might recall the language of the Prophet Jeremiah: "Babylon hath been a golden cup in The Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her." (Jer. li. 7.) Upon the forehead of this splendidly attired figure, (in accordance with an ancient usage,†) was a label inscribed with her mystical name, "Babylon the Great, the Mother of harlots (or adulteries ‡) and abominations of the earth." The woman appeared intoxicated; and it was suggested to the Apostle, that it was with the blood of the saints and mar-

* Upon some ancient coins, the City of Rome is represented as a woman sitting upon a lion.
† More cites from Seneca, in illustration: "Nomen tuum pependit in fronte; pretia stupri accepisti."
‡ ἄφρειδων: so some copies, which the Vulgate follows.
tyrs of Jesus. At this sight, he wondered with great amazement; on which the Angel inquired why he so wondered; and then proceeded to explain the emblematic scene.

The meaning of the Seven-headed monster that carried the woman, is first interpreted. Its seven heads have a two-fold signification: they denote at once seven hills and seven kings. That is, Rome, topographically designated as the seven-hilled city,* had politically existed, or would exist, as the seat of empire, under seven forms of government, the foundations successively of its greatness. The best commentary upon this part of the figurative description, is supplied by the language of Livy and of Tacitus. The former enumerates Kings, Consuls, Dictators, Decemvirs, and Military Tribunes, as the five previous forms of Government.† The latter, with more precision, while noticing the interregna between the distinct constitutional forms of government, still makes these the same in number: "Kings first had possession of the city of Rome. Brutus established civil liberty and the Consulship. Dictatorships were for a time assumed. The power of the Decemvirs did not flourish above two years; and the consular power of Military Tribunes for only a

* "Sed quae de septem totum circumspicit orbe
Montibus, imperii Roma Deinque locus." Ovid.

Other classical references to the seven hills are pointed out by Elliott and preceding writers.

† "Quae, ab conditâ urbe Româ ad captam eandum urbem Romani,
sub regibus primum, consulibus deinde, ac dictatoribus decemvirisque,
ac tribunis consularibus gessere." Liv. lib. vi. c. 1.
short period. Not long did the domination of Cinna or that of Sylla last. The power of Pompey and Crassus soon merged in Cæsar; the armed domination of Lepidus and Antony in Augustus, who, with the title of Prince, took under his rule the entire State, wearied of civil discord."

* The Imperial form of government, dating from the supremacy of Augustus, may therefore be considered as the sixth. This was the existing head at the time of the Vision, agreeably to the declaration of the angel: "Five are fallen, and one is; and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short time."

This solution of the prophetic enigma of the first six heads, which interprets the term βασιλεῖς, kings, in the sense of potestates, governing powers, appears to have been first suggested by Osiander, about the middle of the sixteenth century. Victorinus, the father of Apocalyptic absurdities, expounded the seven heads of the seven Roman Emperors, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus, Domitian (the sixth or reigning head), and Nerva; the eighth to be Nero redivivus or Anti-Christ. Cyril of Jerusalem, in the following century, intimates his opinion, that Anti-Christ, after subduing three out of the ten kings of the Roman Empire in its later form, would, as the first and chief of the remaining seven, be the Beast's eighth head, †

* Tacit. Annal. lvi. i. c. 1.
† This unequivocal reference to the Apocalypse by the Greek father, is admitted by Stuart to be important as a testimony to the genuineness and authority of the book. See Stuart, vol. i. p. 361. Elliott, vol. i. p. 32, note; vol. ii. p. 327.
The same vague notion re-appears in the Commentary of Andreas, early in the seventh century, in connection with a fantastic exposition of the seven heads, the import of which continued to baffle all attempts at explanation, till the era of the Reformation.* No sooner, however, was the true solution discovered, than it appears to have been at once generally recognized.† Grotius first ventured to call it in question; and we find Dr. Henry More, in the seventeenth century, defending this interpretation against his treacherous cavils, and exposing his insidious attempts to divert the application of the prediction from the Papacy. "No historians," he observes, "reckon otherwise; and what can be more satisfactory than that Prophecy speaks in the very language of History?"‡ Dr. Cressener adduces "the contrary authorities of the most zealous and judicious interpreters of the Church of Rome, concerning the chief foundations of the Grotian interpretation." The explanation of the seven heads of the Beast as seven single emperors, is condemned by the Jesuit Riber, "one of the most judicious of all the Roman

† Osiander published in 1544. Nearly the same explanation is given by Fulco in Apoc. Lond. 1573. Foxe, in 1587, notices it as that of Fulco and Artopæus, who wrote earlier. Pareus (1615) adopts it as the solution of Aretius, Napier, and Brightman. Daubuz mistakenly ascribes it to King James; Stuart, with his usual ignorance of English commentators, to Vitringa. See Elliott, vol. iii. p. 99, note; vol. iv. pp. 437, 448.
‡ More's Works, p. 321. We may refer to this learned writer as having refuted, by anticipation, the cavils of Maitland and others to the enumeration. See also Elliott, vol. iii. pp. 99—102.
interpreters," who says: "Never any man but Victorinus did take them for single persons, whose opinion all do deservedly cry out against."* This absurd and exploded interpretation has, nevertheless, found advocates in the present day, among a class of expositors who, from whatever motive, are anxious to make it appear, either that the Apocalypse is a mere fable or 'epopee,' or that its predictions were fulfilled in Jewish times, and can have no reference to Papal Rome. Thus, while Eichhorn, reckoning from Augustus, and arbitrarily passing over Galba and his two successors, makes Vespasian the sixth head, in order to place the composition of the Apocalypse in the reign of that Emperor, Stuart, reckoning from Julius Cæsar, (with Bertholdt,) makes Nero the sixth head, maintaining that the Apocalypse was composed in his reign.† Professor Lee, on the other hand, adopting the fanciful conjecture of Lactantius, interprets the seven kings of those emperors who were remarkable for the part they took in the persecution of the Church, viz. Domitian, Decius, Valerian, Aurelian, Diocletian, Maximianus, and


† "But why only seven kings? First, because the number seven is the prevailing symbolic number of the book; then, secondly, because this covers the ground which the writer means specially to occupy. . . . . . The manner of the declaration here seems to decide beyond all reasonable appeal against a later period than about A.D. 67 or 68 for the composition of the Apocalypse!" Stuart, ii. 325, 6.
Galerius.* These forced and arbitrary interpretations require no further refutation than they receive from the observation of the learned Jesuit already referred to; that to interpret these seven kings of individuals, is to disregard alike Scripture usage and the concurrent opinion of the soundest expositors. Vitrinja, it must be candidly confessed, is chargeable with equal absurdity in interpreting the seven heads of seven Popes!

The real difficulty relates to the explanation of the Seventh Head, which, in the time of St. John, was still future, and, when he came, was to continue but a short time. Three different solutions are mentioned by Mr. Elliott, whose own theory forms a fourth. The first is that of Mede, who, regarding the Sixth Head as terminating at the division of the Roman Empire, makes the Seventh to be the Western emperor who reigned subsequently to that last division under Honorius and Arcadius. The second is that of Dr. More, who considers the “Christian Caesars” as constituting the Seventh Head.† The third is that of Bishop Newton, which regards the Sixth or Imperial Head as extending through the line of Christian, as well as Pagan Emperors, till the extinction of the Imperial title in the West, by Odoacer, king of the Heruli, A.D. 476. Mr. Elliott would make the transition from the Sixth to the Seventh Head to have taken place when Diocletian assumed the

* Lee's Sermons and Dissertations, p. 335.
† More's Works, pp. 298, 364. This opinion has been revived by Mr. Cuninghame, who regards the Gothic decem-regal confederacy of Western Europe under the Papacy as the eighth head.
Oriental diadem in place of the laurel crown, together with the robe of silk and gold, and the title of despot (δέσποτης), and became, in the language of Gibbon, "the founder of a new empire." A new principle was then introduced into the administration, that of a quadripartite division, which led, in a few years, to the permanent separation of the Eastern and Western Empires; and it was under this "quadripartite diademned headship," the learned Expositor contends, that the dragon power of Paganism received its deadly wound from Theodosius.*

Against this novel interpretation of the Seventh Head, there arise several forcible objections. In the first place, it has already been shown, that the head that was wounded to death, was not a Pagan head or a head of the Dragon, but a head of the Wild Beast to whom the Dragon had ceded his seat and his authority. Secondly, the emblematic heads relate to the different forms of government of which Rome was successively the seat, not to Pagan governments as such; and no reason can be assigned for passing over the intermediate changes till the rise of the Papacy. Thirdly, Diocletian, so far as he may be deemed the founder of a new empire, was so, not in virtue of the changes of costume and of administration which he introduced, (changes not greater than had taken place under preceding emperors between the time of Augustus and his reign,) but on account of his restoring the Empire itself to a

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considerable degree of its former strength and grandeur.

Falling back, therefore, upon the interpretation which regards the Sixth Head as continuing under the line of Emperors from Augustus to Augustulus, the last Emperor of the West, we conclude the Seventh Head to be the next form of government of which Rome was the seat; namely, that of the Ostrogothic kings.* This Head, conformably to the prediction, continued but a short space, and was succeeded by the Wild Beast, which, though the eighth in succession as a reigning power, is declared to be one of the seven heads or forms of government, being, in fact, a restoration of the Imperial power. This is the Beast which carries the Harlot; "the wild beast that was, and is not, and yet is." This phrase has been explained as implying,—"that did exist under his former head, and does not any longer, but exists under another form." It may be more clearly rendered, "the Wild Beast which had existed" (in its Imperial form), "and

* Or, as Dr. Cressener interprets it, the Herulian and Ostrogothic Head. Bp. Newton seems to make the Seventh Head the Dukedom under the Exarchate; observing, that the government of the Gothic kings was much the same as that of the emperors, with only a change of the name. This is hardly correct; and the seat of the Exarchate was not Rome, but Ravenna. He considers the wounded imperial head to have been healed in Charlemagne; and yet deems the eighth form the Papal, not the Imperial; making the beast on which the woman (i.e. the Romish Church or Papacy) rides, to be the Papacy itself, or the Papal Government. Mann explains both the Seventh and the Eighth Heads, of the Popes prior and subsequent to Pepin.
ceased to exist, and was to re-appear, ascending out of the abyss" (on the revival of the Western Empire). This designation identifies the beast on which the woman is seated, with the emblematic monster of the previous Vision in the xiiiith chapter.*

The entire identity of the two Beasts, one might indeed have thought, would scarcely admit of question. In both Visions, we have the same distinctive features of seven heads and ten horns, and blasphemous titles. In both, the emblematic Beast is the object of wonder and homage to all the dwellers on the earth, those alone excepted whose names were enrolled in the Book of Life; and is described as making war upon the saints, and overcoming them. And, as the Wild Beast from the sea is associated with the two-horned Beast, so, in a subsequent Vision, we find the Beast connected with the False Prophet who "wrought signs before him." (ch. xix. 20.) The only apparent discrepancies are, that the one is represented as rising from the sea, the other from the abyss; and that, whereas the former combined the leopard, the bear, and the lion, the latter is

* It is remarkable, as an approximation to the true idea, that Luther makes the sixth head "which is," that of Papal Germany; the head wounded to death, or old Roman empire, having been revived. (Elliott, iv. 418.) Pareus notices, that several Protestant expositors make the eighth head to be the Frank and German Emperors of the West. (Ib. 449.) Mr. Elliott pertinently asks: "Why may not the Beast which was be the Roman dragon slain under his seventh (sixth) head, and the Beast from the sea or abyss that new form under which he revives?" Vol. iii. p. 70, note.
simply described as scarlet-coloured. But the explanation is obvious. The seven-headed monster appeared, in the Vision, to rise from the sea, as indicating its foreign or external origin. The word abyss might be taken as of synonymous import; but, if we understand it of the infernal abyss, there is no real discrepancy. As Mr. Elliott remarks, a marine volcano rises both out of the sea and out of "a deeper depth" in the fiery abysses beneath; and so, under different aspects, the same Anti-Christian power might be described in reference to the apparent circumstances of its rise, and to its infernal origin. As to the colour of the Beast on which the Woman is seated, to borrow the language of the same Expositor, "when ridden, an animal has on its housings, which, if ample, would hide the Beast's body; and then their colour might be predicated of the Beast itself, by a license not infrequent in poetical or figurative writings."* Scarlet or crimson is the usual colour of the trappings of horses or mules ridden by the Popes and Cardinals. There is, therefore, a perfect keeping in the costume of the emblem. The names or titles of blasphemy were embroidered upon the scarlet trappings.†


† The Jesuit Malvenda says: "No sane person can doubt that the Beast in the xith and that in the xiiith chapter are the same Beast." And Aleasar acknowledges it to be "certain, that the Beast out of the sea in ch. xiii., and that Beast upon which Babylon sits, ch. xvii., are but one and the same Beast, as Jerome does expressly affirm." Cited by Cressener, "Judgments of God," &c. Pref.
The ten horns are next explained as denoting "ten kings which have not as yet received any kingdom, but were to receive power as kings, at one and the same time with the Wild Beast."* That is, they were not in existence at the time of the Vision, but were to arise contemporaneously with the revival of the Western Empire. Bp. Newton, and even Mr. Elliott, speak of the Roman Empire as being divided into ten kingdoms, as if these ten kings constituted the power symbolized by the Beast. This is obviously a mistake. The dissolution of the Western Empire was complete in the sixth century: the rise of the Beast with his ten horns, each surmounted with a crown, belongs to the close of the eighth; and these ten horns receive their explanation from the language of Gibbon, who speaks precisely of the ten kings of the Latin world, not including among them either the Imperial Head or the Papal power.† These kings, it is said, "have one mind or purpose, and shall give their power and strength unto the Beast." That is, translated into the language of history, "the hereditary monarchs of Europe confessed the pre-eminence of the Emperor's rank and dignity as the temporal Head of the great Republic of the West," who "disputed with the Pope the sublime prerogative of creating kings and assembling councils."‡ "These shall

* This is the most natural and grammatical rendering of μετὰ τοῦ θηρίου; and has the sanction of Cyril of Jerusalem, Irenæus, Præmasius, the Vulgate of Jerome, Mede, Vitringa, Daubuz, and Bossuet. See Elliott, vol. iii. p. 69.
† See page 311.
‡ See pp. 308, 333.
make war against The Lamb; but The Lamb shall overcome them." They shall take part with the Beast in persecuting the Church of Christ, and shall share in his doom.

Moreover, these ten horns, it is predicted, "shall hate the harlot, and make her desolate and naked, and shall devour her flesh, and burn her with fire." "That is," remarks Bp. Newton, "by a common figure of the whole for a part, some of the ten kings; for others (ch. xviii. 9) shall bewail her and lament for her, and (ch. xix. 19) shall fight and perish in the cause of the Beast. Some of the kings who formerly loved her, grown sensible of her exorbitant exactions and oppressions, shall hate her, shall strip, expose, and plunder her, and utterly consume her with fire." Writing in the middle of the eighteenth century, the learned Prelate proceeds to state his opinion, that, as the kings of France have contributed greatly to her advancement, it is not impossible, nor improbable, that, some time or other, they may also be the principal authors of her destruction. Signally has this anticipation been verified. Under the Fifth Vial, poured out upon the throne of the Beast, this prediction may be considered as having received its initial, though not its final and complete accomplishment. The spoliation of the apostate hierarchy, begun in France, spread rapidly into the other Papal kingdoms. In Italy, the Pope was stripped by Napoleon of his temporal possessions; and although these were restored in 1814, the Papal See has been crippled and impoverished; while, in Spain and Portugal,
the ecclesiastical domains have been permanently alienated, and the immense wealth of the churches confiscated. The Romanists have not ceased to complain of the suppression of the monasteries in England, by our Henry VIII., and the seizure of Church property by the Crown at the time of the Reformation; but it would not be difficult to show, that the secularization of Church property has been carried to a much greater extent in Roman Catholic States, that the Papacy has suffered most at the hands of Roman Catholic sovereigns, and that Napoleon himself was a less ruthless spoiler and devastator of Rome, than an Imperialist army, headed by a Bourbon.* But the end is not yet. "God hath put in the hearts of the kings to fulfil his purpose, and to agree in giving their kingdom to the Wild Beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."

Finally, the Angel adds: "The woman whom thou sawest, is that Great City which exercises dominion over the kings of the earth." This can be understood of no other than the mystical city of the Papal commonwealth, "Babylon the Great." Rome itself with its seven hills, is but the throne of the Beast, the seat of the Harlot. What is here personified is clearly a regnant system of spiritual wickedness,— an idolatrous Church. As the mystical Jerusalem is allegori-

* The Constable de Bourbon. "The capital of Christendom was then (A.D. 1527,) abandoned to a pillage unparalleled in the most calamitous period." Sismondi's Hist. of the Italian Republics, p. 335. Vitringa supposed this sack of Rome to be the fulfilment of the fifth vial.
cally designated by St. Paul as the mother (i.e. mother city) of all true believers, in contradistinction to the earthly Jerusalem or the Jewish polity, so the mystical Babylon is here characterized as the mother, or mother city, of idolatrous worshippers; for, to the abominations of idolatry, according to the uniform import of the metaphor in the Hebrew Scriptures, the terms harlotry and spiritual adultery must be intended to apply. As the harlot and the hostess of a tavern were characters often united or confounded in ancient times, so, in the emblematic personification, there may be a twofold allusion to the meretricious attractions of the Papal Church, and to the venal traffic in absolutions and indulgences, relics and masses, the wine of her golden cup. A medal of Leo XII. exhibits on the reverse, a female holding in her left hand a cross, and in her right a cup with the legend, "Sedet super universum."

That Papal Rome is intended by the mystical Babylon, is a conclusion of much earlier date than the Reformation. Joachim Abbas, in the twelfth century, recognized in the emblematic personification, "the Harlot Rome;" "not, indeed, the Church of the just that sojourn in Rome, but rather the multitude of Rome's reprobate members; her place being also not in one province or kingdom, but over the whole area of the Christian empire."† By

† Elliott, vol. iv. 395. "The kings of the earth who commit adultery with the Harlot, Joachim makes to be, "bad prelates with the charge of souls"; and her merchandize to be that of ecclesiastical functions bartered by priests for money.
the immediate followers and disciples of Joachim, the truth was more distinctly proclaimed, that the Church of Rome was the Apocalyptic Babylon, the mother of Harlots, and the chief and proper Anti-Christ. Petrarch, in his xxth Epistle, styles the Papal Court, "the Babylonian harlot, mother of all idolatries." This representation of Papal Rome came at length to rank among the Waldensian heresies; and was adopted and transmitted by Wickliffe and his followers, till, in the sixteenth century, it was proclaimed by all the chief Reformers of Germany, Switzerland, France, and England.* Grotius appears to have been the first who attempted to set aside this interpretation, by explaining the Scarlet Beast of the old Roman idolatry; for which he is charged by his not less learned contemporary, Dr. Henry More, with having treacherously played into the hands of the Papists. Bp. Newton, after citing the admissions of Baronius and Bellarmine, that, by Babylon, Rome is meant, adds: "I think it apparent almost to demonstration, that not Pagan but Christian, not Imperial but Papal Rome, was here intended; and the arguments used to the contrary by the Bp. of Meaux himself (Bossuet), the best and ablest advocate of Popery, prove nothing so much as the weakness and badness of the cause which they are brought to defend. Ancient Rome ruled more with a rod of iron than with the wine of her fornication. What and where were the kings whom she courted and debauched to her communion?

What and where were the people whom she inveigled and intoxicated with her idolatry? Her ambition was for extending her empire, and not her religion. She permitted even the conquered nations to continue in the religion of their ancestors, and to worship their own gods after their own rituals. The title of ‘mystery’ is in no respect proper to ancient Rome, more than any other city; neither is there any mystery in substituting one heathen, idolatrous, and persecuting city for another; but it is indeed a mystery, that a Christian city professing and boasting herself to be the City of God, should prove to be another Babylon in idolatry and cruelty to the people of God.”

What Grotius with all his erudition, and Bossuet with all his subtlety, failed to accomplish, in seeking to shield the Romish Church from the condemnation pronounced upon her spiritual harlotry and cruelty, it is not for the Neologists of Germany or the Puseyites of England to achieve. One cannot, however, but feel deep concern, that any Protestant Expositors should, in the present day, be betrayed into the grievous error of denying the plain import and only rational application of the solemn predictions and warnings of this portion of the word of God; thereby doing their utmost to blunt the edge of the spiritual sword with which the early Reformers and preceding Witnesses for the Truth combated the power of Anti-Christ.

When the Angel had concluded his explanation of the Vision, St. John beheld, descending from the firmament, another Angel, of great power or authority, and the earth was illuminated with his
radiance; who proclaimed in a strong voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great, and is become a dwelling-place of demons, a hold of every foul spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird; because of the wine of the poison of her fornication (or idolatry) all nations have partaken, and the kings of the earth have committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth have been enriched through the abundance of her luxury." And he heard another voice, proceeding from heaven, which cried: "Come forth from her, my people, lest ye be partakers of her sins, and share also in her calamities; for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath called to remembrance her iniquities."* These words are followed up with a proclamation of her sentence, and a highly figurative description of the lamentations which it shall call forth from the sovereigns and merchants of the earth; while heaven and the holy apostles and prophets are called upon to rejoice, because God had avenged them upon her. A mighty Angel then took up a stone like a mill-stone, and cast it into the sea, saying, "Thus with impetuous force shall be thrown down Babylon the Great City, and shall be found no more."†

As the fulfilment of this portion of the Vision must be regarded as still future, all that will be attempted, will be, to explain the import of the

* Joachim Abbas has a striking remark: "The comfort is, that Jerusalem tarries in Babylon." Elliott, vol. iv. 398.
† Compare Isa. xxiv. 8; Jer. vii. 34; xvi. 9; xxv. 10; li. 63, 4; Ezek. xxvi. 13.
symbols agreeably to what has been shown to be the true interpretation where they occur in predictions that have been fulfilled. Reasoning in this way from analogy, we are led to anticipate, that, corresponding to the angelic voices of the Vision, which proclaimed the approaching catastrophe, and exhorted the people of God to come forth from the mystical Babylon, there will be an utterance of warnings loud and distinct on the part of bold and faithful men, attended with an "effulgence of light as well as strength of cry" suited to the urgency of the times. It is plainly intimated, that many of the people of God will be lulled in false security, having been drawn into a dangerous alliance with the apostate Church. The overthrow of the Great City is to be sudden, instantaneous, and violent as a physical convulsion. "In one day shall come upon her pestilence, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire." The fate of Sodom seems to be alluded to; and the description of the catastrophe suggests the idea of the tremendous agency of volcanic fire. That the city of the Cæsars and the Popes is destined to perish literally in some such manner, is a notion that has prevailed from very early times; and even Gregory the Great avows his belief in the tradition.* The destruction of Rome as a city cannot, however, be intended by the prediction, inasmuch as the mystical Babylon denotes the Papal hierarchy or the Church of Rome as a dominant power.†

* See pages 164—6.
† Dr. H. More, after observing, that "The City Babylon is
Even, then, if the metropolis of Papal Christendom were to be literally overthrown or swallowed up by any sudden convulsion, the tremendous phenomenon might be, as in other analogous instances, a typical foreshadowing of the ultimate accomplishment of the prediction, but not the consummation intended by the fearful emblem. As if to preclude all doubt respecting the retributive character of the Divine judgment or the cause of her doom, the angelic denunciation closes with charging upon the Great City the ambition of her merchants, and the extent of her sorceries. And then, as if her overthrow had taken place, it is added: "And in her has been found the blood of prophets and of saints, even of all who have been slain upon the earth;"—language which recals the words of Our Lord respecting Jerusalem: "That upon you may come all the righteous blood that has been shed upon the earth." (Matt. xxiii. 35.)

And now, a chorus of exultant voices was heard in heaven, denoting the joy and thanksgiving of which the judgment upon the mystical Harlot and Murderess of the Saints will furnish the occasion and the theme. The language of the song of praise is distinguished by one remarkable peculiarity from that of the doxologies in the preceding Visions, the Hebrew word Hallelujah being here employed for the first time, and emphatically not a city of brick and stone, but a polity, and particularly the Roman hierarchy,"—illustrates in detail what he deems the mystical sense of the burning and the lamentation over her. Works, pp. 423—429.
repeated four times.* First, a loud chorus of voices is heard in the heaven or firmament, saying, "Alleluia, the salvation and the power and the glory to our God, for faithful are His judgments." And a second time they shouted "Alleluia," as they beheld the smoke of the city rise up. Or, rather, the words may be regarded as part of their song: "Her smoke shall rise up for ever and ever." The four-and-twenty elders and the four living creatures, which appear again to be present to the entranced view of the Apostle, falling prostrate in worship before the Throne, respond to the song, "Amen, Alleluia." Then, a voice proceeding from the Throne, called upon all the servants of God and those who fear Him, small as well as great, to praise our God. Upon which a louder chorus broke forth, as from a vast multitude, like the noise of many waters and of mighty thunderings, "Alleluia, for the Lord God, the Omnipotent reigneth.† Let us rejoice and be glad, and ascribe glory to Him, for the marriage of The Lamb is come, and His Bride has prepared herself, and it has been given to her to be arrayed in fine linen, radiant and pure." The following words appear to have been spoken by the angel in explanation: "The fine linen is (denotes) the justification of the

* Several commentators have regarded this circumstance as an intimation that the Jewish nation, having extensively embraced the Christian faith, shall join, if not take the lead in the Church's song of praise. See Elliott, vol. iv. pp. 110, 111.
† Literally, and more correctly, "For the Omnipotent God reigns supreme (or as Lord)."
saints;"* for, without naming the speaker, the Apostle immediately adds: "And he said to me, Write, Happy are those who are invited to the marriage-feast of The Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true words of God."

These transporting disclosures of the joyful issue of the long-protracted conflict between Anti-Christ and The Lamb, had so overpowering an effect upon the mind of the Apostle, that he fell prostrate before the heavenly messenger to do him homage. But the Angel forbade him, saying, "I am thy fellow-servant and the fellow-servant of thy brethren who have (or bear) the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." The following words appear to be the comment of the Apostle: "The spirit of prophecy is that testimony of Jesus." That is, those who so bear testimony are the inspired prophets. This view of the import of the declaration is supported by the parallel passage at ch. xxii. ver. 9, where, instead of "thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus," the words employed by the Angel are—"of thy brethren the prophets and of those who keep the sayings of this book." The declaration may, however, be properly construed as implying, that the design of the spirit of prophecy, and of the whole Revelation conveyed by the Angel who shewed the Apostle these things, was, to bear testimony to Jesus, their common Lord.

It may seem strange, and at first view inexpli-

* The original word is in the plural, τὰ δικαιώματα: q. justificatory robes. See page 94.
cable, that St. John, the Beloved Disciple, should have fallen into the error of offering religious homage to even the highest angel. The comment of Bp. Newton, that St. John was in such rapture and ecstasy at these discoveries, that he did not know or consider what he did, is far from being satisfactory. It must be borne in mind, that the whole transaction was visionary, and St. John is to be regarded, therefore, agreeably to the principle of interpretation which has guided us in explaining the symbolic action in preceding Visions, as performing this act in his mystical or representative character. So, the ancient prophets are frequently described as acting.* This explanation is rendered the more necessary, and at the same time the more probable, by the repetition of the act after the Angel had forbidden it. (ch. xxii. 9.) Considered, then, as prefigurative, the symbolical transaction may indicate, that, at the period of exultation and rejoicing to which the Vision relates, there will be a disposition on the part of the Church, to give undue honour to individuals who shall be prominently instrumental in accomplishing the Divine purposes, or who shall take the lead in the glorious triumph of the Faith, and to ascribe to the servants of God that praise and

* For instances of the prophets' taking part in visionary transactions, see Ezek. ix. 8; xxxvii. 7. &c. Dan. vii. 15, 16; viii. 17; x. 15, 18. Also, Isa. vi. 5, 6. Examples of their acting symbolically are numerous: as Jer. xiii. 1—7; xxvii. 2; xliii. 8, 9. Ezek. iii. 1—3; iv. 1—13; v. 1—4, &c. That St. John acted here in his symbolic character, is maintained by Daubuz and by Elliott. See Elliott, vol. i. pp. 268—271.
homage which are due to God alone. It is to
guard the Church against falling into this sin, that
the rebuke and exhortation in the Vision are
addressed to the Apostle: "See thou do it not:
worship God."

With regard to the emblematic rejoicings and
thanksgivings, it may be safely assumed, that they
prefigure what will actually ensue on the overthrow
of the mystical Babylon, and that they denote a
time of great felicity and external prosperity. This
will, probably, be attended with a prevalent antici-
pation, that the marriage festival of The Lamb is
immediately to be celebrated. But the consum-
mation is not yet. The descent of the Bride out
of Heaven is still future,—the subject of a distinct
Vision. The Angelic declaration which the Apostle
is directed to write down, seems adapted to correct
any impatient or fanatical anticipations, and to
convey a practical lesson appropriate to the times:
"Happy are those (only) who are called (of God)
to the marriage festival of The Lamb."

* It deserves observation, that the worship which St. John is
forbidden by the Angel to pay to him, was evidently of that kind
which the Romanists style, dulia, as distinguishable from latria,
and deem lawful and due to saints and angels. "Now, if the
angel here refused civil worship," argues Dr. H. More, "how
groundless a thing were it, nay, how disallowable, to have offered
him religious worship! And if he refused religious worship,
though present, how unlawful is this worship, suppose but dulia,
to a saint or angel, being absent!" Works, p. 28. The learned
Author remarks, that Satan claimed but that worship from Our
Lord, which the Angel rejected; and Our Lord's answer implies,
that there is but one only kind of religious worship, namely, that
which is due to God alone.
Vision the Eleventh.


I. THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON.

Another scene is now presented to the view of the entranced Apostle, in illustration of the words of the Angel in explaining the emblems of the previous Vision (ch. xvii. 14): "These kings shall make war with The Lamb, and The Lamb shall overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings." The firmament appeared to open; and there came forth, riding upon a white horse, a glorious Personage distinguished by the insignia of royal power and the mystical tokens of Divine attributes. His eyes were as flames of fire; on his head were many crowns; as the Jewish high-priest wore upon his forehead the ineffable name of Jehovah, so, this glorious Personage had, inscribed upon the frontlet of his diadem, a Name which only Himself could comprehend;* his vest was of crimson, as if dyed with blood; and from His mouth proceeded a sharp sword; also, upon his vesture and upon his thigh, his regal title was

* Compare Matt. xi. 27.
embroidered, King of kings and Lord of lords; but his personal name is proclaimed to be, "The Word of God." After Him rode forth the army of his followers, all upon white horses, and clad in shining robes of the finest linen, symbolical at once of their sanctity and of their triumph.

In this striking emblematic representation of Our Lord, the attributes of his proper humanity are combined with those of true Deity. In allusion to the language of ancient prophecy respecting the Messiah, He is styled, "The Faithful and True," who "in righteousness doth judge and make war;" and "with the sword proceeding from his mouth He shall smite the nations, and with an iron sceptre He shall rule them; and He treadeth the wine-press of the fierce wrath of God the Omnipotent."*—declarations importing his supreme authority, awful justice, and irresistible power as the Avenger of His Church and the Administrator of the Divine Government.

The catastrophe is now at hand, to which prospective reference was made in connexion with the Sixth Vial. The three spirits of demons which had gone forth to deceive or infatuate the kings of the earth, and to gather them to the battle of the great day of God the Almighty in the field of destruction, have done their work. An angel standing in the Sun, (the emblematic seat of Imperial power,) in language borrowed from the prophecies of Ezekiel (ch. xxxix. 17, 29), invites all the birds of prey that fly in the mid-heaven to the

* See Psa. xlv. 3—5; Psa. ii. 9. Isa. lxiii. 3.
great feast about to be prepared for them by the slaughter of kings and chiefs and nobles, of horses and their riders, and of all orders of men, free and bond, small and great. The Wild Beast and the kings of the earth were seen gathered together to make war against The Lamb and His army; the battle ensued; the Wild Beast was taken, and the False Prophet (or Papal Beast), his companion, that wrought wonders before him; and these two were both cast alive into the lake of fire that is burning with sulphur. "And the remainder were slain with the sword proceeding from the mouth of Him who sat upon the white horse, and all the birds of prey were gorged with their flesh."

This, clearly, is the mystical battle of Armageddon, denoting some signal overthrow of the Anti-Christian powers, secular and ecclesiastical, with their adherents, combined in support of despotism and idolatrous priestcraft, at some period subsequent to the fall of the mystical Babylon. As the Beast and the False Prophet are emblematic agents, the language in which their destruction is described, must also be emblematical; and in the same allegorical sense, in order to preserve the consistency of the description, we must understand the invitation to the birds of prey, and what is said of their being satiated with the flesh of the slain.* The victory is to be effected by the sword which proceeds from the mouth of the Divine Conqueror; and the sword of the Spirit is the word of God

* Bp. Newton interprets this figurative language as indicating the spoiling of their worldly substance.
This doubtless indicates some signal and extraordinary manifestation of the power and supremacy of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords, although it affords no solid ground for the notion that it prefigures a personal advent.* That the issue of the conflict described under these terrific emblems, will be, as having the character of a Divine punishment, truly calamitous to the enemies of Christ and His Church, cannot be doubted; but to suppose a scene of actual slaughter to be here intended, would be to fall into the error of explaining the figurative in a literal sense, and to violate consistency of interpretation. The lake of sulphur burning with fire cannot be understood of any physical catastrophe; and to be slain by the sword of Christ, fearful as is the image, can scarcely denote falling by the sword of man.

II. THE BINDING OF THE DRAGON.

The Wild Beast and the False Prophet have been destroyed; but there still remains the Dragon who had ceded his power and his seat to the Seven-headed monster from the sea, and from whose mouth one of the three unclean spirits had proceeded, by which the kings of the earth had been gathered to the great conflict; thereby indicating that the power or evil principle of which the Dragon is the emblem, was still in existence,

* "We must not imagine that this appearance of Christ will be a personal one, no more than his appearance in the destruction of the Jews by Vespasian and Titus was such." Fleming's Rise and Fall, p. 65.
although deposed, in that form, from its political ascendancy.

But now, the Apostle beheld an Angel descend from heaven, bearing in his hand the key of the abyss, with a great chain; and, seizing upon the Dragon, he bound him, and cast him into the abyss, and shut him in, and set a seal upon its mouth, that he should deceive the nations no more till a thousand years should be fulfilled; after which, it was said, he must be loosed from his prison for a short time. He is then to be permitted to go forth to deceive the nations* in all quarters of the earth, and to gather them together, an innumerable host, to battle against the camp of the saints and the beloved City; when fire from God out of heaven will consume them, and the Devil, their deceiver, is to be cast into the lake of burning sulphur, where are the Beast and the False Prophet, and to be consigned to eternal torment.

This has been deemed one of the most mysterious of all the Apocalyptic predictions; but the difficulty which has embarrassed all expositors, has arisen, in no small degree, from their abandoning a consistent interpretation of the emblems for a literal meaning which yields no tolerable sense. The importance of rendering the symbolical lan-

* It must be noticed as a significant distinction, whatever it may import, that, whereas the three unclean spirits (ch. xvi. 14) "went forth to the kings of the earth, to gather them to battle," and "the kings of the earth" are accordingly mentioned (ch. xix. 19) as making war against Him who sat upon the white horse,—the Dragon or Satan "goes out to deceive the nations."
guage aight, is enhanced by the coincidence of the period during which the Dragon is to remain imprisoned, with the Millennium referred to in the subsequent verses.

In a preceding Vision, we have seen, that, by the Dragon, which is there also identified with "the Old Serpent, the Devil, and the Satan," (ch. xii. 9,) the Pagan power of old Rome is specifically intended;* the Dragon being the political form of the Satanic spirit of Paganism, which, after sustaining utter defeat in its conflict with Christianity, still persecuted "the Woman," or the True Church. As a political power, the Dragon gave up his seat of empire and his authority to the Seven-headed Leopard, the emblem of the revived Western Empire; and it can scarcely be with any reference to the symbolic meaning of its draconic form, as described in the previous Vision, that the Dragon is here re-introduced. Hence, after the explanation subjoined, "which is the Devil and the Satan," the designation is dropped; clearly intimating, that what is here represented as being overcome and bound by a power capable of closing up the prison of the abyss, is the draconic spirit, "the genius of old Rome," in some other form or character.

Now, under the Fifth Trumpet, when the infernal abyss was opened, there arose a smoke, out of which came forth the mystical locusts, whose king was the angel of the bottomless pit, Abaddon, the Destroyer. The emblem prefigured, as we have

* See pages 292, 444, 447.
seen, a sudden outbreak of martial fanaticism, followed by a devastating warfare.* The angel of the pit was the demon of war, the very principle of destruction. Guided by analogy, we are warranted in concluding, that the sealing up of the abyss to which the draconic spirit is consigned, must intend some event or interposition of a precisely opposite character; that, as the opening of the pit let loose "the destroyer," the closing up of the pit imports, that the spirit of conquest which has deceived the nations will thenceforth be bound or restrained, and that there will be a total cessation of international conflicts, as well as of internal oppression and religious persecution, during the long period indicated by the thousand years. Considering that the genius of Pagan Rome was essentially that of military power, that Mars was the tutelary deity of the Romans, and that in no respect is the contrast between the Dragon and the Lamb more striking and marked, than in the antagonism of the Anti-Christian spirit of war and conquest to the kingdom of the "Prince of Peace," —there seems a peculiar appropriateness in the emblematic binding and imprisonment of the Dragon, if understood as denoting the abolition of War by the ruling powers of the earth. Ancient prophecy distinctly points to a time when the nations shall "learn war no more;"† and we might expect to find the fulfilment of that highly remarkable prediction foreshadowed in the Visions of the Apocalypse.

If this simple explanation of the allegory be

* See pages 169, 174. † Isa. ii. 4; Mic. iv. 3.
admitted, it becomes easy to understand how, nevertheless, at some remote period, on the expiration of the thousand years, the Satan shall in this sense be loosed, and a war break out, which will be the last in this world's history; for God will visibly interpose to terminate the conflict; and the Satanic spirit which had deceived the nations, shall, with Death itself, be cast into the lake that burns with eternal fire.

After this symbolical transaction, the Apostle "beheld thrones, and personages seated upon them, to whom judgment was committed;" he saw, in other words, a tribunal. Thus, in Psalm cxxii., the Jewish metropolis is referred to as the seat of the national judicature: "For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the House of David." The brief and elliptical intimation in the Vision receives the strongest light from a passage in the prophecies of Daniel: "I beheld, and the same Horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. . . . . The judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and destroy it to the end; and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." (Dan. vii. 21, 22; 26, 27.) As the prophecies of Daniel were familiarly known to the early Church, the allusion to this prediction
would be readily understood; a consideration which enables us to account for the enigmatical conciseness of the intimation in the Vision. The import of the emblem, thus interpreted, is, that the reign of Justice would be established. Thrones of judgment were to be set up, after the binding of the Dragon; implying that a righteous administration should succeed, in the government of the earth, to the long reign of violence, injustice, and cruel oppression. In this sense, the judgment or judicial rule shall be given to the saints of the Most High.

III. THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

We have now arrived at that passage which, more than any other in the whole Book, has, from the earliest times, been the fertile source of fanciful speculations, and the battle-ground of polemical discussion; that which connects with the happy period of the thousand years, the prediction of a previous resurrection of martyrs and saints. The entire passage, consisting of verses 4—6 of chap. xx., is as follows: "And (I beheld) the souls of those who had been put to death for the testimony of Jesus and the word of God, and whosoever had not worshipped the Wild Beast and his image, nor had received his mark upon their forehead or in their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not till the thousand years were fulfilled. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first
resurrection: upon such, the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

This mysterious passage obviously refers to the souls under the altar, in a preceding Vision, which symbolized the victims of Pagan persecution, as well as to the later confessors under the long reign of the Wild Beast. It corresponds also to the song of the four living creatures and the four-and-twenty elders: "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." (ch. v. 10.) The question is, in what sense are we to understand this resurrection and reign of the saints and martyrs;—as a literal and physical resurrection of their bodies, or as a mystical and allegorical one;—as a political, or as a spiritual reign?

Most of the early Christian Fathers interpreted the prediction literally, grafting upon it notions, borrowed from the Rabbinical writers, of an earthly kingdom, of which Jerusalem was to be the metropolis, and connecting with it also the second advent of Our Lord and His personal residence upon earth.* The ancient Chiliasm or Millenarians generally held, that the Temple should be gloriously rebuilt, and that the land of Judea

* So, Justin Martyr, Barnabas, Irenæus, Tertullian, Victorinus, and Lactantius. See Lardner, vol. ii. pp. 703—5; iii. 520; v. 79. This theory, revived by Mede in his Clavis Apostolica, has been espoused by Daubuz, Bishop Newton, Dr. Thomas Burnet, Dr. Gill, and the modern pre-millenarian school. To these names, we regret that Mr. Elliott's must be added.
should be the habitation of the saints who were to reign with Christ; while Papias, Nepos, and others of the same school, are charged with holding opinions of a still more extravagant and fanatical character. The patristic authorities are entitled, therefore, to little weight, and can afford us no aid in investigating the true import of the Apocalyptic declaration.

Jerome appears to have felt himself in a dilemma. "If," he says, "we understand the Revelation literally, we must judaize; if spiritually (or figuratively) as it is written, we shall seem to contradict many of the ancients, particularly Latins."* Augustine, his great contemporary, more distinctly and decidedly adopted a figurative interpretation of the passage, but erroneously dated the commencement of the Millennium from the ministry of Our Lord; "at which time, the Devil, the strong man armed, was bound and expelled from the hearts of his disciples;" while he appears to have understood the loosing of Satan, of the coming of Anti-Christ.† In his "City of God," he distinguishes "the first resurrection," "that of souls from their death in sin," which is "mercy's resurrection,"—from the second resurrection, that of judgment. But his language, it must be admitted, cannot be regarded as an exposition, so much as an accommodation of the passage.‡ Andreas, Bishop of Cesarea, in the sixth century,

† See Elliott, vol. iv. p. 179.
‡ "Rise, then, in the first resurrection," he says, "ye who will not to perish in the second."
in his Commentary on the Revelation, refers to some who confined the thousand years to the three years and a half of Our Lord’s ministry on earth; and to others who thought that, “after the completion of six thousand years, shall be the first resurrection from the dead, which is to be peculiar to the saints; who are to be raised up, that they may dwell again on this earth, where they had given proofs of patience and fortitude, and that they may live here a thousand years in honour and plenty; after which will be the general resurrection of good and bad. But the Church,” he adds, “receives neither of those interpretations; for we remember what Our Lord said to the Sadducees, ‘that the righteous shall be as the angels which are in heaven;’ as also the words of Paul, who says, ‘The kingdom of God is not meat and drink.’ By the thousand years, therefore, we understand, the time of the preaching of the gospel, or the time of the gospel dispensation.”*

It can scarcely be necessary to show, that this exposition of the passage is inadmissible upon any sound principle of critical interpretation, being irreconcilable alike with the immediate context, and with the general plan and chronology of the Apocalypse. It appears to have prevailed, however, during the middle ages, and has found supporters, in recent times, in Lightfoot, Abp. Usher, and Professor Lee.†

A third opinion is that maintained by the

* Lardner, vol. v. p. 79.
† Elliott, vol. iv. pp. 179, 180. It was adopted, with modifications, by Bullinger, Bale, and Pareus.
Romanists, which makes the "First Resurrection" to be ecclesiastical, and to have taken place on the overthrow of Paganism by Constantine. Thus, the Papal Millennium extends from the fourth, to the fourteenth century. This hypothesis assumes Rome Pagan, not Rome Papal, to be the Apocalyptic Beast, and consistently identifies Protestantism with Anti-Christ. The theory has, however, been adopted by some Protestant expositors with various modifications. Foxe, the Martyrologist, adopting the notion, that the thousand years of Satan's binding dated from the overthrow of Paganism, applied the loosing of the Dragon to the Ottoman invasions of Christendom in the thirteenth century, and to the contemporaneous rising to its acme, of the Papal arrogance, tyranny, and impiety.* Brightman strangely made the First Resurrection, which he identified with the Reformation, to synchronise with the unloosing of Satan in the conquests of the Turks, the Gog and Magog of the prediction.† Witsius considers those who were beheld sitting on thrones, as being, not the souls of the martyrs, but their oppressors; and some recent writers would make the Millennium synchronise with the reign of the Beast, and the living of martyrs with Christ to signify the vigorous life of those who were opponents to the Papal domination; thus regarding the thousand years as a period most

† ib. pp. 180, 444. The Romish view of the First Resurrection as dating from the establishment of Christianity, has been supported by Grotius, Hammond, and Lee.
calamitous to the Church. The historical and critical objections to these several modifications of the theory, are alike obvious and insuperable; and it is not deemed necessary to enter here upon an elaborate refutation.

The fourth solution,—which Mr. Elliott acknowledges to be the only one that can, "with any show of plausibility, compete against the earlier and more literal explanation of the Millennial prophecy given by Papias and Irenæus,"—is that proposed by Dr. Whitby, and adopted by Vitrinia and Faber, which regards the Millennium as a future and glorious period, and the First Resurrection as representing a spiritual revival.* Against this "theory," Mr. Elliott zealously contends, his main argument being, that the context is opposed to such an interpretation: inasmuch as the death of the martyrs and of those who had lived during the reign of the Beast, was a literal, individual, bodily death, the resurrection intended must be

* "I believe that, after the fall of Anti-Christ, there shall be such a glorious state of the Church, by the conversion of the Jews to the Christian faith, as shall be to it 'life from the dead;' that it shall then flourish in peace and plenty, in righteousness and holiness, and in pious offspring; that then shall begin a glorious and undisturbed reign of Christ over both Jew and Gentile, to continue a thousand years, during the time of Satan's binding; and that, as John the Baptist was Elias, because he came in the spirit and power of Elias, so shall this be the church of martyrs and of those who had not received the mark of the Beast, because of their entire freedom from all the doctrines and practices of the Anti-Christian Church, and because the spirit and purity of the times of the primitive martyrs shall return." Whitby's "Treatise of the True Millennium."
literal also, in order to correspond to it. Yet, his own pages supply an answer to this objection. Speaking of the revival of the slaughtered Witnesses, Mr. Elliott remarks: "The figure of a revival, resuscitation, or resurrection, is so natural as well as striking, and so evidently appropriate in the case of Luther and the Witnesses preceding him, that we cannot wonder at its having been perpetually applied in the case, by writers of whatever different creed and sentiments." And he proceeds to refer, by way of illustration, to the remarkable language of Huss:—"I, awaking as it were from the dead, and rising from the grave, shall rejoice with exceeding joy;" and to the comment supplied by Pope Adrian, in his letter to the Diet of Nuremberg: "The heretics Huss and Jerome are alive again in the person of Martin Luther."* Now, 'the death of those martyrs was a literal, bodily death; yet, the resurrection was figurative or spiritual. The restoration of the Church is repeatedly represented in the Old Testament prophecies under this same figure. Thus, Isaiah (ch. xxvi. 19): "Thy dead shall arise, and the earth shall cast out the dead." So, Ezekiel, in the name of God, addresses the Jewish nation (ch. xxxvii. 12—14): "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel." Again, in Hosea (ch. vi. 12): "After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His

sight." To these predictions, St. Paul may be thought to allude, when he speaks of the restoration of the Jews as "life from the dead." (Rom. xi. 15.) We have a familiar instance of a conventional use of the same figure, when parents are said to live again in their children; in which case, the death is literal and bodily; the living again, figurative and representative.

But Mr. Elliott further insists, that the declaration, that "the rest of the dead lived not till the thousand years were fulfilled," shows, that "the dead mentioned just before as first raised, must, upon every principle of consistency, be explained also of persons literally dead, and their resurrection as a literal resurrection." That the two resurrections must be of the same nature, because they are distinguished as first and second, is, however, an assumption which demands some better proof, while the principle of consistency seems to require that the language of a figurative prediction should not be taken literally. The Apostle saw in vision, the souls of the martyred who lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. What he saw, must have been prefigurative of a future event. Now, the allegorical character of all the Visions, and more particularly the symbolical nature of the binding and loosing of Satan in the immediate context, require us to understand the living and reigning of these souls in a mystical sense, upon the same principle of interpretation that has furnished the key to all the emblematic predictions. Taking the declaration literally, there is no congruity between the
figurative language in which those are designated who had not worshipped the Beast and his image, or received his mark, and what is predicated of these same persons as living and reigning with Christ. So sudden a transition from a mystical phraseology to a literal statement, in the same sentence, is at least very unusual. Had it been intended to convey the idea of a pre-millenary literal resurrection of the bodies of the martyred saints, would the Apostle have spoken of their living and reigning with Christ only a thousand years? Are not the saints to be "for ever with the Lord?" But, adopting the more consistent interpretation of the Vision, if the living and reigning of the saints, like the binding and loosing of the dragon, and the sealing up of the abyss during the same period, be taken as a figurative prediction of the glorious revival and triumph of the true Church of Christ, and the happy condition of society resulting from the reign of Truth, Righteousness, and Peace, and the restraint laid upon evil principles,—then, indeed, we seem to have a sufficient reason for its being added, that this First Resurrection is distinct from the General Resurrection of the dead.

Another objection urged by Mr. Elliott to this view of the Millennium, is one to which it is extraordinary that he should attach "great weight;" namely, that the promise of a participation in the kingdom and glory of Christ, is uniformly represented as "the reward of hard service, suffering, and conflict." But "can the righteous in the millenary dispensation," he asks, "come under the

2 x
same category of service and suffering?* Why not? Is there any warrant for the supposition, that, during the millennial period, the state of earthly society will be such as to preclude all temptation, all service, all room for the exercise of constancy, patience, or self-denial? Although all tyranny and persecution may cease, and the reign of peace and righteousness be established, and the knowledge of the Truth be universally diffused, and every tongue may confess Christ to be Lord, to the glory of God the Father,—still, out of this very prosperity, and felicity may arise peculiar temptations to the indulgence of sloth, earthymindedness, ambition, and practical infidelity: there will still remain the world to be overcome, the tempter to be resisted, and self to be subdued. It is not imagined, even by those who entertain the most romantic notions of the millennial felicity, that those who are “blessed and holy” as partakers of the First Resurrection, will be the only inhabitants of the earth during the thousand years: how then could it be otherwise than that they should still have occasion and scope for the trial of their fidelity and patience in the service of Christ?

There is yet a fifth interpretation of this mysterious prediction, which, while assuming the First Resurrection to be literal and bodily, infers that the glorified spirits and bodies of the martyrs reign with Christ, not on earth, but in heaven. Professor Stuart, while contending, upon philological

THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

grounds, that the words imply a bodily resurrection, is, at the same time, strongly opposed to "the ancient or the more modern enthusiastic interpreters who find in the text, a temporal and visible reign of Christ on earth, in the midst of a church militant and triumphant, mingled together in one and the same terrestrial abode." "How, in the nature of things," he asks, "can the glorified saints physically associate with those who have never yet undergone the change of death and a resurrection? How can earth become heaven, and saints once there glorified, be honoured and made more happy by a descent to a world of sin and sorrow, or, at all events, to a world in which corporeal beings dwell?" The learned Author contends, that, as Christ is not represented as having changed or transferred His abode, which is "in Heaven, upon the Throne," it is there the martyrs and saints are to live and reign with Him during the millennial period. "There, indeed, their spirits were, before this period commenced; but now, a new state or condition is brought to view. It is a union of their spirits with their bodies raised from the dead. In this advanced state of happiness, they are to be enthroned with Christ: i.e. they are to be where He dwells, and where, as the Scriptures often teach us, He will continue to dwell, until He shall make His descent at the final Judgment-day."*

But if, according to this view of the passage, a participation in the First Resurrection is to be the

peculiar reward of unshaken constancy and fidelity, "what of other pious men of every age, who have borne no conspicuous part in martyrdom or suffering, and made no peculiar attainments in piety? Are they to wait the common lot of other Christians who may live after the Millennium has commenced, and be raised up only at the Last Day?" This question, the learned Author seems aware, scarcely admits of a satisfactory answer: the objection is all but fatal to his theory. "On the one hand, to affirm that all the pious who have lived before the Millennium, will be raised up at the beginning of that period, would seem to abolish all distinction between faithful confessors who are martyrs, and other Christians who hold an inferior place. On the other hand, however, it will be said, that we seem, by the distinction in question, to mingle the pious of humbler degree with the wicked, who are a portion, if not all, of 'the rest of the dead' that have no part in the First Resurrection. We are reduced, then, to a kind of strait, here, between these two considerations; nor does there appear to be anything so entirely explicit in the text as completely to relieve us from this strait."*

If the literal interpretation be adhered to, the First Resurrection must, it is contended, be regarded as limited to the martyrs. This was the prevalent notion among the earlier Millenarians. Hence, martyrdom was eagerly sought for by not a few, in the hope of securing a part in this First Resurrection. Extravagant ideas respecting the

* Stuart, vol. ii. p. 484.
merit, and even the expiatory efficacy of martyrdom, led to a pernicious fanaticism, and prepared the way for paying to the martyrs idolatrous honours. A doctrine which so unduly exalts martyrs, whose piety was often of a very imperfect character, above the rest of the faithful servants of Christ, receives no countenance from the declarations of Our Lord and His Apostles, and is not likely, therefore, to be a doctrine taught or countenanced by the Visions of this Book.

Further, the blessedness ascribed to those who share in the First Resurrection, is represented as consisting, at least in part, in exemption from the Second Death; which seems to leave exposed to that awful doom all who are not sharers in the First Resurrection, including all the inhabitants of the world during the Millennium, who are not in the Resurrection state. What is the Second Death? Not the death of the body, (to which, for anything which this interpretation implies to the contrary, the risen martyrs would still be subject,) but, the doom of the unbelieving and the abominable, the death of both soul and body in hell.* Now, as deliverance from the power of this death, is the common privilege of all who are Christ's, surely, the First Resurrection, which confers exemption from the Second Death, must be of a spiritual character. Accordingly, what is prefigured must be, the spiritual revival of the Church upon earth, the triumph of that cause and kingdom against which the gates of death shall not prevail; a reign

* Compare ch. ii. 11; xx. 14; xxi. 8. Matt. x. 28.
in which the Church in heaven and the Church on earth shall alike participate as sharers in "the joy of their Lord."

It is, indeed, a fatal objection to Professor Stuart's theory, that, in the song of the elders and the four living creatures before the Throne, it is expressly said: "We shall reign on the earth." Those who joined in this hymn, represented the whole family of the redeemed in the heavenly Temple,—the Universal Church.* In the subsequent Vision, under the Fifth Seal, the souls under the altar, or the spirits of the martyrs, are described as awaiting the time when The Lord would judge and avenge their blood on the inhabitants of the earth. This was fulfilled in the overthrow of Paganism, and in the judgments which beset their heathen persecutors. Does not the emblematical representation imply, and may it not have been intended to intimate, that the spirits of the just take an intense interest in the cause for which they suffered or laboured, and in what is taking place upon earth? If the patriarchs and ancient saints rejoiced in the predicted greatness of the holy nation upon earth, in which personally they were not to participate, but only as living in their posterity, why may we not understand the exultant language of the saints and martyrs in the Apocalyptic Vision, as denoting their joyful anticipation of the future triumph of the Christian Church,

* This has been well adduced by the Rev. E. G. Marsh, in his reply to Mr. Birks, as an argument against a literal reign on earth.
the nation of "the first-born," when, not personally, but in their spiritual descendants, they should live and reign with Christ upon earth?

In whatever the happiness and holiness of those who partake of the First Resurrection shall consist, it is inconceivable, that the spirits of the just made perfect, who, "being absent from the body," are now "present with The Lord," should leave the heavenly paradise, in order to live again an earthly life of a thousand years. "Oh! how inglorious," exclaims Dr. Whitby, "how despicable is the resurrection which these men (the Millenarian writers) expect, compared with the resurrection promised in the Holy Scripture! How much more happy would the saints and martyrs be, could they immediately enjoy the Scripture resurrection, than by enjoying that which the Millenarians have allotted to them! And why should any one conceive that they should not do it? Is it because there is a necessity they should first live on earth a thousand years, to prepare them for heaven and eternal glory; "ut paulatim assuescant capere Deum," as Irenæus says, that they may by degrees enlarge their capacities, fit and accustom themselves to receive God; or, as he says in another place, that they may become capable of the glory of the Father, that is, capable of bearing the glory and presence of God? What is it that must thus be fitted and capacitated by contemplation to receive God and to enjoy His blessed Vision? Is it not the soul? And can she not as well contemplate Him under the altar or the Throne, or whilst she doth abide in paradise? Is coming down from
those celestial regions to this dull earth the way to elevate the soul to heaven? Or is it necessary, as Tertullian and others argue, by way of retribution, that the body which has suffered, may be rewarded in like kind; that is, that it may be now gratified with bodily delights, the pleasures of the throat and palate, fine clothes, and innocent diversions here on earth? As if a change of this vile body into the likeness of Christ's glorious body, were not a better and far more glorious reward of all its sufferings! . . . . The comfort which Our Lord and His Apostles do afford these sufferers, is only this: that 'great is their reward in Heaven'; that, 'when they are tried, they shall receive a crown of glory'; and that they have in heaven 'a better and more enduring substance'; which, as it placeth the reward and comfort of Christ's suffering members, not on earth, but in the heavens, and so gives us reason to conclude that Our Lord and His Apostles knew nothing of this reign on earth, or thought it no great matter of their consideration, so did it give occasion to the ancients to conclude thus; 'If the inheritance of martyrs be in heaven, their reign on earth can be no better than a fable.'"*

After all, it must be acknowledged, that there is no specific mention in the Vision, of a bodily resurrection. The Apostle "beheld the souls of those who had been slain on account of the testimony of Jesus," as, in a previous Vision, he had seen the souls under the altar; and Dr. Whitby

* Whitby's Treatise, &c.
remarks, that "a proper and literal resurrection is never, in the whole New Testament, expressed or represented to us by the living of the soul, but always by the living, raising, or resuscitation of the bodies of the saints or of them that slept in the dust." Mr. Elliott endeavours to evade this objection by contending, that the term, "souls" (ψυχάς), refers to their previous state; but this remark does not meet the objection to his theory, that no mention is made of their undergoing that great change which is to pass upon all who sleep in Jesus, or who shall be alive at His Second Coming. That a bodily resurrection is implied, is an unwarrantable assumption.* Yet, upon this mere assumption, taken in connection with another supposition equally unsupported by the sacred Text,—that of a pre-millennial Advent of Our Lord,—rests the entire fabric of Millenarianism.

The conclusion, then, to which we seem to be shut up, is, that the language of the Vision must be taken in an allegorical sense, and that the First Resurrection denotes a glorious revival of the life of the Church, and a development of the kingdom of Christ upon earth, worthy of being regarded as a prefiguration of the Final Resurrection. The full import of the prediction, time will discover. With regard to the duration of the happy period, the commencement of which is evidently posterior

* Prof. Stuart remarks, that the word signifies revived, or restored to life; and "such life implies the vivification of the body." This takes for granted the very point which requires to be proved.
to the fall of the mystical Babylon and the termination of the mystical twelve hundred and sixty days, had the phrase used been, "a thousand days," there would have been little room for hesitation in construing it, agreeably to the mystical import of a day in the previous Visions, as denoting a definite period of a thousand years. But, as there is no previous instance of a round number being employed as a mark of time, and as the term year does not elsewhere occur in its literal meaning, it may be questioned whether an exact millennium is intended.* The declaration of St. Peter, that "one day is with The Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," seems to indicate, that the phrase was in proverbial use, as denoting a long, indefinite period. This is a point, however, of no immediate interest.

At length, on the expiration of this term, there will take place a fresh outbreak of wickedness and violence; and a conflict will ensue, which is mystically described as an invasion of the holy land and the beloved City by an innumerable host of Scythian and other barbarous nations. The geographical appellations, which evidently allude to the predictions of Ezekiel,† must, as in former parallel cases, be interpreted in a figurative sense.

* Some Expositors have pleased themselves with the extravagant fancy, that a period of 360,000 years is intended!
† Ezek. xxxviii. 2; xxxix. 1. Gog and Magog were Scythian or Turkish nations occupying the region of the Caucasus, the borders of the Caspian, and Transoxiana; whence have proceeded, from time to time, those vast hordes who have repeatedly over-run and desolated Western Asia.
By "the camp of the saints," and "the beloved city," the Church of Christ is doubtless intended. Of the origin, circumstances, and duration of this last conflict, it is impossible to form even a conjecture. The issue alone is certain. The enemies of Christ and His saints will be destroyed by a Divine interposition, and an end will be put to all delusion and all rebellion, for ever. For, "The Lord Jesus shall be manifested from Heaven with the angels of His power, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them who know not God, and who obey not the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of The Lord, and from the glory of His power, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints in that day." (2 Thess. i. 7—10.)

IV. THE LAST JUDGMENT AND THE NEW CREATION.

In striking coincidence with the passage just cited from St. Paul's Epistles, is the description of the awful Vision which next presented itself to the Beloved Apostle. "I saw a great white Throne, and Him who was seated upon it, from whose countenance the heaven and the earth fled away, and no place was found for them. And I beheld the dead, small and great, standing before the Throne; and Books were opened. Also, there was opened Another Book, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged by the things recorded in the Books, according to their works. The sea also gave up the dead which it contained; and Death and the Grave gave up the dead which they contained; and
they were judged, every one according to his works. And Death and the Grave were cast into the lake of fire. This is the Second Death. And whosoever was not found enrolled in the Book of Life, was cast into the lake of fire. And I beheld a new heaven and a new earth; for the former heaven and the former earth were passed away, and the sea was no more."*

With this sublime emblematic description, it is only necessary to compare the literal declarations of St. Peter, in order to fix its solemn import. "The day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. . . . . The heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless, we, according to His promise,† look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth Righteousness." Here, there is no allegory. That the language is not figurative, is shewn by the previous declaration of the Apostle, that, even as the former world, "being overflowed with water, perished," so, "the existing heavens and earth are, by the same word, kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." This comparison leaves no room for reasonable doubt that a physical catastrophe is intended.

* The sea is probably referred to as the grave of those who had perished in it, or as an agency of destruction.
† Alluding, apparently, to Isa. lxv. 17.
Taken by itself, the prediction of a new heaven and a new earth, might be understood as denoting nothing more than an entire change in the existing state of things; the precise nature of that change, and of the means by which it shall be brought about, being left indeterminate, or, rather, unrevealed. In fact, the words of St. Peter, "a new earth wherein dwelleth Righteousness," might seem to indicate a moral regeneration.* But the declaration so emphatically reiterated, that the elements of the material earth shall melt with fervent heat, and that all the works contained in it shall be consumed,—the distinct announcement, that the present earth shall as truly perish by fire, as the antediluvian world was overwhelmed with water,—cannot be resolved into mere metaphor, and must therefore imply a real and physical destruction and renovation.

In what manner the passing away of the former heaven and earth, and the appearance of a new creation, were presented to the mind of the Apostle in the Vision, it is not easy to conceive, nor is it of any importance to ascertain. But it was probably an emblematic representation. He then beheld "the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." From this metaphor,

* Mr. Elliott seems anxious, in supporting his pre-millenarian theory, to explain away the literal import of St. Peter's prediction as being identical with Isaiah's figurative language. That he should find himself under any temptation to do so, affords a strong presumption against the scriptural character of his theory.
we are led to conclude, that he beheld a personification of the Heavenly City in the form of a Bride splendidly attired; just as the Great City, Babylon, had been personified as a meretricious female. While he beheld this emblem, a mighty voice out of Heaven supplied the interpretation: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them; and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.* And death shall be no more, nor shall there be any more sorrow, or mourning, or affliction, for the former things have passed away."

This declaration is followed by a Voice from the Throned One:—"Lo! I make all things new." And the Apostle was commanded to record what he heard, because the words were true and certain of accomplishment. Then the same Voice added: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the Consummation. To whosoever thirsts, I will give to drink of the fountain of living water, freely. He who overcomes shall possess all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But, to the fearful and unbelieving, to detestable persons and murderers, to adulterers and sorcerers (or dealers in charms), to idolaters and all deceivers, shall be assigned their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and sulphur: which is the Second Death."

In this passage, the same Divine Person who had addressed the Apostle in the First Vision,

* See Isa. xxv. 8.
reiterates the promises and threatenings which St. John was commanded to write to the churches; speaking from the Throne in the name of The Father, and in the character of God. Here terminates the chronological series of predictions; but, before the curtain falls upon the sequel of this world's history, a supplemental Vision presents a vivid allegorical picture of the unity, glory, and blessedness of the Redeemed.
Vision the Twelfth.

THE NEW JERUSALEM.—CONCLUSION.

As, after the Seventh Vial had been poured out, one of the Seven Vial-bearing Angels invited the Apostle to come and witness the Judgment upon the mystical Babylon; so, now, after he had recorded the awful burden of the previous Vision, one of these Seven Angels (we may presume it to be the same, and the last of the Seven) invited him to come and behold the glory of the Heavenly Jerusalem. Accordingly, he was transported in spirit to a lofty mountain, commanding a vast horizon, from which he beheld a City that seemed descending out of heaven, irradiated with the Divine glory. It must, therefore, have appeared suspended in the mid-heaven. From what is said of the height of the city, it must have risen upon terraced foundations, each terrace having its distinct wall supporting or encircling it; so that, although each wall was only 216 feet high,* (less than the height of the walls of the Assyrian Babylon,) the entire height of the City was equal to

* One hundred and forty-four cubits (πολευσματικος) "man's measure, which was that of the angel;" i.e. the ordinary cubit of eighteen inches. (See Ezek. xli. 5.)
its diameter; inasmuch as "the length, and the breadth, and the height are equal." The Angel bore a golden measuring-rod for the purpose of measuring its extent; and the measure was declared to be 12,000 studia (about 1500 miles*) in circumference, or a square of 375 miles. It is obvious, that the eye could no more take in the view of a city 1500 miles in circumference, than it could a terraced mountain 375 miles high; nor can the idea be made palpable to the imagination. As the measurement was mystical, so, the numbers must be regarded as symbolical, and understood as denoting, according to the idea which seems to have been attached to the number twelve, universality or completeness, and, at the same time, immensity.

In its general plan, the symbolical City presents a striking resemblance to the description of Ecbatana, furnished by the Father of secular History. "Of this city, one wall encompassed another, and each rose by the height of its battlements above the one beyond it. The ground, which was a circular hill, favoured this construction; but it owed still more to the labours bestowed upon the work. The orbicular walls were seven in number: within the last stood the royal palace and the treasuries. The largest of the walls nearly equalled the circumference of Athens. The battlements of this outer wall were white; those of the second, black; of the third, purple; of the fourth, blue; of the fifth, orange; all the battlements being thus

* Rather less than the twenty-first part of the Earth's diameter. The highest summit of Himalaya is about five miles in elevation above the sea level.
covered with a pigment. Of the last two walls, the battlements of the one were plated with silver, those of the other with gold.”* Thus, the Median city consisted of seven circular terraces, each distinguished by the colour of its wall; whereas the Apocalyptic city is described as a quadrangle of twelve stages or foundations; but the points of coincidence are highly illustrative of the emblematic description. The precious stones of which the walls of the holy city appeared to consist, whatever mystical or symbolical significance may attach to them, are obviously intended to describe the colour of each resplendent elevation; and, although the colours do not occur in the precise prismatic order, the combination would have the general effect of a double rainbow.

While, however, the imagery is composed of terrestrial elements, the scene was obviously emblematical. It is impossible to regard the pictorial symbol as a representation of any place: the very measurements seem intended to preclude this idea, by rendering such a literal interpretation of the Vision preposterous. The designation applied to the mystical city, of “The Bride, the Wife of the Lamb,” sufficiently denotes, that the emblem represents, not a place or state, but a society,—the “Body of Christ.” In St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians, (ch. v. 25,) “the Jerusalem which now is,” (meaning the Jewish nation under bondage to the Sinaitic covenant,) is contrasted with “the Jerusalem which is above,” the mother

* Taylor’s Herodotus, p. 48.
city of all believers; comprising the whole polity or society of the redeemed. In the Epistle to the Hebrews (ch. xii. 21—24), there occurs a graphic and beautiful description of the Church under the same emblem, in which the allusion to the construction of ancient cities, and more especially to the literal Jerusalem, is kept up through a series of clauses, the essential idea conveyed by the figurative language being that of the heavenly society. "But ye," says the inspired writer, "have come" (or have the privilege of drawing nigh as worshippers) "not to Sinai," but "to Mount Zion." The Apostolic description conducts us first to the foot of the mount itself, on which the citadel is built; we then ascend to the walls of the city, guarded by "myriads of angels;" then, entering the city, to the plateia or forum,—the place of the solemn assembly (πανηγύρις) of the enrolled citizens whose names are in the Book of Life; we then advance to the tribunal, the palace of the Supreme "God of all;" within the very sanctuary are the mansions of the glorified spirits of the just;* and in the midst, before the Throne, there being no veil, The Lamb, the Mediator of the New Covenant, and the sprinkled blood on the Mercy-seat. Thus explained, the order of the several clauses, which at first sight presents a difficulty, is appropriate and beautiful. That no actual place is intended by the "City of God" in this allegorical description, any more than in the Apocalyptic Vision, is obvious.

* See John xiv. 2, where τῇ οἶκῳ must allude to the Temple with its numerous "mansions" or chambers.
The subject of the former is the Church of God, part on earth, and part in heaven; for to suppose the invisible world to be exclusively referred to in the Epistle, would deprive the contrast between the Sinaitic and the Evangelical Economies of its appositeness and force. Moreover, the distinction between the general assembly or church of the enrolled citizens, and the spirits of the just made perfect, which has perplexed commentators, may be explained by interpreting the former of the Church militant, or the general body of Christ on earth; the latter, of the Church triumphant in heaven. The New Jerusalem of the Apocalypse represents, however, the entire Church in its ultimate unity, glory, and felicity.

According to this view, the details of the emblematic description must be interpreted as significant of the characteristics of the heavenly society. The general idea seems to be taken from the Jewish polity; the sacred nation, divided into twelve tribes, being represented by the twelve regions of the City. That the Jewish nation itself is not intended,* is evident from the foundations having inscribed upon them, the names of the Twelve Apostles; thereby denoting the Church Catholic "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets;" that is, upon their doctrine and teaching. The precious-stones with which the foundation-walls are faced, are the same that are specified (Exod. xxviii. 17) as adorning the breast-plate of the high-priest; and, as upon the stones in the pontifical breast-plate were inscribed the

* Mr. Elliott admits, that this notion would be contrary to the whole analogy of Apocalyptic interpretation. Vol. iv. p. 236.
names of the Twelve Tribes, so, the names of the Twelve Apostles are inscribed upon the several courses of precious stones in the foundation-walls of the City. The coincidence must be intentional and significant; and the idea designed to be conveyed seems to be, the preciousness, in the sight of God, of the chosen nation; while the splendour denotes the reflected glory of the Divine presence. The form of the City, a quadrangular pyramid of many stages, is symbolical at once of unity and of universality or completeness. The several stages have been supposed to signify the successive generations of the faithful; but, as each foundation bears the name of an Apostle, and each gate has inscribed upon it that of a distinct tribe, (agreeably to the description of the Holy City in the prophecies of Ezekiel, (ch. xlviii.,) the twelve stages must be interpreted, not of periods or generations, but rather of the different tribes or nations out of which the Church had been gathered. The labours of the Apostles, which were collaterally directed to different countries, had for their first object the calling of the Jews; and it may be reasonably supposed, that some out of every Jewish tribe were actually gathered by them into the Church; and though this came to consist afterwards chiefly of a Gentile constituency, yet, these Gentiles were ingrafted upon the Abrahamic stock, and thereby ceasing to be "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," were made "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

* Eph. ii. 19, 20. As the Christian Church was primarily Jewish, so, perhaps, connecting the predictions of Ezekiel with
Further, the description given of "the street of the City" as "of pure gold, transparent as crystal," obviously denotes the moral purity of those who are thus "built together as a city" upon the Apostolic foundation;* and the gates of pearl, each having its angelic guardian, suggests the exclusion of "every thing that defileth, and of all falsehood," the pearl being an emblem at once of truth and of purity. The "river of life" is a metaphor of frequent occurrence in the Sacred Scriptures† as denoting joy and felicity, the emblem being taken from a topographical feature of the Jewish metropolis:—

—— "Siloa's brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God."

The "tree of life" obviously alludes to the Garden of Eden, conveying the idea both of present satisfaction and of immortality; ‡ while the absence of any curse emphatically marks the contrast between the earthly paradise of our First Parents, over whom impended the curse denounced in the event of disobedience, and the eternal security of the Redeemed.

Such being the general import of the emblems of the Apocalypse, we may consider these Jewish emblems as importing the re-inauguration of the natural branches upon the original stock, or the restoration of Israel. (Rom. xi. 15—29.)

* Comp. 1 Cor. iii. 12.
† See Psalm xlvii. 4; xxxvi. 8; Jer. ii. 13; Ezek. xlvii. 1—12.
‡ The metaphorical description is taken from the prophecies of Ezekiel, ch. xlvii. 12; and, on comparing the two passages, it will be seen, that ἐνωλον ἤφης must be taken as equivalent to a species of tree, i.e. trees of life, not a single tree.
atic imagery, the question arises, whether the Vision is intended to prefigure any future condition of the Church upon this present earth, antecedent to the General Resurrection, or the consummation and everlasting blessedness of the risen saints in the heavenly world?* Mr. Elliott "inclines to think, that the Apocalyptic New Jerusalem was intended to symbolize the millennial glory of the risen saints," (agreeably to the theory of a pre-millennial Advent of Christ,) "and its descent from Heaven in vision, to denote a public manifestation to the world of that glory at the very opening of the Millennium." The reasons in favour of an opposite conclusion appear, however, greatly to preponderate. In the first place, the order of events seems too distinctly indicated to admit of this supposition. The thousand years are represented as having expired previously to the Judgment, the Resurrection, and the passing away of the former heaven and earth; and it was after the Vision of the new heaven and earth, that St. John beheld the personification of the holy city as a Bride, of which the Vision of the New Jerusalem is an allegorical amplification.† In the second place, if the New Jerusalem is symbolical of "the Church in the resurrection-state, perfect in number and unity," its descent cannot be referred to a

* Vitrinnga and Whitby suppose it to signify the blessedness of the earthly Church during the Millennium. Mr. Faber explains it as post-millennial.

† Mr. Elliott admits, that the Vision, if appertaining to millennial times, must be "retrogressive."
period at which there will still remain to be made vast accessions to the number of the saved.

On the other hand, an objection to our regarding the Vision as symbolical of the heavenly perfection, has been founded upon the declaration, (ch. xxi. 24, 26,) that "the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour into" the City; and that "they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it." "How," it is asked, "can we explain this, except on the supposition of men existing on earth and in the earthly state, contemporarily with the higher and heavenly glory of the New Jerusalem?"* It must be observed, however, that this part of the description is an application of the prophetic language of Isaiah, in which Jerusalem is apostrophised as a city, but under the same personification, intending unquestionably, by "the City of the Lord," the True Israel.† Here, the whole description being symbolical, it seems unreasonable to interpret allegorically, what is said of the construction, architecture, and measurements, and to contend for a strictly literal meaning in the municipal allusions. There seems no more propriety in interpreting the prediction, that kings shall be tributary to the redeemed Church, and that the wealth of nations shall be poured into the heavenly community, as relating to commercial wealth, mineral riches, or earthly splendour, than in attaching a literal and earthly meaning to the precious-stones and pure gold of

* Elliott, vol. iv. p. 239.
† See Isa. lx. 3—14, 19, 20; lxii. 5, 12.
the City walls and pavement. This were, indeed, "to judaize." The real purport of the figurative language seems to be, that the Celestial Jerusalem will gather into itself all that is truly precious, glorious, or excellent upon earth, all the elements of intellectual and moral grandeur, all the accumulated wealth of true knowledge and wisdom, as well as all that can conduce to immortal felicity and perpetual advancement.

But, again, it is asked, "How can the leaves of the tree of life be for the healing of the nations, unless there be contemporaneously existing upon earth such as need healing?" Yet, surely no one can suppose a literal tree to be intended, to the leaves of which medicinal virtues are ascribed. The inhabitants of the heavenly City cannot stand in need of healing, for it is declared, that "there shall be no more pain and no more death." The tree of life is the emblem of immortality. (Gen. iii. 22.) The healing properties of its leaves are for the healing of the nations now; as the water of life is now offered freely to whosoever will.

In opposition to the theory of a pre-millennial advent, it may be gathered from various intimations in the Apostolic Scriptures, that the manifestation ("apocalypse") of the sons of God will be connected with the redemption of the body, and with the deliverance of Creation from the bondage of corruption; (Rom. viii. 19—23;)—that the presentation of the Church by Christ to Himself, as a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle, holy and unblemished, before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, (Eph. v. 27; Jude 24,) will synchronize with
that Advent at which Christ will deliver up to the Father His mediatorial commission and the kingdom he has subdued and conquered, having first, while still reigning at the right hand of the Father, subdued all things unto Himself, and deposed Death, the last enemy that remained; (1 Cor. xv. 24;) —that then shall be "the End;" —that the period at which He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all those who believe, is the same at which He shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon them who know not God, and who obey not the Gospel, and who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of The Lord; (2 Thes. i. 7—10;) —that, when The Lord shall so descend from Heaven with a shout and the voice of the Archangel, and the trump of God, He will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus; (1 Thes. iv. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 51;) —that the dead in Christ shall then rise, and the living saints be changed in a moment, and all be together caught up in the clouds to meet The Lord in the air, thenceforth to be for ever with The Lord; —that, at the same hour, all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man as the appointed Judge of the living and the dead, and shall come forth, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation; (John v. 28;) —and that the time when He will raise up to everlasting life all whom The Father has given Him, is emphatically "the last day;" (John vi. 40;) —that, when the Son of Man
shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, He shall take His seat upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations; that those separated upon His left hand shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous shall then enter upon everlasting life. (Matt. xxv. 21.) From this chain of clear, unequivocal declarations, can any other conclusion be safely deduced, than that the Apocalyptic Vision of the Bride of Christ relates to the *palingenesia,* (Matt. xix. 28,* *) to the times of the restoration (*apocatastasis*) of all things (Acts iii. 21,†) which is to be introduced by the Day of Judgment?

Having completed his interpretation of the glorious Vision, the Angel who was commissioned to shew these things to the Apostle, reiterates his solemn affirmation of their truth and certainty; (see ch. xxi. 5 ;) adding, that the Lord God who inspired the ancient prophets, had sent His angel to make known to His servants what must speedily come to pass. Speaking in the name of Our Lord,

* "For what is the *palingenesia* spoken of, but the state when Christ shall make all things new?" Elliott, iv. 210. And when, we may ask, will the Son of God sit on the throne of His glory, and his apostles "as co-assessors" occupy twelve thrones, but at the solemn hour when "before him shall be gathered all nations," and the blessed shall be eternally separated from the wicked? Matt. xxv. 31.

† Or consummation. So, Hesychius, supported by the Syrian and Arabic lexicons. Calvin renders, "*restitutio in integrum.*" Mr. Elliott, in a series of philological notes, (vol. iv. pp. 211—213,) labours to prove, that restoration, not fulfilment, is the proper meaning. This can scarcely be disputed; but it does not affect the argument.
he repeats the Divine message to the Churches: "Lo, I come speedily: blessed is he who observes the declarations of the prophecy of this Book." As the solemn warning, "I come quickly," occurs more than once in the messages to the Seven Churches in the First Vision, its repetition here carries us back to the time at which the Apocalypse was given, since it must be understood as referring primarily to the events in which the Christians then living were immediately concerned, the commencement of the long train of predicted events. This is the more evident, inasmuch as there is nothing in the immediate context with which the words here seem immediately to connect. Yet, the admonition may be regarded as the general lesson of the entire Book, the burden of the Divine Revelation, applicable to all times and seasons; an exhortation to constant vigilance and habitual preparation of mind, in reference to all the Divine Dispensations:—"Behold, I come suddenly: blessed is he who watches."

The Apostle now names himself as having witnessed the things which he records, and describes the effect which the Vision produced upon him: "I who saw and heard these things, am John; and when I had heard and seen them, I fell at the feet of the Angel who shewed me these things, to do him homage. Then he said to me, Beware of doing so; I am a fellow-servant with thyself and thy brethren the prophets, and with those who observe the sayings of this book. Worship God." In this instance, it might seem, that St. John mistook the angelic messenger for a personal
manifestation of Christ. Whether we regard his action here as personal, or as symbolical and figurative, (as in a preceding instance, ch. xix. 10,) it must have been recorded for the instruction and warning of the Church; and the repetition of the circumstance gives a peculiar emphasis to the lesson which is conveyed. It was foreseen, that there would be, on the part of Christians, a proneness to this error of offering to saints and angels a worship due to God alone; a danger of transferring to the servants of Christ, a homage and allegiance which He claims as His Divine prerogative. It teaches us to look to the highest angels, not as mediators, but as fellow-worshippers. Possibly, too, it may convey a further lesson; not to mistake for the personal manifestation of Christ the coming which is here referred to, namely, the intervention of His providence, and the fulfilment of His promises and threatenings in the administration of His heavenly reign.

Having cautioned the Apostle against misconception, the angelic messenger proceeds with the delivery of the final command from Our Lord to His beloved Apostle. "Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this Book, because the time is at hand:" a direction equivalent to an injunction to publish forthwith the whole series of prophetic disclosures, the fulfilment of which was speedily to commence. It may be inferred, that the necessity had become urgent for correcting false expectations, and for recalling the Churches to their duty, which was the primary design of the Divine communication. The words which follow, have
been variously interpreted. Mr. Elliott (after Vitringa) conceives it to be implied, that the probationary period of permitted evil, as well as good, is for a while prolonged. Professor Stuart's interpretation seems more in accordance with the context: "Be it that persecutors and vile men shall continue for a while longer their oppressive and debasing practices; yet, let not the righteous be shaken in his constancy, nor the holy man cease in any measure from the pursuit of sanctification. The oppression of the wicked will speedily cease, and their abominations shall receive a due reward. It is an earnest exhortation to perseverance, accompanied by adequate encouragement. Their reward is speedy and certain. So, on the other hand, is the punishment of the wicked; for to every one there will be a recompense according to the nature of his work."* For the fifth time, the solemn warning is reiterated: "Lo! I come speedily (or suddenly);" accompanied with an intimation that it will be in the character of a judge, to dispense both rewards and punishments. The words, "And my reward is with me," allude to a promise which occurs twice in the prophecies of Isaiah, (ch. xl. 10; lxii. 11,) "Behold the Lord God will come with might. . . . Behold His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him."† That is, "to award to every man according to his work." He who thus speaks by His Angel, then proclaims

† In the second passage referred to, we read, "Behold, Thy salvation cometh," &c.
Himself to be "the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last."

In the declaration which follows, there is a change of person; and the words have the appearance of a comment introduced by the inspired Writer, or of a response to the Divine message: "Blessed are they who do His commandments, that they may have a right to partake of the tree of life, and to enter through the gates into the City; for without are dogs,—sorcerers and adulterers, and murderers and idolaters, and all who love and practise falsehood."

Again the Heavenly Voice addresses the Apostle: "I Jesus have sent My angel to declare unto you these things concerning the Churches. I am the Scion and Offspring of David, the bright Morning Star." The titles here assumed by Our Lord, are evidently allusive to the language of ancient Prophecy. The title of "The Root of Jesse," (used metonymically for that which springs from the Root,) occurs in Isa. xi. 10. In the first verse of that chapter, we read: "And there shall come forth a shoot from the stem of Jesse, and a branch (or scion) shall grow out of his roots." And at ver. 10: "In that day shall there be a Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people;" i.e., as a banner for the people, round which all nations should gather.* The import of the term is here made the more clear and

* To this passage, Our Lord appears to have alluded, when he said, (John xii. 32,) "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."
determinate by the parallel expression, γενος, offspring; which shews that Our Lord is speaking of Himself as the promised Son of David. It may be presumed, that the other title in like manner alludes to ancient prophecy; and the figurative language of the prediction of Balaam, (Num. xxii. 17,) affords a striking parallel: "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and he shall smite the corners of Moab."

The prediction primarily pointed to David and his territorial conquests; but, as David was both a type of the Messiah and a progenitor of Our Lord, its ultimate reference seems to be to the triumphs of David's Son and Lord. The epithet πρωινος, belonging to the morning, may be explained as answering in import to λαμπρος, shining or refulgent; but it may possibly allude to the earliness of the prophecy respecting Our Lord under this emblem.

Taken altogether, this remarkable declaration bespeaks at once supreme authority and infinite condescension: "I, the First and the Last, am Jesus, who have sent to thee My angel, the angel of the Lord God of the holy prophets, with this message to the Churches. I am the promised Son of David, who was from the earliest times announced as a Star and Ruler, to proceed from the line of Jacob; to whom all the prophets of old bare witness; and at whose second coming all things shall be fulfilled. And, behold! I come quickly."

As if in response to the promise so often reiterated, the Apostle here expresses the fervent desire of the Church for the coming of Christ:
"The Spirit (of inspiration and prophecy) and the Bride of the Lamb say, Come! And let whoso hears say, Come!" The next words are an invitation: (answering to Our Lord's own proclamation, John vii. 37:) "Let whoso thirsteth, and is willing, come and partake of the water of life freely." As if to intimate, that it was only by an immediate compliance with the Divine invitations of the Gospel, that any could obtain a portion in the heavenly inheritance, and enter through the gates into the City.

And now, in the closing words of this last of the Divine Oracles, the Apostle solemnly warns all who shall hear this Book publicly read in the Churches, (for the expression, "who hears," implies that it would be so read,*) not to tamper with its awful contents, either by adding to them, or by taking from them. This solemn prohibition has been erroneously applied to the Canon of Scripture, which was not, at that time, formally completed. It is manifestly intended rather as a special caution against those false prophecies and spurious Apocalypses which were put forth by heretical teachers,† and those Rabbinical legends which, by being mixed up with the inspired declarations of this Book, tended to undermine

* See page 3.
† Professor Stuart, in illustration of "the strong inclination of the early ages of Christianity toward writings of this nature," gives (from Lücke) a list of twelve apocryphal Apocalypses no longer extant, and a brief account of seven others of which fragments have been preserved. Comment. vol. i. pp. 36—123. Nothing can be more striking than the contrast between these silly fables and the Apocalypse itself.
its authority, as well as to obscure its import. Yet, it seems to involve also in its awful condemnation, all wilful attempts to explain away the denunciations contained in this Book against the Papal Anti-Christ and the sin of idolatry.

For the sixth time, the declaration is repeated,—they seem to be the last words of the Divine address: "The Testifier of these things saith"—i.e., "I Jesus, who declare these things, say"—"Surely I come speedily." To this reiterated promise of His speedy advent, the glorious hope of the Church, St. John adds his final response: "Amen. Yea, come, Lord Jesus!"

There appears to be, in the concluding portion of this wonderful Book, (from verse 12,) an alternation of declarations on the part of The Son of God, (or of the angel speaking in Our Lord's name,) and of response on the part of the Apostle, as the representative of the Church; similar to what is found in some of the responsive Psalms.

The Apostolic Benediction closes the whole:—"The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints. Amen."
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