

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

BOOK 13

REVELATION 5:6-14

THE ACTION OF CONSTITUTING
THE LAMB-SLAIN
HEIR OF ALL THINGS

EDWARD IRVING

1831



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*Exposition of the Book of Revelation:
in a series of Lectures*
1831

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WHY THIS WORK?

The first time I came across the writings of Edward Irving, deep in the back shelves of the Theology Library at UBC (Vancouver, BC, Canada), I was deeply impressed with the unusual treatment he gave to the final book of the Bible.

He wrote as one who knew his calling, and knew that he had a message from God for his generation. Combined with that urgency, Irving had a large sense of the glory of God in Christ, and God's purposes through Christ to reveal Himself unto the world through the Church.

He also possessed a large gift for language and expression, and apparently was quite an orator, as well as being a man of great compassion and sensitivity.

His work on the book of *Revelation*, which originally comprised two volumes, but only covered the first six chapters, towers above other similar commentaries because of its unique blend of gospel and prophecy.

Coming from a church founded on the Advent movement of the mid-1800's, I was somewhat familiar with books on the prophetic parts of Scripture. Irving's commentary was nothing like those.

Whereas the standard prophetic works tended to get quagmired in historical events and details, thus dwelling on the vessel by which God's purposes were worked out, Irving kept his eye single to the glory of God, and searched into those deep purposes as far as he was able. He rightly dwelt on the treasure that was in the vessel of prophecy. Like Moses, he wanted to see God's glory, or as much as was humanly possible. And he did see much, indeed.

And because most of the treasure he unearthed is practically lost to the Church today, I have for a long time had a strong desire to make these works more widely available.

In this republication, I have taken only a few liberties: correcting and modernizing spelling and grammar in a few places (including the language in the KJV Bible references), breaking up large paragraphs and sentences, and inserting full Bible references where appropriate. I have separated the original 2-volume work into smaller books, one for each of the fifteen original lectures. Otherwise it is as Irving wrote it.

This is Edward Irving's parting gift to the Church of Christ. In his own words, from the exposition on Laodicea:

"But my confidence in truth never fails me. I know that these things are not published in vain. It is not for myself, nor for my flock, but for the church of God, that I write these things, which I pray God for His own name's sake to hasten and bless."

Gather up the fragments, that none be lost.

CONTENTS

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.....	1
OLD TESTAMENT PARALLELS.....	1
1. BRINGING INTO THE PROMISED LAND.....	1
2. THE VINEYARD OF NABOTH.....	11
3. JEREMIAH'S PURCHASED LAND.....	12
A MIXTURE OF SYMBOLS.....	12
THE LAMB.....	15
THE LAMB SLAIN.....	17
THE PASCHAL LAMB.....	20
THE MORNING AND EVENING SACRIFICE.....	24
THE SEVEN HORNS AND SEVEN EYES OF THE LAMB.....	33
THE TITLE OF THE LAMB TO REDEEM.....	43
THE FIRST BORN.....	44
1. FIRSTBORN FROM ETERNITY.....	45
2. FIRSTBORN IN THE NEW LIFE.....	46
3. FIRSTBORN FROM THE GRAVE.....	47
THE MYSTERY OF GOD.....	48
PERFECT OBEDIENCE REQUIRED.....	55
THE WITNESSING PARTIES.....	58
THE ABSENCE OF SATAN.....	59
SATAN AS THE USURPER.....	60
LESSONS FROM THE REDEEMER'S ACTION.....	62
1. CHRIST'S DUAL NATURE BEFORE CREATION.....	62
2. CHRIST'S ONENESS WITH FALLEN NATURE.....	63
3. CHRIST'S PERFECT HOLINESS AS MAN.....	65
THE SONG OF THE LIVING CREATURES AND THE ELDERS AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHURCH.....	67
THE HARPS.....	70
THE INCENSE.....	72
THE VIALS.....	74
THE SONG.....	78
REDEMPTION BY HIS BLOOD.....	81
KINDRED, TONGUE, PEOPLE, AND NATION.....	92
KINGS AND PRIESTS.....	99
YOU ARE WORTHY TO TAKE THE BOOK.....	101
WE SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH.....	102

THE SONG OF THE ANGELS.....	105
POWER.....	112
RICHES.....	114
WISDOM.....	115
STRENGTH.....	117
HONOR.....	118
GLORY.....	119
BLESSING.....	120

Revelation 5

⁶ And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

⁷ And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne.

⁸ And when He had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints.

⁹ And they sung a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

¹⁰ And have made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

¹¹ And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

¹² Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

¹³ And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

¹⁴ And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped Him that lives for ever and ever.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

WE SET forth in our former Lecture that this action of our blessed Lord, whereby He possesses Himself of the sealed book in the hand of God, and opens its seven seals, and by seven acts of power dispossesses the beast and the false prophet, and all their adherents, of the earth, and with His raised saints occupies the thrones, and rules it in righteousness, is nothing else than the fulfillment of another integral part of the Redeemer's office: that is, to redeem the inheritance according to the ancient ordinance of the *Goel*, or redeemer, laid down in *Leviticus* 25, and exemplified in the act of Boaz, recorded in *Ruth* 4, and in that of *Jeremiah* 31.

OLD TESTAMENT PARALLELS

If this be the true interpretation of the delivery of the sealed book into the hands of the Lamb slain, there ought to be found in the Old Testament prophetic anticipations and typical significations of this great action of redeeming the earth, which is deemed of such weighty importance as to be made the subject of such a magnificent scene in the court of heaven. Of these there be many, from amongst which we select the following.

1. Bringing into the Promised Land

First, the manner of bringing the children of Israel into the possession of the inheritance of the promised land was a wonderfully exact type of the transaction before us.

To understand this, it is necessary to remember that the Book of the Old Testament contained no more of the Scripture, than what is written in the *Exodus* chapters 20 to 23. These four chapters, containing laws moral, ecclesiastical, and political, were included in one book or roll, which the children of Israel having heard, swore to keep; and the oath was confirmed by blood of bulls and of goats, sprinkled both upon

the book and upon all the people (*Exodus 24*).

And this book, thus consecrated with blood, was laid up on the side of the ark, and is that which in Scripture is commonly signified by the book of the law.

Now we have the authority of the Apostle Paul (*Hebrews 9*) for calling this a Testament, the Old Testament, in contrast with the New Testament which was ratified with the blood of Christ, and sealed up unalterably by the death of the Testator.

Accordingly, if we examine that document as it is contained in the four chapters referred to above, we find that it is after the nature of a bequest, bestowing upon them the land of promise (*Exodus 23:23-31*), and securing them in it forever, upon the condition of their keeping the laws, moral, judicial, and political, therein laid down.

That was the land of Canaan, whereof the bounds are precisely described in the deed itself; and of which God declares by the mouth of Moses (*Deuteronomy 32:8*), that when He divided the earth among the sons of Adam, He reserved this portion for His people Israel.

Here, therefore, is the Old Testament, which in all respects was such a type of the new, that the one is commonly expressed in terms of the other.

It is the language of the Scripture, and the current language of the Church, that we are passing through the wilderness, fed with the manna of heaven, followed by the waters of the rent rock of Christ, and sojourning towards the land of promise, the heavenly Canaan. Such language is authorized by the Apostle (*1 Corinthians 10; Hebrews 3 and 4*), by our Lord's discourse (*John 6*), and by the Apocalypse (*Revelation 12*), and by the cumulative proof of a thousand types, whose collective force the Christian Church has in no age thought of doubting.

Seeing, then, that on all hands it is allowed that Canaan bequeathed to the children of Israel by the Old Testament is the

proper type of the inheritance bequeathed to the spiritual Church by the New Testament, confirmed in the blood of Christ, we may well expect that the giving possession of the former should shadow forth the giving possession of the latter, as set forth in the transaction before us.

When the children of Israel had accomplished the forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, according to the sharp-edged word of the Lord, which He spake on the day of provocation, and every man of stature who provoked the Lord, save Caleb and Joshua, had fallen in the desert; and those who were then children had crossed Jordan, and been circumcised, they:

Joshua 5

¹⁰ ...kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.

¹¹ And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day.

¹² And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old com of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

These signs sufficiently declare that the wilderness dispensation was at an end, and that a new dispensation in the history of the people was about to begin; which is the dispensation of giving them possession of the land.

Now Jericho was the frontier city, a place of great strength, under whose walls the host of Israel then lay. It was...

Joshua 6

¹ ...straitly shut up, because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.

This city the Lord Himself gave into their hands, without once requiring of them to strike a blow. Other cities, as Ai, they took by strength of hand; but this was given into their hands according to an ordinance delivered by the lips of Jeho-

vah Himself.

This ordinance for the giving possession of Jericho is an exact type of the ordinance in the *Revelation* for giving possession of the earth. Jericho, as being the first city, and a place of great strength, is the part, in the delivering up of which the whole is signified as being delivered up; just as in the legal forms for giving possession of any property you take a portion of stone, and earth, and wood, and water, and having given them into the hands of him who would serve himself heir, you are understood to give the whole. So God being minded to put the children of Israel in possession of the promised land, takes Jericho as the representative of the whole; and, by the manner of giving them possession thereof, typifies the manner of giving us the possession of our inheritance of the redeemed earth.

This method of representing the whole by a part is constantly the way of God. Adam's possession of paradise signified the possession of the earth; and the saints' possession of the New Jerusalem signifies their being rulers of the earth; and Christ taking possession of the temple (*Psalms* 24) signifies His being put into possession of the whole world.

God, when He is setting forth His typical history of the Jews, does not combine merely one great type, but a numerous succession of them, each complete in itself. For example:

- the manna represents Christ's flesh, the nourishment of His people;
- the rent rock yielding streams of water represents Christ's body sending forth the streams of the Holy Ghost;
- the brazen serpent signifies Christ crucified, the remedy of our spiritual diseases;
- the Angel of the Covenant in the cloud signifies Christ the Shepherd and Leader of His people, &c.

In like manner, when the dispensation proper to the wilder-

ness state is passed, and the dispensation of giving possession of the land begins, we have, from the prostration of Jericho before Joshua, until the taking of Jerusalem by David, nearly three hundred years after, a succession of types; which, being taken together, do completely set forth the history of our investiture in the inheritance.

Now it is always in the first of these acts that we have the completest symbol of the thing foreshadowed, and this first act is the taking of Jericho, which stands to the dispensation of giving us possession in the same relation in which the paschal lamb stands to the dispensation of redemption out of bondage. The New Testament is accustomed to speak of our redemption very much, and the Church has come to speak of it almost entirely, in terms of the paschal lamb.

This book of the *Revelation* speaks of our obtaining the inheritance of the earth in terms of the giving possession of Jericho; and the Church ought likewise so to speak.

Let us now diligently peruse this great typical event as it is written in the 5th and 6th chapters of *Joshua*; in quoting from which, we insert the 1st verse of chapter 6 in a parenthesis; for it is merely a note of explanation, introduced by the historian into the midst of the dialogue between Joshua and the Captain of the Lord's host, and intended to explain the instructions concerning Jericho which immediately follow:

Joshua 5

¹³ And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with His sword drawn in His hand: and Joshua went unto Him, and said unto Him, Are you for us, or for our adversaries?

¹⁴ And He said, Nay; but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto Him, What does my Lord say unto His servant?

¹⁵ And the Captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose

your shoe from off your foot; for the place whereon you stand is holy. And Joshua did so.

Joshua 6

¹ [Now Jericho was straightly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.]

² And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into your hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor.

³ And you shall compass the city, all you men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shall you do six days.

⁴ And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day you shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.

⁵ And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up, every man straight before him.

This person who speaks to Joshua is, beyond doubt, the same who appeared to Moses in the bush, and named Himself Jehovah; using towards Moses the same language as He does to Joshua:

Exodus 3

⁵ Put off your shoes from off your feet, for the place whereon you stand is holy ground.

And therefore, after He had announced Himself in the new character of "the Captain of Jehovah's host," the Holy Spirit designates Him Jehovah.

So, also, when He is introduced as the Angel of the Covenant (*Exodus* 23:20), it is added, "My name is in Him:" and in *Malachi* 3:1, "Jehovah, whom you seek," is said to be "even the Angel of the Covenant." Jehovah is the substantial name of Godhead; and the other names are only significant of a particular strain of manifestation or action.

He is the Angel of the Covenant during the passage through the wilderness, because He continually brought messages from God concerning that covenant and worship which God had established with His people. He brought them to Moses, who talked with Him face to face; and Moses brought them unto the people. In this same character, He continued to act through the high priest; and hence has He His name of "The Word of God."

But now He is about to exhibit another and a different manifestation of the name Jehovah, that which concerns war, and the destruction of His enemies. He is about to fulfill another part of the Redeemer's office, which is, to take the purchased inheritance by force from the possessor, if he will not yield it quietly to the claim of right. And in what guise does He appear? Does He appear as He did to Moses and Aaron, and Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel...

Exodus 24

¹⁰ ...with a paved work of a sapphire stone under His feet, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.

No, verily; but as a swordsman, as an armed captain, with His sword in His hand, whom at first Joshua supposed to be an ordinary man of war, and challenged Him to which side He belonged. He appears in that attitude and guise which best represents the new character which He is about to act in, as the *El-gebor*, the Man of War, who is about to fight for Mount Zion, and the hill thereof. And thus appearing in the presence of the captain-general of the host of Israel, He claims to be Captain over him, saying, as...

Joshua 5

¹⁴ ...the Captain of the Lord's host am I now come.

And Joshua, the captain-general of the host, does homage to Him as his Lord:

¹⁴ ...What says my Lord [Adonai] to His servant?

And the Lord of hosts required of His servant Joshua to give sign of his subserviency, by taking off his shoes from his feet, when standing upon that ground on which He stood.

He is about to communicate a high matter, to give Joshua a new commission, such as had not been vouchsafed to anyone save to Moses at the bush. There Moses received commission to fulfill the great part of the office of the redeemer, in delivering the person of the kinsman Abraham's seed from the house of bondage. Here Joshua receives commission to fulfill another part of the redeemer's office, in delivering the inheritance from the hand of the usurper.

This sign being given, of reverence to your superior by taking off the shoe (which still continues in eastern countries), Jehovah in His character of Lord of hosts, with His drawn sword in His hand, gives to Joshua, His lieutenant, instructions concerning the taking of Jericho, which is, as we have said, the part that represents the whole inheritance. Now observe how it proceeds.

There is first a division into seven times, each a day, in which a part of the mystical action proceeds. If any of these had been omitted or altered, most certainly the end would not have been accomplished.

On each of these days the city was to be compassed about by all the men of war, and the seven priests blew the while with the seven trumpets before the ark, as they marched around the walls of Jericho. Each day they compassed the city, with seven priests blowing the seven trumpets before the ark: but on the seventh or last day they did compass it seven times, blowing each time all the while with the trumpets. And the last compassing being ended, the whole congregation of the people lifted up their voice with a great shout, and the walls of the city fell flat to the ground, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

What means all this pomp and circumstance? What means all this formality prescribed by the mouth of the Lord of the hosts of God, and exactly obeyed by Joshua His lieutenant? It had no virtue to throw down the walls of Jericho. Did God merely appoint it as a test of their obedience? Not merely as such; but likewise to be a type of the manner in which He had purposed that the lost inheritance of this world should be redeemed by the Son of Man, and won back to His kinsmen out of the hands of its usurpers.

Accordingly, this book of the *Revelation*, which from the 4th chapter to the 20th wholly concerns the inheritance, is laid out with precise reference to the delivering up of Jericho in its most minute details.

First, there are seven successive periods, consisting each of the opening of a seal, immediately before the last of which the possessors of the inheritance are all in consternation on account of their destruction just impending, giving us to understand that in the seventh is to be their final overthrow—as it turns out to be.

Besides this there are seven angels; which, we have seen in our former lecture, are priests having the seven trumpets, who each of them within the time of his seal blows a blast against the inheritance, and when the last shall have blown, it is declared that...

Revelation 11

¹⁵ ...the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

Then the seventh seal and the seventh trumpet do together bring the day of the consummation of God's wrath and of the possession of the kingdom by Christ.

Observe, now, how the seventh seal is divided into seven successive parts, each having a corresponding blast, at the last of which the inheritance is taken possession of. This is known

by reflecting upon that which, under the sixth seal, is put into the mouth of the fraudulent possessors, that the day of the wrath of God and the Lamb is come (*Revelation* 6:17), and comparing it with chapters 15 and 16, which declare themselves to be that very day of wrath, the seventh day, which has seven distinct acts, called vials of wrath.

Moreover, when the sixth trumpet comes to an end with chapter 9, 10, in chapter 10, when Christ comes to take possession, seven thunders are said to utter their voices, whereas under each of the first four seals there was only one voice like the voice of thunder; but after the sixth, in the period of the seventh, there are seven which utter their voices, signifying, that parallel with each of the vials is a great voice, to which the sound of the trumpet is likened. *Revelation* 1:10.

But as the seven vials together do but compose the seventh seal, so the seven thunder voices uttered contemporaneously therewith do together compose the seventh trumpet, which may not be said to have completely sounded until the seven vials with their several thunders are completed.

This Divine formality being concluded, the beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire, the kings of the earth, their captains and their armies, are slain, the devil is cast out into the bottomless pit, and the whole earth, being dispossessed of those who corrupted it, Christ and His people take possession of it, and govern it in righteousness.

I question whether in the whole Scripture there can be found a more perfect correspondence between the type and the antitype than there is between the action of Joshua for the taking of Jericho and the action of our Joshua for the taking possession of the inheritance of the earth. And as there can be no doubt that as the Man of War armed against His enemies He gave His instructions to Joshua, there is a very strong collateral argument that we are right in our interpretation of the seven-sealed book, with all which it draws along with it, as

being the book of the New Testament, which conveys to Christ possession of the whole earth, and of His action as being the action of delivering the same out of the hands of its fraudulent and unjust possessors.

If I err not, this parallel, when it shall have been reflected upon, will come to appear as complete for the interpretation of all in the New Testament which concerns the redemption of the inheritance, as that of the paschal lamb is justly felt to be for the interpretation of all which concerns the redemption of the captive from the house of his bondage, which is this carnal body and the corruption of the grave.

The conclusion of the matter therefore is, that Christ acts throughout this book in that character in which He is announced, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, as the strong and mighty God of Jacob, the Root of David, in right of whom David held dominion, and whose higher dominion David's kingdom shadowed forth. In this character He takes the book and prevails to open its seals; and in this character He must be understood to act in the opening of them; and in this character He presents Himself coming forth out of heaven riding on the white horse of victory and triumph, overturning all His enemies, and taking possession of the throne of His kingdom.

There are two other events recorded in the Old Testament which seem to me likewise to bear upon the "redemption of the purchased inheritance."

2. The Vineyard of Naboth

The former is the violence with which king Ahab, through the instigation of his queen Jezebel, did wrest from Naboth his vineyard: wherefore both of them came to their end on that spot, in a way which is evidently alluded to (*Revelation 17:16*) in the description of the harlot's end. But this properly belongs to the head of the usurpers of the inheritance, and will be better treated of in that place.

3. Jeremiah's Purchased Land

The latter is that very purchase which Jeremiah made of his uncle Hanameel, which, whether you regard the manner of its introduction by the revelation of the Lord, and not by simple narratives of the event, or the time at which it took place, when the city was besieged and about to become the prey of Babylon, or the prayer which is introduced into the midst of the narrative, or the very remarkable reference made to it by the Evangelist Matthew (*Matthew 27:9*), will be seen to contain a typical reference to that inheritance which Christ purchased with His blood.

But into this I enter not at present, lest I should be led away further from the regular course of our subject than is convenient in the introduction to our present Lecture.

A MIXTURE OF SYMBOLS

We had arrived, in our former Lecture, at that point of the representation where the whole might of heaven and earth and hell having been nonplussed by the proclamation of the strong angel, for someone to come and open the book, and John cast into the deepest grief and bitterest lamentation that there was no one able to redeem the inheritance, one of the elders comforted his grief with the information that He who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Root of David...

Revelation 5

⁵ ...has prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof.

At this point, John saw the glorious Personage who had been announced not as "having prevailed," but as "prevailing," to open the book, advancing to the fearful work from which every creature shrunk dismayed. But He advances not as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, in the pride of strength, nor in the royal dignity of David's Lord, but...

⁶ ...as a Lamb that had been slain.

Why this change of style? Why this mixture of symbols? In order to express still more and more of the truth; in order to catch up another of the symbols of revelation, and infix it in the person of Christ; in order to claim another of the ancient honors which were prepared for Him before the world was, and prophesied of in the old dispensation.

But because this new style is introduced we are not to suppose that the former has been abandoned: it retains the place, and continues to serve the same end for which it was introduced—the end, to wit, of declaring in what strength and in what right it is that He opens every seal, and brings the stroke of vengeance upon the evil-doers, until at length He dispossess them all. Then, when the heavens open wide (*Revelation* 19), He is revealed as the Captain of the Lord's host, as the Captain of salvation, with all those whom He has saved.

Every symbol which is put upon Him abides on Him, to represent that attribute of His many-sided person for which it was introduced. He continues the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the mighty God of Jacob; He also continues the Root of David, all the while that He is represented to us as the harmless Lamb that was slain.

THE LAMB

BEFORE entering upon the interpretation of this symbol, I would first examine into the condition as to place, which is expressed by these words:

Revelation 5

⁶ In the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain.

In somewhat similar language it had been said of the four living creatures, that they were...

Revelation 4

⁶ ...in the midst of the throne, and in circle of the throne.

Which I interpreted as signifying that they were seen everywhere, from center to circumference of the throne, occupying the bounds with a kind of omnipresence, the life of it, the being of it; from which permanent motion I think they have the name of “living ones,” or “living things.” So, to compare great things with small, when with the microscope one examines the inward constitution of things, they seem all full of living creatures in a continual state of restless motion, I understand the throne to have seemed to the seer instinct with the animation of these four living ones.

If this be the right interpretation, which was suggested to my mind by the corresponding passage in *Ezekiel* 1:13-14, it will yield for the interpretation of the Lamb’s condition, in respect of place, something of this kind: that He was the soul of that animated throne, its heart, its life, and so also of the elders which sat around, answering to that appearance of lamps of fire:

Ezekiel 1

¹³ As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and

the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.

The Lamb being represented in the midst of the throne and the living creatures, signifies that He was the informing soul and central life of that system of being; and His being represented in the midst of the four and twenty elders signifies that He is also their center and support.

It is remarkable that the expression “in the midst” should be twice repeated, as if there were two systems and spheres of being represented by these two symbols, the Church subsisting in a double form, of both which the Lamb is the support. It is not, however, repeated both before the throne and the living creatures, because these are two symbols for one and the same thing; as the New Jerusalem and the bride of the Lamb, the temple and the living stones.

Perhaps I may be bringing more out of this circumstance of place than the Holy Spirit intends: if I err, it is the desire to do honor to the Lamb; and yet, without any consciousness of over-straining the matter, I think it is conveyed to us by putting the Lamb in this position, that He is the life of the Church, everywhere present in all the members, the one Spirit which unites all and animates all to the one great object of worshiping and serving God.

It is hard of comprehension; it were a sore task for a painter to represent it: and I confess it is rather the idea conveyed by the symbol than the form of the symbol itself that I seek after; and because Christ has the middle place of these two symbols, I simply conclude that He is the heart and soul, the center and support, of their several actions.

When He comes forth from this His resident place and central function, to do the act of taking and opening the book, we are not to suppose that He has ceased from the former office and function but that He superinduces thereupon the new office for which He comes forth.

As He was represented in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, which are the Churches on earth, so is He here represented in the midst of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, which are the Church in heaven.

But now arises this greater question:

Why, as the life and soul, the center and support, of the Church in heaven, is He represented in the form of a Lamb as it had been slain?

The adjunct “as it had been slain” does not mean to imply that the Lamb was *as if* it had been slain, but not *verily* slain; in the likeness but not in the verity of a slaughtered Lamb; for in the song of the redeemed Church, they sing, “You were slain;” and in the song of the angels, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.”

The meaning of the adjunct “as it had been slain” is, that the Lamb which John saw bore about it the sure and evident marks of a slaughtered Lamb, wounded with death-wounds, bloodless, yet living still: not only stained with blood, but having shed out its life-stream, and yet possessing life; dead, and yet alive.

THE LAMB SLAIN

Now what is signified by His taking this symbol upon the occasion of opening the book, and continuing to use it through all the Apocalypse? This is a great inquiry, to which we now gird ourselves in the strength of the Most High.

This very book in various places gives us insight into the high original and deep meaning of this name of Christ; as, for example, in *Revelation* 13:8, where He is declared to have had this character of the Lamb slain, yea to have been the “Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world:” by which language can be signified nothing less, than that it was a part of the Divine purpose that Christ should be the Lamb slain, in the fore-view of which He created the world. Or as it is still more ex-

pressly written in the first chapter of the *Colossians*, that in this assumed form of the Lamb slain and living still, of the risen God-man,—assumed I say, but not realized,—He did create all things; for even as Jesus He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

But as death could not come without sin, of which it is the first-fruit, it is evident that God's purpose, with respect to the incarnation, death, resurrection, and glory of His Son, was laid in the prospect of a fallen and not of an unfallen creation. And to this agree all the Scriptures, which make hardly any allusion to the unfallen state of creation, but continually represent creation as it is,—sin-possessed and death-doomed, as the outward thing unto which God's love is manifested, and upon which God's power is shown forth in the incarnation of His Son.

Methinks if, as some to the destruction of all truth maintain, Christ came in the unfallen nature of Adam, there would have been more said about it in the Holy Scriptures. The unfallen state proved that God is good, and that sin is not from God but from the creature; the fallen state proves that God is gracious, and that sin in the creature can be overcome by the might of the holiness of God.

The same passage which we have quoted above contains another note significant of the great consequence of this name of Christ; namely, that the book of life, in which the name of everyone that is saved must be entered, is called "the Lamb's book of life," as it is also *Revelation* 21:27, where it is declared to contain the full company of those who inhabit the New Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven; and in *Revelation* 12:11, the blood of the Lamb is declared to be that by which the martyrs overcome.

These two most honorable distinctions ascribed to the Lamb declare this great point of doctrine, that there is no everlasting life, nor spiritual blessedness, which does not emanate

from the slaying of the Lamb; and that faith in His blood, and faithful testimony to its preciousness, are the foundations of our strength in our controversy with the devil and his angels. Seeing then that this is a title of such consequence to men, and of such antiquity in the counsel and purpose of God, it may well repay our diligent study.

Forasmuch as the name before us is not merely “the Lamb,” but “the Lamb slain” (*Revelation* 13:8), “slain for us” (*Revelation* 5:9) that is in sacrifice, we may not doubt that from the very first institution of sacrifices this purpose of God, that His Son should be led as a lamb to the slaughter, was shadowed forth: and seeing that Abel offered “of the firstlings of the flock and of the fat thereof” (*Genesis* 4:4), and was accepted, because he offered in faith; which Cain not doing, was rejected; I have no doubt that the ordinance of offering a lamb in sacrifice was as ancient as the Fall.

The Fall brought us that state of things for which God in His more ancient purpose, even from eternity, had prepared the remedy in the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. And in every sacrifice that has been offered unto God this one truth and no other has been signified, that by the blood of Christ, and in no way else, can remission of sins be procured.

In the ram caught by his horns in the thicket on Mount Moriah, which Abraham sacrificed instead of Isaac his son, the great truth of God’s offering up His only Son is beautifully prefigured; but it is in the paschal lamb that the complete exhibition of this part of the Divine purpose is made, as the same is recorded in the 12th chapter of *Exodus*, and referred to in all the Scriptures. For, next to “the Seed of the woman,” I place this name of Christ, “our Passover” (*1 Corinthians* 5:7), “the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” *John* 1:29.

THE PASCHAL LAMB

The children of Israel were in bondage in the land of Egypt, under the cruelty and oppression of Pharaoh, then the chief ruler of the darkness of this world, who is called the dragon and the leviathan (*Psalm* 74:13-14; *Ezekiel* 29:2-3; *Isaiah* 51:9-10); which name is afterwards appropriated to Satan (*Revelation* 12:9, 20:2; as also *Isaiah* 27:1); whereby we are given distinctly to understand that Pharaoh's oppression of the children of Israel is but the type of the devil's oppression of the Church.

Now when God would bring His people out with a high hand, and an outstretched arm, and with fury poured forth, it is not by the various mighty plagues with which He vexed the land of Egypt, but by an act of slaughter upon man and beast. This judgment, which set Israel free, would have passed no house, no not one, but for the interposition of the blood of a lamb, which each family of the children of Israel was commanded to slay and eat, sprinkling their door-posts and lintels with his blood. That blood arrested the angel of destruction; and he passed over that house, nor slew he the first-born of that family, either of man or of beast. Upon which the Apostle Paul observes in these words:

Hebrews 11

²⁸ Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.

The thing taught by this ordinance of the paschal lamb therefore is, that when the judgment shall come upon every family and house in this world, the only element of salvation is the blood of Christ slain, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: that alone shields us from the righteous indignation of God against our transgressions; that only stands between us and the sword of the angel of judgment, which shall then go forth.

If, as we have seen, the children of Israel in Egypt be the type of the Church under the bondage of sin and Satan and their votaries, we have in the paschal lamb the great truth set forth, that out of this bondage the only means of deliverance is the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. But it is to be carefully observed, that the exact slaying and eating of the passover did not accomplish the deliverance, but merely saved from the destroying angel who went forth at midnight to slay the first-born of Egypt. The violent and powerful act of the Angel of Judgment was more the cause of the redemption than the paschal lamb. The Angel of Judgment was no other than Jehovah the Angel of the Covenant:

Exodus 11

⁴ Jehovah said, About midnight will I go forth into the land of Egypt.

Exodus 12

¹² I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt.

The same Jehovah who was prefigured in the Lamb slain brought the judgment upon Egypt, and guided the people through the wilderness, and put them in possession of Jericho, the symbol of the inheritance.

Therefore it is in the passage before us that Christ, being announced as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, mighty to slay His enemies, and as the Root of David, rightful King over the people and their land, nevertheless comes forth in the character of the Lamb slain; being minded to gather unto Himself the completeness of those characters in which He had acted under the former dispensation, from the deliverance out of Egypt to the plantation of the throne of David:

- *Lamb*, to save from their sins;
- *Lion*, to deliver, and uphold, and settle the saved in their inheritance; and

- *Root of David*, to rule over them there in righteousness.

But this peculiar honoring of THE LAMB, as the name by which Christ prefers to be known throughout this book, will well reward a more diligent study of the symbol of the passover.

The lamb was required to be without blemish, signifying the spotlessness of that human nature which Christ offered upon the cross. Mortal it must be, that it might die; and mortal must He be, that He might die: but while mortal, and therefore under the condition of a fallen Creature, still sinless.

When its blood was shed out, the flesh of it was eaten by all the people; but the blood availed only to the salvation of the first-born of each family. This seems to mark a difference between the extent of the redemption and the extent of the salvation. Certainly it gives origin to the language used in the *Hebrews* to denote the complete number of the elect:

Hebrews 12

²³ The general assembly and Church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.

And this last expression coincides with that word in the *Revelation*, “written in the Lamb’s book of life.” To follow out the history of these, the firstborn, who were saved, will yield us much light upon the words of the verse now under consideration, and convince us that these things which were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.

After having been thus redeemed from death, God ever claimed them for His own; yea, the first word which the Lord spoke after the redemption was to this effect:

Exodus 13

³ Sanctify unto Me all the first-born, whatsoever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is Mine.

Afterwards, when the Levites had performed that service (*Exodus 32:29; Deuteronomy 33:9*) which is the antitype of the true believer's act (*Luke 14:26*), God took that tribe instead of the firstborn (*Numbers 3:12-13*) which He had saved; and thus the new attribute of priesthood came to be concentrated upon those whom the Lamb had redeemed from death by His blood. Wherefore the saints in heaven sing, first:

Revelation 5

⁹ You have redeemed us with Your blood;

and secondly:

¹⁰ You have made us to be kings and priests unto our God.

There were more of the first born than of the Levites, and so jealous was God of His right, or, in other words, so careful was He to preserve the completeness of this type of the saved ones, that He required the surplus to be redeemed with money; to which the Apostle Peter seems to allude, when he says:

1 Peter 1

¹⁸ We are redeemed not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold...

¹⁹ But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

In the redemption out of Egypt, whereof all the nation were partakers, even all that generation who provoked God and fell in the wilderness, there is an interior redemption from death into the dignity of priesthood, whereof only a part are partakers. And it would be as far wrong to assert that redemption is only to the elect, as it would be to assert that it is not in an *especial* manner to them only.

Those who vexed God, and perished, were as truly redeemed out of the house of bondage, and are as much upbraided with their ingratitude for the same, as others; and this is the language we should hold to all men. And he who holds

it not betrays God's trust, and belies His grace to every creature under heaven.

But, on the other hand, it may as little be disputed that there is a redemption purchased by the blood of Christ out of miserable death into the estate of holy priesthood, which pertains only to the Church of the first-born. This is the redemption so constantly spoken of in the Westminster Confession of Faith, for the testimony of which our Church has been set of God; as the Church of England seems to be set for the testimony of the other, asserting as she does, that God the Son redeemed me and all mankind.

In the passage before us the Lamb appears primarily as the Redeemer of God's elect, and also as the Redeemer of the whole creation from that bondage under which it now groans; for else why should every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, join in the general chorus?

There is much more to be gathered from this most comprehensive ordinance of the paschal lamb which Christ assumes unto Himself; but as our object is not to exhaust but to gather the essence of the infinite subjects which are taken up into the bosom of this blessed book, I count it better to bring forth what other lights the Scripture casts upon this honored name.

THE MORNING AND EVENING SACRIFICE

Next to the paschal lamb, I count most worthy of mention that continual sacrifice of a lamb, morning and evening, which was made without intermission at the door of the tabernacle upon the altar (*Exodus 29:38*). This was the continual purgation which went on forever in the sight and on the behalf of all Israel; deemed so essential to the nation's existence, that it was never intermitted under the most violent sieges, and at the most imminent risks. And so awful was the removal of it deemed, that in the prophecy of *Daniel*, concerning the desolation of the sanctuary, it stands in the first place.

Daniel 8

¹³ Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spoke, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

It was at the time of the evening sacrifice that Christ gave up the ghost; which, save on some particular occasions, was at the ninth hour, about three hours after noon, according to our way of reckoning. Caiaphas prophesied:

John 11

⁵⁰ It is better that one man die, and the nation perish not.

If I err not, Christ as the Saviour of the Jewish nation in that sense, was prefigured in the morning and evening sacrifice, which were continually offered. To this, which was in common language called *the daily*, the Apostle makes distinct allusion in *Hebrews*; the antitype of which he declares to be found in Christ:

Hebrews 10

¹¹ And every priest stands daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

¹² But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

¹⁴ For by one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified.

Indeed, that constant repetition, day by day, did signify something which should be perpetual in its effects, of daily efficacy; and so also of the sacrifices which were offered, year by year, continually. The continuation can only have its antitype in that “sacrifice forever,” which has “forever perfected all them that are sanctified.”

This morning and evening sacrifice was at the time of public prayer (*Luke 1:10*), when all the people were assembled in

the temple; and doubtless the offering of a lamb therewith did denote Christ's sacrifice, through which we have boldness to approach the throne of the Divine Majesty on high.

If I err not, it is with a respect to this lamb offered daily for the sin of all Israel, rather than to the paschal lamb, that John the Baptist has reference in these words which he spoke over Jesus:

John 1

²⁹ Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.

For I think the proper signification of the passover lamb was not the taking away of sin, but the redemption from death and bondage. It is true, that in this idea the other is included, and so every Divine idea includes every other one; but the duty of the interpreter is to find in spiritual things the exact correlative of the visible thing, that idea of which the symbol is the Divinely constructed sign.

Now the daily sacrifice was offered for the sin of the whole people: it was furnished at the expense of the community, out of the common treasury of the temple: it was not for the sin of any particular man, or order of men, as the sacrifice for the sin of the priesthood, on the day of atonement: it was not offered on a particular festival, as the Sabbath, the new moon, or the day of atonement, but every morning or evening, to signify that it was ever presented for the sins of all Israel. Now the Baptist declares that Christ is "the Lamb which takes away the sin of the world;" and John the Apostle says:

1 John 2

² He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.

What can we say then, but that in the offering of Christ there is the taking away of sin in the mass, or perfect atonement made between God and mankind; whereby God has

made Himself to be known, not only as the good Creator of all men, but as the gracious Saviour of them all; so that every sin we sin, is sinned against a Saviour God.

Sin is not an offense of a creature created merely, but of a creature created, fallen, and redeemed; of a culprit condemned and reprieved. And because man was put upon the footing of grace from the beginning, in the person of Adam, every sin which has been done in this world is of the deep dye of having been committed against a God who died for us. The sin of the heathen is such; all sin is such; and he who does not preach a God having died for a sinner, can never show that sinner the aggravation of his sins.

It is only in the light of God's love that the nature of sin can be at all perceived. I defy a man to make out the guilt of sin by working with the Law merely. There never was a law merely, but a Law and a Gospel welded into one; a law moral condemning, a law ceremonial purging, and a God forgiving.

When I say that God has been exhibited to all men, not as a creating God merely, but as a redeeming God, I do not mean that He is not of the same grace and love in creation as in redemption: redemption does but discover what an act of love creation is: God is a Redeemer, because He is a Creator and loves the creatures which He has made.

These two ordinances,—the paschal lamb, commemorative of redemption from bondage and death, and the morning and evening sacrifice of a lamb, significant of the continual presentation which Christ makes of Himself before the throne on high,—do together exhibit the salvation unto men contained in this name of “the Lamb,” which Christ prefers for His constant name.

As the question is concerning the redemption of the earth, He presents Himself to resolve it in His character of Redeemer of men: but there still wants some link to connect this symbol with dignity, and rule, and government, which also in the

character of the Lamb He receives and exercises throughout the *Revelation*. This link we have in the prophecies of *Isaiah* 16, where the Lamb is presented to us as the Ruler of the land, the Lord of the inheritance, whose throne is prepared in Mount Zion, and who sits in the tabernacle of David, judging and seeking judgment, and hastening righteousness:

Isaiah 16

¹ Send the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.

² For it shall be, that, as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, so the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon.

³ Take counsel, execute judgment; make your shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts; bewray not him that wanders.

⁴ Let my outcasts dwell with you, Moab; be a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceases, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.

⁵ And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hastening righteousness.

⁶ We have heard of the pride of Moab; he is very proud: even of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath: but his lies shall not be so.

The true sense and spirit of the passage is lost, from the translation of the first verse having been wrested to meet a notion that the passage has merely a respect to the tribute which the king of Moab was wont to send to the king of Israel (*2 Kings* 3:4). But besides that, one lamb were a poor substitute for one hundred thousand both of lambs and rams, and that the king of Israel was no wise entitled to be called the ruler of the land, which belongs to the king of Judah, in right of David's Root, the Hebrew will by no means bear any such translation as "Send the lamb to the ruler of the land;" and is literally:

“Send the Lamb Ruler of the land from Selah of the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.”

In the Septuagint and Syriac versions it is “*I will send;*” but this makes little difference, and we prefer to keep the exact rendering given above, which is also that of the Vulgate and of Luther.

Look now at the passage, and you have a most striking exhibition of the Ruler of this world, under the symbol of the Lamb. Moab having, in the preceding chapter, received the prophecy of her speedy desolation, the Spirit in the Prophet’s mouth does, as his custom is, take the onward look to the last times, when...

Isaiah 16

⁴ ...the extortioner is at an end, when the spoiler ceases, when the oppressors are consumed out of the land.

That is, when the spoilers of Israel are spoiled; when the great image of oppression is broken to pieces by the stone cut out without hands; or, to keep Isaiah’s own language in the preceding chapters, when the Assyrian and all oppressors shall be broken together (*Isaiah* 8:9, 9:4, 10:27, 34). Against this time, he intimates to Moab that upon his borders shall appear God’s outcasts and wanderers; that is, the children of Israel who have been described under that name (*Isaiah* 11:12); and gives him counsel how he should carry himself against that day of decision towards the tribes of Judah, when they shall once more appear upon his borders.

The prophecy further declares, that at this time the throne shall be preparing; that is, the throne of David, which, in *Isaiah* 8:7, had been by Divine decree appointed for Immanuel, the Virgin’s Child. That it is the same throne which is signified in both places is manifest from the identity of the language: in the one place:

Isaiah 9

⁷ ...upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth and forever;

In the other:

Isaiah 16

⁵ In mercy shall the throne be established, and He shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.

Now when thus the throne of mercy and judgment shall have been prepared, and the tabernacle of David set up (*Amos* 9:11), who is the person to be called to fill it? This has already been fixed in Isaiah's prophecy, over and over again, for the Virgin's Son, Immanuel (*Isaiah* 9:6-7; 10:20; 11:4; the *El Gebbor* of *Isaiah* 9:6). For Him therefore the Prophet calls:

Isaiah 16

¹ Send the Lamb, the Ruler of the land.

Who should occupy the throne but "the Ruler of the land"? He is to come from Selah, or the rock, in the wilderness, which lay on the skirts of Moab and Edom (*2 Kings* 14:7; *Isaiah* 42:11); from the wilderness where the people are to be betrothed to Him the second time (*Hosea* 2:19-20); from the south, according to the prophecy of *Habakkuk* 3:3.

He is "the Ruler of the land" by virtue of God's decree, *Isaiah* 8:8, "Your land, O Immanuel;" and, in consequence of His right to the land, all confederacies are to be broken. In this right, therefore, of "the *Lord* or *Ruler* of the land" (it is the same word which is used *Micah* 5:2), He is called to the throne, when it shall have been prepared for Him in Mount Zion.

This exposition of the passage by means of the preceding chapters of *Isaiah*, from the 7th onward, is so simple and straightforward, that it cannot be doubted to be the genuine

one.

That the tribute of lambs which the king of Moab, a sheep-master, rendered to Israel, may be the occasion of giving to Emmanuel this name of the Lamb, I do neither affirm nor deny. It may be that this tribute for the land of Moab did signify, that out of that land should come to Israel a Lamb of another kind; that the Lamb of God appearing there to His people, should from Teman and Mount Paran come to the mount of the daughter of Zion, by way of the east: but into this matter I inquire not. It is sufficient for our purpose that, as the rightful possessor and ruler of the land, He is entitled the Lamb, and comes as “the Lamb, the Lord of the land,” to take possession of the throne and the tabernacle of David, leading with him the outcasts of Israel found again, the wanderers of Judah gathered again.

So that in this one passage of *Isaiah* we have the three characters of our text:

- “Lion of the tribe of Judah,” leading all the tribes;
- “Root of David,” coming to claim David’s throne and tabernacle, and
- “Lamb, Ruler of the land,” or Heir of the inheritance.

All these are combined together, and therefore we give it as our opinion, that this passage in the 16th of *Isaiah*, being restored to its true rendering, is the very original passage in the Old Testament to which our text refers us, and in the language of which it is written; and therefore we are glad that it has come last in our exposition of these three styles: “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, the Lamb the Heir of the inheritance.”

To these passages might perhaps be added that in the 53rd chapter of *Isaiah*, where Christ is said to be led as “a Lamb to the slaughter;” but this is more of the nature of a similitude than of a name. Nevertheless, it is one of the strongest pas-

sages in all the Scriptures for establishing His identity with the morning and evening sacrifice, upon which were laid the sins and transgressions of all Israel:

Isaiah 53

⁶ ...the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Having thus explained sufficiently the salvation and the dignity, the grace and the glory, of that name by which Christ prefers to be named throughout this book, we now proceed to examine the symbolical attributes with which He is invested:

Revelation 5

⁶ ...having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God.

THE SEVEN HORNS AND SEVEN EYES OF THE LAMB

THESE appurtenances of the Lamb occur nowhere in Scripture till now; and they contain revelations concerning the dignity and office of Christ entirely new.

We have had frequent occasions, particularly in Books 2¹, 3² and 4³, to touch upon, and somewhat to open, these two symbols. Every symbol of this kind is first used as a metaphor or similitude, until it has acquired such a familiarity as that, without the formality of signifying a comparison, it may be used as a substitute for the other thing. Thus it is that, without either much erudition or acuteness, the interpretation of symbols will open itself, of its own accord, to one who is diligent in the study of the Holy Scriptures.

Moses' blessing of Joseph both contains the symbol and its interpretation:

Deuteronomy 33

¹⁷ His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth.

In the 89th *Psalms* the same figure is used, both of Christ and of His people, and in both cases in connection with strength and conquest:

Psalms 89

¹⁷ For You are the glory of their strength: and in Your favor

1 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 2 "Christ Revealed by Names", Chapter: "The Name of the Holy Ghost", p. 15-20.

2 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 3 "Christ the Universal Head and Bishop of the Church", Chapter: "The Vision", Sub-chapter "His Countenance", p. 109-110.

3 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 4 "Epistle to the Church in Ephesus", Chapter: "Christ's First Designation", Sub-chapter "In the Right Hand", p. 11-13.

our horn shall be exalted.

²⁴ But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.

And in the 132nd *Psalm*, which concerns the same glorious person of the mystical David, it is said, in reference to the perpetuity and the flourishing of David's kingdom:

Psalm 132

¹⁷ Then will I make the horn of David to bud. I have ordained a lamp for my anointed.

I quote this passage, because in the horn and in the lamp united together there is an indirect parallelism with our text, which combines the seven horns and the seven eyes; and gives to the latter the same interpretation as to the seven lamps (compare *Revelation* 4:5 with 5:6).

It is not till the time of the Prophet Daniel that we find the horn used as a regular symbol; where, being placed in the heads of beasts, it signifies so many powers or kingdoms as there are horns.

- In the 7th chapter the ten horns signify the ten royalties which acted, and still act, in subservience to the Papal power.
- In *Daniel* 8, the two horns upon the ram signify the two kings, Darius and Cyrus, of Media and Persia, which coalesced into one beast, or organized power, the Medo-Persian Empire;
- while the single horn of the rough goat of Grecia signifies Alexander the Great, and the four that rise up in its room are the four generals who originated four lines of kings.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that as the horn is of every beast the offensive weapon, and, in the case of the unicorn, the most offensive of all natural weapons, when used symbolically, it signifies power and strength, with which to beat all opposition down, to scatter and destroy all our ene-

mies.

In the Prophet Zechariah the four empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, which have in succession oppressed God's people, are called four horns:

Zechariah 1

¹⁸ Then I lifted up my eyes, and saw, and behold four horns.

¹⁹ And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What be these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

That these are the Gentile monarchies who have exercised tyranny over Israel, and to whom a certain term for treading Jerusalem under foot is fixed in the purpose of God and written of in Scripture, under the name "the times of the Gentiles" (*Luke 21:24*), is sufficiently declared in the two verses of *Zechariah*. A king, a dynasty of kings, a kingdom, or a vast empire, are therefore alike signified by the symbol of a horn.

And so it is expressly interpreted in this book:

Revelation 17

¹² The ten horns which you saw are ten kings.

We understand, therefore, by the symbol of "a horn" kingly or imperial power. Now add to this the import of the number seven, as frequently explained above, which is totality or completeness; and we obtain out of the symbol of seven horns sevenfold, or total and complete, dominion;—whether in respect of extent, or of sorts, may be difficult to determine.

In the passage before us the eyes, which no doubt are co-extensive with the horns, are declared to run over all the earth; and again, in the worship of the angels, there is ascribed to Him a sevenfold variety of dominion or possession.

While, however, I believe universality in kind, and in extent, and in duration, to be all expressed by the number seven, I rather incline to understand it of extent; and, in particular, of the earth, which is the great subject of the vision.

In the Old Testament His dominion was limited to the land of Israel, but in the New Testament it extends to the whole earth: for upon His ascension we are expressly taught that He received...

Psalm 2

⁸ ...the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession.

(Compare *Psalm 2:9* with *Revelation 2:27*.) And, therefore, from the time of His resurrection He was preached by Peter and all the Apostles, not only King of the Jews, which He Himself at His death witnessed to before Pontius Pilate, but Lord of all. *Acts 10:36*. And therefore the preaching of the Gospel, which in His time had been restricted to the land of Israel, was extended to all the nations.

These seven horns in the head of the Lamb do declare Him to be the Subduer and rightful Lord of all the earth; to claim the title-deeds of which, He advances in this symbolical array.

With respect to the radical meaning of the eye, as a symbol (“He had seven eyes”), I have nothing to add to what was so largely set forth in the conclusion of Book 11⁴, to the effect that it signifies spirituality. I understand the eyes to be situated in the horns, and not in the head of the Lamb. And this I gather from the character of the Antichrist, or feigned Christ, as given in the 7th chapter of *Daniel*, by a little horn, in which were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.

I infer the same from *Zechariah*, who places these eyes in the stone which was laid before Joshua and brought out by Zerubbabel. This stone is Christ the foundation-stone, and Christ the chief corner-stone; the one in *Zechariah 3:9*, and the other in *Zechariah 4:10*. In both cases these seven eyes de-

⁴ *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 11 “The Vision of Heaven”, Chapter: “The Four Beasts, or Living Creatures”, Sub-chapter: “Their Appearance”, p. 92-95; and Sub-chapter: “Full of Eyes”, p. 121-137.

note that the stone is a spiritual stone, and that the temple is a spiritual temple.

There is no doubt from the words, “which run to and fro through the whole earth,” used in *Zechariah* 4:10, and the words, “seven Spirits sent forth into all the earth,” used in the text, that the Holy Ghost desires to refer us to the passage in *Zechariah* for further information.

Now it will be observed, that the matter in hand in that place is the building of that temple which is reserved to Him whose name is the Branch (*Zechariah* 3:8; 4:12); while Joshua and Zechariah are permitted to go on with the restoration of the type of that everlasting temple, and Haggai and Zechariah are set by God to interpret the true temple and Temple-builder which were signified. For never was any typical event permitted to come to pass, but in the fore-mention of it a prophet did signify that whereof it was the type: all prophecies being, in truth, but running commentaries upon, and immediate anticipations of, the providential occurrences which God is bringing to pass in their days.

To Joshua, as being the high priest, it is given to lay the foundation of the spiritual house (*Zechariah* 3:9), to signify that Christ, as our priest, should lay the foundation in the offering of His holy body, as a perfect sacrifice “whereby the iniquity of the land should be removed in one day;” the evening sacrifice which made all other sacrifice to cease, and took away the sins of the nation, that it should not perish forever.

To Zerubbabel, as being the *Tirshasa* or chief magistrate, it is given to bring out the headstone with shoutings (*Zechariah* 4:7), to signify that against our Lord’s coming as a King He shall have finished the spiritual structure, and begin to exercise an authority and oversight not over all the land merely, but over all the earth.

In the former case, the seven eyes are mentioned in connection with the taking away the sins of a land; in the latter case,

they are mentioned in connection with His exercising an oversight over the whole earth. In the one case, it is spoken to the Priest; in the other, to the King. The reason is, that the Gentile dispensation did not begin at Christ's death, but after His resurrection. It was Paul's prerogative, which he could not enough admire, to preach that the Gentiles were made fellow-heirs with the Jews, and brought to be of the same body.

When He lays the foundation, therefore, in offering His crucified and risen body in the presence of God, He is said to have taken away the sin of a land; because, though truly the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world, He was as yet only declared to be the one sacrifice for Israel which made every sacrifice to cease: upon which repentance and remission of sins were preached to them.

But when He comes as the chief cornerstone, He comes as Lord of the whole earth, reigning in Mount Zion, and having His habitation in the holy temple of Jerusalem. There is much more in that prophecy of *Zechariah* to which we shall have to refer again; but this is enough for the present purpose.

Our idea, therefore, of the symbol is, that the Lamb had seven horns, with each an eye upon it, at its extremity haply, according to the conformation of certain of the insect tribes. Indeed the eyes of far-seeing birds are capable of being protruded or drawn in after the manner and upon the principle of a telescope. The symbol, therefore, is not incongruous with real existences; although to preserve congruity with nature is not an invariable law of a symbol, which frequently brings together into a monstrous combination things which, existing separately, have most natural and simple applications.

The horn is the symbol of power, the eye is the symbol of spirituality, and the horn with the eye is the symbol of power spiritual, of a spiritual dominion; and the number seven gives the addition of universality,—“over the whole earth.” The Lamb, thus arrayed, is therefore to be interpreted as the Lamb,

the Spiritual Ruler of the whole world.

By spiritual many understand invisible, and absent in place; but this is a mere accident. Christ was spiritual when He rose from the dead, being both present and visible; and when He comes again and all His saints with Him, they shall all be visible and present. There is a spiritual body, as well as an immaterial spirit.

At present, indeed, the efficacy of that spiritual authority which abides in Christ is not in the visible and sensible creation, because the present is the time for demonstrating the existence and the dignity of the unseen God, of the increate and invisible God, over the created and visible world under the dominion of Satan.

There is no tempering of the mixture with some bitter element in the person of Christ or His members (as these enemies of the truth allege); there is no infusing of a new substance into the creature substance; but there is a main resistance and counteraction of it all, by power of the invisible Creator, who proves Himself hereby not only able to bring creation out of nothing, but to rule this self-begotten warfare, and to steer it through the billows of change to the condition of stable blessedness.

He works in it invisibly. He works in it without being of it a part. He is not mixed up with it, substance with substance, in any way. He keeps His uncreatedness, His unlimitedness, and yet brings good out of evil, light out of darkness, righteousness out of sinfulness.

This was done in Christ; it was completely done in Christ; and before He might do it in another He must absent Himself, in order that, though now done by instrumentality of a creature nature, it might still be done from the invisible without any conjunction of parts, or communication to the senses, and through them to the spirit.

It is the gift of the Spirit which gives Christ at present power over the whole earth: for as yet He has received no temporal dominion. When He comes to take the temporal power, He comes as a conqueror with many crowns upon His head (*Revelation* 19:11-13). This before us is a symbol for expressing, not what He shall be then, but what He is now; and it signifies that He has received the fullness of the Holy Ghost, to use it as He pleases.

And how does He use it? As heretofore, to do His Father's will. He waits the Father's election to give Him whom He pleases, and all whom the Father gives Him He baptizes with the Holy Spirit and with power. He has received power over all flesh, to give eternal life to as many as the Father shall give unto Him. *John* 17:2. He has received all power in heaven and in earth. *Matthew* 28:18. He is Lord of all. *Acts* 10:36.

And this lordship He asserts in every one of His people to whom He gives power to overcome every form of wickedness, and to be holy as He was holy (*1 Peter* 1:15); which if we are not, then are we guilty of unbelief and willful disobedience, not He chargeable with inability or withholding; and also in the Church gathered out of all kingdoms and nations, and tongues and generations, and by whom He has successfully resisted every form of wickedness and error which has ever been, in the fullness of His spiritual power shown forth.

And when He comes again to rule the world, it shall not be by mixing nature up with the Holy Spirit. There is no such amalgam; but there is a world subjected to the Spirit of Christ. And to mix the Holy Ghost with the human nature of Christ is the form of that heresy concerning the Lord's body which is now passing current for orthodoxy in so many quarters; showing, alas! how miserably, in those quarters, the people are afflicted with dullness of spiritual vision, their senses not being exercised to discern good and evil.

The matter on which the Spirit works, like the atoms of the

Epicureans, is all at war within itself, and with God through sin. It is the prerogative of God to show it to be His creature still, by reducing it unto His will against its own will, by implanting in it a law of the Spirit contrary to, and masterful over, the law of nature. Thus He proves Himself to be the Lord of creation, as a man proves himself lord and master of a rebellious steed, when, in spite of its manifest ragings, he curbs it into obedience, and makes it to do his will.

This is the essence of spiritual power: it is supernatural power exercised over ungodly nature, to bring nature into harmony with the will and mind of God.

THE TITLE OF THE LAMB TO REDEEM

Revelation 5

⁷ And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne.

THIS action of taking the book into His hand is regarded by all the beholders as equivalent to the opening of it, yea and the possessing of the inheritance which it bequeaths. He is not required, as the seer was in the case of the little book (*Revelation 10*), to eat it, but simply to take it into His hand. This of itself seems to me to prove that it must signify something to be possessed, and not something to be known.

In the case of *Ezekiel 2*, and of our seer, *Revelation 10*, when the book was for knowledge, which they were afterwards to utter by the mouth, they are required to take it into the mouth, and swallow it; because things uttered come out of the mouth. According to our Lord's mode of speech:

Mark 7

¹⁸ And he said unto them, Are you so without understanding also? Do you not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without enters into the man, it cannot defile him;

¹⁹ Because it enters not into his heart, but into the belly, and goes out into the draught, purging all meats?

²⁰ And he said, That which comes out of the man, that defiles the man.

²¹ For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

²² Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

²³ All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

But now that the book concerns possession, it is taken into the hand; and the giving of it up to be held by another signifies the right of that other to possess the thing signified therein. This is the custom in all countries, that he who possesses the title-deeds possesses the right over the inheritance;

and thus thought the Church in heaven, and the angels, and innumerable company of every creature, who immediately burst forth into strains of joy and gratulation over their Redeemer.

Now this seems to be the proper place for inquiring into the right or title which the Lamb had to take and to open this book, at which all heaven stood amazed. According to the Law of Moses, the redeemer must be a kinsman of the same blood, and the nearest of kin; and if the first-born of the family were alive, it pertained to him both in duty and in privilege. The duties were threefold, as were also the privileges:

1. The first duty was, to avenge the blood of any member of the family who had been slain; in which capacity he is called "the avenger of blood." *Deuteronomy* 19:6.
2. The second duty was, to redeem the mortgaged land of any branch of the family (*Ruth* 4:4; *Jeremiah* 32:7) so that the inheritance might remain in his hand till the year of jubilee.
3. The third was, to relieve the bondman from prison; to which there is an evident allusion in *Hebrews* 2:14-15, where it is said, that for this end our Saviour took partnership with us in flesh and blood, that He might be our kinsman and undertake our redemption from death.

These were the duties of the redeemer: and for his privileges, if he were the first-born, he had, first, a double portion of his father's goods (*Deuteronomy* 21:17); secondly, he was the priest of the family; and, thirdly, if he died childless, his brother was to raise up seed unto him. *Deuteronomy* 25:5.

THE FIRST BORN

Now our blessed Lord, in right of the first-born, is our Redeemer; as is declared:

Colossians 1

¹⁵ Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of ev-

ery creature.

Revelation 1

⁵ And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

Romans 8

²⁹ For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

And the Church of the redeemed is called:

Hebrews 12

²³ The general assembly and Church of the first-born...

And how, it may be asked, is Jesus first-born; seeing He was long after Adam, the Seed of Abraham, the Son of David? The answer is threefold.

1. Firstborn from Eternity

First, as set up from eternity in the purpose of God, He was His image, according to which Adam was fashioned. To this His form as the predestinative Christ the Apostle seems to me to refer:

Colossians 1

¹⁵ Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature.

For in this character, as the image of the invisible Godhead, and the first-born, He is said to have created all things. To this form of the Christ, assumed before the world was, reference seems to be made when in the book of *Revelation* 3:14, He takes to Himself the mysterious title, “the Beginning of the creation of God;” that form of subsistence which was capable of expressing unto a future creation the invisible Godhead, and which He took before creation was, and unto creation’s being, after the fashion of which Adam was made, and with

whom Adam conversed in the garden, and Abraham in the plain, Moses upon the mount, and Joshua in the camp before Jericho, in which He appeared in the days of His flesh, and in which He now sits at the right hand of God, and shall forever continue.

In this form of the Christ, I say, which is the same yesterday, today, and forever, He is entitled to, and receives, the name of the firstborn. I speak not now of His eternal generation in the Godhead, but of His being set up before the ages as the fullness of creation and life and blessedness, in which God saw His purpose all complete, ere yet any outward thing did exist. To this His pre-existent glory, as the Christ of God, these words also refer:

Hebrews 1

² ...whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds;

³ Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power.

2. Firstborn in the New Life

Secondly: He is the first-born, as being the first Son of the Holy Ghost's begetting; the first-born of the regeneration. All creation of men in Adam's loins, and from him by generation proceeding, was put out of life by that word which said:

Genesis 2

¹⁷ ...in the day you eat thereof you shall surely die.

This word made null and void Adam's primogeniture, and the primogeniture of all men who were born before Christ. Mankind by that word lay dissolved in death: a living man was not any more; but mortal men we all became.

Jesus receiving in His generation the regeneration of the Holy Ghost, became at once of the mortal and of the eternal life. From thenceforth, though mortal, He had eternal life

abiding in Him; just as we who are regenerate, though mortal, have eternal life also abiding in us. This gave Him a right, as a creature, to that name Son of God, which as Creator He had possessed in His Divine nature from eternity. To this His prerogative of first-born, from His generation of the Virgin, the Apostle seems to make reference:

Romans 8

²⁹ Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.

In His generation by the Holy Ghost, He did give to human nature a second beginning of life; or rather, resigning the *pleroma* or fullness of creation's wealth and life, which was His, being created by Him and for Him, and consenting to become poor, mean, and mortal, for the end of manifesting the grace which is in God, He did, in the very act of taking the mortal doomed thing, receive from the Father a Holy-Ghost life, which has no death, but is the death of death, being the resurrection and the life.

This Holy-Ghost life in Him, as in us, was compassed round with a body of sin and death, which must be changed into a body of glory and life, and was so in the resurrection, in order to His being declared to be manifestly, as from His generation He had been really, the Son of God.

3. Firstborn from the Grave

Thirdly: And this, even His resurrection from the dead in the glory of the spiritual and unchangeable body, is His third and consummate title to the name of the first-born, as is declared in express terms:

Colossians 1

¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence.

Revelation 1

⁵ And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

To the exposition⁵ which we have given of the last of these passages we refer for further information on this point. And in virtue of this His resurrection it is that the Apostle, *Romans* 1:4, declares that He was determined or defined to be the Son of God.

His generation by the Holy Ghost determined Him to be the Son of God, so far as God Himself was concerned, and those to whom it was made known by God's special revelation; the descent of the dove upon Him, and the audible voice of God, did the same in the hearing of the thousands of Israel assembled at Bethabara beyond Jordan. But His resurrection out of death determined Him to be the Son of God in the sight of all the creatures of God; for death had set its seal upon all creation, and He who overcomes death must be more than creation,—that is, the Creator Himself.

Creation itself could not stand against sin and death: when therefore One in creation's form rose up from the bed of death, He was shown to be that Son of God who had created all things, and now has redeemed all things: and He therefore is able to govern all things, and to be their support forever. And thus also is He proved to be the life of all things, when all things, having made shipwreck of the gift of life, shall be, by the word of His mouth, raised from the dead and constituted in an endless state of being.

THE MYSTERY OF GOD

These three forms of primogeniture:

⁵ *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 2 "Christ Revealed by Names", Chapter: "Name of the Son", p. 21-44.

1. The eternal generation manifested in the setting up of the Christ,
2. His generation of the Virgin's substance in the form of mortal creature, and
3. The generation from the grave in the form of immortal creature-being,

...are all required in order to constitute Him the Redeemer of creation. He must be begotten before all worlds in order to claim the worlds as His, for a redeemer must have a previous title to that which he would redeem. Redemption does not constitute a title. It only recovers a title for a season forfeited. Now that all creation was the property of the Son, both in right of creation, and in right of possession, and in right of sustentation, appears not only from the passage quoted above from:

Colossians 1

¹⁶ ...all things were created by Him, and for Him;

¹⁷ ...and by Him all things consist.

And likewise from the passage quoted from:

Hebrews 1

² Has...spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed Heir of all, by whom also He made the worlds.

But likewise from that passage in the first chapter of the *Gospel by John*, where the world is declared to be His own:

John 1

¹¹ He came unto His own [His own property, to wit *the world*,] but His own [persons] received Him not.

The thing called His own property is the same with that universe (verse 3) which was made by Him. This heirship of all things belongs to Him, not in His Divine nature, in which sense they are as much the property of the Father, and of the Holy Ghost, as of Him; but they belong to Him, specially, in His official character of the Christ, which He assumed unto

Himself with a view to creation, and for the gracious end of blessing creation with the knowledge and enjoyment and blessedness of God.

It is, I say again, a great lack of discernment in “the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ” (*Colossians* 2:2), to make Christ possessor of all in right of His Divinity. For the Godhead, never changing, can never abandon any of its rights; whereas Christ did give up the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. Though rich, He did for our sakes become poor; He emptied Himself, and made Himself of no reputation. All this is not an appearance, fiction, or make-believe, but a truth.

But if this be spoken of Him in His Godhead, how can it be? for God cannot change. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, to believe that He must hold what He relinquishes by another holding than the unchangeable holding of Godhead. And what is that holding? There is no other, than that which He possesses in the character of Christ, assumed before the worlds, in order to create and bless the worlds: in that limited subsistence which is not creation, but creation’s source; which is not creature, but creature’s prototype; which is not the purpose in the absolute Godhead, nor yet the purpose realized in creation, but the purpose embodied in the person of the Son, the Word, in whom is life and light and all information of creature-being.

This glory of being the fullness of the Father’s purpose, and the fountain-head of all creation, he could resign; because it pertained to Him as the Christ (His rights as God He cannot resign). And He did resign it, when He became frail man, mortal and corruptible man. He resigned it for an end far nobler than to possess it; the end, to wit, of showing the love, grace, and goodness which are in God towards man, His master-work, and towards creation, man’s inheritance.

To show the existence of a moral principle in God, the prin-

ciple of grace, Christ deemed it nothing beneath His dignity to let go the heirship and lordship of all creation, and to become a houseless, homeless wanderer, who had not where to lay His head.

Yea more: the Christ, life's Fountain, life's Preserver, was content to become mortal and dead, in order to show the faithfulness, the trueness, of God's word, that Adamhood should die for one transgression; and at the same time to show the faithfulness and trueness of another word of God, that Adamhood should rise again from death by One Man's righteousness.

These things are not for me; they should be sung in loftiest strains, by every breathing thing, with every instrument of music. They are too lofty to be given forth in languid prose: but I am a weak man, and have not attained unto the measure of my fathers; yet I have good assurance that there will arise some one, perhaps many, who have in them the poetry of youth, and are blessed with leisure and retirement to give worthy form to these ideas, which I am roughly hewing, and hastily casting forth from an overwrought and sometimes troubled mind.

For as reproach broke the heart of the Son of God, no good man should desire or claim exemption from the like sinless infirmity of feeling the reproaches of brethren and kinsmen dear. But truth cannot be wounded unto death: the truth cannot die. The banner which I have displayed for the truth, against a violent and heady and heartless generation, will not, cannot, sink in the agitation which may overwhelm me, and all who do battle around it.

This truth of the Son of God, the Second Person of the adorable Trinity, taking the form of the Christ, and really subsisting in that limited form, and therein creating all things; and, when all things had fallen into sin, being content to forego His right for a season, and to come into destitute mor-

tal flesh, in order to show what He who is God can do, out of love and grace;—this truth, I say, is the root of truth.

It is an idea which defends Godhead's unchangeableness, which exhibits Godhead's graciousness, which explains creation's true standing, as not in God, nor yet holding of God by necessary connection, so as that He should be incomplete without it; and it makes Christ's humiliation a real, not a fictitious, thing; and it preserves His Godhead-person, the same yesterday, today, and forever, while it leaves room for His real, veritable humiliation of Himself into mortal corruptible flesh, that He might take creation out of the hands of the destroyer, and rise again with creation in Himself, of Himself an imperishable part.

I say this truth is a pearl, a pearl of inestimable price, which he who knows of it straightway sells all, that he may possess it. I gave the pearl forth, for the enriching of the Church: nor wonder I, nor should men wonder, in these schismatical and cruel-hearted times, in these ignoble, inglorious, dishonorable and dishonest times, that many should have trampled the pearl under their feet and turned again and rent me.

It is a truth which, since the days of the Council of Nice, has been obscured and eclipsed by its own blessed productions, as the stem and trunk of the tree is obscured by the exuberance of its fruits, and flowers, and foliage.

But in these days, when all the precious productions of this fruitful idea which took form from the time of the Nicene Council, and were confirmed at the Reformation, are withered and fallen off, we are fain to address our care to the root and trunk of the tree once more. We, whom the Father has appointed to keep the vineyard, must not heed the opposition, but address ourselves during the winter to the work of digging about the roots and clearing the trunk, and opening avenues to the light, and access to the refreshing air of heaven, assured that there is life in it, and that another spring is com-

ing, when these wintry nipping winds shall be past, and:

Isaiah 35

¹The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall blossom like the rose.

In consequence of this right to all which Christ possesses, not as pertaining to His Godhead, but as pertaining to His Christhood, to His assumed, but not to His necessary, form of being (for, as has been said, His Godhead right He cannot, but His Christhead right He can and does, resign), He has title and claim to be the Redeemer. It is His in right; but the right has gone from Him, and He comes to redeem it.

Now, how went the right from Him? It went from Him in consequence of His having invested therewith another, even Adam, and given it to him to keep and to maintain: not indeed in fee-simple stood Adam invested, but in direct holding from Christ, as His created representative image and vicegerent, with only one sign of creature inferiority, which was abstinence from the fruit of the forbidden tree.

This most honored of all lieutenants suffered himself to be seduced from his allegiance, and allowed a usurper, the enemy of Christ, to take possession of his faith and confidence, instead of the Word of God. The inheritance was forfeited; life was forfeited; the creation's existence was forfeited; and the body, which had been created out of dust into an image of God, went back into mouldering dust again.

Now, I say, if creation had been a thing necessary unto God, as having union with God in any way, this could not have happened. The death of life is the proof that the life stood, not in God as God, but in God as Christ. Therefore this breaking of the cord, this untwisting of the triple cord, this breaking of the pitcher at the fountain, this spilling of the sweet waters, could all have place; and, having place, is the proof of what sin is, is the proof of what sinners are, of what the devil is, of what death is, and a faint foreshowing of the second death.

Yea, moreover, and it gives the occasion for showing the counterpart of all these calamities, the medicine of all these poisons, the physician of all these evils, in the goodness, grace, and love of God Himself, who in the person of His Son strips Himself of all the glory of the Christ, and descends naked into the field of controversy, to cast this usurper out, and save with an everlasting salvation.

And how now does He attain unto Himself the power of Redeemer? I answer, by becoming one of the family whom He would redeem; by becoming flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone; for by the ordinance of God for showing us what a Redeemer is, He must be a kinsman, yea, and nearest kinsman, to those whom He would redeem. He must come, therefore, into their likeness; He must be borne of the same mother, and made of the same substance, and placed under the same law, and made liable to the same temptations and death.

He is to redeem mankind, and the inheritance of mankind. It is not manhood unfallen that He comes to redeem; for, besides that this needed no redemption. If he had come in the likeness of the unfallen man, He must have come, not by generation, but by creation; He must have been made out of dust, and not made out of a woman. Generation had not place till our first parents fell, according as it is written:

Genesis 4

¹ And Adam knew Eve his wife: and she conceived, and bore Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.

² And she again bore his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

It is a foolish, vain, and wicked invention of Satan to assert that Christ came in the nature of Adam before he fell. Adam was not made of woman, he was not made under the law; but it is expressly said of Christ, that He was...

Galatians 4

⁴ ...made of a woman, made under the law,

⁵ To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

If He came in the likeness of Adam unfallen, how should it be said that He came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin (concerning or about sin); to redeem flesh from weakness and bondage, and to bring it into holiness and freedom?

If He came in the likeness of Adam before He fell, how should it be said, that in order to redeem us from the devil's power, and the prison-house of death, He, kinsman-like, shared flesh and blood with the children?

The solecisms, the untenable positions, the glaring heresies into which those are betrayed who maintain this doctrine arise altogether from their ignorance of the ordinances of the redeemer, which a few hours' study of the Old Testament would remove.

But interpretation of types and prophecies is a thing which they set little store by, when compared with their own argumentations. and declamations and polemical exploits, for the nourishment of their own self-esteem, and the gratification of a vain, contentious, worldly-minded generation.

PERFECT OBEDIENCE REQUIRED

Our Lord's third primogeniture, from the grave, is likewise necessary in order to constitute Him Redeemer; for this reason,—that thereby He was proved to have satisfied the conditions of the redemption. That which fell in upon man's estate, in consequence of the mastery of the devil, is the bondage from which he is to be redeemed. Christ by becoming co-partner of this bondage, by taking to Himself mortal and corruptible flesh, was joined to us in our condition, and proves Himself Redeemer by answering the stipulations of God, and overcoming the enemy of man.

The stipulations of God have never changed. They are now what they were at first, perfect obedience, entire holiness. The

Fall has not made His holiness more holy, has not made the law of man's obligation towards God severer than it was at first. God cannot change, and His relation to His creatures cannot be abrogated.

The Fall introduced into man's constitution the knowledge of evil as well as good: and instead of being ignorant of, and unconscious to, the opposite of good, he lay on all sides open and conscious to evil,—in his will, in his mind, in his body: and this is the universal condition of mankind.

Now the law is nothing but the exposition of the evil in all its wide-lying varieties, together with the contradiction of it, and the threatening of God against it. Christ, by being made of a woman, was mortal; by being made under the law, He was in the same condition of the knowledge of good and evil as all other men are. To put Him under the law without the consciousness of the evil were a feint and delusion on the part of God, which cannot for a moment be admitted.

But besides His being in the same estate, of the knowledge of good and evil, in which all of us are found, He was likewise open to the same assaults of the devil to which we are open, and to the powers of a devil-possessed world. Thus, constituted as we are constituted in all respects, He must present absolute holiness without taint, without guile, without defect.

A man He is as all of us, in God's image created; a man He is as all of us, dissolved with death, open to sin, disturbed and invaded by the devil; yet notwithstanding these disadvantages, and under these disguises, and with these infirm materials, He must all His life long present an image of God in righteousness and true holiness: and this He did without a flaw, without a failure.

This done, He is entitled to the inheritance, which for defect of obedience was forfeited, and which by completeness of obedience is redeemed. Though therefore He died, He died without a spot, and He died rightful possessor of the inheri-

tance.

The devil, the accuser-general of the brethren, could lay no accusation against Him in the court of heaven. A space of time was given, but he could find no count in all the statute-book of God's holiness whereon to impeach this Man, who could say, and did say, unto His Father:

Isaiah 49

⁴ My judgment is with the Lord

Psalms 16

⁸ I have set the Lord always before Me.

If then the right remained with Him unchangeable, He must be raised up to inherit it; and by the resurrection God's satisfaction with His work was proclaimed. He was proved to be the Holy One and the Just: He was shown to be the Redeemer in all the various functions of the Redeemer. By His life of holiness He has redeemed the living man from sin: by His resurrection from death He has redeemed the dead man from his prison, the grave and hell.

And though He has not yet come as the Redeemer of the inheritance, He is revealed in this very vision as possessed of its rights, and about to come to cast the devil and his adherents out, and to possess it, in reality and truth: and, meanwhile, He enjoys the throne of God itself, which is more than man could ever have aspired unto.

This primogeniture from the grave, this honor of being the firstborn from the dead (*Colossians* 1:18; *Revelation* 1:7), is therefore that which proves Him to have redeemed man, and man's inheritance.

The first primogeniture, His generation before the worlds, and His constitution as Heir of all things, proves Him to be rightful owner of that which He comes to redeem.

And the second primogeniture, His being firstborn by the Holy Ghost of a woman, qualifies Him to redeem, by bringing

Him under the bondage and the curse.

Which three things,—an original right in the possession, a rightful forfeiture of it, and a rightful payment of the forfeiture,—are verily the three conditions which must coalesce, in order to the idea and the act of a redemption.

THE WITNESSING PARTIES

There is yet another thing to be observed, in order to the completeness of this subject, which is, that in the case of a forfeited estate there needs to be likewise, besides the redeemer, the present temporary possessor; and, besides these two, there likewise needs to be a third party above them both, who may see justice and righteousness done between the parties.

This last function was fulfilled in Israel by the elders of each separate city or township, as we see in the case of Boaz, and in the case of Jeremiah, who being a prisoner, and therefore unable to present himself in the gates where the elders sat, did take the best substitute which he could have, to wit, “all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison.” This, by the way, I believe to be another reason why the elders are presented to us in the vision, and also why they are redeemed men, and also why they are the destined rulers of the earth, because the transaction is concerning the inheritance of the earth, which ought therefore to be done in the presence of those into whose hands judgment and justice are given.

But, because they also have only a derived power, it would not have been proper to put into their hands the symbol of the inheritance, which is the seven-sealed book. In whose hands then should it rest? In the hands of Him whose right in it, whose relation to it, is absolute and unchangeable; who cannot denude Himself, who cannot be denuded, of that which out of nothing He formed by the word of His power: in the hands of God lie the title-deeds of the earth. Therefore it

is, that as Creator He is celebrated by the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders.

God, then, with the council of this world's subordinate kings, is the umpire between man, the rightful owner (for it is as man that Christ is constituted Heir; as God He needs no constitution), and the devil, who by guile has won the inheritance out of man's hands, and brought man under an unalterable law of God, which is death, under which while man continues it is most clear that he cannot possess the inheritance, for what power can a dead man exert over the earth?

Now when the Man, whose name is the Lamb, appears at the gate of heaven, and presents Himself before the Judge of all the earth, being in the aspect and reality of One whose life had been taken, and who is yet alive; who had come under death, and out of death had come again; it was beyond a question that this Man had done no sin, else would He have been under death: whereas He presents Himself alive; and having done no sin, He is the Man, the Redeemer, who has taken from death its sting, and from the grave its victory; therefore, without a moment's hesitation, He receives the investiture in that inheritance which man had lost.

THE ABSENCE OF SATAN

But it may be asked, Why does not Satan, the present possessor, likewise appear in that court to maintain his own right? For that the possession really became his, upon the forfeiture of our primogenitor, is abundantly evident from the name which our Lord gives to him, "the prince of this world" (*John* 16:11, 12:31); from both of which passages it is likewise evident, that at the time of our Lord's crucifixion he was judged and cast out.

How at this time, and by this act, he should be cast out of his principedom is, I think, declared to us:

John 14

³⁰ The prince of this world comes, and has nothing in me.

This signifies Christ's perfect holiness as to body and soul, and declares that the accuser of the brethren had nothing whereof to accuse the Lord; and this, if I err not, is the reason why he appears not in the court of heaven; he suffers the cause to go by default; he confesses that he has nothing to plead in bar of the title of the Lamb.

In the case of Job he replied against Job, and was permitted to put him to the proof: in the case of Christ, he had for a long while been putting Him to proof, and in the last crisis with a more terrible trial than Job's; and finding it utterly vain he shrinks back defeated, and can make no appearance whatever.

When Christ's disciples went forth to preach the Gospel and cast out devils, and when they returned triumphant over all the power of the enemy, Jesus said:

Luke 10

¹⁸ I saw Satan like lightning fall from heaven.

This, together with some other passages of Scripture, has at times led me to believe, that Satan's prerogative of presenting himself before God was lost to him forever from the time that the Lamb was received into that holy presence; the ascension of Christ into heaven being the casting down of Satan out of heaven, as the coming of Christ to the earth shall be the casting of Satan out of the earth.

SATAN AS THE USURPER

However this may be, and the subject will come more properly before us in the 12th chapter, it is evident from the premises, that since the death and resurrection of Christ, Satan has been declared to be a usurper. There cannot be two heirs, there cannot be two possessors, there cannot be two crowned princes; the one must be a usurper: and when the issue has been tried, and judgment given by the righteous Judge

of all in favor of the one party, the other, if he resign not possession, is nothing better than a usurper.

This now is the case with Satan, who, though he had no face to appear in this great assize, and answered not the summons which went forth to every creature in heaven and in earth, and under the earth, has nevertheless endeavoured to retain the inheritance by force, and gathered under his banner the greater part of mankind, who love darkness rather than light, their deeds being evil.

And one chief part of this *Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ* is to set forth the form and duration and issue of the controversy between the beast and the Lamb for the supremacy. The 12th, 13th, 14th, 17th, 19th, and 20th chapters contain the particulars of this long and bloody strife; which, be it observed, begins with the account of Satan's casting down from heaven, by the virtue of the blood of the Lamb.

The 11th chapter also, in which the right is made out in the mouth of the two witnesses, the Old and New Testament as I believe, is the preliminary to this great controversy, showing it to be the struggle of a usurper with the rightful heir. In that preface to the annals of the long war between the beast and the Lamb we are let into three things necessary to the understanding of the nature of the controversy of the principles of righteousness and violence which are opposed to one another. These three things are:

1. The witnesses;
2. The beast's attempt to destroy the witnesses, with his overthrow therein; and
3. The blast of the seventh trumpet, which forever possesses Christ of the principedom of this world.

Being thus, as it were in a prologue, informed of the side whereon lay the right, we have, in the chapters enumerated above, the history of the long and laborious conflict delin-

eated, until at length Satan is cast out of the earth, and the saints with Christ do reign.

LESSONS FROM THE REDEEMER'S ACTION

From the account which we have given above of the Redeemer's action, it is manifest that these three things are never to be forgotten nor gainsaid:

1. Christ's Dual Nature Before Creation

First, that not merely as God, but chiefly as the Christ set up before the worlds, did He create and possess all things. This is that possession of glory with which we have to do. This is the estate which He surrendered on becoming man. His Godhead he did not surrender. Godhead cannot change; and therefore, if He be contemplated merely as God before His incarnation, He gave up nothing, He could give up nothing, for He was as entire God in the days of His flesh as He was before.

What did He give up then? He gave up that creation, that glory as creation's Head, that glory as creation's Fountain-head, that glory as creation's Cause and Origin, which He had with the Father before the world was. This He could give up, because it pertained to Him, not in essential Godhead, but in assumed Christ-head.

This is a great point of doctrine not now found written in our books or symbols; but it is that hidden root out of which the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the love of God, and of redemption, grow. Without it either Godhead changes in becoming man; or if it change not, then there is no sacrifice made, there is nothing given up, but something is added to itself; namely, the creature part.

Though few do see this truth, or will take the trouble to think about it at all, I will both say and put myself oft to the trouble of demonstrating, that all declarations of Christ's

humbling Himself, and emptying Himself, in order to become man, that the whole doctrine of His humiliation, that all proofs of a love in God, which can give up and surrender its own, fall to the ground, as unmeaning expressions or mere appearances, unless the Son be seen from before the worlds, not only as God, but also as the Christ, having assumed that form of being, which afterwards He is to realize in creation form, and forever possess and act in.

I feel that, in insisting upon this point of the Son's possessing creation as the Christ, who is with God and God, I am delivering the Trinity from being a mere piece of nomenclature, and bringing it back to be the truth absolutely necessary to the existence of a creation. I am teaching divines, those of them that will be taught, how Arianism and Unitarianism are to be lifted from their rocky beds, and cast out into the depths of the sea.

I know it is a subject too deep for the patience, yea and the capacity, of those men who rule with reckless rage the opinion of the religious world. But there are a few, despised for their youth, and abused for their lack of judgment, and persecuted for the truth's sake, who will give reverent heed to a matter which I press with such frequency, and with such earnestness.

2. Christ's Oneness with Fallen Nature

The second thing which has come out of this inquiry into the Redeemer's action is, that as the forfeiture of the estate consists in the knowledge of good and evil, and the doom of death, as well as the resistance and conquest of the devil, it is necessary that the Redeemer should come under these penalties, be in the continual knowledge of good and evil, be brought into death, and yet be without sin.

The inheritance is to be redeemed from under the sentence of death inflicted on it by God; and also it is to be redeemed

from under the power of the devil, let in by the disobedience of man. The law shows that it can be redeemed, for the law contains a continual promise of life to him that keeps it; and life is the contradiction of death.

How can the law promise life, then, to creatures who had all been doomed to death? Can one word of God set aside another? No verily. The life which the law promises to him that keeps it, is a life from the dead, a resurrection life. The word of God pronounced upon mankind, "In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die," is fulfilled when the body and the soul are parted. The life promised in the law is the reunion of that soul and body, under new conditions of being.

This life Christ, by keeping the law, purchased unto Himself. He believed that He should not see corruption, because He had set the Lord continually before Him, and, dying in this faith, the Father gave Him life, and thereby attested that He had kept the law blameless; and thus is He the Resurrection and the Life to mankind universally.

He has redeemed the life of mankind out of death by receiving His own body out of the grave. Death was lost to the whole in one man; the law lay against the whole, for that offense of one man. Life was recovered unto the whole by the resurrection of one Man, and the law was removed from the whole by the obedience of one Man.

Those thoughtless, and I may say reckless, men who deny that He was in manhood fallen, understand not what they say, nor whereof they affirm, and would do both a wise and a good thing to hold their peace upon all such subjects until they have meditated them at least for five years to come, during which they should be interdicted from all conversations, criticisms, and discourses upon the subject of redemption, which they are laboring as diligently to make void by their traditions and inventions as their fathers ever did to make good by their interpretations of the Holy Scriptures.

3. Christ's Perfect Holiness as Man

The third thing which we have gathered from this action of the Redeemer is, that as surely as He was Heir of all things before the world was,—the Heir, to wit, of His own creation, Heir by the truest title, of having made the thing He claimed; as God bringing all things out of nought, as Christ giving them their form and place in the one temple built for the glory of God and of Christ: as surely also as He abandoned, relinquished, and in very truth denuded Himself of all this possession which pertains to Him as the Christ, though of His Godhead, and His Godhead rights, He resigns and can resign nothing, and became:

- a man of frailty,
- a man of infirmity,
- a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,
- a born babe,
- a subject man,
- a houseless, homeless wanderer,
- a man accursed, hanging on a tree,
- a dead man,

—all to testify the love which is in God to sinners, and the purpose of God to redeem sinners:—so surely was He

- spotless in His life, and spotless in His death,
- blameless before the law,
- whom Satan could not challenge, in whom Satan could find nothing to blame,
- who had never disobeyed God in thought, word, or deed,
- whose every member had done only righteousness,
- whose every faculty had sought only righteousness,
- who had kept Himself clean from every defilement,
- who had lived in love to God, and love to man, and love to His enemies, without a breach of that perfect law,

- who had borne the pains and sufferings, and anguish and woe, which the soul and body of man can ever endure on this side the grave, without a murmur, without a complaint,—that is, such a complaint as involves rebellion,—and
- who had borne the hidings of His Father’s countenance, the darkenings of His own mind, the swimmings of agony, the pains of death, and a thousand other endurances to which no one can be conscious,

...because no one has love like His to be wounded and grieved, because no one has holiness like His to be offended and tortured with the continual presence of malignity, because no one has faith like His, and honesty and truth, to be continually disgusted with the doubts, suspicion, and disbelief of men.

These three great truths,—His primitive right as Christ, which He could abandon; His abandonment thereof, to come into the condition of the Redeemer; and His reinstatement therein, in virtue of perfect holiness and complete redemption,—do together make up the action of redeeming, and entitle Him to that book of the inheritance which He receives so soon as He appears to claim it.

This action being concluded, a very great sensation of joy and gratitude is excited throughout the whole creation, which in its several orders and ranks sends forth its transports of joy in various choral songs, which we now proceed in the strength of God to open in order. And first, taking precedence of all the rest, we have...

THE SONG OF THE LIVING CREATURES AND THE ELDERS AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHURCH

Revelation 5

⁸ And when He had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints.

⁹ And they sung a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

¹⁰ And have made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

THIS is the song of the redeemed, sung upon the occasion of the Lamb's preferment to the inheritance of the earth; not indeed the possession of it, which is the subject of a future song (*Revelation 11:15*), but the investiture in its rights.

It is sung by the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders, in whom we have shown that the Church is represented. Formerly the elders fell down before Him that sat upon the throne, but now both the elders and the living creatures fall down before the Lamb. And this they do immediately upon His receiving the book into His hand.

Now, let us be informed in what character Christ is worshiped, besides His worship in the eternal Godhead, and we shall have another means of ascertaining what is substantially signified by His taking the book. This information we have in many parts of Scripture; yea He has a name which signifies it, —the name of Lord,—as is expressly declared:

Philippians 2

⁹ Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name:

¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

¹¹ And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The name *Jesus* is His name, to distinguish Him among the sons of men; *Jesus of Nazareth* expresses the Son of Mary, as distinguished from every son of man: at which name it is here declared that every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that He is LORD. The name LORD therefore, which we apply to Jesus, is that wherein stands that dignity and authority for which He is worshiped.

We may say that Christ has a double worship; not only in His Divinity, as a person in the substance of the incomprehensible Godhead, but also in His subsistence as the Christ of God, the risen God-Man, the Lord of all. This He has by special gift of God, who, for His humiliation, conferred upon Him the exalted dignity and honor of sitting on the throne of the Eternal.

And this is the true declaration that the Divinity is in the person of the Son of Mary: His being seated in the throne of the Father is proof beyond all proof that He who sojourned amongst us, and died upon the cross, is God as well as man. For it were the most incongruous of all conceivable things, that a mere creature should be seated in heaven's throne and be able to dispense the gift of the Holy Ghost.

This also is what does, and will forever, distinguish Jesus from the rest of the brethren, who have no such Divine prerogative of honor and worship. Forasmuch, then, as worship is rendered to Him always in sign of that lordship and dominion which the Father has given Him over all flesh—and, in our text, in consequence of His receiving the sealed book—it is put beyond doubt that the sealed book is the symbol of His dominion over, and inheritance of, all things.

Not until He received the book out of God Almighty's hand did He receive the worship of the hosts of heaven. This positively and expressly declares, that in the possession of that

book stands His lordship, and that His worship is not His inherent worship as God, but His derived and bestowed worship as God within the bounds of the creature subsisting.

To this worship Jesus was entitled from the time of His generation of the Holy Ghost; and He received it both at the hand of the angels, and of the shepherds, and of the wise men of the East. It was in Him always by right, but He always emptied Himself of it during the days of His flesh. He laid it aside, and became a servant, a subject, a worm and no man.

From the lowly bed of death God Almighty raised Him, and set Him above all in His own throne. This was the Father's reward unto His Son, who had learned obedience by the things which He suffered. The Son, acting in the creature's limits, showed by His self-humiliation what every creature should be willing to undergo for the glory of God the Father. And God the Father, by His exaltation of the submissive Son of Man, showed what honor and dignity forever and ever He will put upon every creature who thus bears patiently everything for His sake.

As Christ, of free-will, came into our fallen state, we should, without murmuring, abide in it; and, like Him, be glad to testify a creature's love and duty by our endurance of all its ills: well knowing that from its lowest estate of corruption we shall be raised to honor, and glory, and life. He that has borne most for God, shall be most highly rewarded of God.

That reward the Church in glory feel themselves to be secured in, when they see their living Head invested in the rights of the inheritance, in the symbol of lordship and possession. And having thus announced to them Him who is appointed their King and God over all, the whole assembly of living things does do Him reverence and homage, and profess firm allegiance to His throne and strict obedience to His authority.

I think no further doubt can remain with the reflecting

mind, that the book of seven seals is the sign of possession and lordship; not of knowledge or revelation, nor of anything else whatever.

THE HARPS

We now come to speak of the new symbols which are put upon the elders and beasts; for to the elders I am not inclined to restrict these words:

Revelation 5

⁸ ...having each of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints.

If the song be the song both of the living creatures and the elders, then, by the same construction of the sentence, the harps and the bowls of incense should belong to both. But if it be said, that the song belongs only to the elders, then I ask:

For what purpose are the four living creatures introduced at all into this grand chorus? Is it merely to prostrate themselves and keep silence?

Surely, no. If they who cease not day nor night from celebrating Him that sits on the throne utter no voice in worship of the Lamb, what were to be inferred but that there was a strain of worship and a body of worshipers which the Lamb had no title or claim upon; and the effect would be to demonstrate Him not to be the Lord of all, but only of a part; not to be worthy of the honor with which we honor the Father: a fatal conclusion, which cannot for a moment be entertained.

It remains, therefore, that as well by the necessity of the case, as by the express construction of the sentence, the four living creatures do take part with the elders in their song; and if so, then also in the holding and using of the harps, in the holding and using of the vials of incense, with which they offer praise and service unto the Lamb who had taken the book.

Now as concerns the symbol of the harp, in all languages it answers to the vocation of a poet or a prophet who utters his song to appropriate music. That in old times the harp, with other instruments of music, was the accompaniment of a prophet, we learn from the word of God:

1 Samuel 10

⁵ You shall meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp before them, and they shall prophesy.

And what kind of prophecy was proper to the harp in particular is declared to us *1 Chronicles* 25:3, where six of Jeduthun's sons, under the hands of their father, are appointed to prophesy with the harp, "to give thanks and to praise the Lord."

And many instances to the same effect occur in the Book of Psalms (*Psalm* 33:3, 43:4, &c.); and in the description given of the earth's misery (*Isaiah* 24:8) it is said, "the joy of the harp ceases;" and in *Psalm* 49 the harp is used likewise for helping the soul to utter deep and dark sayings:

Psalm 49

⁴ I will incline my ear to a parable: I will utter my dark sayings upon the harp.

However various were the instruments of music used by the prophets and by the Church on earth, it is remarkable that in this book no instrument but the harp is introduced in heaven. Our seer, in recounting the voices which he heard from heaven, describes it as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and he adds:

Revelation 14

² ...I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.

What obtains for it this distinction I leave to be determined by those who are more skilled in the instruments of music. It is sufficient for my purpose to observe that, by this instru-

ment in their hands, the four beasts and four and twenty elders are declared to be the prophets of God; the prophets who make known unto the angels, and all the creatures around, the mystery of God's being and providence and grace: for to none of the angels, and to none of the creatures in the heavenly assembly, is this emblem of the prophet given, but to the redeemed Church alone.

I wish that the Church would learn the superiority of her destination, and not be guilty of angel worship anymore. It belongs to men to teach unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God. Man was made to be God's image in thought, in word, in deed; and to be God's image has he returned through the work of the Son of Man, who is the image of the invisible God.

Ah me! what a dignity is in man! how mindful God has been of him! how highly God has exalted him! Methinks their much preaching of our present misery, and their little preaching of our exalted destiny, has crushed the spirit of the Church, and reduced her to a crawling, creeping devotee, or a meager, melancholy hermit. And though I be convinced of the unutterable glory which is reserved for us, and the poverty in which we are kept by the mean report which our preachers give of the land, I dare hardly utter my convictions, I dare but take stolen glances of the glory which I see, because men are stirred up against me, and reject the truth because it is uttered by one whom they despise or hate.

THE INCENSE

Behold, next, how these living creatures and elders are connected with the priesthood, by putting into their hands golden vials full of incense. It pertained to the priest, and to him alone, to offer incense upon the golden altar which stood over against the mercy-seat outside the veil (*Exodus 30:7-8*); and this was done perpetually, morning and evening, after the sac-

rifice of the lamb had been offered upon the brazen altar; and without this entering into the holy place to burn incense before the Lord the sacrifice was not complete (*Luke 1:8-11*).

Now of what kind that incense was which might be offered unto God is by Himself prescribed (*Exodus 30:34*); and all strange incense, or strange fire, is strictly prohibited (*Exodus 30:9; Leviticus 10:1*). From the composition of this incense, consisting of many precious ingredients, it is, as I think, that the word incense in our text is in the plural number, which our translation has in a manner preserved by using the word odors. It was compounded of the most precious and odoriferous spices which nature yields, which yield their sweet smell spontaneous, and scent the air around, to signify that there ought continually to ascend from the heart of man a spontaneous effluence of praise and prayer and heavenward thought, so that our godliness and heavenly-mindedness may evermore reveal themselves to those in our company, as do the sweet odors of an aromatic garden.

At the same time, by bruising and by burning a more strong and potent odor is extracted from the incense-bearing plant,—wherefore God required that fire should be put in the censers beneath the incense, that it might ascend unto Him in clouds of sweet odors,—even so shall the fiery trials of this life, and the inward contritions of the soul through sense and shame of sin, cause a larger and more fervent offering of prayer and praise and thanksgiving to ascend unto God most high; for it is said, that the incense is the prayers of saints (or, literally, the prayers of the saints).

From this expression I gather, that the incense which was required to be offered in every sacrifice, signifies the spiritual actings and sufferings and exercises of the soul wherewith the sacrifice must be accompanied, if it would find acceptance before the throne of God.

And accordingly the sacrifice was offered in the face of day,

and the sight of all the people, upon an altar of brass outside the holy temple, even before the porch thereof: not so the offering of incense which had to be done in the holy place within the temple, straight before the vail at the footstool of the throne of God, in the light of the holy lamp, and out of sight of all the people, who meanwhile were engaged in prayer beyond the porch of the temple; all to signify, that with every outward act which we are not ashamed to do for God in the presence of the world, there is an inward, unseen, spiritual, God-acknowledging act, which constitutes the chief excellency and all the religion of the outward act; for religion stands altogether in the acknowledgment of God, and is a transaction between God and the soul with which man may not intermeddle.

Whereby also we are taught, that the one sacrifice which Christ offered for sin, stood not only in the wounding and bruising and crucifying and slaying of that mortal body which He took, but likewise, and more especially in the contrition of His soul, in the grief, perplexity, travails, and dolours which wrung His inward man with direful agony, and proved Him to have a human soul that was tortured, and could be tortured in every way; but by all its tortures could not be removed from the confidence, and holiness, and obedience, and perfect submission, and complete contentment with His Father's righteous and holy will. It is better far to die for this truth than to deny it; yea, it is better never to have been born.

THE VIALS

With respect to the vials or bowls in which they held the incense, it is well worthy of our observation, that they are not censers such as the priests were wont to offer withal, but merely vessels for containing the incense which the priest was permitted to present in sacrifice to God. This is the more diligently to be noted, because in the 8th chapter, one whom

we have shown to be the Son of God, our great High Priest has the sole prerogative of offering with a censer this same incense, which, in the passage before us, he has presented unto him at the hands of the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders.

This device of God's wisdom instructs us, that between the saints who make the prayers, and the Priest who presents them upon the golden altar, there is interposed the office of the living creatures and the elders to communicate or convey the thing which is to be offered from the Church on earth to the High Priest of the Church in heaven. Which again confirmed the great doctrine taught in our former Book⁶, that the spirits of departed saints do act as interveners (I would say intercessors, if the Papacy had not corrupted that word,) between the Church on earth and the Head of the Church in heaven. Not as if thereby they had attained unto any independent separate dignity, but that they continue to serve Him and to serve the Church, in a new capacity, proper to their new mode of existence as disembodied spirits.

To take the help of that similitude, most frequently used in Scripture, if Christ be the Head, and the Church the body, I would give to the disembodied part of the Church, the office of the nerves which carry on the communication between the head and the members, to and fro, by some circulation of an influence which no anatomist nor physiologist is able to demonstrate unto the sense. Be it observed, that this is only a similitude, which, however, is entitled to no small reverence, as being the emblem chosen by God and Christ.

Now this reservation unto the King and High Priest of saints, of the singular honor of presenting the prayers and sacrifices of the Church, is not for the end of denying priest-

⁶ *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 12 "The Worship in Heaven", Chapter: "The Occupation of the Four Living Ones and Twenty-Four Elders", p. 11-21.

hood unto the living creatures and the elders, but of securing high priesthood unto himself alone. For in the body of their song they do assert of themselves, that they are both kings and priests, giving however the glory of having made them so unto the Lamb. And as they do signify their derived royalty by prostrating themselves before Him, so do they signify their derived priesthood, by presenting the incense to Him who contains holy priesthood in His own person, and gives it to whomsoever He pleases.

Taken altogether, this new feature of the symbol of the Church in glory,—to wit, their having golden bowls in their hands full of incense,—reminds us, and is, I think, intended to remind us, of that great action or oblation recorded in the 7th chapter of *Numbers*, where, upon the dedication of the altar, the twelve princes of the tribes of Israel did day by day offer splendid offerings, amongst which they failed not each one to offer “one golden spoon of ten shekels full of incense;”⁷ with which it was commanded of the Lord that the service of the tabernacle should be done. This is, I think, parallel with, and typical of, these princes of the Church in heaven presenting unto the High Priest, both that which he should offer for the congregation, and the vessels which he was to use; perhaps for filling the incense into his censer.

As to the number twenty-four, here used instead of the twelve princes of the tribes, I have nothing to add beyond what I have set forth in Book 11, when treating on that subject⁸. There be more in it than is there set forth, but nothing more has as yet appeared to me.

Such then are the additions made to our knowledge of the living creatures and the elders, by the new symbols of the

7 This phrase is repeated throughout the chapter: *Numbers* 7:26, 32, 38, 44, 50, 56, 62, 68, 74, 80.

8 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 11 “The Vision of Heaven”, Chapter: “The Twenty-Four Elders”, p. 50-51.

harps, and the golden bowls full of incense. We learn thereby, that they are the prophets and the priests, and the princes of creation, who body forth in every way the fullness of Godhead and the perfection of manhood in Jesus Christ. They are the image of Him who is the image of the invisible God, to declare Him, to speak of Him, to celebrate His praise, and to tell of all His mighty acts. In His service they strung those harps which yet are no material instrument, however perfect, but verily the harmonious and many-toned instrument of human nature, all attuned to speak the praises, and do the service of God in the sight of the myriads of His creatures. And not only so, but likewise to receive the grateful returns which the blessed creation renders back unto its Creator, and to present them through the intercession of the great Mediator through whom, and by whom, and for whom, are all things.

This middle place, between the Redeemer and the redeemed world, is the Church destined to occupy forever. And when the number of the elect shall have been accomplished, I do believe that the body of Christ, the bride of the Lamb, the New-Jerusalem tabernacle of God, shall be completed, and a new era in the history of creation shall begin to unfold itself.

I cannot tell exactly how it is to be with those who are found faithful in the days of the kingdom, whether they stand in the same relation unto Christ, as those gathered during this the day of His humiliation on the earth. I am inclined to think they do so; but this is a small matter to us, whom it chiefly concerns to know, that in these elders, and living creatures, and in their glorious state is set forth that passing prerogative which pertains to every one who overcomes, and keeps unto the end the steadfast testimony of Jesus.

Then, O Lord, strengthen me, and strengthen every one who reads and believes these things, to stand fast, and quit us like men, to be strong and to suffer no man to take our crown. My heart bleeds for the multitude of those, who, bearing Your

name, do yet disregard or blaspheme Your truth; that most precious truth of Yours, O God, which, everywhere scattered over Your word, is built up in this book into a glorious temple of revelation, whose very beauty, whose very glory, whose very perfectness is at once the mock, and the rebuke, of this low-thoughted, hard-hearted, mean-spirited generation of men.

The Lord knows that in these words I rail not, but speak forth the soberness of my mind, and the charity of my heart. I love the brethren, and would fain deliver them out of the hands of the babes who rule over them. I know the preciousness of this book: I understand somewhat of its fullness, and I would fain justify it against the mean and dishonorable treatment which it receives in the secrecies of men's hearts, in the privacies of familiar intercourse, in the publications of the Church, yea, and in the preachings of the ministers of the Church. I must speak these things, come out of them what will: I must be faithful, or else I will be given up to my enemies: I cannot stand a day in the midst of this warfare, unless I stand girt about with truth.

THE SONG

We now come to the words of the song itself, after having thus considered the appearance and attire of those who sing it. It is called a new song, to signify, as I take it, the newness of the occasion which calls for it, and the freshness of the matter which it contained. The like expression is found in *Revelation* 14:3, where another era in the history of the Church commences, which is the era of taking possession of the inheritance.

This interpretation will be borne out by a reference to those places in the Old Testament, where the same expression is used; as, for example:

- *Psalms* 30:3, where it refers to the new dispensation of

righteousness and judgment, and the goodness of the Lord;

- *Psalm* 96:1, 98:1: in both which it refers to the time of the coming of the Lord to deliver the creature from the bondage of corruption;
- *Psalm* 144:9, 149:1; which both refer to the deliverance of His people from oppression, and their establishment in power and authority upon the earth.
- *Psalm* 40:3 refers to that same event of Christ's resurrection and establishment in glory, which is contained in our text.

But perhaps the most striking confirmation of this idea that the expression new song has reference to a new and hitherto unrevealed event, is to be found in the 42nd chapter of *Isaiah*, where, after the humiliation of our Lord, and His preaching unto the Gentiles, have been unfolded in the first eight verses, the scope and spirit of the vision change, proceeding to describe the power and glory and strength with which He shall come to destroy the enemies of Israel; and this transition from gentleness to violence, from silence to tumult, is with these words introduced:

Isaiah 42

⁹ Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.

¹⁰ Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth.

Songs, in the *Apocalypse*, and indeed throughout Scripture, are not introduced for ornament or effect, but for interpretation and acknowledgment, and adoration of the works and ways of God, as they open themselves in new forms before the eye of the prophetic Church. The song is the purer essence of the action, and the sublime effusion of the soul, ravished with the knowledge of the action; and a new song is not merely another song, but a song sung upon an occasion and

of matters new.

The occasion, in the case before us, is the Lamb's public acknowledgment of God, as the Heir of the earth, whereof man had been disinherited since the Fall, and which man did then receive in undoubted right. This is the new occurrence in the world's history, which the celestial choir deemed worthy to be celebrated by a new song, into the matters of which we now inquire.

The song is an ascription of praise unto the Lamb, and consists of three parts:

1. the chief is, the assertion of His worthiness to take the book and loose the seals thereof:
2. the reason of that worthiness: "For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and have made us unto our God kings and priests:" and
3. the consequence, the happy and blessed consequence, which will result to them from this great preferment of the Lamb: "We shall reign upon the earth."

Let us consider these in the order of the past work of the Lamb for His Church, His present preferment in consequence thereof, and the future advantage which results thence unto us, who are represented by the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders.

The first of these subjects consists of two parts: the one, redemption by His blood; the other, advancement to the dignity of kings and priests, of which two glorious themes we have largely discoursed in our Second Lecture⁹.

Nevertheless the subject is so rich and so welcome to our heart, that without reference to what is there written either in the way of repeating it or of avoiding repetition, we will go

⁹ *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 2 "Christ Revealed by Names", Chapter: "Doxology", Sub-chapter: "Washed Us From Our Sins", p. 47-53; and Sub-chapter: "Kings and Priests to God", p. 54-63.

straightforward and open in this new connection the same blessed truths.

REDEMPTION BY HIS BLOOD

As respects, then, our redemption, it is made to depend upon His having been slain:

Revelation 5

⁹ You were slain, and have redeemed us by Your blood.

Literally, “have bought us in Your blood.” This language implies, first, that we are in a condition of bondage; and secondly, that the death of the Lamb has bought us up from the bondage wherein we were held. What, now, is that bondage from which to be redeemed cost the price of the blood of God? It is written:

Acts 20

²⁸ Feed the Church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood.

And again:

1 John 3

¹⁶ Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us.

We answer to this question, that the bondage is death. The cause of it is sin; but the bondage itself is the grave for the body, and for the soul that place known by the name of Hades, and loosely called hell, though certainly not the lake of fire which burns forever.

The effect of sin, the effect of one sin, has been to dispossess man of life, and of life’s possessions, this fair and beautiful creation; and there they lie all of them dissolved into dust. To redeem from the grave (*Psalms* 49:15), to redeem from the lowest hell (*Psalms* 86:13), not to be left in hell (*Psalms* 16:10), this is the work of the Redeemer.

And when death and hell shall have given up their dead

(*Revelation* 20:13), the redemption will have been completed, and it shall be seen whether it was universal or not. To say that redemption is not universal, is to say that Christ shall not raise all the dead, for death is the house of bondage.

If it be asked, Why this universal death? it is answered, Because God's holiness will not, and cannot bear up in a state of active power the being of one who has sinned against Him, and therefore will bring him into a state of passive powerlessness, which is the state of death.

Death is God's word dissolving His own work, in order to show His own holiness; proving to us how little worth in God's esteem is creation's form and beauty, when set against one moral attribute of His being.

It is most true indeed, that if God's purpose beginning in a good creation had ended in a creation dead, there would have been a seeming waste of power or lack of foresight, an effort at an undertaking which had failed and come to nought, a manifestation of holiness in the miserable dissolution of the world.

But the purpose of God is not so limited, whose being stands not complete in the attribute of holiness alone, but thereto adds other attributes of grace and mercy and love, whose presence in the goodly work of creation is seen in company with all His other attributes; for creation is a work of love and passing grace, but apart this attribute is not seen, save in the redemption of sinful man.

Out of nothing to bring so goodly a creature as man, was a magnificent work of power, and a munificent work of love; but from the floor of hell, and from the corruption of the grave, to bring up the being of rebellious man, and advance it to the right hand of glory into the condition of eternal and imperishable life, beauty, and blessedness, is a far more famous display of that love which God has for the creatures of His hand.

Now this very thing it is which the Son of Man by death accomplished. He did in very deed bring from the floor of hell, and from the bed of death, that dissolved being of man, and raise Him to the right hand of the Majesty on high. Who did it?

- God did it, in the person of the Son. God humbled Himself to be the Man of Sorrows, the frail temptable man; and in that lowly sphere performed the will of God.
- God did it in the person of the Father, by supplying evermore the Son of Man acting thus, with a given and conferred power to sustain the fiery conflict in the flesh, and to burst hell's gates, and to take His body from the grave.
- God did it in the person of the Spirit, in enabling the Son of Man to believe evermore upon the Father, and never for any instant to be divided from His trust; by serving the believing Son of Man continually with power to crucify the flesh with its corruptions and lusts, and to quicken throughout all its parts and properties the hunger and the thirst of doing the will of God. God the Spirit did it by enabling Him to present without murmur that body on the cross, and to part from it for a season and descend into hell, and to break through hell's spiritual confinements, to take His body again from the grave, and inform it with eternal and immortal life.

Thus did God acting in the persons of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, redeem human nature from the bondage under which it was brought by sin.

If anyone say, that this is not a true account of the work of redemption, because I have not spoken of price, and purchase, and imputation of sins, and sufferings of the elect, and so forth; if anyone say, that this way of speaking is virtually to make void the atonement, I tell him that he has no idea of re-

demption at all; but merely a parcel of notions, a system of names, a multitude of illustrations; which indeed are very profitable for exhibiting in various aspects the truth set forth above, but in the absence of that truth, in the ignorance of it, in the denial of it, they are but idle, unsubstantial, insignificant words.

But the redemption through Christ's blood, through the slain Lamb, stands not in any beauty or sleight of words, in any theological shifts, in any hidden and inscrutable mysteries; but in this great act of God to apprehend into the person of the Son the death-doomed nature:

- to gainsay and gainstand its disobedience, its sinfulness, its weakness;
- to make it keep the law without a scruple;
- to make it a temple every way worthy of the Holy Ghost to dwell in;
- to die in it, to break hell's barred prison in it, to stay the corruption of death in it;
- to take it up incorruptible, to present it acceptable in the sight of God;
- to seat it in the throne of God, and in it forever to wield the power of God over all creation.

If a man will not be at the pains to consider and contemplate and believe redemption of man thus acted and done by God, in the person of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, he will bring loss to his own soul, he will ever be at the mercy of man's opinions, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. Redemption is as much a reality done upon creation, as creation itself is a reality done upon nothing.

Having given the idea of redemption, as a work of God in our fallen, enslaved, mortal, corruptible nature, to raise, redeem, and glorify it, I am nothing loth to explain, yea, and to enforce the various Divine contrivances of language by which God, in His word and ordinances, conveys to men the excel-

lency of this His chiefest work. The Searcher of hearts can testify that it is not to avoid any one of His sanctified means for embodying the idea in a worthy form, that I thus ever strive to get at and set out the idea itself, and in exemplification of this my willingness to clothe the idea and fact of redemption with His own venerable dress and gainly ornaments, I do proceed to explain the force, and show the propriety of the figurative language used in the text before us.

The word in the original is, “You have bought us in Your blood;” being derived from the condition of a bond slave, who must be bought with a price before he can enjoy his liberty: and the price with which we were bought, is declared to be the blood of the Lamb, slain for us:

1 Peter 1

¹⁸ ...not...corruptible things, such as silver and gold...

¹⁹ But the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb, without blemish and without spot.

Whereby it is signified that our redemption waited for a perfect and holy man, who should die for us. We were held in the power of a master who would not yield us, until one should die in whom no blemish could be found. This eternal truth was signified in every sacrifice for sin since the world began. The sacrifice must be without fault, the paschal lamb must be examined by the priest, and found to be faultless, and then it must die: another life than the life of the sinner must for the sinner’s life be taken; and then the sinner may be absolved, and dwell in peace and joy with God.

Thus was Israel’s bondage in Egypt broken: thus held Israel his inheritance, by the perpetual morning and evening sacrifice of a lamb without blemish and without spot. In this is taught the principle of substitution; and the thing taught is accomplished, when another than the sinner, even the eternal Son of God, gives His life a ransom for men, a propitiation for the sins of the whole world.

But what is this? Can Godhead die? No—nor even change: and therefore he becomes man, that he may die; not man created, for man as he was created was not mortal, and could not die, until he had committed sin, which Christ did never commit. Not man above the Fall, of whose being death was not, but the opposite of death was, the condition. Man therefore generated, manhood under the Fall must he take, because to that, and that alone, is it proper to die.

With reverence be it spoken, that it is impossible with God, to put to death any creature who either has not sinned itself, or has not been generated out of a sinful substance. No verbalism, nor eloquence, can change the constitution of God's being, which we know to be this, that while a creature sins not, it cannot know death, except it come by a generation of a sinful parent; in which case, without personal sin of its own, it may know death, yea, and must know death.

In this war therefore Christ came, and knew death without any personal sin. He was the only blameless and spotless one in the whole flock, and therefore he sufficed for the sacrifice. He took a mortal life, that he might die; and He lived in that mortal tabernacle, that He might fulfill all righteousness; and thus dying, not for Himself, but for mankind, He was the end of all sacrifices, He was the substitute for all men, He bore, and He bore away all sin, He defeated all enemies, He broke all bonds, and led the captors captive.

If anyone now ask, What proportion is there between the holy life and holy death of one man, and the redemption of a whole race? I answer, That I cannot tell; but that I will be able to tell when he shall first have told me what proportion there is between the sin of one man and the death of a whole race. I believe both truths to be, without a reason, ultimate truths; the one the support and evidence of the other; and, if I err not, the Apostle Paul had the same view of this, when in the 5th chapter of *Romans* he sets them forth as I have done, without

any attempts like those of modern Calvinists, who would balance suffering against suffering, merit against demerit, and make it a mere matter of barter, which a good calculator can understand just as well as a good man.

But none save a heaven-taught man can understand these things. A loving heart alone can apprehend a loving God. A cruel heart cannot understand a gracious God. A mocking mind cannot understand a blessing God. There is not such an evil under the sun, as to have made theology:

- a matter for the head, and not for the heart;
- a matter for the unrenewed, and not for the renewed mind;
- a matter of legal fictions;
- a matter of algebraical calculation, wherein words and terms are shuffled from side to side of the equation, in order to bring out a certain plain and palpable result.

Atonement, substitution, imputation, purchase, price, redemption from bondage, are most precious forms for explaining the one act and fact of the grace of God to man in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of His Son; but if they be separated from that fact which they do but embody in appropriate figures, they become a heap of confusion, a mass of rubbish, a putrid carcase of theology, and not its living, beautiful, and holy embodiment.

But still the question remains, And wherein lies the worthiness of Christ's death, that it should raise man into such exalted dignity? The worthiness of the death of Christ consists in this, that there was nothing binding or constraining Him to die. He was God from all eternity; from all eternity He was the Life. He was the Holy One of God; and death is the great sign, and seal, and punishment of unholiness.

Far from death therefore, infinitely far, secure against sin in the unchangeable holiness of the Godhead, stood Christ; and

from that security in immutable holiness to come into temptation and trial, from that dignity and plenitude of life, life giver and life sustainer of all, to come into the condition of death, is such a stretch, such a vastitude of deep descent, as argues some vast cause of pre-eminent magnitude in the Divine mind, in the Divine purpose for which it should be done.

When it is said, “You were slain,” you are not to look at the Cross merely, or at the sorrows of His life, or at the humiliation of His estate in flesh, but at the primeval and eternal dignity of His Godhead, from which He descended through infinite orbs to reach the condition of a creature, and of a creature fallen; of a creature fallen, I say, absolutely and positively, for otherwise He was not within mortality’s verge. He gave Himself up unto death when He took substance of a mortal, woman. He took a lump of mortality to make it immortal; and when it had been shown to be a mortal lump, He then showed that He had made it immortal by raising it from the dead.

Now where is the worthiness of this free act of the Son of God? what unexplored, what unrevealed, what unrealized part of the Divine purpose, of the Divine, being, did this act of the Son express? It expressed this mighty truth of God, that:

- where sin abounded, grace could much more abound;
- where death triumphed, life could more abundantly triumph;
- where justice had past and executed its verdict, mercy might prevail over justice.

It showed that man in sinful flesh abiding, that man by death-stroke divided, that man wrapped in the cerecloth of the grave, may be still loved of God; and dismantled of the enwrapping tomb, and joined in immortal and inseparable being of body and soul, and purified from every spot and wrinkle of sin, may rise again and dwell forever in the presence of God, and do Him forever most excellent and holy service.

By God in flesh incarnate it was proved, that a fallen world is not a world lost, is not hopeless, is not remediless, is not abandoned of God, fixed and settled in irreversible doom; but that such a world is in truth only a fit theater for the disclosure of God's fullness, which creation did not altogether reveal.

These and many other lessons of Divine truth, of the Divine being, did Christ's dying teach; which, we may say, could not otherwise have been taught. And therefore the Father loves Him, because He gives His life for the sheep; therefore also the Father glorifies Him, because the Father Himself is glorified in the Son of Man.

Out of this death comes also His power over creation. In death creation's captivity is consummated; and in resurrection from death creation's captivity is broken. By death Christ destroyed him that had the power of death. By taking His own body, His body and soul, the one from the grave, and the other from hell, the prison of souls departed; He did prove Himself greater than all His enemies, He did take the prey from the strong, He did lead captivity captive, and become the great Redeemer of all that were in bondage.

Well therefore does it befit the Church in heaven, and the Church on earth also, when they would celebrate the praises of the Lamb, and the glory of His might, to begin the song from His death, saying, "For You were slain," because not only in this was His love and the love of God consummated, but in this also was His power first manifested. From the lowliest bed of death, creation's basement, creation's deepest fall, did He arise in the greatness of His strength, and accomplish those things which the heavenly song does celebrate.

From their making no mention of others besides themselves, it has been argued by some, and by none more ably than our Durham, in his commentary upon this book, that the work of redemption extends no further than the Church, be-

yond which most certainly the work of salvation does not extend; and in confirmation of this idea, that Christ's death has no further a respect than to the election, other passages are appealed to, such as:

John 10

¹⁵ I lay down my life for the sheep.

But such a conclusion is not fairly drawn from such passages as these, which merely assert a positive, without at all asserting a negative. It is altogether true that Christ has given His life for the sheep, and that He has redeemed the Church: but this truth in nothing contradicts the other truth, that He is:

John 1

²⁹ ...the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world;

that He is:

1 John 2

² ...the propitiation...for the sins of the whole world;

that:

Hebrews 2

⁹ ...He has tasted death for every man;

that:

Romans 5

¹⁸ ...the free gift has come upon all men unto justification of life.

A universal proposition thus asserted can only be set aside by a universal denial and it is but confirmed by asserting the same thing of a part contained under the whole. Until therefore there can be produced out of the Scriptures positive negation of these propositions that Christ tasted death for every man, that Christ took away the sin of the world, that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, I will hold these propositions as God's truth, not contradicted but con-

firmed by such passages as our text.

For example, I hold, for my own part, as it is well expressed by the Church of England, that Christ has redeemed me and all mankind; and it would be a great error, and unwarranted inference to conclude that every time I acknowledge my redemption, I excluded the redemption of others. It might as well be said, that every time I acknowledged my creation, I denied the creation of others.

Now this is exactly what the Church is here doing: she is expressing the burden of her obligations unto the Redeemer, without reference to any other creatures besides. As to the question whether the redemption be universal or not, it stands altogether in the meaning men attach to the word redemption, by which if they understand the bringing up from under the bondage of death and corruption; that this was done for the whole family of mankind, will be put beyond question when Christ shall raise them all from the dead.

If death be the bondage, then it is clear, that resurrection from death is the redemption. If death be the wages of sin, then it is clear that before death can be taken away, sin must be taken away; wherefore it is written:

Hebrews 9

²⁶ He has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

The resurrection of Christ has, I believe, as truly placed the world in a state of redemption, as the sin of Adam placed it in a state of condemnation; and men do sin against God, not as a Creator merely, but against God as a Redeemer also. Moreover because the redemption was preached in paradise, men do stand to God as their Creator, their Creator offended, their Creator forgiving the offense.

Men have never known God but as a good Creator, creating them in blessedness; a holy Judge, condemning them to death; a gracious Redeemer, raising them from the dead; a bountiful

Benefactor, crowning them with eternal glory. And he who knows not God in this completeness, knows Him not as He is: he that preaches not God in this completeness, preaches Him not as He is revealed by Jesus Christ; he who believes not on God in this completeness, believes not in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore I hold, that this great controversy which is now raging in this island and especially in Scotland, respecting the extent of the redemption, reconciliation, or atonement, is as truly a controversy for the being of God, as that which was waged by Elias at Mount Carmel, when the question was whether Jehovah was the Elohim, or Baal was the Elohim.

If any man say God has not love and grace to all men, so as to forgive them their sins, or that He has not shown this grace in giving His Son a ransom for all (*1 Timothy 2:6*), then, I say that he denies the being of our God, and substitutes a creature of man's imagination; so that I feel as if the existence of Scotland as a nation, and of the Church of Scotland as a Church, did depend upon the great question now at issue, whether God showed love to all men, equal and alike, and wrought a true redemption for all flesh equal and alike out of sin and death, by the death of His Son: and having through these Lectures the opportunity of speaking at least to hundreds of my countrymen, and to many of the ministers of my Church (would it were to all, for I love them all alike), I cannot help digressing ever and anon, to stir up the valiancy of men who know the truth, and to entreat those who know it not, to take care how they contradict it.

KINDRED, TONGUE, PEOPLE, AND NATION

It is added:

Revelation 5

⁹ ...out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

This now speaks distinctly of election; but it may be said,

What is the meaning of redeeming us out from among the redeemed? I answer, that this is not the grammatical meaning of the sentence, the *out of*, stands not connected with *redeemed* but with *us*; and the last clause of the sentence is not meant to express the bondage, but to express the unlimitedness of the election with respect to time and place, and nations and families.

This is put beyond a doubt by the repetition of the same words, where no mention is made whatever of redemption:

Revelation 7

⁹ After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.

The fourfold enumeration, tribe, tongue, people, and nation, is made in order to set aside all distinctions whatsoever, all preferences whatsoever, of one family of men over another, of one part of the earth over another, in this matter of election; and to signify that as God is no respecter of persons, so is He also no respecter of tribes, or nations, or tongues; and when election is otherwise preached, or otherwise believed, as if it presented God as a favorer of one above another, it is not fairly dealt with.

It ought to be used as a part of preaching to all men, and to every man, to the end they may know that without a putting forth of Divine power in them, and upon them, all that has been done out of them, and for them, in Christ Jesus, will prove of no avail; to the end also of convincing them, of the power of sin in their mortal bodies, ineradicable, save by the power of God working in them to will and to do of His good pleasure.

Redemption in Christ, and by Christ, is the objective part of religion; election by the Father, is the subjective part of it: and these two should never be separated the one from the other; nor are they separated in the word of God, and by His grace I

will never separate them in the preaching of that word.

The knowledge of God, as a Redeemer of sinners, as a Pardoner of sin, as having redeemed sinners, as having pardoned sin without exception, is the only ground of my confidence towards God; is the only ground of my hope and trust in Him, from the beginning unto the ending of my Christian course.

The knowledge again of God, as an electing and sovereign God, to work in me whatever His pleasure is, is the continual ground of my looking up to Him, out of myself to do for me, what I cannot do for myself.

And the song which should ascend from a believer is the song of redemption and election in sweet accordance; and he who has not learned to harmonize these notes, cannot yet take his place in the celestial choir. But upon this point it will be necessary to be a little more particular.

The Church is set to exhibit unto men what God is, in His relation to man; and therefore the Church is taken from all kindreds, that all kindreds may know that God is their God. God is not a different being to the Church than He is to all men. The Church is the prophet of God unto all men, in her worship and adoration of God, in her knowledge and utterance of Him. The Church is the priest of God unto all men, in her continual offering of body, soul, and spirit, a willing sacrifice unto God. The Church is God's king unto all men, in her ruling herself, her family, her estate, her whole outward substance, with a single eye to the glory of God, and of Him alone.

And for this her acknowledgment of God as her God, for this her denial of every other God, whether fabricated of wood or stone in the artificer's shop, or of words and notions in the schools of theology, the Church being content to suffer the loss of all things, in due time receives the possession of all things in that kingdom, which shall be established on the earth; while the world, rejecting the testimony, trampling the

word under foot, and worshiping a god of their own invention with worship of their own willing, deny the true God, to their own destruction, and shall, like Tyre, and Moab, and Edom, and all the nations doomed in the Old Testament know by the judgment and destruction of hell forever, that Jehovah, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom the Church preaches, and whom they deny, is the only God, and that Jesus of Nazareth is the only Lord.

These words which we are examining show the second great end of Christ's work; the former accomplished in flesh, this accomplished upon flesh; the one in His own person, the other upon the persons of the Father's election, the Church of the firstborn, whose names are written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The first great work of God being to bring forth His Son, as Head of all; the next, to bring forth those chosen in His Son, as His companions, or rather His lieutenants in the government of all.

The Father had a creation; but it lacked its head to sustain it, and its hands to rule it: and that His Son might be at the head, well-beloved of creation, and felt in its very being, He comes to redeem all, and ransom it from the grave, and bring it up again in resurrection glory and resurrection strength.

But this is not all which the Church in heaven celebrates. They celebrate His peculiar love unto themselves, that He should have purchased them from out of a world lying in wickedness. And how purchased them? With His blood, with the blood as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot. And whence is the preciousness of such a price? The blood is the life, the blood shed is the life given up. His dying, therefore, is the price of the purchase of His people.

Now His dying, as has been said, is His descending out of the infinite unchangeable Godhead, to sweep the very basement of a sinful fallen creation. I say, the cross on which He died embraces in its arms the whole compass of His actings in

humiliation, from that day in unreckoned time, before time flowed, while there were no creature's succeeding impressions to give meaning to the word time, from that fountain-head of purpose when He said:

Hebrews 10 [Psalm 40:7]

⁵ Lo, I come; a body have You prepared for me.

...until the time He said:

John 19

³⁰ It is finished.

All the merit, before God, of all things created by Christ, and redeemed by Christ, all Christ's actings within the limited and the visible until He gave up the ghost, are embraced by the arms of that cross on which He died, and their value included in that blood which He shed.

He served the Father, and He well served Him; He brought out the Father's creation according to the Father's mind. He kept it from rushing into main ruin, He came into it by taking a body and poised it up again into the place of His eternal rest: and what can we say but that this was a measureless meritoriousness in the sight of God, the meritoriousness of action, of passion, of creation, of redemption, of incarnation, of word, of flesh, of life, of death, of all things.

Poor arithmeticians in the school of divinity are they who would estimate the work of Christ by what He suffered on the cross, or on Calvary, or in the days of His flesh, but make no reckoning of that infinite quantity which stands in the vaward of all these, His condescending to come into the region of suffering at all.

Be it then, that we have obtained the measure of that ransom which is in His blood, we observe next to whom we are ransomed, even to God, or for God; whereof the meaning is, that God desired and sought to obtain these His children from the midst of the nations, but He could not, by simple desire,

accomplish His purpose, because a ransom was necessary, and that a ransom of blood, which Christ gave, and thus were they obtained for God. This I say is the true meaning of the words “for God,” and the true figure employed not here only, but in all the Scriptures, to explain the mystery of our redemption. God has chosen certain to everlasting life, to be kings and priests, but cannot have them, until Christ shall have laid down His life to redeem them.

This I say is the figure or the sign, and what then is the substance, or the thing signified? Why cannot God reach His purpose without a means? Why does He not reach His purpose without a means? There is no outward hindrance to God. The hindrance is all in Himself, because it is better and more congenial to His own nature, that it should be through a means, than directly without a means. The means is only another revelation of the Divine essence, which, without the method of this means, would not have been known.

And what is it in God, good and profitable to be known, which is in this way opened? The impediment which stood in the way of God’s obtaining His elect ones, was the hatred to sin which subsists in the Divine Mind, and by the means chosen for removing this impediment was God’s mercy and grace unto the fallen sinner shown forth. Sin’s exceeding sinfulness, God’s surpassing holiness, God’s infinite mercy, Christ’s infinite love, the Holy Ghost’s infinite power, did all become known by the method which God adopted of bringing His elect ones unto Himself.

Now, how did Christ’s death, all precious as we have shown it to be, remove this impediment of sin which prevented God’s chosen ones from coming to Himself? Not, as some suppose, by adding a new attribute of grace to God that was not in Him before, but by showing forth that attribute in God the subject, in its reference to sinners the object. The attribute was in God subjectively from everlasting, but could not be shown objec-

tively until its proper object, which is a sinner, had come into being.

But from the moment that sinners were, in Adam and Eve fallen, from that moment did God's grace, through the woman's Seed, tell out its being in Himself, and its purpose of manifestation by man unto man, and through man unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. Grace being shown through Christ to be in God as well as holiness, and with holiness perfectly harmonious, the impediment between God and the sinner was removed, at least in so far as God is concerned.

But if God in His creation of man has made man capable of interposing an impediment in himself, and of himself, which man only can remove, and which man, and man only, must remove, as I believe to be the very truth, then indeed what can we say but that God's will is so; and we, bowing in reverence thereto, must exert our own will and power to remove that impediment which He calls upon us to remove, when He calls upon us to believe in the grace that is in His Son.

And if God has said that in such actings of His creature unto belief, He will by His Spirit be helpful, but without such actings will not be helpful thereto, then what can we say but that the success of this great work of removing the impediment rests with God, the labor with us, and the glory with Christ.

Now, then, both as respects the revelation of the grace that is in God, and as respects the communication of the help that is in the Spirit, both proceed from Christ; the former in virtue of His being the Word before becoming flesh, and the Word made flesh; the latter in virtue of His being creature anointed with the Holy Ghost, presented upon the cross without fault by the Holy Ghost, raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Ghost, and endued with the gift of the Holy Ghost to bestow it for sufficient help upon every one who heartily, and in

dependence upon God's grace, uses all the appointed means of salvation. Thus Christ removes the impediment in the way of all men, and succeeds in bringing the chosen one unto God.

KINGS AND PRIESTS

And next the question arises, For what end redeem them to God? The answer is in the third and last ascription of praise in this heavenly song:

Revelation 5

¹⁰ And has made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Being redeemed out of the base bondage and oppressive burden of sin, they are made by Christ kings and priests for God. How? As kings and priests were wont to be made; by unction of holy oil. And what is the holy oil with which they are anointed? That same with which Christ was Himself anointed when He went forth from the baptism of John, and the temptation in the wilderness, and preached from that text of the Prophet:

Isaiah 61

¹ The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for He has anointed me to preach glad tidings to the poor.

That same anointing is it, spoken of in the 45th *Psalms*, and applied to Christ in *Hebrews*:

Hebrews 1

⁹ Therefore God, even Your God, has anointed You with the oil of joy above Your fellows.

The king and priest had also royal and priestly raiment, wherein to minister in their several rooms, and this likewise receive we from Christ—the present raiment of His righteousness, and the future raiment of His glorious body. But kings and priests must also have a region over which to reign, and this region is also mentioned to us by name, “we shall reign

on the earth;” reign on the earth as kings and priests, uniting in their persons the twofold office of our great Melchisedec, kings to govern and priests to offer their power as a continual oblation unto God. It is proper to a king to reign, it is proper to a priest to offer unto God; and he that is at once king and priest, offers all his power and influence unto God. This, which the Church in heaven celebrates as having being done for them, was the first promise which God made unto the children of Israel, when He brought them out of Egypt:

Exodus 19

⁶ You shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

And as such the Apostle Peter addresses the Christian Church:

1 Peter 2

⁹ You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.

And so, in the introduction to this book, it is likewise spoken as a thing done¹⁰:

Revelation 1

⁵ Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His blood,

⁶ And has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, unto Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Seeing, then, that to be a king and a priest is the proper dignity of the Church on earth¹¹, the only point by which the song of the Church in heaven surpasses this is in these words,

10 See the interpretation of this verse in *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 2 “Christ Revealed by Names”, Chapter: “Doxology”, p. 45-72.

11 For further instructions on this, the duty of the Church, I refer to: *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 4 “Epistle to the Church in Ephesus”, Chapter: “The Spirit’s First Exhortation”, Sub-chapter: “An Ear to Hear”, p. 72-75.

“and we shall reign on the earth;” which therefore we must conceive of as an honor in the prospect of which they have great delight.

YOU ARE WORTHY TO TAKE THE BOOK

Such, then, is the thanksgiving of the Church for what the Lamb has done for her; and in consideration of this she says:

Revelation 5

⁹You are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof.

Having redeemed the persons of God’s kings and priests, He has virtually redeemed their inheritance also. A king and a priest must have a kingdom to rule over and people to offer for. If the Redeemer stop short with the redemption of the persons appointed to the royal priesthood, He leaves them in the foolish predicament of having an office without any duty to perform: they are nominal but not real kings. The redemption is complete as concerns the persons, but not as concerns the things; and because the greater involves the lesser, Christ’s redemption of the lord involves His redemption of the lordship.

It is, moreover, signified by this connection, in the way of cause and effect, between the redemption of the person and the redemption of the place, that Christ, in redeeming our nature, did destroy the cause of the bondage, and the power of the bondholder, which verily He did when He destroyed death (*2 Timothy 1:10*), and the devil who had the power of death (*Hebrews 2:14*), and the works of the devil (*1 John 3:8*); since which time of His resurrection the devil has been showing his reckless hatred of Christ, his usurpation of the inheritance, his contempt of God’s Lord: for all which he shall be doomed to hell fire forever.

But wicked men have been showing worse than this; in that, being redeemed into Christ’s kingdom and glory, they

have preferred the devil's kingdom, and the devil's doom; and upon them more lies than the devil's guilt. The beast and the false prophet, that is the Church knowing and despising her kingdom, shall be cast into the lake one thousand years before the devil (compare *Revelation* 19:20 with *Revelation* 20:10).

We ought to know, therefore, and we ought to teach, that the inheritance was redeemed by the death and resurrection of Christ, as well as the lord of the inheritance: that now this earth is Christ's vineyard, and we men are but the stewards over it; that it is Christ's kingdom over which kings and magistrates are but the lieutenants; that for Him kings reign, and princes decree justice.

Oh, I am grieved at my heart, that Christian ministers, and Christian people, are in general sworn and mad against this truth; that Jesus of Nazareth is as truly every king's Head and Commander, to whom they should look in all actings of their kingdoms, as they are heads of their deputies and lord lieutenants, as they are commanders of their subjects.

But when I express my grief, they call it vain self-applause; when I contend for the truth, they call it proud arrogant condemnation of others. Judge then Your own cause, O God! plead then for Your own truth, O Lord Jesus! Your servants, who would rule the house for You, are beaten. It is time You should come, and look after Your own affairs. Even so come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!

WE SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH

To put it beyond a doubt that the taking of the book, and the opening the seals thereof, has respect unto this earth, and that the name and dignity of kings and priests has respect to nothing else, they, the Church in heaven, which have the prophetic harps of God, conclude with this asseveration:

Revelation 5

¹⁰ ...and we shall reign on the earth.

Does that mean we shall *not* reign on the earth? So says the multitude of those calling themselves preachers of the truth. So say not I: God forbid.

Does it mean we shall reign in heaven? No: for they are now seated on the thrones of heaven with golden crowns upon their heads; and earth does not mean heaven. And in *Revelation 20* they are represented as living and reigning with Christ on that earth, whose nations Satan, being loosed from the pit, afterwards deceives.

I wonder much how men will not believe the very word of God? They must be resisted to the death. Can it be a matter of small importance for us to hold fast, as our hope, that which the Church in glory delights in, and boasts of as theirs? Surely, no. Reign therefore we shall on the earth; for these reigners are not four, and twenty-four, but the hosts, the armies in heaven, who come forth with Christ (*Revelation 19:14*), to triumph over the destroyers of the earth, to destroy them (*Revelation 11:18*), and to rule over it in holiness and blessedness.

Should this truth be hidden? It shall not be hidden while I have breath to utter it: and woe be to him who, knowing it, is ashamed to confess it! He barter his kingdom away for the applause of men; he eclipses the glory of Christ, to enhance his own! O far be this from the servants of the Lord! O far be this from the ministers!

Awake, awake, O you Church! awake, awake, O you men! Awake, awake, O you ministers of truth! Awake, awake, O you kings and judges of the earth! And you, O nature! groaning under oppression, awake unto hope! For your great Redeemer comes, whose coming shall be like the morning, and His voice like the songs of morning.

Hear how the Apostle Paul writes, O you scorners of the truth!

Romans 8

¹⁷ And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.

¹⁸ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

¹⁹ For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God.

²⁰ For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope.

²¹ Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

²² For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now.

²³ And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

²⁴ For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for?

²⁵ But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

THE SONG OF THE ANGELS

Revelation 5

¹¹ And I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels encircling the throne, and the living ones, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands;

¹² Saying in a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

WE now come to the voice and song of the angels. These angels are distinguished, on the one hand, from the redeemed Church whom they encompassed, and, on the other hand, from the mere creatures, or created things, whose song or voice is given afterward.

Now though the name *Angel*, as has been observed above, be employed in this book to signify a member of the elect Church in glory, a redeemed man, yet in this place there can be no doubt it represented the innumerable company of the angelic host.

Of them mention is often made in Scripture, as in *Hebrews* 12:22, where, after the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, is mentioned:

1. “an innumerable company of angels;”
2. “the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven,” and along with them “God the Judge of all,” which I consider parallel to God enthroned upon the four living creatures;
3. “the spirits of just men made perfect,” which I consider as being in some way or other parallel with the four and twenty elders; and
4. “Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant,” which is parallel with the Lamb as it had been slain; and
5. “the blood of sprinkling,” by which all these heavenly things are purified.

These angels, these elect angels, which have not fallen, take a great interest in the work of redemption; for the reason, I believe, that they themselves stood through the virtue of Christ, as a sustaining Head, and longed for the appearance of Christ, as Abraham did, who saw His day afar off and was glad; as the prophets and wise men of old, who desired to see His day, and were not permitted.

From whatever cause this longing of the angels may proceed, there can be no doubt that they take the deepest interest in man, seeing when the earth, the habitation of man, was founded, it is written:

Job 38

⁷ The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

And at the birth of Christ, in the stable of Bethlehem, the multitude of the heavenly host sang in the silent night unto the shepherds:

Luke 2

¹⁴ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.

And it is said that the principalities and powers in the heavenly places do learn, through the instrumentality of the Church, the manifold wisdom of God:

Ephesians 3

¹⁰ To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

And again it is written:

1 Peter 1

¹² ...the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow...

...are things into which the angels desire to look. We do, therefore, certainly conclude, that the angels have a secondary

interest in the great progress of redemption.

Now, forasmuch as this opening of the seven-sealed book is after the incarnation, the next step in that progress being in truth the investiture of Christ with power over all God's created universe, we might expect that the angels would express their deep interest therein in a secondary and inferior place, and, as it were, under the leading and guidance of the Church. The Church sings the song, the angels add the voice, thereby proving themselves to be the chorus which swells the anthem of heavenly praise.

Their inferiority unto the Church, which is the body of Christ the Head, under whose feet all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name, are placed, is further shown by the place which they occupy in a circle farther from the throne.

First, there is the Heavenly Majesty seated on the throne, within whose circumference dwell the four living creatures, as the inseparable body of Christ; the throne of the Eternal, before which, as serving Christ and the Church, are the seven lamps of the Holy Ghost; and the sea of glass, symbolical of matter's purified, clarified, eternal, and incorruptible state; upon which crystalline basis resting are four and twenty enthroned crowned elders, compassing the throne and the four living creatures around.

Then, beyond all this assembly of the Redeemer and the redeemed ones, of the King and of His peers, is this grand circle of innumerable angels, standing ever ready harnessed, to minister unto them which shall be heirs of salvation;—just as when a king and his council are seated in high deliberation concerning the estate of the kingdom, guards of soldiers compass them about, to prevent the intrusion or the attack of others, and to carry forth into the remotest parts of the kingdom, and execute, the purposes which are resolved upon.

Now while I believe, from the universal custom of this

book, that the communication between Christ and the Church on earth is carried on by the intercession of the Church in heaven, I do likewise believe that the angels do carry on the communication between the Church and the inferior creatures, whose song follows next after theirs. Through the angelic hosts it is, I believe, that the providence of God, and the purposes of God towards the animate and inanimate creation, the Church excepted, is carried on.

Christ's dignity is to be named Son of God, and our dignity is to be named sons of God, in that same sense unto which the angels have not attained; of whom He said:

Hebrews 1 [from Psalm 104:4]

⁷Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire.

And to me it is manifest, from reflecting on this passage in the first chapter of the *Hebrews*, that the contrast between Christ and the angels stands in this, that while the former is everywhere in Scripture designated Son of God, angels are designated winds and flames of fire, to show that by how much more excellent a work is the perfect Son of God, in His human nature, than the winds and the flashes of lightning which do God's will, by so much more excellent is the dignity of Christ, and His redeemed people, than the dignity of angels.

The winds and flames of fire, which did encompass the summit of Mount Sinai, and intercede between the glory within and the visible world without, are the outward manifestations of angels; but the outward manifestation of Christ is a man, the perfect man, declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead, into which glorious likeness the redeemed Church shall at length be brought. All therefore that pertains to the natural world I consider to be under the dominion of the angels. But all that pertains to the spiritual world, which is the Church, I consider to be under the domin-

ion of Christ and the Church in glory: wherefore the distinction is taken:

Hebrews 2

⁵ Unto the angels has He not put into subjection the world to come, whereof we now speak.

Which shall all be exhibited under the dominion of Christ, according as it is written in the 8th *Psalms*, and confirmed by the Apostle in that same passage of the *Hebrews*.

Meanwhile in this present age I believe, as I have said, that all, save the Church, is under the government of angels, through whom God receives from every kingdom of creation the homage and the incense thereof; from the sun, and moon, and stars, receiving through the guardian angels thereof the harmony of their several notes of praise; and from every herb that grows upon the ground, and from every animated creature upon the earth, and in the deep beneath, and from the inanimate substances of the earth, with their several properties and laws endued, and from the winds of heaven, and from the mists and exhalations of the earth, does God the Creator of all receive, I deem, through intelligent spirits, the homage of their worship, and the incense of their thanksgiving.

So that those superstitions of all countries which live in the traditional faith of the people, and which, when a poet of gifts arises, are brought into the beautiful forms of supernatural ministers, such as Ariel in the *Tempest*, are the image of a truth; and this truth is, I believe, the ministry of angels.

Thus conceiving of the trust and ministry of angels in the creation of God, we should expect to find their honor of the Lamb which was slain, and is now receiving exaltation above every name, to consist in an acknowledgment unto Him, and a bringing unto the footstool of His enthroned majesty, the offerings of those several departments of power and government, with which they have been trusted by Almighty God.

As when on the morning of the nativity they sung in full choir, from the vault of heaven, what they saw of newly accomplished glory, peace, and good will, in the incarnation of the Son of God; and as the wise men of the east brought of the most precious fruits of the earth unto Him that was born King of the Jews; so should we expect, now that the Child of Bethlehem is in the act of being installed King of heaven, that these angels would bring from their several chambers of trust and superintendency the offering of the best, yea, the offering of all, and lay it at the feet of the Lamb which was slain.

When the Babe of Bethlehem was born, what did the angels see therein, what did they learn therefrom new, unexampled, and worthy of commemoration in a song?

- They saw in that holy thing, produced out of an unholy thing, glory to God in the highest.
- In the sanctification of sinful flesh they saw the purification of the highest region of creative power.
- God's glory saw they beaming forth more brightly from creation's obscurity than it ever had done before.

For what is that "highest"? is it not the humanity of Christ, Lord of creatures, higher than the heavens? What is that "peace on earth," which they sung, not as about to be, but as then being? Peace it is between the Divine and human natures, which now had met in personal union.

And forasmuch as all strife and war began in Adam's separation from God, so in Adamhood's union with God is peace on earth bestowed. As when two kings, between whose kingdoms mortal strife has long prevailed, do meet together in peace and embrace in loving friendship, the trumpet sounds no longer the alarm of war, and the battle ceases, and throughout the rival kingdoms they are at peace; so, when manhood and Godhead in one person were seen united in the Babe of Bethlehem, the angelic host saw peace on earth accomplished. And, moreover, they saw "good will to men;" or

more exactly, “well seeming in men,” good pleasure in men; meaning, as I take it, that in men had appeared that thing approvable by God, which the world longed to see—a living exemplification, an acting reality, of God’s unseen and invisible inclination.

They wanted an *eikon*, an image of the invisible God, wherein His good pleasure should be alive, and act out its life. This the angels then saw;—that in men, in human nature, God was to be explored, and the mystery of His being explained; the dispositions, the inclinations, of His will revealed. In the Head of the Church these angels did explore and discover the hidden mystery of God, which more and more perfectly, more and more fully, they are now reading in the Church.

But now that the Child is exalted on high, bearing about Him the same signs of death, and yet alive—“that was dead, and yet lives, and is alive forevermore” (*Revelation* 1:18);—they have another and a higher part to perform, a larger and a nobler song to sing. To Him who heretofore manifested that which they desired to know they have now to ascribe power and dominion.

The Destroyer of death is now come among them, the King of the grave, the Bruiser of the devil’s head, the Redeemer of the fallen creation; God’s Revealer, God’s Justifier, God’s Glorifier, is ascended upon high; and therefore, while the saints in glory, the four rivers, and the four and twenty elders, do sing His worthiness to take the book, and open it, and to redeem saints out of every kingdom and nation, and to make them kings and priests that they may reign upon the earth, these angels, myriads of myriads, do sing the worthiness of the Lamb that was slain to receive or take power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing;—a sevenfold or complete offering from the intelligential world of all that over which intelligence has the will and the government, proving unto me that there is a domain, in itself com-

plete, which I take to be the domain of creation, wherein the angels dwell, and over which they are exalted to rule.

Their harp is seven-stringed, their song runs through the diapason complete; it is perfect and complete harmony, and yet it does not touch the song of redemption. To that they may not, they cannot, attain. In that they have no original, but a derived, interest. Man is the warden of that house of God, the priest of that temple of the Most Highest. That song is his to sing; and, save to hear and learn this song, the angelic host pretend not.

Now, touching this sevenfold song of the angels, I know not whether I can worthily distinguish its several parts, and re-compose again their completeness. Perhaps man has some limitation therein, that the angels may have in it a special propriety: but however this may be, I will make the endeavor, trusting in the helpful Spirit of God.

POWER

Revelation 5

¹² Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power.

The song begins from “power,” which I define to be the faculty of knowing and of doing what is within the measure of the habitation of our being: what God has meted out unto every creature, saying, “Hitherto you shall go and no further” (*Job* 38:11), I take to be the creature’s power; diverse in the diverse sorts of creatures, each according to its sphere; but within that sphere chartered of God to do so much of His will, and implement so much of His power.

Power therefore is all within the arm of our being; and when the angels come unto Christ, and ascribe unto Him power, they do signify that the Lamb which had been slain, and whom they now saw introduced into the court above, is the same person from whom they had derived their power, and to whom they would acknowledge and devote it.

And when they sung that He was worthy to receive power, they sung Him Lord, of all: they, as subjects of the great invisible God, did come up to the great installation of His Son, and acknowledge that the deed which the Father had done was a most worthy deed.

As upon the adoption of an heir, or the accession of a prince to a throne, or the birth of an heir, the estates of a kingdom come and express their joy and fealty, and thereby do their sovereign honor; so when the Eternal Majesty of the heavens, King eternal, immortal, and invisible, did bring His first-begotten from the dead, and install Him Lord of all, it well became the powers and principalities and thrones and dominions in heaven to come in with their ascription of praise, and adhesion unto Him whom He had constituted the Man of His right hand. Therefore they said:

Revelation 5

¹² Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power.

In His being slain they see His worthiness, not His unworthiness. Who should hold the power but He that is powerful, He that had overcome the power-fullest,—that is, the devil? Him who had overcome both angels and men, He is worthy to receive the power. They crown Him not; He has crowned Himself. The spoils of death in which He appears are His crown. He is worthy to receive power, because He has been slain and is yet alive.

How great is the beauty, how sublime is the grandeur, of this vision of God! It speaks in every feature of it the highest theological truth; what already we have seen, what already we have spoken, from this single feature, “the Lamb as it had been slain,” is but as a morsel of that feast of knowledge and of love which it contains.

RICHERS

Revelation 5

¹² Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive...riches.

The potentates of heaven having thus acknowledged the various powers of their eminent places in creation unto the Lamb, do next sing with a loud voice His worthiness to receive riches; by which I understand everything precious, everything rich, everything good, within the orbs of their several jurisdictions.

Not only the power of governing them, but the things they govern ascribe they unto the Lamb. Whatever God has furnished their several dominions withal, which I know not nor can describe, because the hidden mysteries of creation, their beauty, and their wisdom, and their various properties, we discern not through the sevenfold veil of sin and Satan. But methinks if these angels were expounding the riches of their several spheres which they inhabit, and possess, and use, and enjoy, and which in this song they yield unto Christ and hold forever thenceforth of Him, they would display the same in language kindred with that by which Moses blessed Joseph, when he gave him the riches of the earth, saying:

Deuteronomy 13

³³ Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that couches beneath,

³⁴ And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon,

³⁵ And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills,

³⁶ And for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof.

The riches which they retain in their several treasures, every jewel in their diadem, every ornament of their throne, every comfort of their habitation, all that is fruitful, all that is plentiful, they ascribe unto the Lamb that was slain, and say

that He was worthy to receive.

And why? Because He has compassed it with incorruption; He has delivered it from sin and death; He has taken out of it the rust that corrupts; He has debarred the thief and the robber that breaks through to steal; and well worthy is He to receive the riches of all who has redeemed the riches of all.

WISDOM

Next they ascribe wisdom, saying:

Revelation 5

¹² Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive...wisdom.

Now Wisdom, though she dwell with Prudence and the knowledge of witty inventions (*Proverbs* 8:12), yet exalts herself much higher than Prudence, which is wisdom applied to the affairs we have under us; and rises higher than witty inventions to better the estate of what we govern.

Wisdom, as I understand it, is the right use of intelligence itself; the good guidance of the will, by the instruction of reason, this is the wisdom of men. And wisdom, in general, amongst all intelligent creatures, I suppose to be the good harmony, wise husbandry, and holy occupation of that intelligence which they possess; both as concerns their own contentment within themselves, as concerns the good government of their several habitations, and likewise as concerns the worship and glory of God.

This wisdom, which is an attribute of God Himself,—yea more than an attribute, a person of the Godhead,—is that whereof word is the expression unto another intelligent creature. These myriads of angels do well ascribe wisdom unto Christ, who is our wisdom, the wisdom of the Church, in which Church is expressed the manifold wisdom of God. For of this wisdom it is said:

Proverbs 8

²² The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old.

²³ I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

²⁴ When there were no depths, I was brought forth;

²⁷ When He prepared the heavens, I was there; when He set a compass upon the face of the depth;

²⁸ When He established the clouds above; when He strengthened the fountains of the deep;

²⁹ When He gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment; when He appointed the foundations of the earth;

³⁰ Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.

This glorious exaltation of Christ the Creator under the appellation of Wisdom teaches us that wisdom is the will showing itself forth in the reason, in the word, and in the actions of an intelligent being,—the creative will embodying its creations according to the intelligence which God has given to His creatures.

All this wisdom which the unfallen angels possess, and exercise in their several dominions, they do come and offer unto Christ, not in His character of Creator, but properly in His character of Redeemer, as the Lamb that had been slain; because all perfect as the creatures were created in their several spheres, they were liable to the invasion of sin; and they did fall, both angels and men. And not until Christ the Redeemer gained the mastery of sin and death, could any intelligent creature regard itself as beyond the region of change and loss and destruction.

But the Lamb, in virtue of His being slain, did perfectly accomplish this, and bring in unto angels and unto men the deliverance from sin, death, and the grave: and while He sits enthroned, yea, and because He sits enthroned, the devil and his angels shall have no more power to mislead and beguile the

wisdom of men.

STRENGTH

And next they sing:

Revelation 5

¹² Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive...strength.

This in a man I understand to be strength of body, as we say, “with all his might and main.” In an angel, or any creature of God, it signifies the strength to put into action the thing which we desire and purpose. It is that by which act follows volition, performance purpose. It belongs to the person; whereas power belongs to the estate. It adds to the wisdom of the Word the efficiency of the Spirit.

Strength in any creature is the power of the Omnipotent Spirit of God, according as the same has been bestowed upon that creature. That angels do excel in strength we well do know, from the 103rd *Psalm* and other parts of Scripture.

And when the proclamation, “Who is able to open the book?” was to be made throughout the region of the heaven and the earth, and the deep, a strong angel was chosen to lift up the creation-filling voice.

Whose is it to wheel the spheres in their courses, as if they were bowling balls? whose strength is it that splits the solid rock, that heaves the ocean from its oozy bed, that holds the winds, and anon lets them fly amain? I believe these things are under the angels.

God will not leave inanimate matter to have the glory of these wonderful powers. He has some intelligent ones, I make no doubt, who have the noble consciousness of working the will of God therein, and of rendering unto Him the homage which thence is due.

This is the way in which these philosophists have dispeopled the world of intelligence, by supposing that because they

see not spiritual agencies in the mechanical and chemical regions of nature which they examine, therefore there are no such intelligences. But because we cannot see beings whose property it is to be invisible, are there therefore no such beings? Not to see them is the very condition of their being. If we could see them, they were not.

But, for my part, I believe, out of this text, that the strength, the main strength and force, of things consist in their subjection to mighty angels, who work the work under God, and so display the goodness, the creative goodness, and the riches of the providence of God.

I reverence tradition, and I find herein the most venerable traditions of all men concurring, from the superstitions of my native land, which people the waters, and the earth, and the woods, and everything, with invisible powers and agencies, up to those of the remotest antiquity of which we have any record.

In ascribing their strength unto the Lamb, therefore, I do think that these angels do acknowledge all the powers which we are wont to call the powers of nature, the laws of the created world, to be due unto Him, and unto Him alone.

HONOR

And next in this song comes honor, and glory, which I find to be common, and the only two that are common, unto the four songs of the living ones, of the elders, of the angels, and of the creatures. From which I am inclined to infer that these are special expressions of the dignity and honor of Christ, above every creature whatsoever.

Honor, as it seems to me, is that grace and nobleness with which one creature is dignified over others of his kind. To this Lamb, therefore, who assumes as it were the lowest scale of the quaternion, to signify that all the four are in him interested,—to this Lamb I say, whom God has delighted to honor,

they do ascribe the honor which is most due, saying:

Revelation 5

¹² Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive...honor.

There is no murmur, nor discontent, nor envy, breathed throughout creation, that a Lamb which had been slain should be made the Lord of all. He was a Lamb, it is true, mere flesh and blood; and He was a Lamb that had been slain, brought into the weakness of death, but from death He was alive again. He had done what the strongest angel could not do; He could break the seals of the book: He had broken the sealed tomb; He had gone into sinful flesh, and conquered sin in flesh; therefore was He worthy to be honored, though flesh, though flesh slain.

Perhaps some may think I dwell too much upon this mystery. It is only because of my feeble strength that I dwell not more. When I also shall have received perfection in holiness, I hope to join those four living creatures within the throne, and never to cease day or night in ascribing:

Revelation 4

⁹ ...honor, and glory, and thanks unto Him that sits upon the throne, who lives forever and ever.

GLORY

Revelation 5

¹² Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power...glory.

Now as concerns the glory, I think it is the continual shining forth in Him of that glory which is the eternal and invisible God, the effulgence and effluence from Him forever of that essence invisible which is in the Father forever. As in flesh, heretofore, He glorified the Father, by showing forth in every act the good pleasure of His will, so now in heaven shall He forever glorify the Father, by showing forth the same good pleasure unto a wider region, even unto the whole universe of God.

The artists do ever represent glory as issuing forth from the person: and herein I think they do well; for glory is properly an emanation of that which is within the person and of his substance.

This glory, I think, with which He shines, divides Him from every other creature, and ever shows Him to be God. And therefore it is, as I think, that in the prayers of the Church on earth the whole and complete ascription is commonly summed up in these two words, "honor and glory:" honor, to signify His supremacy of place and dignity amongst the creatures; glory, to signify the emanations of the Godhead which beams forth upon all the creatures;—the one expressive of His supremacy of creation, with which He is consubstantial; the other expressive of His community with the Godhead, with which He is likewise consubstantial.

And, moreover, this glory which shines forth from Him shall not only express the light of the countenance of God in Him, but, like the light which comes from the sun, shall be the medium in which every thing beholds itself, the beauty with which every thing shines. In that light of His they shall clearly see light: looking into the light of the glory of God, they shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of God.

This brightness of His glory the heavens shall be filled with; and with it the New Jerusalem shall shine, and in the light of it the nations shall walk insphered.

BLESSING

And besides this there is, and indeed there can be, only one other form of ascription, which is:

Revelation 5

¹² Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive...blessing [or *eulogy*].

This last ascription unto the Lamb of blessing and bounty,

for the word is indifferently translated by the one or the other in Holy Scripture, adds to all the preceding an element most honorable to Him, and most consolatory to us; which is, that all these possessions of power, of riches, of wisdom, of strength, of honor, and of glory, He possesses not for Himself, but for others; not for His own proper enjoyment, but for diffusing blessedness throughout the creation of God.

Whether you consider it as declaring Him to be the fountain of all blessing, from which every good and perfect gift proceeds, or as the end of all blessing, unto whom the grateful heart of every blessed thing utters its gratitude and contentment; in either sense, it speaks Him most bountiful and benevolent, and ascribes to Him the origination of every blessed emotion or enjoyment to which the creation of God is conscious.

But most especially do the angels well to ascribe unto Him blessing on this great occasion, when by His precious blood He has washed out the stain and the pollution of this world, and brought it into that blessed estate over which it can be said:

Revelation 21

⁴ ...there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain...

Revelation 22

³ And there shall be no more curse.

But it may be said, Is not the world grieved and vexed as ever? Is not the conscience of man defiled as ever? Are not sorrow and death as rife as ever? Yea, verily; but it is so only in defect of faith.

The gates of the New Jerusalem are set open to every creature who lives, a place therein is prepared for every creature who lives: to the most defiled conscience there is perfect cleanness, through faith; this Man has conquered sin and

guilt, and death, and the grave, not for Himself, but for mankind: He has ascended into heaven, not for Himself, but for mankind: and every son of Adam's loins is as truly blessed with Jesus as he is cursed with Adam.

This is the standing of the world. This is the blessing which Christ has conferred upon the world. Men are called to inherit this blessing, and nothing but unbelief prevents any one from entering into it.

Oh man! Did you but know the love of God with which He loves you, did you but know the blessing of Jesus Christ with which He blesses you, you would not then stand afar off, and averse from your own benefactor. O what a hideous thing it is that any lip should be found to gainsay this! My God, my God, make Yourself known among the nations, Your saving health unto all men. *Psalm 67:2.*

Such is the song of the angels, sevenfold and complete, expressive of their allegiance and their gratitude, and their adoration of the Lamb. Our limits permit us not to expatiate over the beauty and magnificence of those seven spheres of being and action, and of joy, whereof they ascribe the excellency all unto the Lamb.

As I said, I do but rough-hew the matter, for artists who shall come after me, and give fitting form to such precious materials. I am presenting the youthful divine with the materials of thought. The land is almost *terra incognita*; it has been lost amongst the mists and exhalations of ignorance, it has been passed by with contempt. But it is a land flowing with milk and honey; it is a good land, rich in all fruits, and redolent of all sweet odors.

It can not any longer be hidden: the time is come for its discovery and possession. Because people have only husks to eat, they will go forth and seek after these new habitations.

