

# THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

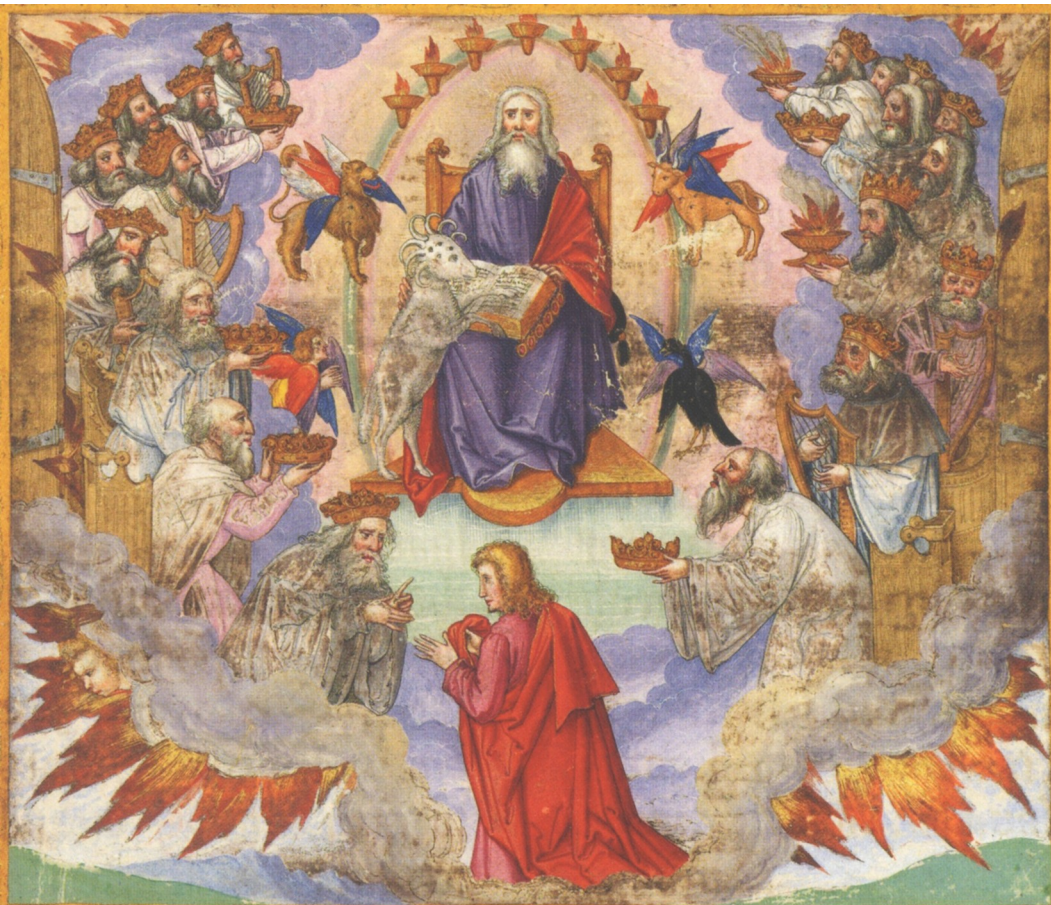
## BOOK 12

REVELATION 5:1-5

# THE WORSHIP IN HEAVEN

EDWARD IRVING

1831



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BOOK 12  
REVELATION 5:1-5

**THE WORSHIP IN HEAVEN**

EDWARD IRVING

*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.*

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## **Revelation 5**

<sup>1</sup> And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

<sup>2</sup> And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

<sup>3</sup> And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

<sup>4</sup> And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

<sup>5</sup> And one of the elders said unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

**E**LECTION I am wont to contemplate, not so much in the purpose and the decree, as in the manifestation and the accomplishment of the decree; believing that when you have asserted that it is a part, and the chief part, of the purpose and decree, you have asserted all that can be asserted in this high aspect of the subject. But turning away from the secret origin of things in God, and looking down the stream to the manifestation and accomplishment of the same, everything appears to me clear and beautiful.

The elect, thus regarded, are those who at the coming of Christ shall be gathered unto Himself from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other:

### **Matthew 24**

<sup>31</sup> And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

These are the same also who since Christ's absence have cried day and night unto God for redress, and shall be avenged at the coming of the Son of Man:

### **Luke 18**

<sup>7</sup> And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them?

Comparing this word with *Revelation* 6:10, 19:2, shows them to be the same with the bride, the Lamb's wife, who now is a mournful widow:

### **Revelation 6**

<sup>10</sup> And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, do You not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

### **Revelation 19**

<sup>2</sup> For true and righteous are His judgments: for He has

judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and has avenged the blood of His servants at her hand.

Christ is the great election Head:

### **Isaiah 42**

<sup>1</sup> Behold my servant, whom I uphold; my elect, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon Him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

### **Luke 23**

<sup>35</sup> And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided Him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.

And the elect ones are His members. They are those who are made sons of God, and admitted to stand in His presence:

### **Ephesians 1**

<sup>4</sup> According as he has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him [or "*in His presence*"] in love.

This we attain unto at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints:

### **1 Thessalonians 3**

<sup>13</sup> To the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

### **Jude**

<sup>24</sup> Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

To stand before the Son of Man and be His royal priesthood forever, this, which is held out to us (*Luke 21:36*), I regard as the end of election:

### **Luke 21**

<sup>36</sup> Watch therefore, and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to



pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

God created a habitable world, and Adam to be its king and the father of its kings; which honor failing to preserve, the Second Adam purchased back for Himself and for those whom He should beget by regeneration of the Holy Ghost,—that is, for as many as the Father should choose to give Him.

The Father elects, the Son endows, for the kingdom; but the end both of the election and of the endowment is to fill that office of royal priesthood which Adam forfeited for himself and his natural posterity, and which Christ recovered for Himself and His spiritual posterity.

Therefore, while unto the Father the origin of the purpose of election is given, unto Christ the work of fitting and furnishing the elected ones for the service to which they are chosen is as constantly given. And when the elected ones have been endowed with the proper gifts, they are presented unto the Father, that the Father may make His own use of them. This use, I say again, is to fulfill the original intention and idea of God in the formation of man: namely, to have dominion over the works of His hands.

Therefore John speaking for the Church says:

### **Revelation 1**

<sup>5</sup> Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

<sup>6</sup> And has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father...

That is, to be used by His God and Father in the government and lordship of all things. And so also these four beasts and four and twenty elders do sing the same song:

### **Revelation 5**

<sup>9</sup> 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;

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

Notice this addition, “and we shall reign on the earth;” thus fixing the place of the kingdom, and fixing also the time thereof to be the period of the Millennium, when they live and reign with Christ upon the earth:

### **Revelation 20**

<sup>4</sup> And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

My idea therefore of the election is, that it includes whom it has pleased God to advance to the dignity of sitting with Christ and reigning upon His throne. The elect are the reigners and rulers.

This purpose, of making a creature who should have dominion, being the great end of God in the creation of man, it necessarily follows that in the redemption it should have the same preeminence of place; for God does not change, nor add to, His original purpose. Therefore it is that the Church has always stood for election as the most important doctrine in the Christian system.

To represent this doctrine, of a chosen people who should have the dominion of all things, God constituted the Jewish nation—a nation of kings and priests; which constitution, for a while prostrate on the ground, shall yet be established over the earth.

Now many men, perceiving this doctrine of election to be the highest of all, have been betrayed into the error of conceiving it to be the only one; but it is not so. Kings and priests must have people to rule over and to bless.

If our idea of election be just, then there must be another idea of a broader and larger, though not so noble a character; an idea which will embrace those ruled over, as well as the rulers. This is the idea of redemption, which indeed precedes the other, though it includes it not. To an election there must be a redemption; but a redemption does not either presuppose or involve in it an election.

Redemption is deliverance from the evil supremacy of Satan; and when Satan shall have been cast out of the earth into the bottomless pit, the whole will be redeemed. The world, therefore, during the Millennium will exhibit the common redemption, and the New Jerusalem then will exhibit the complete election.

And there will be no longer any disputes, like that now misleading so many of the doctors of our Church, as if it were an error and a heresy to assert that Christ's death had to do with all, and not with the election merely. It had to do with all creation, men and things; and all creation, men and things, shall be exhibited in the Millennium in a redeemed state.

But in an elected state shall the New Jerusalem alone be exhibited, and then shall the two principles of redemption and election be seen distinct. Now, a redeemed world to be ruled over, and elect persons to rule over it, being the form of the Divine idea, must necessarily have been exhibited in all the ways of God's dealing with the world since its creation.

Adam and Eve in paradise represent Christ and His election, His bride, in the paradise—the New Jerusalem, and the good world around represents the redeemed world around.

Abraham's family, with ordinances of kingdom and priesthood, the types of the New Jerusalem which is in heaven, represent the governance of Christ and His family over the earth in the world to come; and though neither Adam in paradise nor Abraham's family did bless all nations, but went astray from God, this is due to their own disobedience, and not to

any defect in the purpose of God, which to the former was expressed in these words:

### **Genesis 1**

<sup>28</sup> God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

And to Abraham He spoke these words:

### **Genesis 22**

<sup>17</sup> In blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

<sup>18</sup> And in your Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because you have obeyed my voice.

The purpose of God in Abraham, as in Adam, was redemption and blessedness to all nations, in virtue of the Seed of the woman; with the prerogative, after the Fall, to an elect family, which is in the letter the natural seed of Abraham, and in the spirit the spiritual seed of Christ.

But above other instances was this good will of God to all men testified when His Son came in the flesh, and offered a propitiation, not only for the sins of the elect, but for the sins of the whole world; and, after His resurrection, commanded His disciples to go and preach the glad tidings of it to every creature under heaven; yea, and sealed the universality of it, by taking His Church out of the Gentiles as well as the Jews, out of all nations and kindreds and tongues.

Thus far, I have no doubt, I see my way clearly; but when I come to be more minute, I have some doubts whether the Church, or election, who shall hold the office of kings and priests with Christ, consist of those regenerate under the Gospel alone, or of those likewise who were faithful since the

world began.

That the faithful before Christ's coming shall be raised with Him I make no doubt, no more to return unto corruption; but whether they shall dwell with Him in the New Jerusalem, or sit upon the thrones of the world, I have my doubts. I dare not say yea or nay.

Sometimes I think that when the Jewish nation comes to the supremacy of the world, Messiah shall be their King, as being a Jew; and His faithful forerunners in the Jewish Church shall be the subordinate kings and princes of the world, in whose blessed government all nations shall be blessed: and so the promise made to Abraham shall be fulfilled, and they shall literally inherit the earth.

I think this was the extent of their promise, and as it was promised to them, so shall it be fulfilled. But we who are baptized into the spiritual shall inherit the spiritual and exercise spiritual dominion, to the fellowship of which those living under the millennial government shall be continually called, and unto which the faithful amongst them shall attain.

I see many difficulties, which I hope will clear away as we proceed; but of this I feel certain, that the end of election is the thrones of judgment over a redeemed creation. And whether the election is to be exhibited in two official functions,—the one the spiritual and the glorified, the other the spiritual not yet glorified,—as Christ above the resurrection was exhibited in two states, the not glorified and the glorified, this is what I stand in doubt of; and I pray devoutly that God would enable me, in His own time, rightly to apprehend it.

With this preliminary remark I resume my labors, after a short recapitulation of what was contained in our former Lecture.

In our former Lecture<sup>1</sup>, which contained the full opening of

1 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 11: "The Vision of Heaven".

the celestial scene, we showed that the enthroned One is Jesus Christ, presented to us in His risen flesh with the glory of the Father; and the rainbow round His throne is the symbol of the redeemed earth, which of all the material universe is the region that He has chosen for the seat of His government and abode.

And next we showed that the four and twenty elders enthroned all around Him, with crowns of gold upon their heads, do signify the full complement of the holy and royal priesthood of redeemed men, by means of whom the great King will govern the worlds.

Of the throne itself, we showed that it was all alive, instinct with power, armed with destruction, and endued with the majesty and authority of the Word of God, being truly the habitation of those four living creatures who are the Church of the firstborn, the body of Christ, the completeness of the New Testament saints, who have been begotten by the Holy Ghost.

Of the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, and of the crystalline sea which stretched out before it, as the firmament or floor on which the celestial assembly rested, we showed that the former is the symbol of that purification by fire which every fallen creature must pass through to stand in the holy presence; and the latter, of that pure, clear, and glassy form which matter shall assume after it has undergone the same baptism of fire, for which it is reserved in store.

Of the four living creatures we discoursed much and cautiously, if by any means we might attain unto the wisdom of God therein contained: and upon the whole we were inclined to believe, that the spiritual Church, which in the age to come shall possess the New Jerusalem that comes down from heaven, is the substance of the mystery.

And we gave it as our opinion, that the secret thing revealed by the duality of the representation of redeemed men

is, that in the age to come, of the partakers in the first resurrection, they of the Old Testament will arise to rule the nations with the law of righteousness, the law given at Sinai, which will then show what goodness there is in it, while we of the New Testament will arise to dwell with Christ in the most holy place, the New Jerusalem, and reign with Him in spiritual power and glory.

But this is a deep and difficult question, which we keep open for further information, as the Lord may be pleased to grant it.

Such is the quiescent scene of glory which burst upon the ravished seer, when he was borne by the Spirit within the portals of the invisible world. But, beside the quiescence of the scene, there is an activity going on within the celestial court, which we now proceed to open, as it is written in the last four verses of the 4th chapter.





# THE OCCUPATION OF THE FOUR LIVING ONES AND TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS

## **Revelation 4**

<sup>8</sup> ...they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

**T**HIS feature of the living creatures, that they have no rest in their worship, confirms our idea expressed in the former Lecture<sup>2</sup>, that spirit is the distinctive and specific meaning of this symbol; for of man, as he now is clothed upon with fallen flesh, it is a necessary thing to have rest in the midst of his occupation, and the more he is elevated into the lofty moods of the Spirit, the more is his mortal and corruptible part exhausted of its strength; insomuch that Paul, when he was taken up into paradise, was relieved from the consciousness of the body altogether:

## **2 Corinthians 12**

<sup>2</sup> ...whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows;

When therefore it is said that these four living ones are incessant in their worship, it is a token to me that their substance is entirely spiritualized. Concerning the spiritual body indeed we cannot speak anything positive, save that in the instance of our Lord after the resurrection it showed itself capable of passing and repassing through material substances, of appearing and disappearing at its pleasure, of ascending and descending, while at the same time it was flesh and bones, and did eat, and drink.

If I err not, this ceaseless activity of worship, together with their unresting motion, like a flash of lightning, is the reason

2 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 11: "The Vision of Heaven", Chapter: "The Four Beasts, or Living Creatures", Sub-chapter: "Their Appearance", p. 94-95.

why they are called *live* things, because there was in them the continual action and motion of life.

While our interpretation of the symbol is confirmed by their incessant worship, there is taught unto us by the same this important doctrine, that the Church spiritual, the regenerate body of Christ, in that condition into which by baptism she is virtually, and by resurrection actually, introduced, occupies herself with nothing else but the praise and service of God.

By this it is signified to us, who are virtually risen with Christ and seated with Him in the heavenly places, that there is no time, nor place, nor condition, which ought not to be occupied in the worship of God; that worship is not with the bended knee, nor the outstretched hands, nor the uplifted voice completed; nor, to the church, nor to the house, nor the closet, confined; but is accomplished by the service of every power and even faculty of body and mind, in all times and seasons of this our mortal estate. He that believes has everlasting life, not a life which acts by fits and starts, but a life which ever endures.

Wherefore it is written by the Apostle:

**1 Corinthians 10**

<sup>31</sup> Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.

And again:

**1 Thessalonians 5**

<sup>10</sup> Whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

That we do not so is our sin, is the sin, the sickliness, the wretchedness, of this fallen man revealed. It is not the insufficiency of the Holy Spirit that is within us, whose power is of the same measure and degree with that which changed Christ out of mortal and corruptible flesh into that spiritual

power and glory which He now possesses:

**Ephesians 1**

<sup>19</sup> And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.

By witnessing what bonds and fetters the natural man prevails to impose upon the Spirit of Christ, wherewith we are sanctified, we do abhor our present state, and cry out with the Apostle:

**Romans 7**

<sup>24</sup> O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

While at the same time we do discover what a mighty work of Divine power and grace it was in the Son of God always to resist and overcome those inherent inclinations of the nature which He took, to awaken its sluggishness, to empower its weakness, to reduce its disaffection, rebellion, and alienation into obedience unto, and observance of, God; so that He should ever say:

**John 4**

<sup>34</sup> My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.

Thus by His work in flesh He became the great Head of sanctification, showing that it was possible in mortal and corruptible flesh to present a perfect service, a complete sacrifice, unto God. Whereby we who are regenerated by the same Spirit, after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness, are able to say without a fiction, or rather God is able to say to us:

**Matthew 5**

<sup>48</sup> Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

And thus we obtain a perfect standard of holiness in the

Gospel, by defect from which to reckon the number and aggravation of our sins.

While thus the continual action of the four living ones represents to us in the body what ought to be our reasonable service, it likewise represents what is the actual service of the disembodied part of the Church: for I cannot believe that the Holy Ghost uniting me with Christ, and empowering me completely to subdue and actuate unto holiness this my mortal and corruptible flesh, will, when delivered of the same, leave me in some sleep or prison-house of spirits, to pass away the interval between death and the resurrection.

In contradiction of this, I do believe that such encumbrances being removed, I shall by the Spirit of Christ be empowered to serve God and my Lord with an unresting service of active worship, which yet is not weariness or exhaustion or burdensome; for that very reason, that it is without cessation and needs no rest, and therefore in itself is most perfect rest.

Within the scope and to the utmost bounds of spiritual power, I have no doubt the disembodied Church are at this time occupied in the service of God. The further question, how this service affects the Church visible, will come before us in its own place and time.

Now, for their worship itself, it is expressed in these words, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (*Revelation* 4:8); by which we are not to understand that they do continually utter this form of words, or even that they merely utter it, though doubtless John heard it with the hearing of his ears; but that it is, through speech and hearing, a representation to our mind of that service unto God which it is their office continually to pay, whether by meditation, contemplation, adoration, or action.

The words which are put into the mouths of the symbolical personages in the *Apocalypse* are for the purpose of explaining to another's sense that whereof they are symbolical; or,

like the ancient chorus, to help the spectator to understand and to improve to his own edification the main action which is proceeding.

Of this truth a striking example is contained in the following verse, where the kings of the earth are made to utter their own impending ruin:

### **Revelation 6**

<sup>16</sup> And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

Although we most certainly know, from various parts of the book, that besides their natural fears of change they were nothing apprehensive of the cause, or manner, or end of what was coming to pass.

It is, therefore, according to the structure of this book, to interpret such speeches as that before us in a large sense, as significant of the law and end of their being in the great theater of God's creation. For this book of the *Apocalypse* is no less than the great drama of creation's experience, from the time the resurrection hope was breathed into it until the consummation, when it shall be brought into its state of unchanging life and blessedness.

Thus conceiving concerning the words before us, we would interpret them to signify that these living creatures are the image, the guardians, and the upholders of the holiness of God; that in them is the holiness of God perfected, and by them it is exhibited unto the rest of creation.

This answers also very exactly to the history of the cherubim protecting the holiness of paradise, dwelling in the most holy place, and within the throne of God; and this again confirms our radical idea, that it is creature in the spiritual form which they express. For no creature is holy in the absolute and infallible sense, until it has reached that state wherein it is

united to the Godhead by hypostatical or personal union, without absorption into the Godhead, or becoming of the Godhead a part.

Why they should repeat the word “holy” three times, I can give no reason, unless it be to represent the complete unity of Godhead in a trinity of persons: and certainly it is remarkable that, while Isaiah makes these words to be addressed unto Jehovah, the one God of the Jews, the Evangelist John makes them to be addressed unto Jesus:

### **John 12**

<sup>41</sup> These things said Isaiah, when he saw His glory, and spoke of Him.

And the Apostle Paul makes the person to whom they are addressed to be the Holy Ghost:

### **Acts 28**

<sup>25</sup> Well spoke the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto our fathers.

Having such an authority before us for perceiving the Three Persons present in the substance of the enthroned One, I think it is a good and sufficient reason for deciding that therefore the appellation of “holy” is three times repeated.

Besides this ascription of threefold holiness, which is given to the spiritual Church, as if they only were competent to speak thereof, I do nowhere find in the utterances contained in the book such a large discovery of the name of God as is put into the mouth of these four living ones:

### **Revelation 4**

<sup>8</sup> ...Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

This is the style which Christ’s mouth uttered of Himself (*Revelation* 1:8) and to our observations contained thereon<sup>3</sup>,

3 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 2: “Christ Revealed by Names”, Chapter: “The Name of the Father”, p. 11-14; also Chapter: “Names of Christ”, Sub-chapter: “Which Is, Which Was, Which Is To Come”, p. 98-

and on *Revelation* 1:17<sup>4</sup>, and 2:8<sup>5</sup>, we have few words to add, and would not repeat what we have already said. But for the continuity of discourse we observe, that the name of Jehovah, which doubtless answers to Lord, is the name which came into man's ears for the first time from the burning bush of Horeb, when God began to manifest Himself as a glorious King, having but shown Himself to Abraham as a man in flesh.

The name God, which answers to the Hebrew *Elohim*, is proper to Him as the Creator; the name Almighty is proper to Him as the Governor of all things; and the three forms of time, "which is, which was, and which is to come," is, I think, the method of denying all attributes of time, and expressing absolute unchangeableness.

Now, by putting so large a word into the mouth of these four living creatures, I am inclined to believe that the largeness of their knowledge of God is signified. This manifoldness of names which they are made to utter shows me, I say, that they understand the manifold wisdom of God, even as the Apostle declares, that by the Church the principalities and powers in heaven do know the multifarious or greatly diversified wisdom of God:

### **Ephesians 3**

<sup>10</sup> 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 as he says in another place, that the Church is:

104.

4 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 3: "Christ the Universal Head and Bishop of the Church", Chapter: "The Vision", Sub-chapter: "The Announcement: "I am the First and the Last", p. 119-123.

5 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 5: "Epistle to the Church in Smyrna", Chapter: "Christ's Second Designation", Sub-chapter: "The First and the Last", p. 10-26.

## **Ephesians 1**

<sup>23</sup> ...His body, the fulness of Him that fills all in all.

And as he desires in another place...

## **Ephesians 3**

<sup>19</sup> ...to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Now seeing that, in the heavenly places which are opened to us in this vision, these four living creatures do greatly surpass in their utterance of God's name every other form of being there represented to us, we ought not, I think, to doubt, that in them is symbolized the body of Christ, or the Church, for whom in so many places the Apostle asserts the supremacy of knowledge and of gifts.

If these things be so, what does this discourse mean which I so often hear concerning the dignity and holiness of angels, as if it were something higher than that of redeemed men? And what does all this sentimentality mean about our being taught in the world to come by angels, which our poet has thus absurdly expressed:

“And show our Newton as we show an ape?”

And what does this superstition mean concerning the celestial hierarchies drawn out of the spurious books of the primitive age? All this I hold to be what the Apostle exhorts us to beware of, as...

## **Colossians 2**

<sup>18</sup> ...voluntary humility and worshipping of angels.

The proper object of worship is God. He and He only is greater than man; and there are no demigods between us and Him. And when man has been united to God in the person of the Son, he has attained the highest dignity, the largest knowledge, whereof any creature is capable. To Him thus exalted the angels look up; Him thus honored the angels do serve; as it is written:



## Hebrews 1

<sup>14</sup> Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them which shall be heirs of salvation?

This prerogative of the fullest knowledge and unceasing worship of God having been claimed for the four living creatures, the seer goes on to relate a circumstance which occurred at times in the holy service:

## Revelation 4

<sup>9</sup> And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, who lives for ever and ever,

<sup>10</sup> The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that lives for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

<sup>11</sup> You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for You have created all things, and for Your pleasure they are and were created.

These verses have respect to the harmony or concert which was between the living creatures and the elders; and likewise it makes the specific differences of the parts which they bore in that concert. The passage does not mean that the elders incessantly do this act, as the living creatures incessantly adore; but that *whenever* (for that is the true meaning of the original word) the living ones give glory and honor and thanks, the elders perform the act of prostration, and declare His worthiness to receive it.

It is as much as to say that the living creatures, besides the act of incessant adoration, do at times present an offering of glory and honor and thanks; and that whenever they do so, the elders, crowned and enthroned though they be, do put away from themselves all right or title to any share of the offering, and declare by the casting away of their crowns, and the prostration of their persons, that He only is worthy to receive the glory and the honor and the power.

This action of the elders casts a new light upon the whole

vision, showing us another reason for presenting the Church in throned state, that she might, by the prostration of her throned state, show forth the more completely, that all power is in Him, and in Him only, who sits upon the throne.

If I could suppose any of these visions arranged merely for the effect of conveying an idea, and not also of revealing a future fact, I would say that this vision gives us most beautifully and correctly the idea of the Church with its rulers worshipping and acknowledging in common the invisible Head:

1. The four living creatures presenting the body of the Church,
2. The twenty-four elders presenting the governors thereof, and
3. He upon the throne the invisible Head.

This also would account for the peculiarity of His not being crowned, as not yet revealed in His kingdom: the time when first He assumes His crown is when He comes as the Harvestman (*Revelation* 14:14), to gather His people to Himself. On this occasion no part of this celestial array is seen, all being veiled within the cloud. So also in *Ezekiel* the glory is full displayed to the prophet's eye at the beginning; but in the end there is no display thereof mentioned, but simply the reappearance of the glory.

But a vision of a prophet is not merely to teach an idea, which might be better done by words, but it is to show the form in which that idea shall hereafter be realized. I feel the depth of the subject which I am opening, and I pray for the wisdom that comes from above.

This new circumstance then conveys to me the notion as if these elders, lest they might be thought worthy to intercept some share of the offering which ascends from the Church, do resolutely and most expressively deny the same, and ascribe the worthiness of taking it only to Him who lives forever and

ever, and to Him alone. This has more than once suggested to me a somewhat different idea of these elders than that which we expressed above; to wit, that they merely signify the rule that is in the Church, answering in the invisible to the angels of the Churches in the visible; to the end of revealing that the Church shall have pre-eminences in it, and preferments of one member above another, according to the scope of our Lord's parables of the talents (*Matthew* 25:14-30) and the pounds (*Luke* 19:11-27), and according to many direct promises, whereof that given to the twelve Apostles is the most direct:

**Matthew 19**

<sup>28</sup> You shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Moreover, that these rulers of the Church being seated round the enthroned One signifies that all offerings passing in to Him must pass by them, which in the passage they intercept not, but with prostration of their own dignity do present unto the King. And this idea is confirmed by what is written of the elders in the next chapter, that they had every one of them harps and golden vials, or bowls, full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. According to this notion, it belongs to the elders to receive the prayers of the saints, and to offer them unto the Lamb.

From the passage before us it might seem that they do something the like by the worship of the four living creatures. But not so; they do rather follow than go before the living creatures in their worship. They are accessory rather than necessary to their worship; whereas to the worship of the saints they are absolutely necessary, as the priest is to the worship of the people.

Now "the saints" in this book is beyond question the name for the Church on earth (*Revelation* 11:18, 13:7, 14:12, &c); whence we gather that the elders represent the Church embodied in flesh, whose prayers they present: and so our con-

clusion, that the four living creatures represent the Church in spirit, is confirmed.

Moreover, the notion which we threw out as a shrewd conjecture, rather than stated as a conclusion, that the elders are the rulers of the Church in flesh during the Millennium, while the living creatures are the complete number of the elect who dwell in the heavenly city, is likewise confirmed.

Such being the general addition brought to our knowledge by these three verses, we have now to examine them more particularly; for everything in this book well repays the minutest study.

## GLORY

The four living creatures then are said to give glory, and honor, and thanks. What glory is we have already discoursed of<sup>6</sup>, showing it to signify that bright effulgence and out-bursting light, which bespeaks every other quality of a precious kind. As light was first created and became the bright precursor and joyful herald of a good creation, so glory has the precedence in every enumeration of the redeemed world. When Christ showed in Himself, or rather when the Father showed in Him and unto His disciples, what is the excellency of redeemed nature, He shone with glorious light, which imbued the very garments wherewith He was arrayed.

But of glory it were a poor conception to limit it to this visible effulgence; which is no more than the representation to the eye, which loves the light, of that surpassing goodness which every quality of the renewed nature possesses, both to Him who enjoys and to them who behold it. In offering to Him glory, the living creatures do declare that He is the owner and producer of it; wherefore His Father is called (*Ephesians* 1:17) “The Father of the glory:” and the twenty-four el-

6 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 2 “Christ Revealed by Names”, Chapter: “Doxology”, Sub-chapter: “Glory and Strength”, p. 63-65.

ders reply, "You are worthy to receive the glory;" not *glory*, but *the* glory; that is, *the* glory which the spiritual Church offers You.

## HONOR

And next they present honor. Now honor has respect to the preciousness and value of things, and the Greek word is as commonly used for the price of any article as for expressing honor or dignity of person: when applied to a person, it denotes rank; and the king, from whom rank proceeds, is said to be the fountain of honor.

That which is expressed by honor is distinction and preferment above others, for some excellent qualities and worthy services done for the commonweal. It is not the outward circumstances, the titles of nobility, the emoluments of office, or the rewards of service, which constitute honor; these do but express the common sense of men, that honor is found in him on whom they are bestowed. But honor itself is excellency of being; inbred, inherent in a person; which, being lost, is worse than the loss of all things: so that men rashly conclude that honor being lost, life is no longer precious, forgetting that there is with God forgiveness, and that it ought also to be with men.

The honor of a gentleman is all which distinguishes the man of principle and knowledge and refinement from the ignorant, base, and brutal savage. When therefore this attribute or quality is ascribed to Him that sits on the throne, it is as much as to say that He is honor's seat; that He is the head of rank and of nobility; that He is the fountain from which all excellence flows forth, and the cause to which all preferment should refer itself: and the elders say:

"You are worthy to receive the honor."

Not *we*, but *You*; and while they thus speak, they cast their crowns before Him, and, descending from their thrones, fall

prostrate upon the ground, saying with a power which language possesses not,

“We are but your servants; and though You have seated us on these thrones, and crowned us with these crowns, and exalted us to the headship of all creation, yet we live not in this honor, but You live in us. Not unto us, not unto us, but unto you, O Lord, be the glory.”

This act of the elders is the form by which they express that they are priests as well as kings; for, as has been said already, while it is the part of a king to possess honor and power within himself, it is the part of a priest to offer it unto God.

Oh what a lesson of instruction ought this to be to kings, and what a lesson of instruction it ought to be to the angels of the Churches! Methinks this exhibition of the crowned ones of heaven evermore prostrating themselves before heaven's King might set the question to rest as to the origin of power, whether it be from God, or whether it be from the people. And it might also settle the question, for whom power is held, and unto whom its gifts should be presented, whether to God or to the people.

But, alas! the time is gone by for men to learn their politics from the Word of God: the Church is become too evangelical to meddle with matters political, and the poor statesmen are left to make the best shift for themselves. O you Pharisaical churchmen! O you self-sufficient statesmen! you will bring this kingdom to a direful end.

## THANKS

The next offering which the living creatures present is thanks, or thanksgivings; and it is remarkable that with this the elders do not meddle, but in its stead substitute the ascription of power, proceeding from their own suggestion, and therefore doubtless proper in some way or other to their own condition.

What is still more remarkable, the angelic host, who offer (*Revelation* 4:12) a sevenfold ascription of praise to the Lamb, are not privileged to offer thanks; nor yet every creature which is in heaven and in earth, who offer a fourfold ascription to the Lamb. But in *Revelation* 7:12, the angels which encompassed the throne, and the elders, and the four beasts, do, when the work of salvation is completed, and the saved ones are admitted into the celestial presence, ascribe over them thanksgiving unto their God.

Now I am upon my guard against being misled by verbal niceties, while, at the same time, I am taught by experience to weigh with exactness every word which is written in this book. And perceiving that the four living creatures alone use this note, of all the worshipers in the celestial choir; and perceiving, likewise, that the angels use it not, until the work of salvation is accomplished, and the complete Church presented before the throne, and that all the other notes of the celestial choir are at all times proper to be used by all the worshipers; I am forcibly led to the conclusion that this has peculiar reference to the Church of those who are saved out of the great tribulations. For be it observed, that the saved ones of *Revelation* 7, over whom this song of thanks is sung, are peculiarly the Church of Christ, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

And here, by the way, we have another confirmation of our idea, that the four living creatures mean the Church since the death and resurrection of Christ, and not the Church anterior thereto. That the four living creatures alone should offer thanks, and that the angels should only offer the same over those whom the living creatures do represent, is not a reason for concluding that the others have no ground for thanksgiving, but it is a reason for concluding that the four living creatures have the best and highest reason for presenting such an ascription of praise.

And wherefore should they have this, unless, as we have said, they have have been promoted to some peculiar honor, or have had bestowed upon them some peculiar gift? They offer thanks, because they, of all others, have reason to be thankful. For if our view of this subject be correct, they have received the nearest communion and fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

If it be asked, wherefore we who have been called unto God should, under the Gospel dispensation, specially give thanks? Because we have received, in very truth, that which the fathers only saw from afar.

### **Matthew 13**

<sup>16</sup> Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.

<sup>17</sup> For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them.

We have received oneness with God by the incarnation of His Son, which the former Church had not. If any one shall say that the Old Testament saints had that oneness with God through their faith which we have through ours, he makes void the incarnation of God altogether, by asserting, that without this incarnation union of God and the creature was a reality.

I deny that God was ever united to the creature till His Son was generated of a virgin: then that mystery of union between Creator and creature from being a promise became a fact; from being a hope became a possession. It is therefore not only illogical, it is very evil, and I think subversive of the foundations, to say that any person anterior to the coming of Christ in the flesh had union, with God, in the same sense in which every believing person has had since.

Union with God can only be had through union with the



flesh of Christ, which is of the person of the eternal Son of God: all notions of union otherwise are equivalent to Pantheism, to the doctrine of God the soul of the world, and destroy all worship by mingling God with the creature.

That union through His flesh is the only way of union, Christ Himself abundantly teaches in the 6th chapter of *John*: and that union, not substitution, is the pillar and capital of the faith, is sufficiently taught in the 17th chapter of the same Evangelist: of which two chapters, while the former reveals the mode, which is eating His flesh and drinking His blood, or believing into His very humanity, the latter reveals the end of faith, which is oneness with Him, as He is one with the Father.

But if it be through His flesh only that we have union with Godhead, then it is monstrous to suppose that this union could be had before His flesh came into existence. A real union, therefore, we firmly believe that the patriarchs had not; a real union we as firmly believe that they were promised, and did hope to receive: for otherwise than by union with the body of Christ salvation is not, neither can be.

But when they shall receive this union with Christ, which we now possess in the Spirit, is nowhere said, at least that we know of; and it does not concern us nicely to inquire. What we assert is, that we of the Christian Church possess that union which they only hoped for; and this I believe to be the true ground of these thanksgivings which the four living creatures alone present.

Now it is a very remarkable thing, and well worthy of observation in this place, that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which is the communion of His body and blood, has in all ages of the Church been called the Eucharist, or thanksgiving; for the word in the original for *thanks* is *Eucharist*. This custom, more than a thousand authorities confirming the above interpretation, show that the Church has ever esteemed union

with Christ's flesh to be, by distinction, above all other gifts, the ground of the Church's thanks. And well may it so be, because thereby we have fellowship with the Father and the Son; thereby we receive the Spirit of Christ, to enable us to know the things which in Him are freely given us of God, to have the mind which was in Him, and to give our lives in love for the brethren.

All this truly is become more a matter of word than deed, because the Christian religion is now come to be looked upon as a system of notions rather than the power and possession of the Spirit of Christ: insomuch that in these times men shall exhibit the spirit of contention, the spirit of a bravo, the spirit of a traitor, the spirit of an assassin, in maintaining notional orthodoxy. And merely because his notions are thought to be orthodox, he shall continue to hold his head high as a Christian advocate, as a Christian teacher.

Low, low indeed, is the pass to which the Church is come, when any notion divorced from the Spirit of Christ can find for him who holds it in unrighteousness, in uncharitableness, the favor and applause of the brethren. A Church in such a state can have little sympathy with the ground upon which I have placed the thanksgivings of the four living creatures, because they have no feeling of an inward life of Christ, but only of an outward system of opinions.

Give them their substitution, their atonement, their justification by faith, and other terms of an orthodox faith, and they ask no more. But the thanks of the true believer in Christ spring from a deeper source, even from the depths of a blessed, sanctified, joyful being—the being, the new being, which he derives from the indwelling and inworking of the Spirit of Christ.

This Divine life, this Divine liberty, this Divine love, this presence of God, this seeing of God, this manifestation of the Father and the Son in the inward man, are the real sources of

his thanksgiving. These make up the peace which passes all understanding (*Philippians* 4:7), and the joy in the Holy Ghost (*Romans* 14:17) which the world cannot give (*John* 14:27), and which the world cannot take away (*John* 16:22). This also gives discernment between the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of Antichrist, between the Spirit of love and the spirit of division.

But truly in these days when I write I am more and more convinced that the spirit of schism, sect, and zealotry, is sanctified by the greater number of teachers, and believed in by the greater number of professing Christians, as the Spirit of charity. And whether it is to get the upper hand in our Church of Scotland, and put down the Spirit of charity altogether, depends upon the issue of that great question, which is now so strongly agitated; to wit, whether God in Christ labored for the whole of men, or only for a part of men. If they succeed in establishing it by Church authority, that God in Christ wrought only for the elect, then they deny love to be in God to all men, as sinners, contemplated in common; but only to a few men, as elect, contemplated apart. And being so, then a godly person ought to do his best to discover this part, and then, and then only, ought he to love; which begins in an impossibility, for the elect are invisible, and ends in the sanctification of schism and sectarianism, in the destruction of love and charity.

O it is a great question which is at issue in my native land and Mother Church; even a controversy it is for the name of God, whether He be gracious to the sinner, or whether He be not gracious to the sinner. Never, never until men do instinctively revolt from any limitation of God's love, can they have within themselves the participation of that love out of which flows every grace of the new man. One cannot ascribe the thanks which the Church in glory do ascribe, till he feel himself blessed with that love, which possessing, he possesses

Christ; in which dwelling, he dwells in God, and God in him.

## POWER

I observe again, before leaving this subject, that the elders do not feel themselves competent to meddle with this offering of thanks; but instead thereof they substitute power: by which I understand it to be signified, that unto them is divided power, in the distribution of God: that while the Church has the marriage union with Christ, these elders have the dominion over every land, as it is written in the forty-fifth *Psalm*, which represents the marriage of Christ and His Church:

### **Psalm 45**

<sup>16</sup> Instead of your fathers shall be your children, whom you may make princes in all the earth.

This helps us a little further to clear the distinction between the living creatures and the elders, by informing us, that Christ's royal state shall consist of a wife,—the bride, the Lamb's wife, the New Jerusalem that comes down from heaven,—and a numerous body of governors over every land, who are represented under the relation of their children, of whom it is said, *Revelation 21*, that the kings of the earth do bring their honor and glory into the New Jerusalem.

And because we know that the thrones of the earth are then to be occupied by risen saints, we must conclude that these kings out of the city are risen saints as well as those within the city. What constitutes the distinction between them, which I believe is the same as that between the living creatures and the elders, I have already opined to be union with Christ received and union promised.

This power, then, which the elders shall hold in Christ's kingdom, is what they ascribe instead of the thanks. I say again, that this is a very deep subject, in which I tread with the greatest caution, lest I should speak unadvisedly with my lips. But I have a thought which I will express; and it is this:

that the reason why the living creatures do not ascribe power is, that being married unto Christ, being one with Him, they lose their power in His power, as the wife does in her husband, and in the fellowship of His throne she has her highest, noblest degree, and desires no throne of her own, and has for ever the honor of being regarded as the mother of saints:

#### **Galatians 4**

<sup>26</sup> The Jerusalem above, which is the mother of us all

#### **Psalms 45**

<sup>16</sup> ...your children, whom you may make princes in all the earth.

These are holy thoughts, and the words by which they are expressed are holy likewise; they are the words of God's own selection, husband, wife, and children; and I do very much wonder, and greatly blame, that the unholy imagination of any should connect them with low, sensual interpretations. I know that it has been so impurely done by those who look upon themselves as saints; I deny to them the name, in as far as this is concerned, and with solemn severity I rebuke them, as guilty of prostrating God's holy words to their own base, impure, and malicious inventions.

So much have we to say upon the gifts of the four living ones, and the reciprocal action and ascription of the four and twenty elders.

### **HIM WHICH LIVES FOREVER**

And now we have to set forth the name or aspect under which they present their offering,—to wit, “Him which lives forever and ever;” together with the reason which the elders assign for His worthiness to receive the same,—to wit, because:

#### **Revelation 4**

<sup>11</sup> You have created all things, and for Your pleasure they are and were created.

When in a book like this, and indeed in any book of inspiration, but especially this book, whose every word is pregnant with revelation, we find various styles of Godhead appropriated to various acts and conditions, we may rest assured that there is some fitness into which the Holy Spirit would have us to inquire. In this passage we have the style of Him that sits on the throne expressed both by the living creatures and the elders in these words, “Him that lives for ever and ever.” And in the next chapter the whole scene of adoration concludes with the same words:

### **Revelation 5**

<sup>14</sup> The four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped Him that lives for ever and ever.

And it is most worthy of observation, that this is the very same style which our Lord takes to Himself:

### **Revelation 1**

<sup>18</sup> I am He that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for ever and ever.

This also, I believe, is not an accidental coincidence, but designed on very purpose to identify the enthroned One of the heavens with the great High Priest of the Church; adding another to the many proofs which we have already had, that the Eternal God displays Himself to the heavenly hosts in and by the Person who was dead, and is alive, and lives for evermore.

And yet, behold there is in this same assembly another representation of that Person (verse 6), “a Lamb as it had been slain,” the Redeemer, who has washed us in His blood. How is it, then, that our Lord Christ should be exhibited in these two forms? Because He has two persons to represent, who, though two, are yet one—the person of the Father, and the person of the Son.

He always declared, while on earth, that He would come again in His Father’s glory, as well as His own; and He con-

cluded His epistles to the Churches by declaring that He is now seated in His Father's throne. Doubtless, therefore, the Father is the enthroned One, before whom the Son and the Holy Ghost are presented to us in the act of receiving the powers, and accomplishing the ends of His will, for which they came forth out of the absolute Godhead into the conditions of space and time, or of creation.

Repeatedly, five times within the space of seven verses, is He that sits upon the throne called God (*Revelation* 7:10-17), and therefore of this matter there can be no doubt. It is not two natures that are exhibited in the enthroned One and the Lamb; nor is it two Christs, or two Lords; but it is two persons shown through one Christ,—the person of God the Father, and the person of God the Son,—the former as the Ruler over all, the latter as the administrator of the rule. It is Christ exhibited at once as the possessor of the Father's power and glory, and as the possessor of the creature's lowly, limited conditions.

Taken for all in all, it is a proof of His Divinity and humanity beyond all contradiction. There is none higher than this enthroned One in the heavens; names more comprehensive, attributes more Divine, obedience more entire, have never, by any vision or by any expression, been given to God since the world began; and yet to every letter, to every jot and tittle, "Jehovah, Elohim, Almighty, that lives for ever,;" they have been every one assumed by Christ.

The symbols we have seen are all human, are all Christ's; and what more can be said to show that Christ is very God? I defy language, I defy symbol, to go further in proving the very Godhead of Jesus Christ. This vision sums up the sum of all arguments whatsoever for that foundation stone of the faith.

As to the substance of the title itself, we refer to what was

said in Lecture III<sup>7</sup> and Lecture V<sup>8</sup>.

## WORSHIP

Before leaving this subject, we have one point of difference to observe between the act of the living creatures and the act of the elders,—that the latter alone are said to worship; and the same in *Revelation* 5:14. This same form of expression is also applied to the angels (*Revelation* 7:2), and to the elders (*Revelation* 11:16), and to the nations (*Revelation* 15:4).

But never in all the book is it applied to the four living creatures. They indeed, as has been said, do fulfill the highest offices of uttering and ascribing to Him the honor which is due, and of directing the attention of the seer (*Revelation* 6), and of handing out the judgments of God (*Revelation* 15:7); and when the glorious presence is mentioned (*Revelation* 14:3), they are introduced next to the throne. But never at any time are they said to worship.

Perhaps the reason of this may be partly found in the propriety of the symbols, worship being performed by bowing forward, or falling prostrate before the object worshiped; which were not a proper attitude for the four living creatures, formed as they are represented to be.

Partly also is the reason of this to be found in the proprieties of place, which would not admit that the living creatures should come forth from within the circuit of the throne, where their dwelling is, into the area before the throne, to bow themselves unto the Majesty which sits thereon.

It is true that one of Isaiah's living creatures goes forth from the most holy place to the altar, and with the tongs

7 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 3 "Christ the Universal Head and Bishop of the Church", Chapter: "The Vision", Sub-chapter: "The Announcement: 'I am the First and the Last'", p. 119-123.

8 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 5 "Epistle to the Church in Smyrna", Chapter: "Christ's Second Designation", Sub-chapter: "The First and the Last", p. 10-26.



brings thence a live coal with which to purify the lips of the prophet (*Isaiah* 6:6). And one of *Ezekiel's* cherubim (*Ezekiel* 10:7) gives forth a live coal of fire unto the man clothed with linen, whom God has ordained to consume the city. And so, also, when that great city Babylon is to be consumed by the last vials of wrath, one of the cherubim (*Revelation* 15:7) fills therewith the hands of the seven angels, to whom it was appointed to pour them out.

For such high and holy acts of the Divine Providence their going forth is reserved; but they are not required to take part in the prostrations which are ordinarily performed by the heavenly worshipers whose choir they lead, and of whose worship they pronounce the solemn Amen.

This also seems to confirm our idea of the more noble and mysterious vocation of the living creatures. It is a subject of such great depth that I love better to sound it by repeated efforts than at once to plunge into the abyss. And, if I err not, the thing which is signified by this great difference between them and the other actors in the celestial assembly arises from the desire and design of preserving and keeping up the idea of union between them and the enthroned One, whose supporters, whose body-ministers, whose *legates a latere*<sup>9</sup> (for there is nothing in heaven which the devil has not aped in Rome), whose ministers of vengeance, whose voices of power—in one word, whose activity throughout nature—they represent.

They symbolize the Church in union with God, while the elders are the Church in trust for God: the one acting beside Him, the other acting before Him; or, rather, the one actuated of Him and by Him, the other acting for Him. This distinction between the power of the wife and the power of the children, to revert to the Scripture language, does not admit that the four creatures should go out and prostrate themselves ever

<sup>9</sup> *Legate a latere* - a papal legate of the highest class, with full powers. (Oxford English Dictionary)

and anon, like the elders and the angels.

There must be some explanation of these things; and I am doing my best, with all humility, to give one.

## YOU HAVE CREATED ALL THINGS

It now remains that we open the reason ascribed by the elders for which God is worthy to receive the glory, and the honor, and the power:

### **Revelation 4**

<sup>11</sup> ...for You have created all things, and for Your pleasure they are and they were created.

This ascription of power Divine has no note whatever of redemption, but is wholly taken up with the work of creation; while the song sung unto the Lamb in the next chapter (*Revelation* 5:9-10), is wholly taken up with redemption, and has in it no note of creation.

The same mode of adoration do I find presented unto the King of Heaven by the Redeemer Himself, when He comes in the plentitude of His right, clothed in the cloud of His Father's glory, and crowned with the rainbow symbol of the imperishable earth. Thus magnified, when He would swear by the only One greater than Himself, in language expressive of supremacy, He takes the awful and immutable oath, by combining in one the two forms of sacred words with which the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders render their homage to the enthroned Majesty of Heaven:

### **Revelation 10**

<sup>5</sup> And the Angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up His hand to heaven,

<sup>6</sup> And swore by Him that lives for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.

Be assured, then, that there is a great propriety in thus wor-

shipping the Most High God who sits upon the heavenly throne. Be assured, that to create is a necessary and inalienable prerogative of the Eternal Godhead; otherwise why would the celestial throne, instinct with speech and life of the living creatures, and why would the four and twenty thrones of heaven, and why would the Redeemer of this world, in the noblest act of installing Himself in His purchased creation, in terms of the Creator, and in no way else whatever, express the superior dignity, the supreme Divinity, of the invisible God?

And if we bethink us what creation is, all inclusive of all things that have a being, there can be nothing so great, nor so comprehensive. And if we consider, moreover, what kind of work creation is, to produce all these quick and vital, animate and inanimate, rational and spiritual, substances out of nothing, and to sustain them upon nothing but God's own will to have it so, then does the nature of the work as far transcend all other works as the vastitude of it surpasses the narrow limitations of what men or angels can do.

We can do nothing of the like kind. We can but fashion what God creates; and this also not according to our own will, but according to the will, or disposition, or law, of the creatures which we move and handle.

Redemption does not add anything to creation; nor does it alter any of the laws by which the Creator's work was constituted at first. It only takes out the darkness, and the error, and the misery which sin has introduced. The Spirit in regeneration does not add a new substance to the body or the soul of the regenerate one, but merely works therein, to deliver it from the power and dominion of sin.

Sin is not a created thing; otherwise God were the author of it: it is a condition of the creation, proceeding from the freedom of the will of man, who was invested with creation's weal or creation's woe. It is not a thing in itself, but the evil condition of a thing, proving that the creation is not the Cre-

ator,—is as wide from Him as wrong is from right, as evil is from good.

Yet it also proves that there is a power in God greater than creation, when He shall, in spite of its inbred evil, have drawn it back unto Himself and glorified it with Himself forever and ever. Sin proves God to be different and separate from creation. Redemption proves God to be greater than creation, and able with it to do all His pleasure.

- Creation is God manifested.
- Creation fallen is God obscured.
- Creation redeemed is God glorified.

But more of this when we come to the song of redemption. The song of creation, which is before us, expresses:

1. That God had created all things;
2. That by reason of His will they exist, and
3. By reason of the same will they were created.

The first of these propositions denies the eternity of matter, and of every spirit, save God alone, and asserts their origin to be out of nothing. Moreover, it denies the existence of more than one being from eternity; and asserts that Being, who alone is self existent, to be the same who in heaven wears the human form, and show himself through the risen body of Christ.

The “all things” (*Colossians* 1:16) are sometimes separated into:

### **Ephesians 1**

<sup>10</sup> ...things...which are in heaven, and which are on earth, visible and invisible.

And at other times they are divided into:

### **Philippians 2**

<sup>10</sup> ...the things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.

But, however divided, they include no more than the things which were made in six days, and at the end of six days pronounced very good.

The second proposition asserts, that they were made according to or by reason of His will; that is to say, He was the cause unto Himself of creation; a most important doctrine for us to know, and to be persuaded of, yea, and to feel, in order that when we contemplate creation, and meditate our own being, we may be able to say:

“The good which I see here is of God, and it shows forth the goodness that is in God.”

If God’s will had been influenced from without, creation would have been no manifestation of Himself. Besides that it is absurd to make that a cause, which is not yet in being.

The end indeed of creation is asserted, in the third proposition, to be the same will of God. They both exist on account of His will and were created on account of His will; and being so, they exhibit what His will is, what His disposition is, what be the attributes of His being: just as, when a man is left to his own will, that which he does, shows you what his natural disposition is; but if he be under another influence, you know not how much to assign to himself, and how much to assign to that which actuates him from without.

Now creation was very good; therefore very goodness is the nature of God; which also the Apostle declares:

### **James 1**

<sup>17</sup> Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning.

And, again, another Apostle declares:

### **1 John 2**

<sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but

is of the world.

But more than goodness appears in this, that when the world had engendered all evil within its own rebellious heart, God took in hand to deliver it from its own inbred wickedness, by coming into it Himself and contending with its rebellious disposition; and in so doing He showed Himself to be a threefold subsistence, which could redeem it. and inform it, and yet be altogether separate from it.

One in it He is by the Holy Spirit, one with it by the Son, and yet one apart from it by the Father; so that, though creation be doubtless a work of God in Trinity, yet is it redemption alone which makes that Trinity manifest; yea, makes it a truth necessary to worship.

But here again we are treading on the subject of the next chapter: only let it be observed that in this chapter, which presents us with creation's Lord, enthroned in the midst of His creatures, and receiving their homage, there is yet another great confirmation of the Divinity of Christ; for if nothing more worthy of God can be spoken of Him than that He created all, then this is the essential, the pre-eminent, the noble function of God, and nothing higher, nothing better, nothing more Divine, can be asserted of Him; at the mention of which the crowned heads of heaven are uncrowned, and fall prostrate before the throne.

Can Jesus Christ, then, be anything less than God, of whom it is asserted continually that He created all things?

### **Colossians 1**

<sup>16</sup> For by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him.

### **John 1**

<sup>3</sup> All things were made by Him: and without Him was not anything made that was made.

## **Hebrews 1**

<sup>2</sup> ...by whom also He made the worlds.

Compare with:

## **Hebrews 11**

<sup>3</sup> Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God.

Surely, then, Christ is God: it is high treason against God to deny it, and they who do so are in a damnable case; from which may the good Lord deliver them.





## THE SEVEN-SEALED BOOK

**I**N THE description given in the preceding chapter of Him that sat upon the throne, though doubtless there was in His hand that book of power which is the main subject of the vision, yet was it kept back from the sight of the seer, or at least reserved from the particulars of his description, until now that it is presented to our view, with distinct separation and strong relief, to be made the subject of one of the sublimest scenes in heaven, and the occasion of the most tremendous convulsions on the earth.

This book brings upon the scene the prime mover of the new choral song in heaven, and the great actor of all the events on earth; even the Lamb which had been slain, and lives still. For though He also had been present in that celestial company, and could not but have been seen, as He is everywhere said to be, in the midst of the living creatures and the elders, yet has no mention of Him been made, either in the seer's description of what he saw, or in the words of the living creatures and the elders.

And wherefore this reserve? Wherefore this holding back of the chief Personage in the glorious action? Because the occasion which alone is worthy of His appearance has not yet occurred. But so soon as the book with seven seals had been announced, and every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, challenged to open or to look upon it, He who alone is able comes forward to perform that task which all creation shrunk from in dismay.

### A BOOK OF REDEMPTION

Now, inasmuch as that which Christ alone could do is the work of redeeming the world, natural sagacity would lead us to infer that this book has some respect unto redemption. The symbols also under which He appears, of a Lamb slain,

whether looked at in the Paschal sacrifice; or in the Baptist's presentation of Him:

### **John 1**

<sup>29</sup> Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.

Or in the current language of the Apostolical Epistles:

### **1 Peter 1**

<sup>19</sup> We are redeemed with the blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

I say, in whatever respect considered, this symbol tells of redemption, and redemption alone. And seeing that to open the book is the end for which He is thus introduced, we may rest assured that He approaches it in the guise of the Lamb, because, in some way or other, it concerns redemption.

If it concerned creation, there were no propriety in the Divine order of the piece; for the creation honor is all ascribed already, without either the presentation of the book or of the Lamb to our view. Nor, if it concerned creation, were there any fitness in presenting Him as a Lamb, and a Lamb slain; because thus was He not when He laid the foundation of the earth, and set His compass on the face of the deep.

So, likewise, from considerations merely of order, we can perceive that it is not revelation with which this book is concerned: for to reveal is proper to Him as:

- the Word,
- the Prophet,
- the Messenger of the covenant,
- the Light between the cherubim, and
- the Apostle of our profession.

But it is not proper to Him as the Lamb which is slain. To reveal is proper to Him in the form of a man, and not in the form of a lamb; which lamb, though it has horns and eyes, has not a mouth like the mouth of a man, to speak the glorious

things of God; nor speaks it ever during these visions.

And therefore we shrewdly suspect that this sealed book is not so much the symbol of revelation as it is the symbol of redemption: in which conclusion we are altogether confirmed by the song which the living creatures and the elders sung over the taking of the book, which is altogether a song of redemption. So much do we gather in general from the order in which this great act is presented unto us.

The word “book” is not used in the Scriptures in that absolute sense in which it is used among us, but generally with some definition of its contents, such as *the book of the law*, which contained the conditions of the covenant for the inheritance of the land, and was laid up in the ark in the most holy place (*Exodus 24, Hebrews 9*); *the book of the purchase* (*Jeremiah 32:12*); that is, as we would express it, the title deeds which went along with every mortgaged portion of land; *the Book of the Psalms, the Book of Esaias the Prophet, &c. &c.*

This, I say, is the manner of speaking concerning books in the Scriptures; and therefore it is a prejudice derived from the customs of these times, which leads us at once to infer that this book in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne is a book containing knowledge or information merely.

Against this notion we have already argued from considerations of order; and we may also argue against it from the observation of what follows the opening of the seals. That which follows is not revelation, but judgment and destruction, or the signification of destruction suspended for a while.

## A SEALED BOOK

But we must limit speculation by positive proof. There are specialities enough to determine of what kind this book is; the chief of which is, that it was sealed. Now of sealed books I find mention made only of one kind in Scripture; to wit, those which concerned inheritances. There is no mention that the

book of the Law was sealed, nor that any of the books of the Prophets was sealed. Daniel, indeed, is called upon to seal up the words of the prophecy of his book; but that is spoken in a figurative sense; for literally Daniel's prophecy was as open for study and inspection as the rest of the Scriptures.

It would have been incongruous altogether to seal up the Word of God, which was given for opening, and not for concealing. Yea, for having treated it as a sealed book, and not opening it to the people, Isaiah prophesies that God's judgment will come upon the doctors of Jerusalem (*Isaiah* 29:11), which also our Lord confirmed in the Gospels (*Luke* 21:52, &c).

While to books of Divine revelation this characteristic of sealed can in no wise apply, it applies, yea, it was by law required, with respect to all books of inheritance whatever, of which there were always two copies taken; whereof the one was sealed, and the other was open. Of this custom we have a particular description in the 32nd chapter of the Prophet Jeremiah.

It will be remembered that inheritances in Israel could not be alienated from the family, but reverted every jubilee—that is, every 50th year—to the regular heir; to whom, therefore, it belonged at any intervening time to step in and redeem an inheritance which its possessor might, through distress or other causes, have alienated to a third party.

Now when the possessor of an inheritance gave it in pledge to a third party for a sum of money, or any other consideration, a time was fixed at which, and a price for which, he might again make it his own. And lest the Goel, or redeemer, should step in and use his right of redeeming harshly, and so foreclose the matter, the time and the price were kept secret between the buyer and the seller; and for this end of secrecy there was a sealed book as well as an open book, which, except in this particular, answered exactly to each other.

This device of a sealed book rendered it possible for the poor man who had mortgaged his inheritance at the fixed time or times to possess himself of it again for the fixed price or prices; for the rate of redemption necessarily varied as the jubilee drew nigh, when, without any redemption, it returned free to its hereditary possessor.

A sealed book, therefore, amongst the children of Israel was the standing sign of an inheritance which had been disposed<sup>10</sup> away by its rightful possessor, but not alienated; which was held by another, but at all times free to be given up on paying the proper price.

That this was the standing ordinance in the land of Israel for the temporary forfeiture and recovery of inheritances may be seen by consulting the 32nd chapter of *Jeremiah*, where Hanameel, Jeremiah's cousin, wishing to part with a field in Anathoth, offered the purchase thereof to Jeremiah, in whom was vested both the right of inheritance and the right of redemption. Jeremiah, having had a premonition hereof from the Lord, immediately closes with the offer, and has the whole transaction done in regular course of law; which was:

1. To write the whole in a sealed book, and in an open book; and,
2. To have these subscribed by witnesses, who wrote upon the outside; and,
3. To have the whole transaction confirmed in the presence of the elders.

Jeremiah being at that time in the prison, could not fulfill this last condition; for the place of the elders was commonly in the gates of the city: but, instead thereof, he did it in the presence of all the Jews who were in the court of the prison. With respect to the whole transaction between Jeremiah and his cousin Hanameel, and likewise with respect to the corre-

10 *Scots law* - to transfer legal ownership of. (thefreedictionary.com)

sponding transaction between Boaz and the next of kin to Naomi, recorded in the 4th chapter of *Ruth*, we shall have to speak hereafter, when we come to treat of the Goel, or Redeemer, which is the Lamb that was slain.

The thing to which we at present direct your attention is, that a sealed book was, by the customs and ordinances of the children of Israel, as much the symbol of an inheritance impledged with another, as a Lamb slain was the symbol of a sacrifice, or a throne the symbol of a king. And being so, we do, by this special characteristic of the book in God's right hand, separate it from other subjects to the one subject of inheritances forfeited but redeemable upon certain conditions.

## AN INHERITANCE

From this view of the subject we would gather, that the book in the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne must concern an inheritance. Now the question is:

What inheritance concerns it? Whose by right, to whom forfeited, and by whom redeemed?

All this clearly appears from the song which was sung by the four beasts and four and twenty elders upon the Lamb's obtaining possession thereof.

### Revelation 5

<sup>9</sup> 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;

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

The last clause of this song, "We shall reign with You upon the earth," is the only part of it which concerns place; and therefore, if inheritance be the substance of the book, that inheritance is the inheritance of the earth.

This clause also, it is to be observed, is the only one which

has respect to the future, and, therefore, is the only one dependent upon the opening of the seals. The other clauses have all respect unto the past, and were fulfilled in the shedding of His blood. The past is the redemption of the person, the future is the redemption of the inheritance; the one already completed in His sacrifice, the other to be completed by the opening of these seals. Yet both necessary to the complete act of the Goel, or Redeemer; who had three duties to discharge:

1. To avenge the blood of his kinsman;
2. To marry his wife and raise up seed on his inheritance;
3. To redeem the inheritance.

The kinsman of Naomi would have done the last, but he would not do the second of these things; therefore it became the right of Boaz to redeem both Ruth and the inheritance.

Here therefore we have the true link of connection between the two parts of the song of the Church, or bride, in heaven, who acknowledged the redemption of herself out of the house of bondage first of all, and for this declares Him worthy to redeem the inheritance also.

With respect to the other duty of the Goel or Redeemer, though it be not in this place before us, we may observe in passing, that it is the subject of the next great heavenly chorus sung at the end of the 11th chapter and the beginning of the 19th chapter of this book; which are songs of praise to Him for having avenged the Church upon Babylon, in whom was found the blood of the prophets and saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

Having thus ascertained that the book concerns the inheritance, and that the inheritance is the inheritance of the earth, we may now, before proceeding to interpret, be allowed to give out in a few words the idea which we believe all this vision is intended to unfold.

## RULERSHIP OF THE EARTH

When man was created, he was created first and noblest of all, to be Godlike, an image and likeness of God in the law and form of his being; which image, destroyed by sin, Christ again renews us after, in righteousness and true holiness. This He does by the redemption of the person, the regeneration of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and the presentation of us without spot or wrinkle in the presence of God, who shall see in us no fault, no dissimilitude from Himself, nothing to blame, nothing to be offended with; shall see in us that very idea according to which from eternity He purposed us to be.

This is the redemption of our persons concerning which the Church is wont to discourse, and in so doing to think that she has done her duty for the honor of her Redeemer.

But let me tell her, who have as good a right to speak as Luther or Calvin, or any doctor of them all, being one of the angels of the Churches, who acknowledge no Head but Christ, that she has not told out the complete story of her Redeemer's work, neither remembered the bounty of God in her creation, which was, as we have said, first and noblest of all, to be:

1. His own image and likeness;

But next, and only second to this, to be:

2. The heir, possessor, and lord of all His created works, to have dominion, to rule for God, to possess and to enjoy the works of His hands.

This is an integral part of man's creation;—to inherit the earth, the habitable earth; to have dominion over the beasts of the earth, the fish of the sea, and the fowls of heaven.

This, I say, upon God's own constituting Word, is as much of man's essential being as it is to be holy as God is holy (*Leviticus* 20:7; *1 Peter* 1:16), and pure as He is pure (*1 John* 3:3); and who is the man that dare gainsay it? Is it not written in the annals of creation? Is it not twice over repeated in the



Word of God constitutive of man? Read these words of the first chapter of *Genesis*, and bold you indeed must be who dare to gainsay it:

### **Genesis 1**

<sup>26</sup> And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

<sup>28</sup> And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

<sup>29</sup> And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

Now, when the devil got the dominion, was not man smitten in both these principalities, the godlike form of his person, and the gentle obedience of his subject dominions? Did the earth yield him anything from that day forth of its own accord but briars and thorns? Did the creature yield him anything of obedience but through constraint? Did that curse merely dissolve his beautiful being; or did it not also impene-  
trate the whole world?

And if thus Satan prevailed to poison and to perplex God's work, is it not within the province and the duty of the Redeemer to cast him altogether out of that which he holds only as a usurper? God, when He had finished His work, gave it into the charge and responsibility of man: it was man's house, for man's government; always in obedience and subservience to God—which is a condition, the absolute condition, of a creature.

Of this homage unto the Creator one sign was required, the

least possible, because the Creator was minded to be unto man the most generous which is possible, to pour out upon him those delights which He had in Him from the beginning of the world. Small as the homage was, it was not yielded: and from that moment the inheritance reverted to its proper owner; that is, to God.

And here, when the vision of Him is presented full to view, He has the title-deeds of it in His right hand, and proclaims abroad for one, even the rightful owner, or any creature whatsoever who is able to pay the price which may entitle him to take and break the seal: and no one is able but the Lamb; whereby the Lamb is shown to be the true Redeemer.

Here now is introduced another idea, in addition to the idea of creation, of lordship in man, and lordship forfeited; to wit, the idea of redemption of the inheritance. We speak not now of redemption of the soul and body, but redemption of the inheritance; not restoration of the image of God in the creature, but restoration of dominion to the creature in that world from which he has been supplanted.

And is this a constant and constituent part of the hope presented unto man from the beginning even until now? Yea, verily; the promise made to our first parents, or rather the denunciation made upon the serpent, went to the full extent of his usurpation, to the bruising of his head, to the destruction of his headship.

The covenant of Noah, we have seen in our former Lecture<sup>11</sup>, was expressly for the indestructibleness of the earth. Abraham was promised an inheritance, and his faith in that promise was counted to him for righteousness. He was promised a seed also; but first of all he was promised an inheritance, and the covenant confirmed with him, *Genesis*

11 *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 11: The Vision in Heaven, Chapter: "Christ the Redeemer and King", Sub-chapter: "The Rainbow", p. 32-39.

15:18<sup>12</sup>, stood in the promise of the inheritance. The Apostle, speaking of the promise, in few words calls it:

#### **Romans 4**

<sup>13</sup> ...the promise that he should be the heir of the world.

The book of the Law, which, to divide it from all other future revelations, was laid up in the ark of the testimony, and which contained no more than what is written in the 20th, 21st, 22nd, and 23rd chapters of *Exodus*, contains a testament, not for righteousness, nor yet for resurrection, but for inheritance of the land of Canaan, upon the condition of perfect obedience.

And the whole of the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament go upon the principle of the promise made to Abraham and the covenant made with Moses. I aver it in the face of all flesh, that to inherit the earth is as large, is as integral, a part of the Old Testament revelation, as to possess the favor, and the blessedness, and the image of God.

The latter indeed, as I have said, is the higher, as being the moral part of the dispensation; and far am I from preferring the other, which is physical, before it: but never will I allow the tongue of man, to say that it is not necessary to the faithfulness of God and the redemption of man, that the world, to be his lordship, as well as man, to be its lord, is to be redeemed.<sup>13</sup>

12 "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto your seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."

13 *Genesis* 12:3, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14, 48:4, 50:24; *Exodus* 6:4; *Leviticus* 26:42-46; *Deuteronomy* 30:5; *Psalms* 2:8, 25:13, 37:3, 9, 11, 18, 22, 29, 34, 45:16, 79:35-36; *Isaiah* 14:1, 30:19, 33:20, 34:17, 35:10, 40:9, 49 passim, 51:3, 11, 52:1-12, 58:14, 60 passim, 61 passim, 62 passim, 65:8, 9, 18-25, 66:20; *Jeremiah* 3:14-19, 12:15, 16:14-21, 23:1-8, 30:7-10, 31 passim, 32:36-44, 33 passim, 49:33-34; *Ezekiel* 16:60, 20:33-44, 28:24-26, 34:20-31, 36 passim, 37:21-28; *Amos* 9:15; *Matthew* 5:5, 25:24; *Acts* 20:32, 26:18; *Romans* 8:17; *1 Corinthians* 3:20-21; *Ephesians* 1:11, 14, 18; *Colossians* 1:12, 3:24; *Hebrews* 9:15; *1 Peter* 1:4-6; *Revelation* 21:7.

If we come to the Gospel to see whether this coeval and co-essential part of the Divine purpose is there also held forth, what, I ask, is the kingdom of heaven, which the Gospel preaches as yet to be upon the earth? What is that will of God to be done on earth, as it is done in heaven? What is that coming again of Christ, to purge out of the earth all things which offend, and to make the righteous shine forth as the stars of the firmament for ever and ever? It is nothing but that Jesus Christ, who has done the first part of the Goel, or Redeemer, by redeeming the wife, by redeeming human nature, Adamhood, from the power of death and corruption, shall come again to do the second part, which is to redeem the inheritance to her whose kindred flesh He has assumed, whose cause He has undertaken, and whose enemies, for that He is God, He can overcome.

If there were not another day of redemption, and that the redemption of the inheritance, why does the Apostle thus speak?

### **Ephesians 1**

<sup>13</sup> ...in whom also, after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,

<sup>14</sup> Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.

Here is an inheritance, of which the Spirit is but the earnest, or pledge-penny. Here is a possession, purchased indeed, but not yet redeemed. And what is the vision before us, but the demonstration of this truth, that the price of the purchase has been accepted of God; that the Goel, or Redeemer, has paid the price which was sealed up, known only to Himself and God. The vision before us is God's acknowledgment before the universe, that the Lamb slain has paid the forfeit, and is entitled to the forfeited estate.

Do we derogate from Christ's redemption of the soul, and

from His redemption of the body—whereof the former was exhibited in His perfect holiness in the life of flesh, and the latter in His resurrection and admission into the presence of God—when we maintain with the Apostles, that there is a redemption of the purchased possession, which is yet future,—an inheritance which is yet unredeemed? And what other inheritance is there, than that in which man was installed at the first, the “all things” which God made good, and man made evil? Why is the Spirit ever called a seal, and an earnest?

### **2 Corinthians 1**

<sup>22</sup> Who has also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

### **2 Corinthians 5**

<sup>5</sup> Now He that has wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also has given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

### **Ephesians 1**

<sup>14</sup> Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.

### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>30</sup> And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.

It is called a seal, and an earnest, because it is God’s pledge that we shall inherit something more. And what more beyond that which is pledged in baptism, a regenerate soul and a risen body, can we inherit but the inheritance of this world, of all things, into which Christ has entered as the heir:

### **Hebrews 1**

<sup>2</sup> Has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds.

And of which we are promised to be the joint heirs:

### **Romans 8**

<sup>17</sup> 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.

But, to cut short all argument upon this subject, and to show that this is an absolutely necessary part of a Christian's hope, I refer to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; where the cup has as entirely and exclusively to do with the inheritance, as the bread has entirely and exclusively to do with the communion of Christ's risen and glorified humanity.

**Luke 22**

<sup>20</sup> This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

**Matthew 26**

<sup>28</sup> ...for the remission of sins.

Now, as surely as bread is a sign of life, and the nourishment of it, so surely is a testament the sign of an inheritance. The New Testament has its best interpretation from the Old (*Hebrews 9*); which is that same book of the Law sprinkled with blood, and laid up in the most holy place.

Now that Old Testament, as has been said, was God's title-deeds, presented to the Jewish church on the day of her espousals, and entitling her to the inheritance of the land of Canaan as her marriage portion, according as it is written in the song of Moses:

**Deuteronomy 32**

<sup>8</sup> When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.

<sup>9</sup> For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.

And so the New Testament, which is presented to us in the Supper of the Lord, is Christ's presenting to His spouse, the Church, the joint heirship of His inheritance of the whole world, and especially of that heavenly city; those heavenly

things which were purified by His blood:

### **Hebrews 9**

<sup>23</sup> It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

And so, between the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, we have the symbol of the complete redemption:

- baptism being the pledge of a new life;
- the bread of the Lord's Supper being the pledge of Christ's glorified humanity, to invest it withal, and
- the cup being the pledge of the fellowship of His inheritance.

Seeing, then, that in creation and in redemption the inheritance is an integrant and constituent part of the Creator's work and the Redeemer's undertaking, what should we expect, after seeing Christ in His risen humanity, seated upon the heavenly throne, more worthy of being disclosed to us, than the august solemnity of putting into His hand the rights of that world which, in virtue of man's fall, reverted to the Creator, and, in virtue of the Son of Man's redemption, reverted to man again? This I believe to be the great idea which is expressed by the august ceremony here presented to our view. Into this Divine solemnity, with all the circumstances, we now proceed to examine in order.

### **SEVEN SEALS**

The book is sealed with seven seals; to indicate, as I judge, the totality and completeness of that bondage in which the inheritance of the earth was held. It appears from the opening of the seals, one after another, that there proceeds a great and mighty action upon the earth, a series of striking judgments, which issue in its being completely redeemed out of the hands of its usurpers.

Anyone comparing the word spoken after the opening of the sixth seal, *Revelation* 6:15, with the action accomplished, *Revelation* 19:18, will see at once that this action is the last action of the sealed book. Now, instantly thereon, *Revelation* 20, we have earth redeemed, and the Lord, with His saints, possessing it. This, of itself, is a proof sufficient that the sealed book is conversant with the redemption of the earth out of the hands of its possessors.

The seven seals, therefore, signify the complete bondage in which the inheritance was held, and denote that he who redeems it must be able and mighty to overcome all the enemies of God and man, to break through all the bonds of sin and Satan which had enthralled the earth.

It was one of the duties of the Goel, or redeemer, to deliver his kinsman out of prison. This Christ has virtually accomplished for the Church, when He rose from the dead: therefore He says unto John, in the former vision:

### **Revelation 1**

<sup>18</sup> I am He that lives and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore;

And unto the Church of Smyrna:

### **Revelation 2**

<sup>8</sup> These things says He which was dead, and is alive.

But that act of resurrection, though it virtually delivered us out of prison, did not give us any assurance with respect to the other part of the Redeemer's office, which is to deliver the inheritance out of bondage. And to confirm the hope of the Church, this, which is future, is made known to her understanding by the revelation made in the vision before us, where the rights of the inheritance are presented with all their incumbrances, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah prevails to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof: that is, God acknowledges Him to have paid the complete forfeiture, and to



be entitled to that which is forfeited.

The giving of the book into His hand is the acknowledgment that He had paid the price of redemption: His opening the seals is the token that He is able to rid the possession out of the hands of its usurpers; and the sevenfold act by which He does it is the demonstration of His complete authority, of His perfect power to make good His right by force of hand, whereas His receiving the book is the proof that the right is His, in the judgment of God.

And so it comes to pass that the sevenfoldness of the opening of the seals is the symbol of that perfect and complete act of providence, or rather judgment, by which Christ comes into the possession of the inheritance.

## **WRITTEN WITHIN AND ON THE BACKSIDE**

It is further said of this book, that it was written within and on the back side. It was the custom among the ancients, as it still is in the East, to do up their books in rolls, and only to write them on the inside. And it was the custom amongst the Jews, for the witnesses who subscribed the books of inheritance to subscribe them upon the back side.

But it may be as well, for the fuller information of the reader, to make the following extract from the works of Weemse, a minister of our Church, on the Judicial Law of Moses, chap. xxx:

For the manner of writing the contract, he who was to buy the ground wrote two instruments; the one to be sealed with his own signet, the other he showed unclosed to the witnesses, that they might subscribe and bear witness of that which was written. This the witnesses did subscribe upon the back of the enclosed instrument and these two instruments were almost alike in all things, save only that in the sealed instrument something was concealed from the witnesses.

The things concealed were these, the price of the land and the time of the redemption. These they concealed (for none

knew these but the buyer and the seller), in case that the Goel, or the next of the kindred, knowing the time of the redemption and the price, and the mortgager not being able to redeem it at the day, it was lawful for the next of the kindred to have redeemed it.

These two being concealed, there was place still for the poor man to redeem his land after the day: therefore they set down in the enclosed instrument only the bare disposition, without the price or time of redemption.

This gives us a reasonable, and, I think, satisfactory account of the reason for its being written on the back side. The witnesses to this deed are described at large in the 11th chapter, in language which we think will apply only to the two divisions of the Scriptures, the Old and the New Testaments.

And if so, then while within is written the full account of the inheritance, the time of its redemption, and the price for which it is to be redeemed, without will be written the various words of God contained in the Scriptures, as to the certainty of the things written within. For what is Scripture but the testimonies of redemption, and the conditions unto a redemption? These are the witnesses, in whose mouth, and at whose hand, God takes evidence of the conditions upon which the inheritance shall be redeemed; and when the Redeemer comes, he must be able to answer in all respects to that which has been witnessed of between God, the holder, and man, the forfeiter, of the inheritance.

It must have been this writing on the outside which so astonished every creature, and prevented them all from even looking on it. They could not face the conditions of the redemption. They could not even look upon them.

But when the true Redeemer appeared, and was weighed in this balance, He was not found wanting. But being found, in all respects, able to redeem, He received the book, and the heavenly host celebrated the mighty and glorious work which He had accomplished:

- The Church sung Him Redeemer of the earth;
- The angels sung Him Possessor of the sevenfold powers of nature; and
- Every creature brought Him coequal worship with Him that sits upon the throne.

Then begins the act of opening its contents. And being opened, it reveals no knowledge; but it reveals action; which action is, as we shall see, the act of delivering the inheritance from its usurpers, and obtaining possession of it for its rightful possessors.

Now, the question is, Who are its rightful possessors? When man had forfeited his right to it—man, for whom it was made—who shall possess it? If another being than man possesses it, God's purpose in creation is frustrated, and His end is defeated, which may not for a moment be imagined.

The answer to the question, "Who shall possess it?" is given in the 24th *Psalms*:

#### **Psalms 24**

<sup>3</sup> Who shall ascend into the hill of God, or who shall stand in His holy place?

This very question being proposed, the answer is:

<sup>4</sup> He that has clean hands, and a pure heart; who has not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

<sup>5</sup> He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of His salvation.

And in the next verse they become a generation:

<sup>6</sup> ...the generation that seek the face of Jacob;

Jacob is the name of Christ in His humility, as Israel (*Isaiah* 49:3) is the name for His glory. He was Jacob, the Supplanter, who, during His flesh, did supplant the present possessor of the inheritance, which is Satan. And having by the Eternal Spirit presented Himself without spot in the sight of God, He

received that righteousness from the God of His salvation, and bestows it upon a generation, the generation of those who seek His face, and are not ashamed of His flesh; according as it is written:

### **John 1**

<sup>12</sup> As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.

This chosen race being completed, behold He comes (*Isaiah* 49:7-26) along with them as the Lord of hosts, and summons the temple of Mount Sion, which is the citadel of creation, and the palace of the great King.

Righteousness, therefore, perfect and complete, is the condition unto the obtaining of the inheritance, and God's purpose has in nothing changed. Man, while he was holy, had the inheritance: when he sinned, he lost it, and became a bondslave of the devil, had the mortification and misery to see his inheritance pass over to the devil, and he himself become a bondsman upon it, a hewer of wood and drawer of water on that inheritance, of which he was heretofore the only sovereign lord.

But another man comes, the Son of man, who by perfect righteousness repossesses Himself of that inheritance which man did forfeit; and this vision is the trial of His claim, and the attestation of His right, in the face of all creation.

## **IN HIS RIGHT HAND**

Now this explains the reason why the book of the inheritance should be in the right hand of Him that sits on the throne, because it is His by right of creation. Sin does not destroy any of His works, nor does it cancel any of His rights. The usurpation of the devil did not constitute a right. The right remained with God, till He should come whose right it is, the Seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's

head.

It is in His right hand, secondly, to denote that it is the great subject of the transaction of this vision. The rainbow, symbol of the indestructible earth, is round the throne; the seven-sealed book, the title-deeds of the earth, is in His right hand; and the opening of the book is the subject of the proclamation. And when the Lamb possesses it, that they shall reign upon the earth is the burden of the song of the redeemed; and when the seals have been completely opened, the oppressors and destroyers of the earth, and Satan, the head of them all, are cast out, and the Lamb with His redeemed ones reign thereon. Who can doubt, then, that the redemption of the earth is the one great subject of the sealed book, even the restoration of the Church to her inheritance.

A third reason for which it is in His right hand is, that no one who is not perfectly holy may go and take it. The place which it occupies is the place, at once, of perfect holiness and of omnipotent power. It is within the region of the seven burning lamps, with whose purification everything must be purged, before it can come into the presence of the great King; in whose presence the book being lodged, is token to me that the book is a thing of perfect holiness, that it is the testament of a holy creation, and that no one but a perfectly holy person may dare to go near and take hold upon it.

Now this is one thing, among others, wherefore the book of the Old Testament was laid up in the most holy place, in the right side of the ark, whereby it was signified, that this testament also was perfectly holy, that perfect holiness was its condition. Now, as we have said above, that book of the Old Testament was the title-deed of Canaan's land; which land of Canaan, with Jerusalem and its temple, is, throughout all Scripture, the type of the redeemed earth, with the New Jerusalem which comes down from heaven. And so the book of the Law, on the right hand of the glory in the most holy

place, is the type of this book sealed with seven seals, which is in the right hand of the same glory now dwelling in a glorified body.

Inasmuch as the Lamb slain was a Jew, the Lion of Judah's tribe, He, by keeping the Law, first and second table, becomes the rightful owner of Canaan's land. Inasmuch as he was man, the Seed of the woman, who conquered the devil and death, He became rightful heir of the forfeited inheritance. And so much have I to say upon the subject of the sealed book, from which we now proceed to...

## THE PROCLAMATION

### Revelation 5

<sup>2</sup> And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice,  
Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals  
thereof?

I KNOW not how often the conviction comes across my mind, while meditating on the structure and interpretation of this book, that the forms of Christian society have a strong analogy with these visions; and I can also see therein the sources of almost all the superstitions peculiar to Christendom.

The idea of bearers, or supporters, in heraldry, answers to the four living creatures which upbear and support the throne of God, and the forms of chivalry also come in to illustrate the vision before us. The prize of battle is placed in the hands of someone worthy for beauty and for virtue to hold it. Then the herald proclaims aloud the challenge to the conflict, and whosoever dares to do battle comes forth into the lists.

And with respect to the offices and customs of the kingdom, and the customs, yea even superstitions, connected with marriage, I can see in them all a wonderful harmony with the language and machinery of this book. If I err not, there was some custom in the Jewish synagogue connected with the giving and receiving of the book of the Law into the hands of the reader, which was parallel with the action we are now proceeding to interpret.

The object and intention of which is, to signify that there was perfect liberty, at all times, for anyone who could, to come forward and possess the book; that the redemption of the inheritance was, at all times, open to anyone who could undertake it. Therefore the strong angel proclaimed with a loud voice:

## **Revelation 5**

<sup>2</sup> Who is able to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

The Apostle John saw this action proceeding, anterior to the coming forth of the Lamb to undertake the onerous task. This priority in the vision signifies that there was no foreclosure of the mortgage, so to speak, no cutting off of the right of redemption, until Christ should come; but that any son of man was at liberty, if he could satisfy the conditions, to gain back for mankind that which for mankind was created, and which, by the act of one man, had been forfeited, and, by the act of one Man, was to be won back again.

If any man, of Adam's loins descended, could have fulfilled that righteousness which Adam failed in, could have given perfect obedience to God's commandment; if to this he could have added the victory over death, and the breaking up of the dungeon of the grave; that man, having vanquished the devil, would have been the Redeemer of the world, and of the race, from the devil's hand.

These things no man could accomplish; no, not even to redeem his own life, that he should not see corruption. Nevertheless it was necessary that the attempt should be left open for all, in order that all mankind might be taught that their loss, and their inability to regain what they had lost, was not of the Creator's bringing on, but of the creature's own inbred wickedness: and thus the responsibility of man unto God for that holy image and likeness of Himself in which God had created him, body and soul, as also for that inheritance over which He had constituted him lord, was kept up, while the weakness and wickedness into which human nature had come was revealed.

But while the thing signified by this proclamation of the strong angel with the loud voice was going on in the communications of God to mankind, and in His dealings with this



world, by laws of righteousness and judgments of wickedness, there was, at the same time, intertwined therewith a promise and a hope that a Man would one day come who should be able to accomplish the onerous work; to the end that, all other men having been proved null and void, this Man might be proved to be more than man; yea, to the end that every creature (for the proclamation is not to men only, but to every creature) being negatived, the Man who accomplished perfect righteousness in fallen nature, and resurrection from the corruption of the grave, might be known to be, not only greater than man, but greater than a creature, and consequently the Creator Himself, in some way or other sustaining the creature, and acting in, and by, and with, the creature's powers.

Moreover, such an interlineation of the righteous law with the hopeful promise was necessary, in order that the hope of redemption might not sink flat into the grave; and that dependence upon, and desire for, a Redeemer might take possession of the world's heart.

## **AN INVITATION**

Now this proclamation by the strong angel with a voice which penetrated the upper, and the nether, and the middle regions of creation, did at least tell of redemption, and keep up the memory that Satan is but a usurper. Though no one was able to take up the dreadful challenge, the lists were kept open, and the goodwill and purpose of the Governor to bring the matter to arbitrament of fair conflict was continually signified; whereby God's favor to mankind was continually expressed, yea, and His desire that they should be reinstated was declared, while His own undeviating justice and rectitude, His unchangeable laws in respect of mankind and their inheritance, were gloriously displayed. He said evermore:

“Your father has lost for you that which for you I designed:  
he lost it by violating his fealty to me, and yielding his

homage to an enemy of mine, who has laid over you the chains of his captivity, and you are bondsmen. But come one, come all, join hand in hand, levy war against the enemy, or find some champion who single-handed will enter the lists against him, and cast him out again; and I will see the conflict and judge of the issue, and rejoice in that the usurper is cast out."

This goodwill of God to our race, this pity of God, this desire, on His part, to see us righted, is the very basis of the work of redemption; which has no origin except in the love of God to man and man's world lost. If God hated man and man's world for their sin, and pitied them not, what did redemption spring from? A good cannot spring from hatred, but is the form of love. Redemption is the greatest good, and therefore is the form of the greatest love.

But redemption contemplates not a world in freedom of holiness, but a world in bondage of sin; and therefore there is no cause nor origin for redemption, save in the goodwill of God to a sinful race and a sinful world. Of this pre-existent love, of this unchangeable love, which there is in God's heart to His creatures, of this His special delight in man, and the habitable parts of the earth, before the foundation of the world, the proclamation of the strong angelic herald is to my mind the demonstration; while, at the same time, it is the demonstration of the total inability of every creature but the Lamb which was slain, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, to do this mighty work.

## **A STRONG ANGEL**

The proclamation is given into the hands of an angel, one of the ministering spirits who take a charge over the persons and the property of the heirs of salvation. For though angel be used in this book many times over to denote a minister of the Church on earth, and also a member of the Church in heaven, yet in such cases this is done with such additions and circum-

stances as to leave no doubt concerning the special and figurative use of the word. But when it is mentioned without any speciality, as in the case before us, I think it ought to be interpreted, according to its common use in the Scriptures, of those invisible and incorporeal spirits which are employed by God on errands, especially to His Church.

And in the vision before us, where there is a special symbol for the Church—to wit, the twenty-four elders, and the four living creatures—and where the angels are distinguished from the Church, both by place and by office, and also by their song, it cannot be doubted that, upon every principle of sound interpretation, the word “angel” should be understood, not of the Church, but of that separate community of created intelligences. Besides, it were against the spirit of the office which he fulfills, which is to summon, especially, all men, that he himself should be one of those whom he summoned.

And we have further to add, that most communications, as those to Daniel and the Virgin, were made by an angel, whose name, Gabriel, signifies in the original “the strength of God.” And I think it not unreasonable to believe that the epithet “strong,” given in the text, is no more than the Greek translation of the first syllable of Gabriel’s name, and that the strong angel here spoken of was Gabriel himself. This, however, is a point which nowise concerns the interpretation of the act, though it explains the reason of the epithet, “strong,” which is given to him.

## **PROCLAIMED**

The word “proclaimed” is in the original “heralding or preaching,” being the same used in that text of Peter:

### **1 Peter 3**

<sup>19</sup> By the which he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.

And the same as is used in that text:

## **Mark 16**

<sup>15</sup> Go...and preach the Gospel unto every creature [...under heaven. - *Colossians* 1:23]

But it is not the same with that which is used of that angel, mentioned in this book (*Revelation* 14:6), who preaches the everlasting Gospel to the nations. The word in the passage before us is, merely, doing the office of a herald; the other is, doing the office of an evangelist: between which there is this difference:

- the former has allusion to the office which he fulfills, and the latter to the message which he bears;
- the former is proper to an angel or to a man, but the latter is proper only to a man and a minister of the Church.

I know not whether, in putting this proclamation into the mouth of an angel, and not of a man, it be not signified that until the Redeemer came, and took the inheritance into a man's hand, God's proclamations about it went on through the instrumentality of angels, according as it is declared by the Apostle in divers places:

## **Galatians 3**

<sup>19</sup> Wherefore then serves the law? It was...ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

## **Hebrews 2**

<sup>2</sup> If the word spoken by angels was steadfast...

For, as we have shown above, the proclamation put into the mouth of the angel is, in truth, the whole substance of God's dealings with men, by the Law and otherwise, anterior to the coming of Christ. The whole of what God spoke in the Old Testament contains, everywhere, this challenge, yea, and invitation, to mankind:

Come one, come all; win back your inheritance.

Therefore is there not only a congruity and a custom, but

there is really an ordinance of God, in the putting of the proclamation into the mouth of an angel, and not of a man. If now anyone should inquire of me:

And wherefore did God minister the law by angels, and speak by their mouth those words, so terrible, which man's ear could not bear to have spoken to them again?

The answer, I think, is, that the Law being the expression of justice and severity, not of grace—"for the Law came by Moses, but grace came by Jesus Christ" (*John* 1:17)—it was necessary to use another ministry than that of man. Or, to speak this thing more logically, God signifies by using angels for the ministry of wrath and terror, and by using man for the ministry of grace, that it is a part of His purpose, and of the constitution of His creatures, that in mankind, in the election from amongst men, His grace should be told out; while in the elect angels, and by them, His severity and wrath should be forever told out.

And this is the reason, as I take it, why Christ comes to judgment attended with an innumerable company of angels; and by the same method I justify the tradition of the Church, if it be not in the Scriptures (which at present I do not remember), that the evil angels shall make wicked men their thralls in the lake of fire, whereof I think the truth was also shown unto the world by the demoniacal possessions.

## THE SEALED BOOK

Now, for the proclamation itself, it was made with a great voice, large enough to fill the vault of heaven, and to re-echo through the hoary depths below, and to penetrate every chamber of creation, and to fall upon the ear of every intelligent creature. And the purport of it was:

### Revelation 5

<sup>2</sup>Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

Concerning the conditions upon which this sealed book would be surrendered by God we have already discoursed a little under this head, and shall have opportunity of discoursing further, when the worthy One presents Himself; for it is better to discourse positively upon the positive than upon the negative instance.

When an inheritance in Israel was, for any reason, parted with by its rightful owner, the deed of transfer was sealed up between the two parties, and lodged in the hand of him who had made a temporary purchase of it; for, as has been said, at the time of the jubilee it reverted back to the family whose it was by original right of settlement.

In this sealed book there was entered a time at which the inheritor might redeem it out of the hands of the temporary possessor: and when he so redeemed it, he received into his own hand the sealed book, which he might then open, and so enter into his possession again. The opening of the book, therefore, and the loosing of its seals, was the standing sign, in Israel, of an inheritance recovered.

When, therefore, it is proclaimed, “Who is worthy to open the book, or to loose the seals thereof?” it is the same as if it had been said:

Who can repossess himself of the earth, which heretofore was given for the inheritance of man? Who is worthy to do it? Who has about him all the requisites of the Redeemer?

## **CREATION’S INABILITY TO REDEEM**

And what reply was made to this proclamation by the creatures of God? It is answered:

### **Revelation 5**

<sup>3</sup> And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

In the original it is not “no man,” but “no one.” And yet, as we shall show in the sequel, to be a redeemer it was necessary

that he should be of the same family and kindred with him whose inheritance is redeemed—the nearest of kin—as may be seen at large in the 4th chapter of the book of *Ruth*.

I have no doubt, however, that this challenge, issued forth from the throne of God, and answered with the profound silence of all creation, was addressed to angels as well as men; for angels, as well as men, rejoice to find that the Lamb is able to open it. It is not the Church only, but likewise the angelic host, who sing the song, “worthy is the Lamb that was slain:” and I nothing doubt that the angels, as well as mankind, were interested in this transaction, which concerns the whole creation, and the glory of God the Creator, and ends in the destruction of Satan and his angels, and all wicked men, from the habitable parts of the world.

If the angels rejoiced at His birth, if the angels comforted Him in His tribulations; if Michael fought against the dragon and his angels, in the good cause of casting out the usurper; we may well believe, as their song proves, that they took the deepest interest in that which was proclaimed abroad.

As to their inability to redeem, it stands in their not being of kin; in their not being able to be tempted as we are, through the flesh and the material world; and in their not being able to die and rise again from the dead incorruptible. Besides, they were never installed in the possession: it was not theirs at first; they are but servants to its Lord, and though, for His sake and for God’s glory, they would fain see it redeemed, yet well they know it is not theirs to redeem it.

How vain and foolish then, not to say wicked and abominable, is that Arian heresy, which would make the Redeemer to have been of the order of angels or archangels! The proclamation is made to them also, but they are dumb: the challenge is cast down in the midst of the assembled congregation of heaven, but no one is able to take it up.

Let every mouth then be stopped on earth, if every mouth

was shut in heaven. What dream you, what dote you, O vain men, that you are able to redeem yourselves, or that anyone is able to redeem them on earth, or in heaven, save the Lamb that was slain? He is the Redeemer, the only Redeemer: glory to Him in the highest.

## HEAVEN, EARTH, UNDER THE EARTH

With respect to the three divisions of place, in the heaven, upon earth, and under the earth, I have little to say, except that it includes all creation.

The heavenlies—commonly rendered in our version the heavenly things, or the heavenly places—includes those things which are represented in this vision, and of which Paul gives nearly the same enumeration:

### Hebrews 12

<sup>22</sup> But you are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

<sup>23</sup> To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

<sup>24</sup> And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel.

And of these things he says (*Hebrews* 9:22), that they required to be purified with better sacrifices than those with which the Old Testament was purified.

When the book of the Law was sprinkled with the blood of bulls and of goats, it became a holy thing; that is to say, the whole institution of which it was the germ; the promises of which it was the record became fixed and sure: and the people were also sprinkled with the same blood. So, also, the heavenly things contained in this book, of which it is the deed and document, and the Church which is there in the pure and holy presence of God, are, by the blood of the Lamb, who here



presents Himself, made holy.

These heavenly persons and heavenly things are not as yet under the conditions of space and time; they are not within the region of the sense; they form the spiritual and invisible world, which is declared in all the Scripture as about to be manifested in the last time.

The whole spiritual world heard the challenge in mute dismay. They burned with zeal; but they lacked the power to redeem. How their zeal was kindled is proved by the full horn of their honor, and riches, and power, which they poured out upon Him who accomplished the mighty deed.

To the powers in heaven are added those in earth and those under the earth. What are on the earth we all know; and their inability to redeem we all witness, in the sinfulness, and mortality, and corruption of every creature which has lived on earth, save only the Lamb, the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

This our inability to redeem is beautifully set forth in the 49th *Psalms*, where the emptiness and vanity of riches are exposed in these expressive terms:

**Psalms 49**

<sup>6</sup> They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;

<sup>7</sup> None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him;

<sup>8</sup> (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceases for ever;)

<sup>9</sup> That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.

And the nature of the bondage, and of the redemption, is thus described:

<sup>14</sup> Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.

<sup>15</sup> But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave:

for He shall receive me.

This shows that redemption is the bringing up again of the body from the grave, and the soul from Hades, and the uniting of them in that state of dominion to which God destined, and with which He invested them at first.

Redemption is not merely the deliverance of the soul from sin, as they often preach; which, though the beginning and cause, is not the whole of our bondage. If I could, or rather I should say, if I did, through the Holy Spirit, resist all sin during my life, I am not thereby redeemed. I must be raised from the dead: I must be restored to my inheritance, and my inheritance restored to me. Then am I redeemed.

This the Psalmist, in the *Psalm* already referred to, mocks rich men for continually attempting, by calling their possessions by their names, and supposing that they should continue forever. This he blesses God for performing unto him, and unto all the upright. And this, which in that *Psalm* is so beautifully expressed, is the true Scriptural idea of redemption. Wherefore it is said in the 8th chapter of the *Romans*:

### **Romans 8**

<sup>23</sup> We who have the firstfruits of the Spirit...wait...for the redemption of the body.

And in the 1st chapter of the *Ephesians* we are said likewise to wait:

### **Ephesians 1**

<sup>14</sup> ...until the redemption of the purchased possession [or *inheritance*. vs. 11]

That to redeem himself is man's great effort under the sun, everything proclaims. All human labor is an honest, but ineffectual, attempt at redemption. The moralist labors to redeem the soul, and all education of youth is to the same effect.

- To preserve the body from disease, and as long as possible from death, is a chief part of the labor of every

man under the sun.

- To reclaim the earth from its barrenness, to tame the living creatures, and to drag forth from the mines their hidden treasures, and by every means to repossess the world, is another chief part of man's occupation.
- To beautify the person, to cleanse its defilement, and prevent its corruption;
- To obtain power, and to exercise dominion; and, by justice and equity, to repress wickedness; by chastisement, and imprisonment, and death, to prevent crimes;

These are the aspirations of man, his endeavors after that estate of immortal supremacy which lie held over the innocent world in the day of his creation.

Thus God preserved, in the natural workings of our fallen nature and this fallen world, a continual testimony to that which we have been, and to that which we are yet to be; and the Gospel of redemption by Jesus Christ is no more than the presentation unto faith and hope of that perfect and complete blessedness, which, by fits and starts, and partial undertakings, mankind are, without any exception, struggling to obtain. We on the earth do ever confess our desire after redemption; and we do ever betray our inability to redeem ourselves.

With respect to the things under the earth, I know not well what to say; for of them we seem to have little information in the Scriptures. Our Lord is declared by St. Paul to have first descended into the lower parts of the earth, before He ascended into the heavens; and in the 63rd *Psalms* it is said of the enemies of our King, who seek His life:

### **Psalms 63**

<sup>9</sup> But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth.

I quote this last passage, not as though it had any mystical or symbolical meaning, but because it gives us the key to a

symbol continually occurring in the Scriptures,—leviathan, the great dragon in the waters,—and connects that symbol, whatever it be, with the subject before us.

Man's dominion was originally over the fish of the sea, as well as the beasts of the earth, and the fowls of heaven; and therefore the Redeemer must operate in each of these three spheres. And as God will not suffer Himself to be considered as the oppressor, who is truly only the Benefactor, He opens, or rather keeps open, the power of redemption, and issues the challenge to redeem unto these three provinces of the oppressed world.

But it may be questioned, Who are these under the earth to be thus addressed? The answer to which is twofold: First, that if they were only dumb unintelligent creatures, God, their Creator, would not demean Himself in addressing it to them. Nay, it is of the propriety of the vision, that to them it should be addressed, forasmuch as after the angels have acknowledged the achievements of the Lamb, every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, do likewise present their homage. And this is consistent with the whole of Scripture, as may be seen in the 96th and 97th *Psalms*, and in that sublime Canticle, the 149th *Psalms*. God does not think so meanly of His lower creatures and the earth as our religionists do.

The other answer is derived from the consideration of the texts above, together with the symbol of leviathan in the waters. When we look to the conclusion of this book, we find:

- One portion of men come out of heaven along with Christ to reign upon the earth. *Revelation*, ch. 19 and 20.
- A second part of men render their government upon the earth, who are at length led astray by Satan, and consumed with fire from heaven.
- A third part of men, who come up to judgment from the sea, and from death, and from Hades. *Revelation* 20:13.

Now this last class of men, who arise to be judged according to their works, and of whom every one is condemned who is not found written in the book of life, are those who I understand to be addressed in the text, as under the earth; not all the dead, but as many of them as are not with Christ in the heavenly state, who are not elected to be to the honor of the bride, to the office of kings, but have to stand their trial at the last judgment. And these are to be judged according to their works.

These being regarded as still in existence, though separate spirits—as truly so indeed as the spirits of the saints in glory—are called on to redeem themselves if they can. But the depth said, “It is not in me;” the sea said, “It is not in me.”

As holding these in thralldom, leviathan and the dragon are continually set forth in Scripture; a figure beyond any doubt taken from Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who held the children of Israel in base bondage, and would have prevented them from going free:

### **Ezekiel 29**

<sup>3</sup> Speak, and say, Thus says the Lord God; Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lies in the midst of his rivers, which has said, My river is my own, and I have made it for myself.

### **Psalms 74**

<sup>13</sup> You divided the sea by Your strength: You broke the heads of the dragons in the waters.

This leviathan, this form of infernal bondage, is destroyed by the Lord in the same day or period wherein He judges the earth for its iniquity, and receives His people unto Himself. *Isaiah 26:20* contains the exaltation of His Church:

### **Isaiah 26**

<sup>20</sup> Come, my people, enter into your chambers, and shut your doors about you: hide yourself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

The next verse contains the redemption of the earth:

<sup>21</sup> For, behold, the Lord comes out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain

And the verse following contains the destruction of leviathan in the sea:

### **Isaiah 27**

<sup>1</sup> In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

This leviathan, Job after describing him by the similitude of a great fish (for the type of Pharaoh was not yet in being), denominates king over all the children of pride.

As to the localities expressed by the words, “in heaven, in earth, and under the earth,” I think that it is thus written after the common notion of men, which regards the earth as a level plain, with one part of creation above it, bright and glorious; and another part of creation below it, dark and dismal.

But as we do not therefore suppose heaven the dwelling-place of Christ and the saints to be over our heads, so do we not suppose that the dwelling-place of the souls in Hades is under our feet. As by heaven we understand the invisible abode of those who there abide, so by the expression “under the earth” we understand no more than the inferior place, likewise invisible, in which the others abide; between which two places there is an impassable gulf.

It is not necessary, I think, to conclude, with some of the Fathers, that because it is said under the earth, and lower parts of the earth, we must understand the place of those who are not in heaven, within the bounds of this habitable world. It is sufficient, I conceive, that as the one denotes superiority of condition in every respect to this earth, so the other de-

notes inferiority of condition. Be it observed, that in what I have said I make no reference whatever to the place of punishment, which has for its name “the lake of fire;” concerning which nothing is said in the passage before us.

To all these regions, then, of heaven, and earth, and under the earth, the challenge to redeem, the challenge to possess themselves of the book, and to open it, is made from the throne of heaven by the mouth of a strong angel, that with his mighty and loud voice its notes might be sent circling to creation’s extremest bounds. But they turned away from it in despair; these horrible seals it passed their might to open.

This sublime silence represented the helplessness into which creation had fallen; and, if helpless in itself, whence could its help come but from somewhere out of creation? And what is there out of creation but the Creator Himself?

This sublime challenge proceeded not from the desire to nonplus creation; it is no idle demonstration of the creature’s helplessness, or the Creator’s triumph over it; but is the demonstration of the Creator’s desire to see, and purpose to have it redeemed, and likewise of His intention and His purpose that this redemption should from creation itself proceed.

Be it remembered, be it sacredly borne in mind, that there is nothing done by God for appearance, but that everything has in it either the reality of a fact that has been done, or has to be done.

- That the challenge should go forth to creation proves, that from creation the redemption was to proceed.
- That the challenge should not be accepted by creation proves, that from creation alone it could not proceed.

And these two inferences joined together show that the Creator and creature must combine together in order to produce the redemption.





## THE SEER'S DISTRESS

WE HAVE already observed, in the course of this Lecture, that the words and actions given unto the several persons of this wonderful revelation are to be looked upon, not so much with respect to the persons themselves, as to the part which is appointed to each in the economy of the whole piece. By this device, which is the law of every mystery, the words uttered by the various mystical personages do mightily help to the understanding of the matters intended to be revealed.

The sense of hearing lends its aid to the sense of seeing, in extricating the matter enigmatically set forth. Of this, which we shall find to be a constant rule, we have a beautiful instance in the verse which comes next to be interpreted.

### **Revelation 5**

<sup>4</sup> And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

What now, I would ask, was there to occasion this deep distress of the seer; and wherefore should the mention of the same be introduced amongst the parts of so sublime and awful a vision? Was it that he felt his curiosity disappointed? This is no sufficient reason for the passionate sorrow which these words express. Was it that he understood the weighty issues unto the Church and world which were involved in the taking and opening of the book? I say not but that he had an impression of the issues which rested thereon, while yet I doubt whether, at this stage of the revelation, he could, from natural understanding, have such a sentiment or feeling thereof, as is represented in the passage before us.

But the true resolution of the difficulty is in remembering that John was in the Spirit, and, being in the Spirit, was used by the Spirit, not only for witnessing unto the Church, but

likewise for expressing the feeling which is proper to the Church. This passion of sorrow, this much weeping, I regard to be as much the inward work of the Spirit within the seer as his transportation into heaven, and his beholding these scenes, was the work of the Spirit upon him from without. By which impression of deep grief made upon his mind, it is indicated how deeply concerning to the Church was the opening of this sealed book.

John, in this respect, personates, as it were, the Church on earth; not the Church which then was, but the embodied Church of all times and ages. And because this person is represented as the chief mourner over the unopened books, we do well conclude that the opening thereof chiefly concerns this earth and the oppressions which the Church endures thereon.

The seer weeping, with many tears, represents to me that long and sore afflicted widow, the Church, weeping before the indulgent long-suffering Judge, over the spoliation of her inheritance;—the sons of the bridechamber weeping and fasting because the Bridegroom is taken from them, and His house has been oppressed by the sons of the alien.

This seems to me to give a worthy and delightful account both of the affection which the Spirit impressed upon the seer, and likewise of its cause and its particular mention in this place; for, as I have often said, there are no mere shows and appearances in the Word of God. Everything has under it a reality, and is the most appropriate method of bodying forth the reality which it contains.

The Spirit impressed it upon John's heart that the opening of it mightily concerned him, and that embodied Church of which he stood the only representative in the celestial assembly. And, forasmuch as he alone was thus distressed, it is well and distinctly signified, that though the action in progress, and for a while sisted in its progress, did mightily concern ev-

ery form of being here represented; it concerned, in the way of pain and deliverance from pain, of sorrow, and of consolation, that portion of the creatures which are on the earth.

It is a book whose sealedness is our distress, whose openness is our joy. This consideration, added to the hope of reigning on the earth, which the taking of it at once begets in the glorified Church, puts it beyond a doubt that our interpretation given above is the true one; to wit, that this book is the book of the inheritance, which, so long as it remains sealed in the hands of God, does bespeak the inheritance unredeemed; which, so soon as it is possessed by another, does signify the inheritance of the earth, redeemed.

While John was thus affected, he received prompt consolation from one of the elders, who said unto him:

#### **Revelation 5**

<sup>5</sup> Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

In order to interpret this verse completely, it ought first to be explained why the office of comforting John with this information is given to one of the elders, and not to one of the living creatures, or one of the angels.

Now, by taking this instance along with the only other instance which occurs in the book of an elder acting a part, which is likewise to instruct and inform the seer (*Revelation* 7:13), and setting these two instances into contrast with the action of the several living creatures, one by one, recorded in *Revelation* 6 and in *Revelation* 15, it appears to me that the characteristic difference between the two is this:

- The living creatures do act as the immediate and personal attendants upon the Lamb, between Him and His Church, calling their attention perpetually to His glorious acts;

- The elders, without such near and immediate contact, do the office of instructors, and interpreters, and comforters to the Church.

I think anyone reflecting upon the action of the four living creatures at the opening of each seal, and the action of that one who carries forth the seven vials of the seventh seal, must be convinced, as well by the importance of those actions, as by the voice of thunder with which they are accompanied, that they fulfill a more important ministry, both in respect to its higher origin from Christ Himself, and its effects upon the earth, than do the elders, who merely fulfill the subsidiary part of explaining, by natural speech, those things which need to be explained.

And this also concurs with the opinion which we have given upon the radical difference between these two symbols,—to wit, that the one is the action of the Church subsisting in that spiritual glory in which Christ appeared to Saul; the other the action of the Church in that risen, but not yet glorified, body in which He abode with His disciples for forty days, previous to His ascension.

And next, as to the reason why the comforter is not an angel, we observe that every act, without exception, in this book, which proceeds between Christ and His Church, is carried on by the intervention, not of an angel, but of a saint, a member of the disembodied Church.

Angels are, indeed, the Creator's servants for ministering to Christ and His Church; but it were utterly incongruous that they should communicate between Christ and His members, seeing they have no standing under Christ as Redeemer, and are not, therefore, fitted nor able to bring a message from the Redeemer to the redeemed. For this fitness is obtained by being begotten of the Spirit by Christ Jesus; and if to obtain the knowledge and fellow-feeling of man's condition, God Himself had to become man, then we may well believe, that to

convey that sympathy from Him to us belongs to no creature who is not renewed in the same image.

No foreign body can interpose itself between the members and the head, without destroying the ease and operations of the body: so assuredly may no creature, of however lofty a name, interpose between the Head of the Church and the body, which is His fullness:

### **Ephesians 1**

<sup>23</sup> ...the fullness of Him which fills all in all.

Angels are not of that body, but are ministers to its comfort and necessity. Angels, indeed, did minister to Christ in the days of His flesh, sent by the Father to His consolation, and legions of such He had ever at His command. This is a ministry between God and the Head of the Church, the like of which we affirm to be continually present with us; but it is not a ministry within the Church itself, between the Head and the members, which is the point now under consideration. And this ministry I say, upon the authority of this book, is carried on, not by angels, but by the glorified saints.

We have already seen that the elders and the four living creatures are glorified saints; and the same thing we shall prove, in its place, both of the trumpet-bearing and the vial-bearing angels, of whom the former receive their commission to blow for Christ, and the latter their vials to pour out, from one of the living creatures. All the machinery whereby the intercommunion between the Church on earth and Christ in glory is carried on, all the angels by whom Christ executes His wrath upon the spoilers of His purchased inheritance, are purely ecclesiastical.

And thence we gather the comfortable doctrine, that the saints departed are still active in the service of Christ in the invisible world; being employed by Him in continual ministrings to His Church on earth. If it were not so, to die would be

no promotion of our blessedness, and the spirits of the departed must be in a state of unconsciousness, or of inactive consciousness, something akin to sleep; both of which views are to be resisted.

How a disembodied spirit should be able to fulfill ministries to the Church is no more difficult than how an angel should, which we all believe. This, however, is not a point of argument, but a point of interpretation: one of these elders communicates with, and comforts John; and if in the latter we see the Church embodied represented in one person, so in the other do we see the disembodied Church represented.

And the kind of intercourse which proceeds is most comfortable to reflect upon. I fear that many, in thinking of the Church or body of Christ, think only of the living saints, or of the general congregation of the dead and the living at His coming: but this is not sufficient; for whosoever is united to Him by the Holy Ghost, cannot be separated again, but has everlasting life ever subsisting in him; and having this, then, in the separate estate, he must still be as closely connected with, and as much subservient to the Head, and surely not less employed by Him in the great ends of His office, than those who now abide on earth.

I do not find the Apostle at any pains even to divide between the Church embodied and disembodied, but always preserving the unity of the Church in defiance of death and hell, and every other enemy. And when he makes mention of the body of Christ, or of the Church, it is always in the full feeling of its unity.

Whenever we pray for the coming of Christ and His saints, and their kingdom, whenever we pray for the whole Church, we pray for those in the heavens as well as those on the earth: for all allow that by the resurrection there is a great change made in their conditions, a great addition to their power. And he that omits praying for this consummation, omits by far the

most spiritual and comprehensive part of prayer; which no church that offers the Lord's Prayer suffers to be omitted.

Out of the abuse of this great truth of the oneness of the Church whenever that word is used in our prayers, discourses, or otherwise, the Romanists brought their accursed dogma of prayers for the dead, that their condition might be changed; which to substantiate they added the abomination of purgatory. Likewise their doctrine that souls ought to be prayed to as intercessors; whence also came the pretensions of the Pope to take Christ's office of judgment, and give forth by name who they are that be entitled to the homage.

These, like every other false doctrine of the Apostasy, are the corruptions of great truths; some of which already appear, and others will appear as we proceed. Only thus much we have seen it good to say, in order to explain, and defend against abuse, the great principle which we have laid down above, concerning the occupation of the saints in the separate estate, and their blessed ministries to the Church.

What have we then in the dialogue before us, but the Church disembodied, represented in the person of the elder, comforting the Church embodied, represented in the person of the seer, concerning the inheritance of the earth, out of which she has been so long kept by wicked oppressors, and directing her attention to the only Redeemer, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David.

A very sublime and touching incident it is in this grand representation, to see the greater knowledge into which our brethren are advanced by death, and the gracious end of comforting us to which they apply their newborn faculties. It is sweet to see the unity of the Church, and to hear the communion of its two parts concerning its great Head, the Redeemer of man's soul, from the power of the flesh; of man's body, from the power of death; and of the world, man's inheritance, from the power of the devil.





## THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH

**N**OW, as concerns the two names here given to Him who is worthy, or rather who has prevailed, to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof, we must take ourselves to task, and show wherefore, out of the many names by which He is designated in the Holy Scriptures, these two should be specially chosen, as best fitted to represent the character in which He comes before us, as the only one within creation who is able to look upon and open the seven-sealed book. For, as has oft been said, nothing—no, not a word—in this revelation of Jesus Christ is introduced at random, but labors, in its place, to tell out the burdensome and most weighty truth which it contains.

First, then, let us discourse a little of the name, “the Lion of the tribe of Judah,” and of its appropriateness in this place. The origin of this name is beyond doubt to be found in those fates or destinies of the tribes, pronounced over them by their father Jacob, before his death; where of Judah it is said:

### **Genesis 49**

<sup>9</sup> Judah is a lion’s whelp: from the prey, my son, you are gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?

From this prophecy, no doubt, the lion came to be the standard of the tribe of Judah. Wherefore this emblem should be applied to Messiah, of all the children of Judah, is likewise manifest from the verse next following, in which He is mentioned as the Gatherer of the people; the Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign to the people:

### **Isaiah 11**

<sup>10</sup> And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

This expression which I have just quoted from *Isaiah*, I may observe by the way, contains in it the substance of both designations in the text: the Lion of the tribe of Judah being the ensign, and the Root of Jesse being the same with the Root of David.

In the passage from the fates of the tribes he is designated not only the Lion of the tribe of Judah, but the Lawgiver, the Scepter-bearer, the Shiloh, and the Standard or ensign; and one action of His is described, which is the action of treading the wine-press, and staining His garments with the blood of grapes;—an action which we know, from considering *Isaiah* 63:2 and *Revelation* 19:13, is the action of treading down the oppressors of His inheritance and taking possession of it for Himself and His people.

The passage in *Isaiah* being taken in connection with the context, is the preparation for bringing His chosen people into the promised land, and making Jerusalem a praise in the earth: which He does by the slaughter of Edom, the oppressor of His people; that is, by the judgment of the Gentile apostate nations,—for a vineyard is the symbol of the Church, and a vineyard destroyed by judgment is the symbol of an apostate Church subverted forever.

The corresponding passage in the book of *Revelation* makes this still more manifest; for there the heads and the kings of the earth are congregated against Him, and by Him destroyed, to make way for Him and His sanctified ones to reign over the earth. This expression, therefore, “the Lion of the tribe of Judah,” being looked at in the origin of it, is connected with the dispossession of the usurpers from the inheritance by strength of hand, and fury poured out; and this will be most strikingly confirmed as we proceed to show the application of this name in other parts of Scripture.

In the 31st chapter of *Isaiah*, where the subject is the destruction of the Assyrian—who, all throughout that prophet,

personates, both by his character and his catastrophe, the last great oppressor of Israel—it is thus written to the children of Israel, whom the Lord commands not to trust in others, but in Him only:

### **Isaiah 31**

<sup>4</sup> Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.

<sup>5</sup> As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem: defending also He will deliver it, and passing over He will preserve it.

Here the Lord as the lion appears for the deliverance of His inheritance against the many shepherds or kings who would fain retain their dominion over it. He comes down from His place of rest; and the end for which He comes is to deliver Jerusalem, when all help of man has failed, when she is compassed about with armies, and can be approached only as a bird flies.

This the beleaguered and distressed condition of Jerusalem, and the Lord's coming down to deliver her, derives much illustration from *Zechariah* 14:3 and *Ezekiel* 38:19, &c.; where His people restored to their land by some combinations of events are "overturned, overturned, overturned, till He comes whose right it is," and the Lord gives it unto Him. And, behold, in this great act of claiming and delivering His inheritance, He takes to Himself the name of the Lion and the young Lion of Israel; in which day, be it observed further, that idolatries forever cease in Israel, and the oppressing Assyrian forever perishes (*Isaiah* 31).

The next passage of the holy prophets which I take for confirmation of the doctrine, that this name is proper unto Christ as the Redeemer of the inheritance, is derived from two chap-

ters of *Jeremiah*, in which it occurs in exactly the same words, —first in the destruction of Edom, *Jeremiah* 49:29, and next in the destruction of Babylon, *Jeremiah* 50:44. The reason of this repetition is, that Edom and Babylon are the types of the same Antichristian confederacy; the former of the apostate Church, the latter of the oppressing and imprisoning kingdom.

The passage is as follows (upon which as I proceed I shall give a brief commentary):

### **Jeremiah 50**

<sup>44</sup> Behold He shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan unto the habitation of the strong.

The person here likened unto the lion, if we observe the context of the 49th chapter, is, beyond doubt, Jehovah Himself, who has threatened (*Jeremiah* 49:16) to bring down the soaring pride of Edom, and (verse 17) to put to flight every man therein abiding. And now (verse 19) He does the work which He had threatened: He does it in the person of His elected One; of Him “who is like Me, the Shepherd that will stand before Me.”

If, again, we take it from *Jeremiah* 50, the person who comes up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan, to destroy the habitation of the strong ones, is clearly the Redeemer, the strong Redeemer, the Lord of hosts, who pleads the cause of Judah against Babylon, described in verses 33 and 34:

### **Jeremiah 50**

<sup>41</sup> Behold, a people shall come from the north, and a great nation, and many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.

That is, as I conceive, the tribes of Israel, His battle-axe and weapons of war described in the following chapter, verses 19-25. He, then, Jehovah of hosts, He, the Redeemer of Israel, comes up from the swelling of Jordan: that is, in the time of harvest, when Jordan overflows all his banks (*Joshua* 3:15),

and when the lions that infest the thickets of Jordan's banks are forced for safety and for food, with ravenous haste, upon the shepherds and their flocks; then and thus comes He up to the habitation of the strong, which in the 49th chapter is Bozrah, where the Edomite made his nest like an eagle in the rock, as it is written also in:

### **Psalm 108**

<sup>10</sup> Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?

In the chapter above, Babylon is spoken of in the context as the hammer of the whole earth. Unto the habitation of the strong ones, the Redeemer comes up, as a lion to destroy her; and straightway she is deserted; they flee away from her: and now God asks for a chosen one, to appoint over her, and who this chosen one is we have written in the 42nd chapter of *Isaiah*, verse 1: He also who is like God, He also who is that Shepherd of Israel, who in that day shall stand before God. Compare now this passage with *Micah* 2:12-13, 5:4, to the end; with *Hosea* 11:10; and it will be manifest how true are the interpretations given above, concerning the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

To perceive likewise how constantly this warning of the lion is connected with the deliverance of the inheritance and the destruction of the oppressors or false shepherds, examine *Jeremiah* 25:30,—which prophesies of evil to all nations in the day that Jehovah roars from on high, and utters His voice from His holy habitation, and mightily roars upon His habitation, and gives a shout as they that tread the grape against all the inhabitants of the earth, and thus concludes:

### **Jeremiah 25**

<sup>38</sup> He has forsaken His covert as the lion.

Consult also *Joel* 3:16; *Isaiah* 42:13; *Zechariah* 2:13. The idea is, that for a season the Lion of Judah's tribe should couch

Himself to rest in His covert, even as He has done since His removal from amongst us; and at length by the provocation of the idol shepherds destroying His habitation, His dam and His cubs, upon whom His eye ever rests, He should at length rouse Himself in madness, and roar against His enemies, and with the roaring of His mouth scatter them; and with the tearing of His teeth destroy them; and with the treading of His feet trample them down.

This expression of God's roaring, or lifting up His voice, is a keyword in the prophecies, which always has respect unto the time, when from silent forbearing God changes His purpose, and comes to revenge. I say, to all students of prophecy, that this act of scattering His enemies from Jerusalem and the inheritance of His people in the day of His fierce anger, in the day of vengeance and recompenses for the controversy of Zion, is the mighty act by which He achieves for Himself His name of Strength, the Lion of Judah's tribe.

These conclusions, derived from the prophets of the old dispensation, are all confirmed and made ours by a passage in this book, wherein Christ, coming from heaven, clothed with the cloud of His Father's glory, and crowned with a rainbow, the symbol of the redeemed earth,

### **Revelation 10**

<sup>2</sup> ...sets His right foot upon the sea, and His left foot on the earth,

<sup>3</sup> And cries with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when He had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

This action speaks itself to be the act of taking possession of the inheritance of the terraqueous globe: it occurs at the conclusion of the sixth trumpet, and immediately before the blast of the seventh, when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

The end of this appearance is to postpone for a while the conclusion of the mystery; to declare that the time should not

be yet (as the last clause of the 6th verse should be translated), but at the sounding of the seventh trumpet; being, as has been observed already, parallel with the last chapter of *Daniel*, where after the time, times, and a half, are given, a further period is likewise given; so here, at the time of the ending of the 6th trumpet, which is parallel with the ending of the 6th seal, there is an act of postponement, during which the seven thunders utter their voices.

These seven thunders are the same with the seven vials, which consummate the wrath of God, and dispossess the usurpers of the inheritance: Christ comes at the time appointed in the prophecy of *Daniel*, when the time, times, and half a time, are concluded, and gives a further revelation, to the effect that the last blast is not yet to be blown, but shall be in the day of the seventh angel.

The roaring of the lion, therefore, is the season during which Christ acts, to the discomfiture of those whom He placed in His vineyard of this earth, that they might render unto His Father the fruits thereof; who, forgetting their responsibility, and being long warned without effect, are at once consumed by the word of His mouth, and destroyed by the brightness of His coming.

That period is now in progress: six of those thunders have, as we believe, been heard upon the earth; being the six great events which have befallen Christendom since the French Revolution. We wait for the seventh, which, being the completion of this fearful voice, is that which, in the Old Testament, is referred to under the symbol of the lion's roar.

The period appointed for the rule of the oppressor, the time, times, and a half, of the 4th beast being accomplished, all the Old Testament prophecies would have led us instantly to expect the thing constantly foreshown therein by the lion's roar; which expectation, accordant with His word, God satisfies by exhibiting His Son, in the raiment of the great heir and pos-

essor, roaring against His enemies, and revealing further, that this event, like all others in the Old Testament, had a season and a time for its accomplishment; which, by comparing the 10th of *Revelation* with the 12th of *Daniel*, we do ascertain to be the thirty and the forty-five prophetic days, during which the act of recompense and revenge is brought to its termination.

Let this suffice to show what is meant by the name, “the Lion of the tribe of Judah,” to what event it refers, and at what time that event shall have its accomplishment: and now let us study the propriety of using this name on this particular occasion.

The challenge issued to every creature within creation’s bounds was to open the book of the inheritance of the earth, sealed with seven seals. These seals are the bonds upon the inheritance, which, as they are opened one by one, out flies a strong one, dispossessing the usurper, until he is finally dispossessed: they are riders, who go forth in succession; and the last rider, who finishes the work (*Revelation* 6), is the Lion of the tribe of Judah Himself, who finishes the work by stroke of battle.

The opening of the seals is an act of strength, not of revelation; an exploit of war, not a word of doctrine; a controversy for a kingdom, not the preaching of a lesson of truth. And so it ought to be, if that book be the book of the inheritance; for what has knowledge to do with the redemption of an inheritance? But strength has indeed to do with it; for, as has been said, one of the offices of a redeemer was to deliver the inheritance out of the hands of the strong, both to avenge the blood of the heir and to deliver him out of the prison-house.

The heirs of the earth are the meek, the upright, the chosen ones of God, the election according to grace: these Satan has raged against and slain, and their blood from beneath the altar cries unto God for vengeance. Over them also Satan has con-



structed the prison-house of Babylon; which is the beast, and the false prophet, and the kings of the earth in confederation. It therefore is as necessary an accomplishment of our Redeemer, that He should be able to break the gates of Babylon, and to cast out the old serpent, and to fulfill the part of the avenger of blood—that is, to be the Judge of the quick and the dead—as that He should give His blood a ransom for our sins.

Now to express the greatness of His strength, and likewise His act of revenge upon the oppressors of His people, the roaring of the lion is, as we have seen, a most frequent symbol in the Old Testament. And having been already sanctified in the Word of God, to this end it is most appropriately employed in the passage before us, to designate Him who has strength enough to wrestle with the old serpent, and crush his head.

Besides the addition of the words, “the tribe of Judah,” bespeaks Him coming in the strength of the thousands of Israel. As the King of the Jews, as the Shiloh to whom the gathering of the people is to be, as the Shepherd and Stone of Israel, it represents Him as coming up to the work of breaking the prison house of Babylon and putting His enemies under the soles of His feet.

I cannot help observing, before closing this topic, how much the interpretation of the sealed book, as the symbol of the inheritance, is confirmed by the appropriation of this name, “the Lion of the tribe of Judah,” unto Him who prevailed to open it. If the revelation of hidden truth be that which it contains, why give to Him that opens it a name which has no relation to the knowledge of truth, but to the putting forth of power and strength? Methinks He would have been called the Light, or the Word, or the Truth, or the Witness, or any other name appertaining to a reasonable being, rather than this, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. But this will still more clearly appear, when we shall have considered

His next name, which is “the Root of David.”

## THE ROOT OF DAVID

**H**ERE, likewise, we have to examine, first, the import of the name, and then the appropriateness to the occasion in which it is introduced.

### THE NAME

The name is taken from:

#### **Isaiah 11**

<sup>10</sup> And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and His rest shall be glorious.

Here, indeed, it is the Root of Jesse; but inasmuch as He is the Root of Jesse, He is also the Root of Jesse's son, the Root of David. The name, "Root of David," does not occur at all in the Old Testament.

Now, then, we find that this Root of Jesse stands for an ensign of the people; which is, in other words, to say, that to Him shall the gathering of the people be; so that the two passages of the Old Testament which give birth to these two names do remarkably concur in this,—that He is to be the Head of the Jewish people.

But connected with the latter of the two passages is this, moreover, that the Gentiles also shall seek to Him; or, as it is in the *Psalms*:

#### **Psalms 18**

<sup>43</sup> You have made me the Head of the heathen: a people whom I have not known shall serve me.

By the name, "Root of Jesse," therefore, He is represented to us, not only as the Lawgiver of Judah, but likewise as having:

#### **Psalms 2**

<sup>8</sup> ...the heathen for Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession.

This appears still more beautifully, when we consider the first verse of that same chapter of *Isaiah* from which the name has its origin:

**Isaiah 11**

<sup>1</sup> And there shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

In the verses preceding, the Assyrian, with all his high ones of stature, are hewn down, and the thickets of their forests fall by the hand of a Mighty One—that is, by the lion of the tribe of Judah; whereupon there issues a branch of another root, called the Root of Jesse, but afterwards made to bear Jesse himself;—at once the root and the offspring of Jesse: who, coming in the room of the thickets of the Assyrian, at length covers the earth with blessedness, and makes it to be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

In His character as the rod from Jesse's stem, and the contemptible sucker from His roots, the sevenfold unction of the Spirit is given to Him:

**Isaiah 11**

<sup>2</sup> And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;

Then all judgment:

<sup>3</sup> And shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears:

Then the destruction of all wickedness:

<sup>4</sup> But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked.

Then all righteous government:

<sup>5</sup> And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faith-

fulness the girdle of His reins.

And, finally, the fruit of all peace, unity, and blessedness, in the nether world:

<sup>6</sup> The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

<sup>7</sup> And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

<sup>8</sup> And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

<sup>9</sup> They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

After this, in His character of Jesse's Root, He is introduced as the Gatherer of the people, and the Desire of the Gentiles, coming to a glorious rest:

<sup>10</sup> And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and His rest shall be glorious.

From this verse the name under consideration is taken; in which He passes from the humility of being born by Jesse, into the dignity of bearing Jesse and all his line. For it belongs to Him, not as Jesse's Son, but as Judah's, to be the "Gatherer of the people" (*Genesis* 49:10); and, as Abraham's, to be the blessedness of all nations. *Genesis* 22:18.

But still the mystery, how a man can be the root of his own father, remains unexplained: for the name in the text is not "the Seed of Abraham," nor yet "the Seed of the woman," but "the Root of David," one of those apparent contradictions of which this book is so full.

What is couched under it may best be gathered from our Lord's own question to the Scribes:

### **Matthew 22**

<sup>42</sup> What do you think of Christ? whose Son is He? They said

unto Him, The Son of David.

<sup>43</sup> He said unto them, How then does David in spirit call Him Lord, saying,

<sup>44</sup> The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit on my right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool?

<sup>45</sup> If David then called Him Lord, how is He his Son?

So also that other discourse, *John* 8, concluding with these words:

### **John 8**

<sup>58</sup> Before Abraham was, I am.

In all such expressions, the depth of doctrine contained is that which is expressed in these words:

### **Romans 1**

<sup>3</sup> Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

<sup>4</sup> And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

He is at once the Son of Man and the Creator of man and of all things; the one as to His human, the other as to His Divine nature. He is at once the Beginning of the creation of God, and having no existence as a creature till far down the stream of this world's history.

These enigmas are not resolved by merely saying that He was God as well as man; because the question occurs, Why not speak of Him in His Divine character as the Root of angels, as well as the Root of Jesse or David? why always connect His Divinity in such a remarkable way with man?

To obviate this difficulty and set the thing upon its proper basis, we answer, that before the worlds were, He was set up in the predestinative form of man as the Christ; that being the form of being which was to be anointed lord of every other form of being whatever. Taking to Himself this character, He created all things, to express some part of its fullness, to stand under it, and in some way acknowledge it as the spring and

source and end of its being. And Adam He created to be its full image and likeness amongst all creatures, who therefore was made lord of all; single undivided lord of all; to be the type of Him that was to come into the world.

When this perfect type of Christ was broken into fragments at the Fall, its completeness was represented in different persons, but never again was it contained in one person. No future man ever gave origin to a race, no future man was ever the origin of his own wife, no future man ever ruled a creation, no future man ever gave names to a creation. Of these fractional parts of the great type:

- David represented royalty;
- Abraham represented fatherhood, showing that Christ had a father even in His Divine substance;
- Melchizedek represented priesthood, with royalty included;
- And when that compound type was likewise broken, Aaron represented priesthood, and David represented royalty:
- Moses represented Him as the Head of the whole household of faith, and the great Mediator between God and the chosen people. In this respect he had in him somewhat of the royal office also, and in one place he is called “king in Jeshurun;”
- But the completeness of the type of the king was given in the person of David, whom God constituted a prophet for this very end, that he might receive instruction, and set in order the ordinance of the kingdom.

To be the Root of David, therefore, signifies that as the root gives existence to the tree, and the fruit of the tree is the vital principle which forms it of one fashion rather than another, so He it was after whom David was fashioned and molded, and who must be acknowledged to be in as true a sense the cause

of David, as a father is the cause of his own son. That all promises made to David, that all power given to him, and all acts wrought of God in him or by him, came from the root of Christ, and were for the end of representing that which in Christ should yet be fulfilled.

I confess, if this be not contained in it, I know not wherefore it is used: if it merely mean that He is God, and, as God, is the cause of all things, it might as well be said, root of any other man. In such vague generality all power of interpretation vanishes. But understanding it in the true and literal force of the words, interpreted by sound reason, I see both a greater meaning and a most beautiful appropriateness in the use of the name, “the Root of David.”

So very exact is the correspondence between Christ and David, that He is not infrequently denominated simply by the name of David, without even the hint of a similitude or analogy. Of this these are undoubted instances:

### **Jeremiah 30**

<sup>9</sup> But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

### **Ezekiel 34**

<sup>23</sup> And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

<sup>24</sup> And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it.

### **Ezekiel 37**

<sup>24</sup> And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.

<sup>25</sup> And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.



### **Hosea 3**

<sup>5</sup> Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days.

And that it is not David himself, in his resurrection dignity and power, is sufficiently shown by this, that it is promised to the Virgin's Son, both in the prophecy of Emanuel:

### **Isaiah 7**

<sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

...and in the salutation to the Virgin:

### **Luke 1**

<sup>32</sup> He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David.

...that He shall sit upon the throne of His father David. So, also, that promise:

### **Isaiah 55**

<sup>3</sup> I will give Him the sure mercies of David.

This is applied by the Apostle to the resurrection of Christ:

### **Acts 13**

<sup>34</sup> And as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He said on this wise, I will give You the sure mercies of David.

Which evidently shows that the covenant made with David was for Christ, as truly as that with Abraham was for the Seed. Let any one study the 89th *Psalm*, and deny, if he can, that a greater than David is there, to whom the name of God's firstborn is applied, and who shall say unto God, "You are my Father."

The 18th *Psalm* was sung by David, when he had received the victory over all his enemies, and was at rest: but who that

reads it does not perceive that no one but Messiah is there spoken of, who is made the Head of the heathen.

Our Lord declares that David speaks *in spirit* concerning Christ in the 110th *Psalms*, and so he speaks in all the rest. These *Psalms*, which we sing, are not of the exploits of the king David that was, but of the King David that is to be, our King and our Lord.

The name David signifies “beloved:” and thus God names His Son, “This is my beloved Son” (*Matthew* 3:17); which in the Hebrew would have been, “This is David my Son.” And, again, the Apostle Paul, speaking of the elect, says that they are...

### **Ephesians 1**

<sup>6</sup> ...accepted in the Beloved.

<sup>11</sup> ...in whom we have obtained an inheritance.

Nothing doubting, therefore, that by “the Root of David” is signified Christ, the supporter and informer of David, David’s *Adonai*, or Lord, or *base*, we now proceed to examine the propriety of David’s office and action, to which the Holy Spirit assuredly directs our attention by this name, “the Root of David.”

## **THE OFFICE AND ACTION**

Now, in studying the *Psalms of David* which by the Holy Ghost are applied to Christ, I find that the name of Christ, or Anointed, is most frequently used in common of David and of our Lord:

### **Psalms 2**

<sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed...

<sup>6</sup> Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.

### **Psalms 89**

<sup>38</sup> But You have cast off and abhorred, You have been wroth

with Your anointed.

### **Psalm 45**

<sup>7</sup> You love righteousness, and hate wickedness: therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows.

### **Psalm 20**

<sup>6</sup> Now know I that the Lord saves His anointed; He will hear him from His holy heaven with the saving strength of His right hand.

These are a few instances amongst many whereby the Spirit declares that the unction of David was a great type, in truth the type of the unction of Christ.

Now, behold how, for the end of anointing David, Samuel was given to Hannah, a barren woman, as John was given to Elizabeth for the baptism of Christ.

Observe, also, how David being anointed king, and having slain Goliath of Gath, whereby he purchased for himself a wife, was fain to flee and hide himself in desert places; so Christ being anointed of the Baptist, and by God avowed to be His Son, David the Beloved, and having by His death and resurrection destroyed the devil, and upon His cross made an open exposure of the principalities of evil, and thereby purchased to Himself the election for His wife, disappears for a season, and hides Himself from this earth, the seat of His throne, and the territory of His kingdom.

Now all those Psalms which are indited of king David and his afflictions, of his persecutors, of his confidence in God under all trials, and of his assured faith to be brought unto his kingdom, are proper to, and were indeed in spirit spoken of Christ suffering from the time of His anointing by the Holy Ghost, in the baptism of John, unto this day, either in Himself personally, or in the members of His body, which are as truly one with Himself, as he is one with the Father.

I am able to use all those songs, both in my family and in

the church, with the greatest delight, entering into the fellowship of my Lord's sufferings, and praying for Him, and for all His saints, that we may soon come unto our kingdom, and ever expressing assured confidence thereof.

Meanwhile, upon the throne to which he was anointed sat no usurper, but one lawfully anointed of God, who had his appointed time to accomplish, to whom David ever defers; against whom, though fain to defend his life by every shift, he will lift no weapon, and suffer none to be lifted up, signifying the subjection into which we are brought to the power which persecutes us, before which we may be hunted like the partridge on the mountains, but in our utmost extremities ought to lift no sword against it.

Yet have we the unction of kings in our baptism by the Holy Ghost, as he had in his; and every member of Christ is, during this life, the antitype of David anointed, but not instated in his kingdom; of David a king, but a king unseen and unknown, wandering in various disguises, and hidden in secret recesses, and removed from the knowledge of men.

And though, by the violent frenzy and ignorant mistakes of throned power, it should fare with us as hardly as it fared with him, when he said unto Jonathan, "As the Lord lives, there is but a step between me and death" (*1 Samuel* 20:3); still it is our duty to flee, and not to fight; to endure hardship in the wilderness, to become the tenants of the rock, to dwell in the tents of Mesech and of Kedar, to be transformed into fools before the king of Gath; yea, to be hunted like the partridge on the mountains, and like the pelican to dwell alone in the desert; but at no rate and on no account to lift hand against the powers anointed and ordained of God.

And if, as oft it will chance, our persecutor all asleep, and off his guard, should be brought within sword's length, not to lift our sword against him, because he is the anointed of the Lord. And though some of our company should say, as

Burleigh said of Sharp, “The Lord has delivered him into our hand;” or as Abishai said to David:

**1 Samuel 26**

<sup>8</sup> God has delivered your enemy into your hand this day: now, therefore, let me smite him, I pray you, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time.

It is our part to hold his hand, and say as David said:

<sup>9</sup> Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord’s anointed, and be guiltless?

<sup>10</sup> David said furthermore, As the Lord lives, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish.

<sup>11</sup> The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord’s anointed.

It is not for nothing, my brethren, that David’s conduct in the wilderness of Ziph and the cave of Adullam is written and recorded by God’s Spirit. I would have given the heritage of my father, ten times told, that our Scottish Covenanters had understood this part of Scripture aright.

And I do commend it especially to the perusal and obedience of those in the Church who understand and believe the doctrine of the personal reign and true kingdom of Christ upon this earth; for is it not written to instruct the Church how she should behave herself during the interval, the little while,—between her anointing and her installation? This will guard us against all Fifth-Monarchy violences and all Covenanting resistances.

From this period, during which David was a banished man, though an anointed king, let us now pass onward to the acts occurrent upon his reappearance in the habitable regions of his kingdom.

It was not until Saul, his persecutor, had been brought low by the hand of the Lord, that David, at the command of the

Lord, went up unto Hebron, and was crowned king over Judah, in Hebron; and then, for the first time since his exile, set his eyes upon Michal, his spouse of royal descent; and, after a space of time, he was crowned King over the tribes of Israel also, and straightway went up from Hebron and possessed himself of Zion, the stronghold of Jerusalem which until now the Jebusites had retained in their hand.

Then came against him the Philistines, whom once and again he smote, not without God's miraculous help, in Baal Perazim. This done, he brings up the ark unto Jerusalem, and strengthens his heart to build a house wherein God may dwell forever.

Then smote he and subdued the Philistines anew, and Moab, and the king of Zobah, and the Syrians, and the children of Ammon, and Amalek, and Edom; and the Lord preserved David wherever he went.

And when the Lord had thus delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul, he sung that song which is contained in the 18th *Psalm*; a Psalm inspired on very purpose to show that there was a mystery in these the actions of David, and to explain what that mystery is. I have now before me that Psalm, both as it is written in the *Second Book of Samuel*, and in the *Psalms*; and, if I understand anything of Scripture, this is, in brief, the substance of the thanksgiving.

Distress the deepest is described in the first six verses; such distress as our Lord is wont to apply unto Himself, and as the Church, which is set for the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, ought to apply unto herself.

### **Psalm 18**

<sup>1</sup> I will love You, O Lord, my strength.

<sup>2</sup> The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

<sup>3</sup> I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from my enemies.

<sup>4</sup> The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.

<sup>5</sup> The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.

<sup>6</sup> In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him, even into His ears.

In this anguish of her heart, and crisis of her affairs, she cries unto God, who hears her out of His temple:

<sup>7</sup> Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because He was wroth.

And what follows?—any deliverance kindred to what David had? No. Any deliverance kindred to what Christ had? No. Any deliverance kindred to what the Church has had to this day? No. What then?—the glorious appearance of our great God and Saviour shaking the foundations of the earth, and laying bare the pillars thereof.

<sup>8</sup> There went up a smoke out of His nostrils, and fire out of His mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

<sup>9</sup> He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under His feet.

<sup>10</sup> And He rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, He did fly upon the wings of the wind.

<sup>11</sup> He made darkness his secret place; His pavilion round about Him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.

<sup>12</sup> At the brightness that was before Him, His thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire.

<sup>13</sup> The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave His voice; hail stones and coals of fire.

<sup>14</sup> Yea, He sent out His arrows, and scattered them; and He shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.

<sup>15</sup> Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at Your rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of Your nostrils.

<sup>16</sup> He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many

waters.

<sup>17</sup> He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.

If anyone say that these verses are a figurative description of anything recorded in David's history or the history of the Church, I say that he is a treacherous dealer with the Word of God, and shall be least in the kingdom of heaven. If these nine verses contain not the coming of the Lord to redeem and deliver His Church, then I deny that this event is contained in the Scriptures at all. Base interpreters, false interpreters, you make void the Word of God by your tradition.

Being assured, therefore, that these verses contain nothing less than the appearance of our Lord for the avenging and delivering of His people from hell's hand, and the snares of death, and the floods of the ungodly, what shall we say of the preceding distress? That it is the distress of David alone, or of Christ alone? Nay, verily; but of David and of Christ, and of all the Church, until she reach her darkest hour, the hour that's nearest to the dawn: for what otherwise were the meaning of presenting the deliverance which she is hereafter to receive at the coming of the Lord, if so be that the distress reaches not up to that event? And thus come we to the certain knowledge that David's distress and exile are, by the Spirit of God, applied to the whole Church onward until the coming of the Lord.

Then follows, from the 17th to the 29th verse, the deliverance which David, representing the afflicted, and exiled, and persecuted Church, receives by the appearing of the Lord, together with the principles upon which the deliverance and judgment proceed, into which we enter not particularly.

Then from the 29th verse to the end of the Psalm are contained the strength, and greatness, and triumph over all his enemies, to which David, representing the Church, is advanced after his deliverance out of the enemy's hand. This



song, inclusive of David's experiences, is every letter of it spoken in the Spirit, and puts it beyond all controversy, that David in his exaltation, as in his humiliation, presents the history of Christ humbled in person, and now humbled in the persons of His elect; and of Christ, when with His elect He shall come again to do exploits, as the mighty Conqueror, girding His sword upon His thigh, and with His sword piercing the hearts of the enemies of the King. *Psalms* 45.

And now behold how the particulars recounted above, of David's action in his kingdom, do answer to Christ's actings in His kingdom, when He shall come as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and the Root of David, to take possession of His inheritance. It shall have a true interpretation both as respects the Jews, chartered in the inheritance of Canaan, and the Church, chartered in the inheritance of the earth.

The sum of it is this: Christ shall come from the place of His hiding to the place of His kingdom; and having gotten His tribes together, both the literal and the spiritual dispersion,—the one by gathering the dispersed of Judah and the outcasts of Israel from the places where they be, the other by changing the saints dispersed upon the earth, and raising the outcasts of the grave from the four winds of heaven, and collecting them by His angels, into the cloudy chambers of His glory,—He shall go forth, like a man of war, and stir up vengeance against His enemies, and go on, with His people, conquering and to conquer, until He have delivered the inheritance which His Father gave unto Him, by covenant and by decree, as it is written in the 2nd *Psalms*.

Then shall He take the stronghold of Zion, the tower of the flock (*Micah* 4:8-13), to which the chief dominion shall come. But first He shall have looked upon his wife Michal, of royal line. Then shall come against Him two waves of battle, the Philistines of the West; and He shall discomfit them, as David did in Baal Perazim, and Joshua did in Gibeon (*Isaiah* 28:21);

and then shall He, whose name is the Branch, Root of Jesse, and Branch of Renown, begin to build the temple of the Lord. *Zechariah* 6:12). And having put all His enemies under His feet, He shall have fulfilled the office of David, and shall begin to perform the office of Solomon, Prince of Peace.

It appears, then, from this examination of the proper import of the name, “Root of David,” that like the name, “Root of Jesse,” it characterizes Christ as the Head and Heir of royalty, whose is the right unto the kingdom, and who shall take possession of it by strength of hand, as David did.

This conclusion is confirmed by a reference to that Scripture to which our Lord Himself referred, when He would teach the Pharisees His priority unto, and supremacy over, David. The 110th *Psalms*, which is the only part of Scripture wherein He is expressly set above David by name, and which, if we except that in *Isaiah*, where He is called “the Root of Jesse,” is the passage in the Old Testament from which the name in our text is most likely taken.

That Psalm where He is called “David’s Lord” is altogether taken up with His installation in the throne of Zion, and His slaughtering of His enemies with a mighty hand. There is, first, Jehovah’s welcome of David’s Lord (support, or base, or root) to His own right hand in the heavens:

#### **Psalms 110**

<sup>1</sup> The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool.

There is, next, the promise of sending out of Zion the Rod of His government, and His ruling in the midst of His enemies, both of which refer to power, exercising itself in acts of subjugation:

<sup>2</sup> The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion: rule in the midst of Your enemies.

Next, we have the people who are with Him and willing to

serve Him in that day of controversy; their number, their holiness, their fruitfulness:

<sup>3</sup> Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: You have the dew of Your youth.

This people is His own people; the tribes of Judah and of Israel in the flesh, His risen saints in the spirit. In the 4th verse we have His everlasting dignity as a King and a Priest, sworn to by Jehovah, who repents not:

<sup>4</sup> The Lord has sworn, and will not repent, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Then follow three verses, in which it is declared by whom Jehovah shall work this subjugation of the earth unto David's Lord forever; determining this great point, whether God shall do it by the instrumentality of others, or by Adonai Himself, and putting it beyond a doubt that He who sits at His right hand is to remove thence, and come and do upon the earth all these works of might.

<sup>5</sup> The Lord [Adonai] at your right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath.

<sup>6</sup> He shall judge among the heathen, He shall fill the places with the dead bodies; He shall wound the heads over many countries.

<sup>7</sup> He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall He lift up the head.

What time this is may well be gathered from *Revelation* 6:17, 11:18, 16:1, 19:15: every one of which passages contains a reference to this great act of the day of wrath; to execute which, behold He comes against the kings of the earth with all the hosts of heaven. *Revelation* 19.

And can words be more express than those which are written in the 6th verse?

<sup>6</sup> He shall judge among the heathen, He shall fill with the

dead bodies, He shall wound the great ones over many lands.

Seeing, then, that in the only two passages of the Old Testament (*Isaiah* 11:10; *Psalms* 110), in which expressions parallel with that in our text occur, He is represented as coming in the right of a King to claim, and with the arm of a Conqueror to possess, His inheritance, —whether of Canaan for His ancient people, or of the whole earth, and the subordinate worlds, for the election according to grace,—we cannot doubt that the name, “Root of David,” is given to Him in the passage before us, in consideration of the predestinate purpose of God, that in Him royal dignity should forever dwell: not the dignity merely which David possessed, though David was a king of kings; not the dignity which Adam possessed, though Adam was king of the earth; but the dignity of being the Heir and Lord of all things:

### **Ephesians 1**

<sup>21</sup> Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, both in this world and in that which is to come;

### **Philippians 2**

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

<sup>11</sup> And that every tongue should confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

But because David was the king of God’s choice (*Psalms* 89:3), in whom God showed forth the power of His right hand, and the glory of His strength, bringing all his enemies under the soles of his feet (*1 Kings* 5:3), he is chosen in the text as the fittest type for representing the right and dominion of Christ as a King.

In this dominion Christ was anointed of God at His baptism; and this His election of God, from amongst all men, was openly declared by His resurrection from the dead. But He has not yet taken upon Him the royalty and dominion of this

earth, for which He died; nor will He, until the times of the Father are fulfilled, and He shall send Him forth again to gather His people, and make them to inhabit the desolate heritages.

He has the right; but, in high honor of His Father's will, He holds it in abeyance until the time of His Father's pleasure: and the Father, in order to prove and attest in the assembled congregation of heaven, in the midst of creation's states, and dominions, that to Him belongs the highest honor of being Lord of that world which was made for the habitation of creation's lords, issues the proclamation to every creature whatsoever, to come and take, and open, this sealed book, the symbol of creation's supremacy; wherefore, also, it lies deposited in the Creator's right hand.

But no mighty angel, nor strong archangel, dare even to look upon the lofty prize, but wait for a Lord and King from some other quarter than themselves. At such a nonplus the seer weeps much; and one of the elders who is conversant with the great purposes of God, being of that Old Testament Church through which His purpose was disclosed unto angels and men, graciously undertakes to comfort the seer, by informing him what was about to take place; while, at the same time, he does the part of herald unto the Lamb, by announcing in the hearing of assembled creation the noble styles of Him who was about to enter the empty lists, and win the prize from the hand of Almighty God.

Moreover, the words of this Church-comforting, Christ-heralding, elder do lead us to consider and search into the archives of revelation, in order to discover the high lineage and resistless claims of Him who is about to take the field.

In these expressions I affect not the styles of chivalry, but am constrained to use them for want of any form of language equal to the subject; and, as has been said, I am the more and more impressed from every hand, that this, like every other

institution in Christendom, testifies of Jesus. I say not that it was ordained of God to this end, but permitted and overruled, as the Papacy has been, to testify of Christ, and of His army of knights *sans peur et sans reproche*<sup>14</sup>, of His people in holy beauties from the womb of the morning, coming with Him to deliver Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

I know not how it is with others, but to me it is unspeakably delightful to discover Jesus in all providence as in all Scripture, to see every great achievement of God in His Church ordered, and every invention of the devil overruled, to the disclosure of some part of that perfect fullness which is in Jesus Christ.

God sends forth His most potent herald, one of His angels strong, to challenge creation to a deed of power, and all creation is sunk in flat dismay; whereupon the mangled bleeding Lamb being about to essay the work, or rather to claim the prize in virtue of work essayed and done, one of His own people advances before Him, to herald Him forth in the audience of the King and potentates of heaven.

Not an angel herald now, but one of His own people, one of the myriads of God's creatures, whom His valiancy had redeemed from this vile dungeon to heaven's throne. A crowned and enthroned elder gives forth His recognizance; His shield of high renown, "Lion of the tribe of Judah," to which of old the scepter and the law-giving had been decreed: and the same herald likewise pronounces, in the hearing of all creation, His most ancient and noble lineage, "the Root of David;" He who, though of David's loins, is yet before David's day.

Style this proper only to God, who promised unto David, that a Son of his should yet arise who should acknowledge God to be His Father, at once Son of David and Son of God.

14 "without without fear and without reproach: said originally of the French knight, the Seigneur de Bayard." (Dictionary.com)

Precious truth! glorious name! in right of which He receives the book of the inheritance; the title-deeds of the earth which He had purchased; the style of Prince of the kings of the earth, to which God of old had ordained Him.

And what then is the simple significance of the whole transaction? It is the enacting by celestial symbols of that decree which is written in the 2nd *Psalm*. It is the rehearsal in the morning of the day of His exaltation of that which in the evening of the same day of salvation shall be acted in very deed. It is the uttering and sealing of that oath of God, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec," which Christ, in great contentment, waits the fulfillment of, in that day which the Father has hidden in His own bosom. So let us, in contentment, wait.

You saints from beneath the altar, who cry for vengeance, see the King of Saints waiting in contentment at the right hand of His Father.

You witnesses on earth, who are suffering for righteousness' sake, look at Him and suffer with patience.

You believers in His reign upon the earth, who are scoffed at as delirious and doting fools, or evil entreated as deep and designing men, look to Him and do not make haste.

You Holy Spirit, which He gives, teach to us the same waiting contentment which possesses Him.

Great example once of suffering patience, and now glorious example of waiting patience, teach me, O my Lord, to be meek, as You are meek; merciful, as You are merciful; and faithful, as You are faithful; and help me on my way to open perfectly this revelation of Your present greatness and Your coming glory.





## CONCLUSION

THE argument of the whole vision is therefore briefly as follows: The eternal God, willing to magnify His Son who had glorified Him as “the Man of Sorrows,” and to show what prowess, and valiancy, and power was hidden in that lowly form of a Lamb, what excellence of love in that Lamb’s submitting to be slain, convenes the estates of creation; and, having received their homage as Creator, takes into His hand the book of controversy, the direful book of the controversy between good and evil, whereof the redemption of the earth, by overcoming and subjecting sin forever, is the noble prize.

And all creation, being invoked to enter the lists of controversy, is paralyzed and nonplussed, and proved unequal to the task of redeeming. Whereupon the Lamb slain, as His natural right, in virtue of the work which He had achieved, advances to the throne, and receives the book, the seal of a complete redemption, and straightway enters upon the active work of possessing Himself and His bride of that inheritance which He had purchased with His blood.

Whereby He is proved to be more than creature; for what no creature can do surpasses creature’s power: and He is proved to be the only Redeemer of God’s elect, and likewise the Redeemer of the lost inheritance. Of the former office of the Redeemer much is written in our theological books, especially in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms; of the latter, nothing at all: the more, for the well-being and recovery of the Church, and the composing of many commotions which arise out of ignorance of this great point of doctrine, do I feel it my duty to dwell upon this celestial action, which, by the blessing of God, I will conclude in my next.

Before closing this Lecture, we have an observation to make upon the *Apocalypse*, as giving Christian form, in time and place, to those prophecies written to the Jews, in their proper typical language. For this is one great service which the *Apoc-*

*alypse* does unto the canon of Scripture, that it weaves a regular tissue of Christian prophecy out of the various threads of Jewish prophecy scattered over the Old Testament; which it does not by the destruction of this, nor to the supplanting of it, nay nor to the adding to it of a jot, or taking from it of a tittle, least of all to the spiriting of it all away from earth to heaven, as they talk, or the conjuring of it from plain literal sense into spiritual speculation of every licentious interpreter.

Nay, verily, but to the construction therewith of a regular symbolical history of the events of the Christian Church, until the time that the election according to grace, the antitype of the elect nation of Israel, is taken up to meet the Lord in the clouds; and the tares, the reprobate and apostate parts of Christendom, are burned with the fire of Jehovah's wrath.

Moreover, this web of Christian prophecy, woven out of the words and facts of the Jewish story, both past, present, and to come, is not the Jewish story, and has nothing to do with the Jews at all, save when special and distinct mention is made thereof, but is the Christian story,—is the history of the elect people of God, written with the words and facts which God had already prepared, in the typical testimony, for that very end.

In one word, the *Apocalypse* given to John the divine is that same use made of Jewish types historical, for setting forth the history of the Church, the body of Christ, which Paul makes of the Jewish types ceremonial, for stating out the doctrine of the Church, or body of Christ. And if our divines delight to follow Paul's method of expounding Christian doctrine by atonement, sacrifice, passover, high priests, &c; by what right do they dare to repel God's method of setting forth ecclesiastical history in this book, by the method of Jewish historical events, such as the seasons of the year, the feasts and festivals of the nation, the captivity of Babylon, &c.?

Or why dare they, when one of their brethren gravely un-

dertakes, in the way of story, what Luther, and Calvin, and others accomplished in the way of doctrine, to say he speculates wildly, he dreams, he raves incoherently? Yea, though they have ceased themselves to interpret the Scriptures, though they will put forth whole volumes of Sermons without one interpretation, let me tell them that it never was so done in the Christian Church, and cannot stand.

And let me speak to the young theologians, the sons of the prophets in the schools of the prophets occupied, that if they would see peace upon our Israel, and plenty in our Zion, they must work for it, digging in the mine of the Scriptures, and laboring in the work of interpretation, instead of giving themselves to the abstractions and argumentations of a threadbare and worn-out system of theology, or depend upon the powerful efforts of natural reason to plead the cause of God, without the word of God in their mouths to plead withal, or the knowledge of God in the minds of the people to answer to their powerful pleadings.

I am no vain pretender, nor impertinent fool, when I say that in these and other interpretations I am showing to the rising generation of divines the only way in which the cause of religion and righteousness will rise and flourish again; which, if they had a preacher in every pulpit with the power of a Demosthenes, and the flow of a Cicero, cannot in the way of eloquence and argument come to pass.

I say it again, and I conclude this Lecture with earnestly impressing it upon all, and especially upon the teachers of the people, that interpretation of the Scriptures,—not to teach a system contained in articles or confessions, but to justify God the Creator, and Christ the Redeemer, against man the sinner, and the apostatizing Church; yea, to make God known in being and in act, in word and in deed; to discover to man the original purpose of his creation, his present condition and his future glory.

Interpretation for this end is the only hope of the Church, which I verily believe to be at a lower ebb in respect, both of knowledge and of faith, and I fear of temper also, than it ever has been since the Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost.



