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REVELATION

SPIRITUALLY UNDERSTOOD

PART 16

REVELATION 12:9-17

And

REVELATION 13

The Woman in the Wilderness

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REVELATION SPIRITUALLY UNDERSTOOD

PART SIXTEEN

THE WOMAN IN THE WILDERNESS

Revelation 12:9-17

Revelation 13

The prophetic drama which we know as the Book of the Revelation, is composed of a series of independent visions complete in themselves yet at the same time complementary to each other, presenting as it were the same event or events under different colours or symbols. This follows the method found in the Book of Daniel to which the Book of Revelation stands in close relation.

The 12th chapter of Revelation is a very clear example of this, giving as it does a clear image of the Church in her historic role as the channel through which redemption comes to the world through the glorious Redeemer, the Man Child, the promised Seed of the Woman (Gen. 3:15), the Babe of Bethlehem, the God-Man of Calvary, the Incarnate God, born to rule over all things.

The exaltation of the Redeemer to the eternal throne is followed by the long contest on earth between the Dragon (Satan) and the Woman (the Church) during the symbolic period of 1260 days, corresponding with the 42 months, or 'time, times and half a time' of chapter 11, verses 2, 3 and 9. The recurrence of this mystic figuration in chapter 12, verses 6 and 14, plainly shows the complementary nature of the two chapters, which view the history of the Church in her age-long conflict with the Dragon, under independent representations.

The temple and its court, and the testimony of the Two Witnesses in chapter 11 are matched in chapter 12 by the picture of the Mystic Woman and her preservation in the wilderness. If it should be asked why there should be this presentation of the same prophetic facts under such a wide variety of figures, the answer is that truth has many facets. One set of figures may suffice to illustrate one aspect of prophetic events, but viewed from another angle the same events require further figures which would be inappropriate or irrelevant to the view taken in the first set. The OT (and even individual Books like Daniel) abounds in contrasting pictures of the same predestined event. The expected Messiah is figured as the Seed of the Woman, the King, Melchizedek, the Lamb of sacrifice, the High Priest who offers

the Lamb, the Shepherd of Israel, the Bridegroom of the immortal Song, the Archangel, the Wrestler with Jacob, the Star, the Root of Jesse, the Servant, the Emmanuel, and a host of others. Truth is infinite.

The chapter we now have before us (Rev. 12) presents the Church as the Mystic Woman, the Church of Old and New Testaments, through whom the Redeemer was to come - who has come - and whose present reign in heaven is manifest in the preservation of His Church on earth under the figure of her flight into the wilderness, her triumph over all the attempts of the Dragon to destroy her, and the continuance of her testimony in 'the remnant of her seed' - individual believers - who overcome the Dragon by weapons which are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds (2 Cor. 10:4).

We now have before us again the verse on which we rested at the conclusion of our last chapter:

“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” - verse 9.

The casting down of Satan is the direct consequence of the 'lifting up' of Christ, and the beloved commentator Bengel sees a special significance in the Saviour's words in John 12:31-32: “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” “In the very cross itself there is something which points to glory,” says Bengel.

This is profoundly true, though very few appear to have grasped the full significance of the Lord's words. The Lord does not say, “When I am crucified” or “When I am put to death”, but “When I am lifted up.” The words are elsewhere used in the sense of exaltation, as in Isaiah 6, yet the Lord uses them here of His humiliation, even the death of the cross. His inspired utterance looks beyond and through the cross to His enthronement - raised to an eminence which dominates all the world. It is not the only time the Lord carefully uses the same figure. In John 3:14 He declares, “As Moses LIFTED UP the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be LIFTED UP.” Again, in John 8:28, “When ye shall have LIFTED UP the Son of man, then shall ye know that I AM” (note italicised word, AV). In other words, through the very 'lifting up' of Christ on the cross, His Godhead will be declared and His right to rule all things will be asserted and established for ever.

When John recorded the Lord's words in the passage quoted above (John 12:31-32) he added the explanation, "This he said, signifying what death he should die," because John perceived that his readers would require the Saviour's words to be elucidated on account of their mysterious ambiguity.

That ambiguity is intensified, when the words are compared with the vision of Isaiah in the temple eight centuries before (and from which the Lord was certainly quoting) -

"In the year that king Uzziah died I also saw the Lord HIGH AND LIFTED UP, and his train filled the temple ..." (Isaiah 6:1).

The connection with that glorious verse appears to be enforced by John's further quotation from Isaiah 6 followed by the words, "These things said Esaias WHEN HE SAW HIS GLORY AND SPAKE OF HIM" (see John 12:37-41).

The utmost Satan could do in the liberty permitted to him at the crucifixion only ensured his own destruction. Satan falls by his own hand, in the hour of his greatest seeming triumph.

There is therefore a perfect balance in these two statements - the Lord was 'lifted up' and the Evil One was 'cast down'.

Bengel: "And since Satan is here once and for all cast down, Christ can permit him to attempt more: can look calmly on, while he (Satan) assaults the church; for his attacks can no longer hurt her. They can only advance her real interests."

The Berleburger Bible (the German Family Bible): "This, all weak and fainting believers may lay to heart, so they may not surrender the right which they have in God, nor reckon the devil stronger than God (as reason is apt to represent). Judgment has been pronounced long since, and must be fulfilled."

ALTERED STATE OF THE WORLD

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night" - verse 10.

The altered state of the world brought about by the death of Christ is further taught in this verse. Satan's fall from the power he formerly exercised over the nations before the coming in of the gospel, is acclaimed by a great voice from heaven. A voice of authority and power introduces the kingdom of God in its fullest manifestation on earth: "Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ" The great moment is acclaimed with all the authority of heaven. Only after Calvary could this voice be heard, for until then, Satan had an instrument to hold the conscience of man in bondage. Justice had to be seen to be done so that liberty and deliverance could be rightfully proclaimed.

The word NOW is significant: "Now is come salvation...." Elsewhere, "Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). "Now" relates to the gospel time, the time after Calvary when the salvation of the sinner is made sure and certain. The original promise that a Deliverer would come to bruise the serpent's head is fulfilled. Paul also, "God NOW commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30).

We have seen in our previous chapter how Satan contended over the body of Moses on the ground that by no legal process could the release of one sinful man from the bonds of death be justified so long as sin remained to be judged. If Satan could so dispute (see Jude 9) on strong ground of law and equity, the removal of the body of Moses (that body which represented the Law and its curse) and therefore could contest the right to salvation and forgiveness for any and all of the human race, he could only do so because he knew that the throne of God could not exist if God did not uphold His own righteousness. It is beyond dispute that a nation condemns itself to perdition if it makes laws which it refuses to enforce.

Since Calvary Satan can no longer question the deliverance of sinful man. The cross has answered for all that, and Satan's power henceforth is under new restraint. He will do his utmost to stir up the conscience of the believer and confront him with his sin in the endeavour to cast him down from his hope in Christ. We shall presently see how Satan is overcome.

"For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."

This had been Satan's principal source of strength since first the integrity of man was destroyed. He accuses the brethren of Christ "day and night" (that is,

continuously) just as he once did in the case of Job. “Doth Job serve God for naught?” he cries in contempt of that righteous man; “Take away thy favours from him, scatter his riches and destroy his family, and he will curse thee to thy face.” That is always Satan’s sneer. “No-one,” Satan is saying, “ever serves God out of pure love, but only for advantage”. We know how God answered Satan and proved that he was a liar - and did it through the weakness, not the strength, of man. So Christ was ‘crucified through weakness.’ That is God’s method of overcoming evil.

It ought to be considered a great privilege to suffer for the kingdom of God’s sake. “Blessed are ye that weep now” says the Lord, “for ye shall laugh.” He who takes up his cross daily and follows the way the Saviour went, is Christ’s disciple indeed.

These are the people who are most offensive to Satan, and whose evils and sins and lapses he is never weary of reciting in the court of heaven - to which apparently (according to the Book of Job) he has constant access. His object is to prove that God cannot make a righteous man. Even the best of believers know their own unworthiness-like Paul who, despite all the endeavours of perfectionists to prove otherwise, spoke in the present tense when he declared, “O wretched man that I am” - and in the future tense when he considered the nature and time of deliverance – “Who SHALL deliver me from the body of this death (Romans 7:23-25). It is a great practice of Satan to encourage good men to suppose they have attained to some measure of perfection. This inclines them to look more and more to themselves, and less and less to the righteousness of Christ. It is singular how the perfectionist seldom preaches a sermon on the glory of Christ and the wonder of redeeming love. Like the “charismatic,” he dwells upon “experience,” and less and less on doctrine. He seldom has a sermon on the mystery of the Holy Trinity or the wonder of God becoming man, or the fundamental doctrine of justification by faith. It is not a good thing for preachers and pastors, however earnest they may be, to be obsessed with one line of teaching. All are liable to this temptation, be they Calvinist or Arminian, Perfectionist or Pentecostalist. There is no substitute for the proclamation of ‘the whole counsel of God.’ All ‘obsessions’ are dangerous.

Satan is vulnerable and destroyed only by the Gospel as our next verse clearly shows:

OVERCOMING BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death”. Verse 11

This is the only way by which Satan is overcome. Three things are mentioned here: What Christ has done; our testimony to what He has done; and our deep and absolute committal to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

The blood of the Lamb answers for our guilt. The foundation of all true religion is FORGIVENESS OF SIN. The Christian life begins there: forgiveness of sin through the atoning death of Christ. This is the rock upon which we rest our hope. The knowledge of forgiveness - the belief in it - the assurance that Christ died just for this - that the sin of which Satan accuses us in our conscience is atoned for by His blood. This is something which Satan cannot bear. Defeated, he departs to await a more convenient season. His subtlety aims to arouse in our conscience the fear that we have sinned beyond redemption, that we have committed the sin unpardonable - but the answer is in the blood of Christ. We acknowledge that for once Satan speaks the truth when he tells us what vile sinners we are, but it remains that wherever there is true repentance, there is true faith. The very shame we feel, and the vehement desire we have to be partaker of His holiness who loved us and gave Himself for us - this answers the devil and puts him behind us again and again.

By this one article of free forgiveness - justification by faith alone - Luther threw down a thousand years of superstition and error, and gave liberty of conscience to millions who were in bondage and fear.

The deep consecration to Christ which every true believer must feel; the call to be His and His alone; the losing of our lives for His sake who laid down His glorious life for a world of sinners lost; to be captured by love - His love for us: this is the true experience of those who have the new life in Christ. “Not our own but bought with a price,” says Paul. The love of Christ has impelled more martyrs to the stake, aroused more sacrificial service, turned more from a life of selfish ambition to a life devoted to the unearthly principle that all loss is gain and all worldly gain is loss - than ever can be recorded in books. “They loved not their lives unto the death.” Few are called upon to be martyrs at the stake, but all are called to deny themselves and declare, “Not I, but Christ.” It is this which proves Christ to be what He is, gives the lie direct to Satan, and makes angels wish they had been men.

“They overcame the devil by the blood of the Lamb...” “By this one doctrine of the death of Christ for sinners; by this forgiveness obtained through His all-atonement sacrifice – Satan’s most formidable weapon is wrenched from his hand,” says Hengstenberg.

Well might we be reminded here of that word in Isaiah 4:12: “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations?”

THE RAGE OF SATAN

“Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”

Verse 12

The heavens and those who dwell in them are symbolic here not of the angelic regions, but of the Church, which is a heavenly institution enjoying “all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3); having been raised up together with Christ and made to sit with Him in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6), and whose members, while on earth, have their conversation in heaven. (Philippians 3:20)

The inhabitants of the earth and of the sea are the unbelievers, for in Revelation (as in prophecy generally), the earth and the sea are terms used to denote the worldly multitudes given over to wickedness and impenitence – “The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt” (Isaiah 57:20); false teachers are ‘raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame’ (Jude 13). Likewise the earth often denotes that which is of itself and not of God. “He that is of the earth is earthly and speaketh of the earth. He that cometh from heaven is above all” (John 3:31); “Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, WHO MIND EARTHLY THINGS” (Philippians 3:19); “This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish” (James 3:15).

“For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”

It may seem strange to many that the woe is pronounced first upon the earthly

multitudes against whom Satan rages with great wrath. We should have expected that the only target of Satan's hate would be the redeemed who through grace have broken loose from their old servitude to sin and Satan. We must understand however that Satan has a hatred of the entire human race as such. Bondage to the Evil One does not by any means secure an easy and prosperous passage through this world, as violent deaths, cruelties, wars, tumults, crimes, early graves, only too frequently indicate.

All souls belong to God, not to Satan. God is the Creator of all, and though man has rebelled against God, that does not mean that he is absolved from His allegiance. The judgment seat will show that clearly enough. Satan is not the lord of life, for he owes his own existence to the Most High God and will answer for it when the mystery of God is finished. Meantime, he acts as the slave of providence though he does not so intend, and he fulfils a most important part in the supreme purpose which our God is working out. The permission which Satan sought and obtained from God for the trial of Job is proof that Satan is no free agent, despite his impious boast that he 'goes to and fro in the earth and walks up and down in it' (Job 1:7) as though the creation were his, seeing he has the liberty of it. God nailed that lie not by almighty power but in the weakness and frailty of one troubled man, Job, who maintained the integrity of his faith despite the fact that Satan was permitted to pour upon him suffering and anguish more terrible than death itself. In the supreme sense, this is how Satan is brought to his ultimate ruin, for Christ became man - God manifest in human flesh - and submitted Himself in all the weakness of human limitation to temptation and trial incredible, and anguish unspeakable, for only thus could Satan's lie be destroyed and the righteousness of God vindicated.

Satan acts as an unwilling instrument of God's sovereignty. Paul speaks of delivering certain apostates to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme. (1 Timothy 1:20) This is what excommunication means. Satan thus receives authority to oppress the wicked, to the wise end that they should see the folly of their sins. It is part of the judgment of God upon nations who give themselves over to wickedness, that by their own wickedness they should be judged. Western civilisation today is getting perilously near to that point where the overturning of the commandments of God (which are designed for the good and the happiness of man and not as a restraint upon true liberty) is bringing about a situation of self-destruction. God hands over a people to the will of Satan, but they soon learn how hard and cruel a taskmaster he is unto whose hands they have been delivered.

Thus "the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea" are warned of their fate at

the hands of the devil whom they serve. They find him a hard and cruel taskmaster. The broad way which leads to destruction is by no means a pleasant way of life. Lawlessness and immorality, pleasure-seeking and fleshly indulgence, to which the Western world has largely committed itself in its revolt against God and truth, is not producing a peaceful and safe society. The devil is a hard and cruel taskmaster, even to the wicked. Knowing that he has but a short time, Satan comes out openly as the enemy of the human race and deluges the world in blood and violence and crime, as in the days immediately before the Flood – “The earth was filled with violence and every imagination of the thoughts of men’s hearts was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5).

Satan does not have it within himself to promote the peace and tranquility of the human race for which he has an inveterate hatred and contempt. Destruction and fear are his mission. The legalising and toleration by Western governments of the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the approval given to these monstrous crimes even by churches (and evangelical religion is not exempt entirely from this charge) can only prove the prelude to the judgment of fire and brimstone.

Nevertheless the principal target of Satan’s wrath is always the Church, the preservation of which though all calamities and judgments is the subject of the remainder of our chapter.

THE WOMAN, THE WILDERNESS, AND THE FLOOD

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

And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.”

Foiled and baffled in his age-long purpose to destroy at birth the One who should redeem mankind, the Dragon seeks now to destroy the Woman, the Church, through whom the Manchild has been brought into the world.

The historic persecutions of the Church, especially in those early days of her New Testament history, are well known. During 90 years after the public inauguration of the gospel at Pentecost, the devil sought by Jewish hands to crush the witness of

Christ and prevent the spread of the gospel contagion. Stephen fell as the first Christian martyr, after uttering that inspired apology for the Christian revelation which marked the way ahead for gentile participation in the covenant of grace - an apologia which remained indelibly printed on the mind of one of his hearers, Saul of Tarsus.

Stephen's heroic death was the signal for a furious attempt to destroy completely the infant Church, then still unseparated from the synagogue and the ancient Mosaic rituals. Saul of Tarsus, maddened by fanatical zeal for the Law, made havoc of the Church, throwing many into prison and by his cruelties compelling many to forsake the testimony of Christ. The dramatic conversion of this young zealot was a solemn warning to Israel that the times were moving to the most dynamic development of all - the conversion of the gentiles in fulfillment of those prophecies which false Judaism (and now well-meaning but mistaken prophetic Futurism) claims to belong only to the Jew to the total disinheriting of the Church. The weapon fell from the hands of the Jewish leaders at that dramatic blow from heaven which cast Saul of Tarsus prostrate before the Crucified. Henceforth Saul chose to be known by his Roman equivalent, Paul, to denote his committal to gentile salvation and the setting of the boundaries of the Kingdom in the uttermost parts of the earth.

Slowly but surely, in accord with the method of God, the synagogue connection with the Church receded until it was lost for ever in the ruins of the Temple.

After the period of Jewish persecution of the Church, the Dragon raised up Caesar himself, the Master of the world, against the Church and it was when this onslaught against the testimony of Christ reached floodtide level under Domitian that the lonely Seer of Patmos, the beloved apostle John, received at the hand of the glorious Redeemer Himself, that book of Revelation which was to be the chart and compass of the Church, and her consolation during her 2,000 years of travail and witness.

The successive persecutions of the Church by the Roman Caesars from John's day till the conversion of the emperor Constantine showed the fierce wrath of the Dragon against the Seed of the Woman. Yet how vain were his endeavours to overturn the decree of Christ - "On this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Satan thereupon armed himself with a new and more subtle weapon - though never discarding that of open persecution to which he resorts again and again. When fire

and sword could not destroy the Woman or her seed, the Dragon, consummate as he is in the art of deception, created a rival kingdom to masquerade as the Kingdom of Christ. He raised up an Antichristian empire of which he was the head - for the devil himself is the true and only antichrist: all others are merely his 'front' men.

Intruding into the realm of the visible church, Satan claimed to be God's viceroy on earth, and proceeded to draw all worship to himself, persuading men that religion consists in external forms and histrionic posturings before visible altars, and claims to magical powers. Behind a facade of Christian orthodoxy he perpetuated Babylon so as to enslave the Church. Rome, the legitimate successor of Babylon, was marked to become an ecclesiastical corporation which for a thousand years claimed with resounding success the honours and the rights of Christ's true church.

THE CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS

And where was the Woman, the Bride of Christ? In the wilderness (declares John in his vision). She awaits there the pleasure of her Lord, hidden, secret, often unnoticed, till the time of her enlargement. Hence the mystery of the Book of Revelation as the spiritual handbook of the Church, in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ her Lord.

To the Woman are given 'two wings of a great eagle.' Hengstenberg prefers to read, "the two wings of the great eagle" as more clearly denoting that the great eagle is the Lord Himself who so describes Himself in Deuteronomy 32:11: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, bearest them on her wings" (see also Exodus 19:4, "Ye have seen how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself").

The figure is the same. The Lord preserves His Church by bearing her through her trials as on eagle's wings, lifting her above the world and hiding her in the pavilion of His providential care.

God carries the soul of His people into regions where Satan cannot penetrate. Though the Evil One may destroy or torment the body he may not touch the essential soul.

"There is a calm, a sure retreat;
'Tis found beneath the mercy seat."

The sabbath calm and rest of Elijah at Cherith and Zarephath, is the rest of the Church in the bosom of her Lord. The ravens of His providence, the barrel and the cruse of the perpetual supply of grace, are tokens of the care exercised by Him of whom it is written, "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." The Manchild (Christ) to whom the Woman gave birth was caught up to God and to His throne, whence He rules all nations with a rod of iron (verse 5). The preservation of the Woman and her Seed must be seen in this context always, and the Second Psalm is always the standard of the rule of Christ whom God the Father has set upon His holy hill of Zion - the Church: "Why do the nations rage and the people imagine a vain thing?"

The Woman is nourished (preserved and fed) from before the face of the Serpent, for the period of 'a time, and times and half a time'. Here we are carried back to Daniel chap. 7, v.25: where the Fourth Kingdom of Daniel's vision (which all parties agree is the Roman empire) with its divided form of Ten Kings (about which no parties agree:), and its ultimate development when another king arises after the Ten Kings - different from all who went before him, and who 'subdues' three of the Ten Kings and is distinguished for blasphemy, alteration of laws, and persecution of the Church ('the saints of the Most High') - and his term of usurpation 'a time, and times and the dividing of time'.

Daniel and John are undoubtedly seeing the same vision, but as to the interpretation there are as many theories as there are expositors.

The wilderness into which the Woman is carried can only mean the wilderness of this world. The children of Israel in their flight from Pharaoh, king of Egypt, found rest in the wilderness and safety from the pursuit of their foes. It is well-known that the wilderness journey of the tribes for forty years, during which they were miraculously preserved, fed and refreshed, till they reached the Land of Promise, is a type of the journey of the Church throughout the ages of her pilgrimage till her final entry into the saints' everlasting rest. She is sustained by the heavenly manna. Christ, said, "I am the bread of life ... Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger: and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.... He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever" (see John 6:30-58).

In this manner the Church is nourished in the wilderness of this world in a region of the Spirit where Satan and all the power of this world cannot reach her, sustained by the Bread of Life.

It is true that Satan can stir up the enmity of the world against the Church, but neither he nor any human power can touch that hidden life of the soul which places the believer in heavenly regions where he sits and reigns with Christ.

It is thus that the Church dwells in the wilderness in the place prepared for her by God (“her place” - verse 14) where she is “nourished from the face of the Serpent.”

The period denoted, ‘time, times and a half’ must be regarded not as a period measurable by man, but as hidden in the divine counsel. The terms elsewhere used of the same period (42 months, 1260 days) are subordinate to the equivalent ‘time, times and a half’ and therefore must likewise be discarded as periods of exact measurement which so many have tried to fit into events of history. A favourite termination used to be 1793, the year of the French Revolution, wonderfully forecast by the Scot, Robert Fleming, whose ‘discovery’ of the ‘prophetic year’ of 360 days enabled him, and an army of interpreters after him, to fix a variety of dates all of which have long since terminated, to the no small embarrassment of the Historical fraternity, and to the jubilation of the Futurists whose chronology can never be proved wrong - for they who have no commencing date certainly cannot be required to have a finishing one.

It was never the intention of Almighty God who has reserved to Himself the secrets of the times and seasons (Acts 1:7), to allow man to anticipate the time schedule which omnipotent wisdom has decreed, for this would invade the region of faith. It is enough that the great Architect of Time has placed all things within His own power, and the calendar is no substitute for humble and adoring faith.

The message of our verse 19 therefore is that the trials and tribulations of the people of God down the ages have an end, just as they had a beginning, and that our great and glorious Redeemer is crowned King of the Ages and at the time decreed by the Father all things will have their conclusion in the manner appointed by Him. “Here is the patience and the faith of the saints” says John in the next chapter (13:10) - and neither faith nor patience would have any validity if we could measure on the calendar the times and the seasons of judgment and mercy.

Our Book of Revelation is no Almanac. It is the Book of faith and patience. When we come to chapter 13 we hope to shed some light upon the mysterious prophecy of Daniel 7 with its ‘diverse king’ to whom it is appointed that he should ‘wear out the saints of the Most High and think to change times and laws.’ Perhaps we shall see that he is no stranger to past or present generations of suffering saints.

THE DEVIL'S FLOOD

“And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman”
verse 15

Literalism and Futurism can make nothing of these words, for they would require the abandonment of their entire system of interpretation. They deny that Revelation is a symbolic and spiritual book, for to accept the spiritual interpretation would mean the dismantling of all their theories. Yet who would teach that the Woman is a literal person and not a symbolic figure? Likewise if the Woman is a symbol, so is the flood of water poured from the mouth of Satan, and so by consequence the entire edifice of literal interpretation of Revelation must fall to the ground.

Historicist interpreters have seen this flood of waters as the Goths and Huns, some the Roman armies of Vespasian sent to destroy Jerusalem, others the Arian heretics, or again, the Islamic hosts of Saracens and Turks. Futurists see the armies of Antichrist set in motion against the Jews in some coming day.

We prefer Hengstenberg's consistent and sober estimate, “The hostile overflowing of the Church, the beginning of which gave rise to this Book, namely the Roman persecution.”

The flood of waters is a common and constant OT figure of the rising tide of enmity again and again in history, aimed at overwhelming and destroying the people of God. It is not one isolated episode of history, past or to come, but the constant experience of the Church in her warfare against all forms of Satanic hate, whether in terms of the flood of antichristian doctrine or of open persecution and suppression.

O.T. EXAMPLES

The following examples of this kind of Satanic opposition to the people of God, should be studied:

Jeremiah 47:2: “Thus saith the Lord; Behold, waters rise up out of the north, and shall be an overflowing flood, and shall overflow the land, and all that is therein; the city, and them that dwell therein: then the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl.”

The flood waters in this verse are the armies which came against Jerusalem in the days of Jeremiah.

Psalm 124:1-5: “If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say; If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us: Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us: Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.”

Psalm 18:16: “He drew me out of many waters.”

Isaiah 8:7-8: “Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over his channels, and go over all his banks: And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.”

This prophecy interprets itself. The flood waters of the river are the Assyrian army, which surged against Jerusalem in the days of Isaiah and Hezekiah.

Jeremiah 46:7-8: “Who is this that cometh up as a flood, whose waters are moved as the rivers? Egypt riseth up like a flood, and his waters are moved like the rivers; and he saith, I will go up, and will cover the earth; I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof.”

THE EARTH HELPING THE WOMAN

The swallowing up of the flood by the earth denotes the rise of opposing powers who by engulfing the persecutors or oppressors of the Church, unwittingly ‘help’ the Woman. The dominion of the whole creation, including the nations and their leaders and tyrants, is given into the hand of Christ (Matt. 28:18). In the texts quoted above, especially Isaiah 8.7-8, it is the Lord who raises up the power of the nations to execute His sovereign purposes. Thus He decreed the destruction of Babylon by the Medes and Persians, then the destruction of the Persian power by the Greeks, the Grecian empire by the Roman, and finally the disintegration of the Roman Empire by the Barbarian conquerors. Many times since then, even down to modern days, have we seen the same process at work - the ruin of Spain, the fall of Napoleon, the destruction of the Nazi empire almost as soon as it was created. In the post-Reformation age the antichristian persecutions by the Papal power were

halted by the rise of the Turks and their invasion of Europe as far as the gates of Vienna. The discovery of America provided a haven of refuge for the oppressed people of God in Britain and Europe. The folly of Britain resulted in the independence of the Americas from European domination. Now an invisible and far more dangerous power threatens to overwhelm all of us - and we are NOT referring to Russia, which on account of its geography can neither successfully attack nor be attacked; we are referring to the flood of scientific and religious error which has substituted the mind of man for the fact of God, with the inevitable rise of the tide of open immorality and disgusting social sin which would have made even the inhabitants of Sodom to blush.

There is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Even Satan has to seek divine permission to try the righteous (as the Book of Job plainly indicates). Nevertheless the divine sovereignty, which is absolute, operates secretly and mysteriously so as neither to interfere on the one hand with the liberty of volition without which angels would not be angels and men would not be men; and on the other to lead infallibly to the accomplishment of the holy purposes of God. How this is achieved by the Godhead is not within the capacity of man or angel to understand before the all-revealing day of judgment. The efforts of extreme Calvinism (which Calvin and the other Reformers would not countenance) to devise a scheme complete in all its details, subjecting even the deity Itself to its merciless logic, is only matched by the puerile theology of present-day Arminianism which, in the effort to escape from the enormity of a universe entirely mechanical in its operation, has dethroned God and put sovereign man in His place.

No-one can believe in a universe in which God has failed in the slightest degree to carryout His entire purpose. But neither can any enlightened soul charge God with the deplorable outcome of unbelief – “As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Ezek. 33:11). Neither man nor angel can solve that paradox. We must hold both reins if we would be guided on the right course, and be content to wait for the full light of God's glory in the Day of Judgment.

We now understand the meaning of these words, “The earth helped the woman.” The earth, considered as the worldly multitudes and powers, goes its own way, but the omnipotence of God in Christ, working secretly and marvelously through all history, sets power against power and strength against strength and policy against policy (as in the Book of Daniel) to put down one and raise up

another, always with the welfare of the Church in view, for the Church is the one enduring object in all history. Indeed, all history belongs to the Church, as Moses taught the Israelites in the wilderness, “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” (Deut. 32.8; see also Acts 17.26). The very geography of the earth as well as all human history, has been shaped by divine omnipotence to promote the interests of the Church, the Kingdom of God. Wars and revolutions are disposed by the iron sceptre of Christ for the judgment and chastisement of human pride and power and the limitation of evil (which always multiplies itself with limitless arrogance when left at peace with itself). Christ exercises this sovereignty over all, as much by the control He has over the Evil One as over the kings of the earth, rulers, presidents, democracies, dictatorships, and tyrannies. But He does this in such a way as to defy all human ability to trace His pathway, “Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known”. (Psalm 77:19). (See also Psalm 93:3-4, and Psalm 29:10.)

It is thus that the earth helps the Woman, and thus the purposes of God are fulfilled. “All things are ours, and we are Christ’s and Christ is God’s”. (1 Corinthians 3:21-23)

“THE REMNANT OF HER SEED”

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Verse 17

As the Woman is the Church, the remnant of her seed is that portion of the Church Militant which is on the earth at any particular time. It is the difference between the individual believer and Christ’s mystic body, the Church. The Church is only known or visible on the earth by the presence and the testimony of believers. Against these, the wrath and malice and envy of the Evil One are in constant manifestation. The believer is engaged in unremitting warfare with the power of Darkness and must expect no respite in the warfare with sin. The believer is known by this witness before all men: he keeps the commandments of God and bears testimony to Christ and His saving grace. Keeping the commandments does not mean absolute perfection. It means the serving of God in the spirit of new obedience and consecration. It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit’s work in the soul. It is the mark of God upon the believer. It does not mean faultlessness, but it does mean yielding to Him whom we love, living for Him, preference for Christ above all

else, and glad acceptance of His will. If we do not have these characteristics, of what worth is a profession of faith? Life in Christ is immune to the destructive power of the Evil One, but at the same time is exposed to all the malice and hatred which Satan bears against the Son of God. Hence the Saviour warns of sorrows and trials and tribulations from which no believer is exempt. But, “Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh ... Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep”. (Luke 6:21-25)

ON KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS

“It is a great question whether such is possible to man or not. Those who have attained to faith in Christ serve God in a new and willing spirit and this is called, ‘keeping the commandments of God.’ Those who keep the commandments of God have also the testimony of Jesus. If our hearts are convinced of this our mouth will not fail to deliver a steadfast testimony respecting it. These are the persons on whom Satan makes war, and hence it rouses strong suspicion if one recoils from keeping the commandments of God.”
- Bengel.

“If ye love me keep my commandments.” “This is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, that as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it” (John 14:15; 2 John, v. 8).

* * *

THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY IDENTIFIED

(Revelation, Chapter 13)

Two Beasts rise from the sea and the land respectively. The order is significant. The Mighty One of Rev. 10 (Christ) has His right foot on the sea and His left on the land. All is under His sublime control. He appoints and governs the times and the seasons, and in His hand is the Little Book of the divine decrees which only God can execute - and He is God. This Little Book decrees the end of Satan’s power.

In this vision the Dragon delegates all his power and authority to the first Beast which arises out of the sea (see v.2). This Beast is furnished with seven heads and ten horns, each of the horns bearing a crown. In chapter 12, verse 3, the Dragon (Satan) appears in similar form - seven heads and ten horns, except that in his case

the heads are crowned, not the horns. This distinction is the token that the Beast of chapter 13 is subordinate to the Dragon. The head from which the horns protrude is greater than the horns.

In the case of the Dragon, the symbolism determines that Satan has a kingdom over which he reigns, and the seven crowned heads show the complete extent of that kingdom in history. The figure is taken from the Book of Daniel, which the Apocalypse follows in so many vital instances, though with notable changes which are required by the passage of time and the development of the holy purposes of God.

Thus in Daniel 7 there are four monarchies represented by four great Beasts which arise from the sea - a Lion, a Bear, a Leopard, and an unidentifiable Monster 'dreadful and terrible' which has ten horns. In the course of the vision 'another little horn' emerges and takes the place of three of the existing horns. The whole represents the course of world history from Daniel's time to the coming of Christ, and beyond. The Four Beasts are the empires of Babylon, Persia, Alexander the Great's Grecian empire, and finally the Roman - "strong exceedingly, with great iron teeth."

The mystery of John's Beast with seven heads and ten horns - one Beast, yet incorporating the characteristics of the bygone empires, the Lion, Bear and Leopard - has given great exercise to many interpreters by reason of Daniel's vision allowing only for four empires or heads, whereas John's Beast has seven heads or empires. The solution is a simple one - so simple it does not appear to have been perceived by most of the writers, who have gone back into ancient history in order to find preceding world empires, such as Egypt and Assyria, to piece together so as to makeup John's Beast. But the answer is already in Daniel 7:6 - the Leopard has FOUR heads, representing the four kingdoms into which Alexander's empire was divided at his early and untimely death. Thus the seven heads of John's Beast are accounted for.

The Little Horn of Daniel 7:8 (see also 8, v. 9) is the antichristian apostasy which was to arise in the latter end of the Fourth or Roman Empire, the same apostasy referred to by the apostle Paul in 2 Thess. 2 - the apparition of a Man of Sin (antichrist), a mystery of iniquity which had been explained by Paul during his ministry in Thessalonica: thus, - "Remember ye not that when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he who now letteth (hindereth) will let, until he be taken out of the way" (2 Thess. 2:5-7).

As the Little Horn was destined to rise out of the fourth or Roman Empire, it would have been highly imprudent, even dangerous, for the Church at that time to be furnished with a letter in which the end of the Roman empire was predicted, and the emergence therefrom of a new Roman empire which was in fact a devilish, Satanic fake blasphemously claiming to be the veritable Church of Christ. Paul had been given a clear perception of the rise of the antichristian system, from his study of the Book of Daniel, and gives to the Thessalonians a full-dress picture of that mystery of iniquity which presents itself as the kingdom of God but which in fact is the kingdom of the Evil One. Antichrist, the Little Horn, has been with us for a long time. He was already emerging when John, writing some 30 years after Paul, declared that “as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time” (1 John 2.18). The full development of antichrist however, was delayed until the Roman Caesars were “taken out of the way”.

We wait for no other antichrist but the one with whom John was acquainted, and who is not a person but a kingdom of darkness and deceit and blasphemy. He is the Little Horn of Daniel’s vision and as such he was fated to arise in the latter days of the Fourth Monarchy when the imperial purple of the Caesars gave way to the reign of the ten kings amongst whom the fragments of the old empire were distributed as all history declares. The shadow of the coming antichristian kingdom was already cast over the church as early as the days of John, though another four centuries were to pass before the empire finally disintegrated to re-emerge on the page of history in its new and mysterious Papal form. Daniel’s prophecy does not allow for an interval of 2,000 years to intervene between the end of the Roman empire and the emergence of the antichristian “Little Horn”. There is a continuity in the prophecy. Antichrist is already here - he is at least 1500 years old:

We now proceed with our exposition of Revelation 13.

THE THREE BEASTS

THREE BEASTS are mentioned in chapter 13. These are the Dragon, verse 2 the Beast out of the sea (verse 1) and the Beast out of the earth (verse 11).

The names “Dragon” and “Beast” are used, for these symbolic representations have no likeness to any creature. The Dragon is a fabulous beast, which has always stood for wrath and destruction, and is a fitting symbol of Satan himself, with whom this figure is clearly identified, chap. 12:9 – “the great dragon, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan”.

The Beast out of the Sea, is the one to whom Satan delegates his power and throne and great authority (verse 2) and must answer to the kingdom of Satan on earth - that kingdom of sin and darkness and error by which Satan seeks to enslave and deceive mankind. This is further enforced by the characteristics ascribed to the beast in verses 1 and 2, namely his seven heads and ten horns, crowned with the name of blasphemy, with the body of the Grecian Leopard of Alexander's Empire, the feet of the Persian Bear which Alexander destroyed, and the mouth of the Chaldean Lion, which was supplanted by the Persian power - the same sequence and description observed by Daniel in his vision (Dan. 7). So Satan's dominion passes through its various historic phases in relation to the people of God in the earth, receiving its ultimate historic and religious-political form in that Beast of "diverse" character, mighty and terrible, which tore with its iron teeth and stamped upon and destroyed the residue of the nations - namely, the great Roman Empire, destined to be the only one of the Four Monarchies to come into actual collision with the Kingdom of God in its fully developed state in the New Testament.

In its great historic encounter with the gospel, the empire of the Caesars met its doom, for although in its latest phase it was ruled over by emperors who were Christian at least in name, it did in fact perpetuate the Satanic dominion, for the paganism of the empire was changed only in name. Nevertheless the empire was destined to fall in ruins in the Fourth and succeeding centuries of the Christian era, and disintegrate into a ten-kingdom phase, denoted by the ten crowned horns of Rev. 13:1. The empire was never succeeded by another supplanting power as were its predecessors, and it endures today in its divided form represented by the nations of the Western World, perpetually in turmoil, jostling for the security and power lost with the Caesars, and destined never to be regained by any one power or group of powers - as all subsequent history bears witness.

THE DEADLY WOUND HEALED (Verse 3)

One of the heads mortally wounded, clearly denotes the end of Imperial or Pagan Rome. The fall of this great empire after 1,000 years of history, was a historic event of incalculable importance, and created a vacuum in human affairs, which has never really been filled. But the end of the political empire proved to be only one more phase or chapter in the long history of the Satanic conspiracy. To the wonder of the world there arose, Phoenix-like from the ashes of Rome, another Rome, the same yet different - a religious empire, modelled exactly upon the imperial system which went before it, assuming the very title (Pontifex Maximus) worn by the Caesars, dwelling in the same temples, worshipping at the same shrines, and with a difference only of names, in the same outward forms and with

the same apparatus of images, sacrifices, incense, priesthood and religious orders, as the defunct empire.

This is a unique event in history and represents Satan's masterpiece of delusion and deceit, by which he was to continue to hold the human mind and soul in darkness for another thousand years.

This was the "healing of the deadly wound" - and all the world wondered after the beast (v.3). The worship of the world was fixed anew upon the dragon (v.4) and his kingdom ascended again to its universal dominion.

It is important to follow the narrative in Rev. 13 alongside that of Daniel in his 7th chapter, where the first prediction of this extraordinary event was given. Daniel sees the ten-horned state of the disrupted empire, with a new development - a Little Horn arising after the others, and supplanting three of the horn kingdoms, which fall before it. This Little Horn is the Papal Horn, which seized temporal power in the early days of the Popes by annexing three of the Italian kingdom-states, which event is commemorated to this day in the Pope's triple-tiara which he wears as part of his official regalia.

There is no event in history other than the rise of the Papacy, which corresponds to the predictions in Daniel and Revelation - and the finger points unerringly to Papal Rome.

Identity and continuity are clear for all to see.

Even before Imperial Rome received its deadly wound, the movement was gathering force which culminated in the emergence of the Papal power out of the ruins of the Imperial. The career of the Beast was ended - but no a new wonder is seen: the Beast comes back again from the dead with renewed vigour and tenfold strength and activity, and all the world wonders. Satan's object is attained - "they worshipped the dragon which gave power to the Beast" (v.4).

BLASPHEMY

Thereafter the character of the Papal horn, first unfolded by Daniel and now by John, is assumed by the new ecclesiastical emperors of Rome - "there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies".

The blasphemy is directed against God and His true and heavenly kingdom - the

congregation of all true believers. Blasphemy is the name given to Satan's ultimate objective and the means taken to reach it, namely, to destroy the credit of God, repudiate His character and worship, and substitute for it the worship of himself (Satan).

It is given to the Beast in his new, Christianised phase, to prevail against the saints of God (the true Christian believers), and even to overcome them (so far as the body is concerned) and to extend the boundaries of his dominion throughout the world, far beyond the limits of any empire which ever went before. The only ones to refuse allegiance are the elect whose names are in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world (v.8).

THE THIRD BEAST (13:11 etc.)

As the Second Beast (of verse 11, arising out of the sea of humanity, is properly Satan's Kingdom of Darkness in its organised political aspect, this Third Beast arising out of the earth, with two horns like a Lamb, but with a voice like a Dragon is properly the Papal system of priestcraft and deception by which the Pagan Beast is made to live again after having received its death-blow from the Gospel. The lamblike appearance of this Beast is the pretence of sanctity and gentleness which the Papacy always holds out to the unsuspecting world. The unmistakable tones of the Dragon, however, show what its real nature is. Through the Papal disguise of the Lamb (a character stolen from our Blessed Lord Himself who is the true and only Lamb of God) Satan speaks again in his ancient pagan tones, reproducing the heathenism which he loves and which from its beginning has been his own invention of blasphemy designed to distort the image of deity and to capture the mind and soul of mankind, to keep mankind in perpetual and degrading thralldom.

The great wonders which this lamblike Beast performs, the bringing of fire from heaven and the manufacture of a talking image of the Beast his master, is a perfect cartoon of the Papacy, in its pretended powers of excommunication (which for so long terrified and enslaved the kingdoms of Europe) and its perfect reproduction of the image of the defunct pagan religion by the revival of pagan rites and deities and theology under a Christian name.

This corrupt and fraudulent system of the Papacy, wielding the weapon of excommunication by which it brought interdict, fear, torment and destruction to all who stood in its path - succeeded during the long centuries of its unchallenged domination and its unhallowed pretensions, in bringing under its power all peoples who dwelt in that portion of the world which was given over to it.

By its fraud and craft it set up again the image of imperial paganism once the characteristic of the now defunct Roman Beast of the Caesars, so that the image of Paganism lived and breathed again in Papal Rome with more vitality and power than ever it did in the days of the Empire.

RECEIVING THE MARK

The receiving of the mark of the Beast (verses 16-18) means the acceptance of the Beast's claims and the yielding of worship and obedience to the power behind the Beast - the Devil. The interdict against buying and selling indicates the forbidding of the practice of religion in any form not authorised by the masters of Rome - a clear picture of Papal policy down the ages.

TWO KINGDOMS

There are two kingdoms with which all men have to do. The one is the Kingdom of Satan, described in the Bible as "the power of darkness" (Colossians 1:13) or "the power of Satan" (Acts 26:18), and the other is the Kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:13). We see these two kingdoms joined in age-long conflict in Revelation 12 (see verse 7).

All men are by nature the children of the first kingdom (Ephesians 2:2-3). Those who enter Christ's Kingdom of salvation only do so by a miracle of divine grace. We are "translated" says Paul, into the Kingdom of the Son. Likewise we are to be "turned" or converted, from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God. We are "delivered" from the power of darkness. All these powerful, significant and supernatural words denote that the salvation of the soul, and its deliverance from Satanic thralldom and deceit, requires the total effort of the Godhead in time and in eternity. It is tantamount to a new creation of which Christ the Son is the head, the originator and the consummation - the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Satan's empire of darkness, headed up in the imperial heathenism of ancient Rome, was in the full career of its pride and power in the days of the apostle John, at the time the Book of Revelation was committed to him.

The same kingdom of Satan flourishes today. We do not make the mistake of saying that Satan's kingdom is exclusively the Roman Catholic Church, though we are sure that that Church is a very extensive province of the kingdom of darkness. It is a phase - a formidable phase -of the empire of Satan, that ancient Caesar who

laid the foundations of his rule in the sin of our first parents in the Garden, and who now reigns in the Bottomless Pit of this world's surging whirlpool of sin and shame, not only in the Roman phase of his dominion, but also in the Rationalistic provinces of his far-flung empire. Protestantism itself has in our time become an apostasy.

Wherever the ancient errors of religious superstition and image worship subsist alongside the more subtle modern delusions of the denial of divine revelation in the Word of Holy Scripture and the enthronement of man's intellect, there is the work and the kingdom of the devil and the pollution and ruin of human nature.

The modern world with its sex and noise, its violence and sodomy, its crime and avarice, its worship of money and its overthrow of the Ten Commandments, is one of the phases of Satan's beastly empire - perhaps the last phase.

The awful apparition which sprawls across human history in the shape of this disgusting Beast, is a fitting figure for what reigns in the minds of most men today - the most rich, the most leisured, the most foul, the most degraded of all the chapters of Satan's victory over the mind of man.

The revival of Rome in our day is only made possible by the mental and scientific revolt against the Bible which is now swallowing up the last details of organised Protestantism - a Protestantism now clamouring to be incorporated with Rome in an unequal marriage of Rationalism with Superstition.

It may be that the last phase of the great, far-flung kingdom of Satan is upon us. New features are rushing in, new delusions are draping the horizon of human thought like flickering ghosts in the twilight of man's soul; new and fearful portents of coming wrath are emerging from the shadows of man's last apostasy. The devil knows he has but a short time and is come down in much fury to destroy many.

And where do WE stand? We surely intend to be among the faithful witnesses who follow the Lamb whithersoever He leads, and who testify to His faithful Word against all the error and scorn of these coming dreadful days. We seek the grace of God to give us fortitude and courage in the unknown dangers of these times of gathering gloom. As the devil's campaign mounts in violence and intensity we must speak out more and more to expose that which conspires to silence Christ's Word. We must preach and proclaim that Word. We must worship Him who is our only Saviour, our God and King. We must seek grace to be kept unspotted from the

pollutions of this world, and in the mounting triumphs of the devil we hope to see ever more potent signs of His Coming whom we await, and to whom ascends our welcoming cry -

“EVEN SO COME LORD JESUS.”