

PART III
THE TWO SIGNS IN HEAVEN
CHAPTER XII

Text (11:19–12:17)

19 And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.

1 And a great sign was seen in heaven: a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; 2 and she was with child; and she crieth out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered. 3 And there was seen another sign in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems. 4 And his tail draweth the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon standeth before the woman that is about to be delivered, that when she is delivered, he may devour her child. 5 And she was delivered of a son, a man child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne. 6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that there they may nourish a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels; 8 and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. 10 And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death. 12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman that brought forth the man child. 14 And there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness unto her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus.

INTRODUCTION

We have considered two series of visions; namely, the Seven Churches, and the vision of the seven seals, with their accompanying seven trumpets.

In each of these series John is caught up out of the flesh. Before the unfolding of the first series—the Seven Churches—he is “in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day. Before the second vision—the Seven Seals and Seven Trumpets, he says “immediately I was in the spirit.” Obviously between the two visions he was again in the flesh, else he would not have been called by the voice, as of a trumpet calling him to come up higher, whereupon he was again “immediately in the spirit.”

We are about to begin the unfolding of a new series of visions, as evidenced by the language of Rev. 11:19, which, in passing we must say, should belong to the twelfth chapter. This division of the book into Chapters and verses, as well as the punctuation is a modern method introduced to facilitate easy reading and ready reference to the different passages. Early manuscripts of the Bible were written in continuous rows of capital letters, without spaces between the words and sentences. The early manuscripts had no stops at all. Revelation 12:1 would have appeared in this fashion:

WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN

The earliest example of separated words is found in a manuscript of the ninth century and it was not until about this time that punctuation marks came into existence. The same is true of the employment of verses and chapters. Therefore, the division between the eleventh and twelfth chapters here is purely artificial and does violence to the division of the visions of *Revelation*.

Properly the blowing of the seventh trumpet closes that vision. It naturally follows that 11:19 begins a new vision. The very language indicates a new starting point. Note its similarity in wording to that of the opening of the second series of visions—the seals and trumpets. There it reads:

“After this I looked and behold, *a door was opened in heaven*” Rev. 4:1

Here it reads:

“*And the temple of God was opened in heaven*” and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were

lightnings, and voices and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."

While John seemed to have returned to the flesh between the first and second series, here there is no mention of that experience, rather indicating that he continued "in the spirit," but the similarity of words with those of Rev. 4:1, indicates that a new vision is being presented.

The language also makes it clear by its likeness to the former vision, which we found to have its starting point at Pentecost, that the same starting point begins that new series of visions. As we study this chapter we shall find this to be true.

Since this is still the language of symbolism in a book of signified visions, the symbol here is called heaven because it is a spiritual warfare about to start.

The ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies is brought to view. There are to be events "uncovered" which have to do with the temple of God. Since we are the temple of God, (I Cor. 3:16), then, the trials and vicissitudes of the church are to be presented in the language of symbolism.

This refers not to the Jewish temple, which had been destroyed some twenty-five years earlier by Titus, but to the spiritual temple, the Church of Christ. Its door is opened and its history foretold. The vision following will "uncover" the fortunes, sorrows, trials, persecutions and triumphs of the church. Its history will be traced until it is glorified by Christ, the husband.

The Church's heavenly destiny is symbolized by the fact that the Holy of Holies, the type of her final destiny is seen.

The thunders and lightnings and earthquakes symbolize and foreshadow the commotions, earth shaking events, revolutions and judgments which shall take place in the fulfillment of the symbols of this new vision.

Now we are ready to begin the study of the two wonders, or more properly, signs of chapter twelve—I say more properly "signs," for while the text reads "wonders," in the margin the translation is "sign."

These two "signs" are diametrically opposed to each other, both as to character and their war with each other. Shall we consider their interpretation as they appear in the verses. Rev. 12:1 "And there appeared a great wonder (sign or symbol) in heaven: a

woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."

In all God's references to his chosen, redeemed people, he likens them to a woman, whether the language was typical, prophetic or that of fulfilment. A woman is employed many times in the scripture as a symbol of the church.

"Say to the daughter of Zion, behold thy salvation cometh" (Isa. 62:11). This is a prophecy of the church to come.

"Ye are not the children of the bond woman, but of the free." (Gal. 4:31). The free woman here is the church.

God took the first pair to typify Christ and His church.

Paul said "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come." (Romans 5:14)

Here he says Adam was a figure or type of Christ, so much so that in (I Cor. 15:45) Christ is called the last Adam, for we read: "And so it is written, the first Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit."

If Adam then was a type of Christ, Adam's wife would be a type of the bride of Christ—the church, for Christ is the bridegroom as Christ claimed for himself in (Matthew 9:15).

"And Jesus said unto them, can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the *bridegroom* is with them? but the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast."

Paul, in (Eph. 5:21-31), likens the relationship between the husband and wife to that between Christ and his wife, and closes with these words: "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." (Eph. 5:32)

Adam was indeed a type of Christ, because:

1. He was single awhile; so was Christ for he had no wife, the church, until he purchased her with his own blood. (Acts 20:28)
2. He went down into a deep sleep; so did Christ in the sleep of death.
3. His side was pierced in his deep sleep; so was Christ's by the spear of the Roman soldier. (John 19:34)
4. Out of his side was taken his bride; so Christ purchased his wife by the blood that flowed from his side.
5. Adam said, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my

flesh;" and Paul said the same of Christ's bride the church: "For we are members of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph. 5:30)

6. Adam called her "woman," because she was taken out of the "Man," and the church here in Revelation is called a "woman" because she was taken out of the "Man," as Pilate called Jesus, in being purchased by Christ's death upon the cross.
7. Adam and his wife wore the same name, for we read: "Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name *Adam*, in the day when they were created." (Genesis 5:2). And the church wears Christ's name collectively in being called the "Church of Christ." How wrong it is then to wear a denominational name which dishonors Christ! And individually his redeemed ones are called "Christians," which means "belonging to Christ". (Acts 11:25, 26).
8. Adam called his wife "Eve," meaning the 'mother of all creation,' and the church is the spiritual mother of the re-creation. In (Gal. 4:26) Paul said: "But Jerusalem, which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."

So the woman here is a sign or symbol (and so called in the margin) of the church. We must get our symbolism right in order to progress truthfully and scripturally.

So we have amply identified the woman here as the church, and of her we read that she was "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."

Naturally, she should be clothed with the sun, because Christ, the Son of Righteousness gives her light. Jesus said: "Ye are the light of the world." Said Paul: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath *shined in our hearts* to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (II Cor. 4:6)

Take Christ out of the life of the church, then she, who is fair as the moon and clear as the sun, would walk in darkness.

But she stands on the moon! The Old Testament has been called the moonlight age-typically reflecting the glorious light of the New Testament fulfillment. So in a very definite sense she does stand on the moon, not as a foundation (for other foundation can no man lay

than that is laid, which is Christ), but she stands in the sense of following in succession of fulfillment.

A diadem of twelve stars rests upon her brow, which undoubtedly refers to the twelve apostles, under whose teaching she dispenses light to the world. Christ filled the twelve apostles with the Holy Spirit to inspire the church to know His mind and will until the true church can say: "We have the mind of Christ." Having identified the first sign, we will pass over the second verse for the time being to consider the second sign, for before we proceed farther we must understand the other sign, or wonder contained in this chapter.

Rev. 12:3 "And there appeared another sign in heaven, and behold a great red dragon." The latter part of this verse will await a little while for clarification.

For the third time in this book of Revelation we find the book itself "uncovering" its own symbolism. The first and second instances were in the case of the stars and candlesticks in Rev. 1:20. In almost all of the symbolism we have had to turn elsewhere for interpretation. Not so here, however, for the ninth verse explains this second sign. "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."

Our understanding of him is made crystal clear. It would seem that God made a special effort here to so definitely identify the dragon that there would never be the least doubt. This is the same serpent—that old serpent which met the first woman, wife of the first Adam in the garden, and for a purpose typical of this appearing of him before the woman here, or the church.

In the garden he made his appearance to deceive the woman with subtlety. Surely, he is as old as creation, for in the garden he began his age-long career as a deceiver of mankind.

Then began the age-old conflict inaugurated by the divine dictum: "And I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15)

And just as he ever tried to destroy the seed line and finally "the seed of the woman" when the Son of God, become flesh, in the butcher of the infants of Bethlehem and the attempt to "take" his

life during his ministry, so here we see a similar attempt to "devour" the seed of the woman as soon as he was born.

The purpose of the dictum was to put enmity between them, and the accomplishment of God's purpose involved the overthrow of the devil, and the supreme purpose of the devil has ever been to "*devour*" the woman's seed, as soon as she brings him forth to the world.

So we have interpreted both signs and are ready to begin our study of the chapter. We will go back to the verse we purposely skipped to complete the unfolding of the two signs. Rev. 12:2: And she, being with child, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered."

John here calls our attention to the condition of the woman. She is about to become a mother. Evidently great significance is attached to this, because of the attention called to her condition. Shall we interpret the symbol of childbirth. In Isaiah 66:8, we read: "As soon as Zion *travaieth* she brought forth *children*." The travail of Zion caused an increase.

Shall we turn now to the New Testament. Paul, speaking of the church said: "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, *that ye should bring forth fruit unto God*." (Rom. 7:4)

The law that bound these Jewish brethren to God, to whom they were married (Jer. 3:14) had been nailed to the cross and now being baptized into Christ they were married to Christ. And this spiritual marriage relationship was for the purpose of "bringing forth fruit into God."

With this shall we hear Peter: "If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be *barren* nor *unfruitful* in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (II Peter 1:8)

Just as husband and wife reproduce after their kind, so the church is to bring forth after her kind, or make other Christians. Here the church is pictured bringing forth Christ to the world in great travail of birth. From Pentecost forward she has, in travail of sorrow, affliction, persecution and opposition, brought Christ to the world. She is symbolized here as crying, "travailing in birth and *pained to be delivered*."

That "this manchild who was to rule the nations with a rod of iron" which she brought forth, is the Christ is so obvious as to hardly need elaboration. There is no other way by which Christ can be brought forth to the world except by the church. Remember this is the language of spiritual symbolism.

But if any proof is needed, the fact that this "manchild was to rule the nations with a rod of iron" carries our minds back to the Messianic second psalm.

"The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron.*" (Psa. 2:7-9)

And if there were not enough proof, then hear Christ himself, for he takes this very prerogative to himself alone, "And he shall rule them with a rod of iron." (Rev. 2:27). Also see Rev. 19:15.

And this conflict has a globe encircling aspect. Sun, moon and stars also are indicative of dominion. This is a stupendous conflict. The woman, the church and her manchild Christ are contending with the devil for stakes no less than the dominion of the world.

This is emphasized by Christ's battle, while yet in the flesh with the devil in the wilderness. Matthew said: "Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the *kingdoms of the world*, and the glory of them. And saith unto Him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." (Matt. 4:8, 9)

But before He shall rule the world with a rod of iron, before the kingdoms of this world become the Kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, Child—the manchild has ascended into heaven to sit on the right hand of God until the last enemy is destroyed. This symbolism is not chronologically presented here in the order of his ascension and his being brought forth to the world by the church.

We have had to travel back and forth in this chapter, leaving out some symbolism, in order to establish the meaning of the two great wonders or signs, and the interpretation of this birth of the manchild.

vs. 3 Now we must return to finish the "uncovering" of the symbol of the dragon as he is described in Verse 3. We have been told by the Book itself that the dragon is that old serpent the devil, called Satan. Four titles are assigned to him. Four is the numerical symbol of the entire compass of the earth. We have already seen four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, and there are four points of the compass to cover all directions on the earth.

Remembering always the devil is contending with Christ and the church for the possession of all the world, it is altogether fitting that this symbolism should represent him as having seven heads, expressive of the fullness of his assumed royalty and the ten horns symbolizing the world wide character of his rule and dominion.

Since he works through a world power, and we know by subsequent history that he used a world power, Pagan Rome in his attempt to devour the manchild wherever the church travailed in birth to bring Him forth, the symbolism is perfect. We shall develop this move fully later in this book, but suffice to say here, that Pagan Rome, after her downfall divided into two kingdoms. A horn is a scriptural symbol of a kingdom as Daniel in the seventh chapter makes clear.

Here is portrayed the death struggle between the Kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of the world under the sway of the dragon. Rev. 12:4 "And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven."

In agreement with the stars being angels later in this chapter (verse 7) we read of "how the dragon fought and his angels." In our study of the Saracen scorpions we found that their sting was *in their tails*. In Isaiah 9:15 we found that "the prophet that speaketh lies, he is the tail."

Putting this Biblical interpretation with our present verse under consideration that "his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven," and also recalling that the devil, or dragon "is a liar and the father of it"—the lie (John 8:44) we arrive at the meaning of it all. It was through falsehood or lies that the devil drew these angels after him, even as by a lie he deceived the first woman, or Eve in the beginning of creation.

Shall we recall a startling statement, in this connection, made by Paul: "And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the

world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." (Heb. 1:6)

Here there seems to be quite a group who refuse to worship him but became subject to the devil. This also recalls Paul's declaration "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:12)

So the church, in bringing forth the non resurrected and ascended Christ, to the world faces the devil, his angels and world kingdoms. Surely she can only do this through Christ who keeps on pouring strength into her. Now we are ready to advance in the chapter.

vs. 6 "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her a thousand and two-hundred and three score days."

For the true church the whole world is a wilderness, a place where there are no spiritual sources of nourishment. So God providently cared for her. But more when we come to verse 14, where her fleeing into the wilderness is again mentioned.

The War in Heaven

vs. 7 "And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels."

At first we would be tempted to fix the arena of this battle in the place usually indicated by the word "heaven," but in as much as this is a book of symbolism, heaven as we usually understand that connotation to mean, cannot be the place of conflict.

Particularly is this so when we anticipate the weapons used, and the results which follow in this warfare as enumerated in verse eleven. The overcoming was accomplished "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they *loved not their lives unto death.*"

Certainly there is no dying in heaven as we usually understand by that term, Heaven has no cemeteries. Death is an experience of this earth life only. But we will not say more on this verse until we

come to it in its logical order. We have merely quoted it to show that this warfare was not in heaven itself. We have quoted it to establish the place of conflict.

Heaven, here, is a symbol of the arena of conflict. The church and the devil fight in the spiritual arena, which only the term "heaven" could properly represent. The devil fights here in this world. Peter said: 'Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may *devour*' (I Peter 5:8). Notice the word "devour." Peter uses the same word as John in Revelation.

This walking about of the devil mentioned by Peter reminds us of another instance recorded in the Book of Job:

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and *Satan* came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." (Job 1:6, 7)

How perfectly in agreement are these passages with the Revelation description of the arena of warfare began at Pentecost—the point of beginning of this vision and has continued ever since. We have already quoted page after page of history in the first two series of visions how Satan fought with the saints with bloody persecutions from the very setting up of the church. This casting out of the devil took place beginning at Pentecost and he is still being cast out "into the earth" or from things heavenly. We have already, under the brief discussion of the seven heads and horns, referred to a similar prophecy of Daniel. In Daniel we find that Michael is "*the great prince that standeth up* for the children of thy people." (Daniel 12:1). So it is completely in keeping that we should find this same Michael standing up for the saints in this vision of Revelation.

Another insight to all this is that neither is the instance recorded in Daniel, nor this one in Revelation the only times Michael and the devil met in combat. In Jude 9 we read:

"Yet *Michael* the *archangel*, when, contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, "the Lord rebuke thee,"

So this archangel must be of very great power because when the dead in Christ shall arise at the Lord's descent from heaven, he is to come with the voice of the archangel. (I Thess. 4:16). It is this mighty archangel which leads the angelic forces against the devil and his angels.

What encouragement this ought to give the saints to know how unseen forces fight on their side against the adversary of their souls.

A notable instance of unseen forces fighting for a servant of God, even Elisha, is found in II Kings 6:15-17:

"And his servant said unto him, Alas, my Master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them (the Syrians).

And Elisha prayed and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

We now come to the result of this great conflict.

vs. 12:8,9 "And (that is the devil and his angels) prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 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."

This symbolism makes clear that the devil was defeated in his attempt. He was not only vanquished and defeated, but humiliated, or "cast down." That this was to be accomplished by preaching is declared by Christ himself, as he commended his disciples upon their return from preaching. "And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning *fall from heaven*." (Luke 10:18)

Christ said, anticipating his death upon the cross, which death would overcome sin and its wages, "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be *cast out*." (John 12:31) This was a crushing defeat because not only is the devil cast out, but his power to kill by death was ended in Christ's victory.

"For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself partook of the same; that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil." (Heb. 2:14)

Then comes the song of triumph:

vs. 10 "And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 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."

These declarations of this poem of praise again give us added information on the time of the beginning of this series. This victory came about when salvation came, and when strength from heaven came (ye shall receive power), "and the Kingdom of our God," which we know Peter proclaimed at Pentecost when he preached the first gospel sermon, using the "Keys" to open the door of entrance into the Kingdom. This he did by the power of Christ who sent the energizer—the Holy Spirit on that day. It was a power which Christ said "had been given him in heaven and earth." (Matthew 28:18).

The words of this song are a fulfillment, almost item by item, of the promise Christ gave his apostles just ten days before Pentecost. He had been with them forty days, "speaking of things *pertaining to the Kingdom of God*." (Acts 1:3) He further said: "*But ye shall receive power* (the power of our Christ) after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." (Acts 1:8). Now we behold the weapons of their warfare, which Paul said are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

(II Cor. 10:4) Shall we read the list:

vs. 11 "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb."

That was by preaching the atonement and teaching all men to be baptized unto the death of Christ that the blood might be applied for in His death he shed His blood for the remission of sins. (Rom. 6:3-6)

"And by the word of their testimony." This was done on this earth the arena of the spiritual conflict, because John, the author of this very book was in the isle of Patmos for the word of God and for the *testimony* of Jesus Christ. (Rev. 1:9)

"And they loved not their lives unto death."

There is no death in the heaven above. This action transpired here because men died as martyrs by untold thousands in the death struggle with the devil and his angels.

Surley, this one verse removes all question as to the time and arena of these events. Pagan Rome, the political power through which the dragon or the devil worked, was vanquished and Christianity triumphed.

vs. 12 "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."

This verse is a call for those who as overcomers dwell in the heavenlies, spoken of here as "ye heavens and ye that dwell in them." This is not addressed to the angels, neither to the martyred dead, nor to the heaven, as usually understood by that term, because this call is like a door swinging on a hinge. "Therefore" in this case is the hinge, the door-post is the eleventh verse. Those of the eleventh verse are those who overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.

According to the New Testament conception of things, the people of God, living here, are viewed as now dwelling in heaven, since their citizenship is there. The Christian is taught to consider himself a stranger and a pilgrim in the earth. Paul said:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in *heavenly places* in Christ." (Eph. 1:3). Again

And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in *heavenly places* in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:6) Yet again:

"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in

heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. 3:10)

Paul also says that here and now we have already "come to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." (Heb. 12:22)

So near to heaven is the church that Paul adds these words in that same verse, "and to the innumerable company of angels." Why shouldn't this be so when we remember that he said of the angels "are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14)

Thus we see that the saints are spoken of as they "that dwell in the heavens" in contrast to those who are spoken of as "the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea," upon whom a woe is pronounced because "the devil is come down to them, having great wrath because he knoweth he hath but a short time."

Defeated, humiliated, cast out by overcoming Christians he heaps the spleen of his anger upon the inhabitants of the earth, who are of the earth earthly.

The Persecution of the Church by the Devil

We see how the first great struggle between the woman and the dragon ended in ignominious defeat for the devil and a glorious triumph for the church. But the struggle is renewed. He now tries persecution. This is the exact order of the devils work and the experience of the church as depicted in the first series of visions. After the Ephesian period came the Smyrian period of the martyrs. So here we read:

vs. 13 "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he *persecuted* the woman which brought forth the man child."

This completely agrees with what history tells us of the work of the devil during the second and third centuries of the church.

From Nero in A.D. 70 to Diocletian in A.D. 303 to 313 the church went through ten major persecutions. Of course Pagan Rome

was the instrument of persecution, but the guiding genius was the devil himself.

The object of this malignant and venomous persecution was the "woman which brought forth the man child," or the church bringing Christ to the pagan world. So God's people are the object of hatred of the devil and they ever bear the reproach of Christ.

Persecution, as a portion of the Saints dates from the last part of the Ephesian period and reaches its height in the days of Diocletian who inaugurated the longest and severest, as well as the last pagan persecution against the church. The devil learned that persecutions did not accomplish his purpose to blot out the name "Christian" from the earth, but rather the reverse. As far as he was concerned, he wisely changed his tactics, but as the church's welfare was involved, the change of attack proved her downfall. Compromise was substituted for crucifixion. But more anon of this change of method.

vs. 14 "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."

Between verse 6 and verse 14, we have as it were a parenthesis thrown in, in order to reveal the contestants, the method and weapons of warfare, and the triumph of the saints. The events described embrace both sides of the veil, some of which are heavenly and others on the earthly side of things.

Now verse 14 takes up where the narrative of "unfolding" was abruptly cut off or interrupted at verse 6.

There is given in verse 6 a description of how the woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared of God where she was to dwell 1260 days, or years. Here she goes to "her place," and was to continue there a time, or a year, times, two years and half a time, one half year, or in other words three and one half years, or 1260 days, which in prophetic history is 1260 years. Therefore the periods are of the same length and both refer to the same segment of time.

But here is added a new symbol. The woman, or church is "given

two wings of a great eagle" to facilitate her flight into hiding. This signifies divine aid given the saints to assist them in their escape from Satan while they still dwell in this world-the enemy territory. (John 14:30). The meaning and significance of eagle's wings becomes manifest by turning to a couple of Old Testament passages. The first is in Exodus 19:4 where God said to Moses:

"Ye have seen what I did into the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself."

These people of the Old Covenant were a type of the saints of the New Covenant and their deliverance foreshadowed the escape of the people of God of the New Testament.

Here the deliverance of the latter is described by the same symbol "eagles' wings" as the former.

The second passage is found in Deut. 32:10-12:

"And found him (Jacob) in a desert land, and in the waste in the howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, heareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him and there was no strange God with him."

Eagles wings then are a symbol of divine strength supplied and applied with energy and swiftness.

We said earlier that there was indicated a change in tactics on the part of the wily serpent, the dragon or the devil. The next verse enlarges on this change.

vs. 15 "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."

So when the devil failed to accomplish his design to destroy the saints and their witness, through violent persecution, he resorted to a new method of attack.

Here we meet with a new symbol, that of a "flood." The symbol of a "flood" is employed in the Word of God to represent some overpowering and overwhelming agency of destruction.

"Let not the waterflood overflow me." (Psa. 69:15)

"Thou carriest them away as with a flood." (Psa. 90:5)

"The enemy shall come in like a flood." (Isa. 59:19)

"And the end thereof shall be with a flood." (Dan. 9:26)

"Behold waters rise up out of the north, and shall be an overflowing flood." (Jer. 47:2)

This symbol is a most suitable one. None other could be employed which would so well picture the stupendous effort put forth by the devil to carry the church away and drown her testimony by the means of a flood of half truth, comprising alliances, false doctrines, pagan philosophies and practices, blended with the gospel.

Since the true teaching comes from the mouth of the witnesses so here the flood pours from the mouth of the devil. This indicates false doctrines proceeding from the dragon's mouth. And this is just what happened! After persecuting Diocletian came Constantine, who though a pagan embraced Christianity because he had won the battle of Milvian Bridge and he proceeded to corrupt the church with a flood of blended pagan philosophy and Christian doctrine. Thus we see the Smyrnan period of persecution fading out of the symbolic picture and the Pergamos period of compromise coming on the stage of church history.

To save the church God carries her into hiding. And how long was she there? How long was she to be in the wilderness? 1260 years. We found in the second series of visions, consisting of the seven seals and the seven trumpets that this period began with the elevation of a man as "Rector Ecclesiae," Lord of the church and ran until 1793, when the two witnesses were slain in the streets of that great city—the papal empire of Rome—the apostate city in contradiction to the holy city. Much of this time corresponds to the Thyatira period or the Catholic church period.

vs. 16 "And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth."

To exactly what providential deliverance from this flood the incident refers, it is most difficult to say, but a suggestion or two might help.

Many of the heretical teachings of the early centuries disappeared, although it must be honestly admitted that others arose to take their places. But they were swallowed up, as if buried in the earth.

Again: and this seems more likely, while apostate and pagan doctrines were flooding the religio-politico empire church with spiritual and doctrinal corruption, the truth of God was kept by a comparatively faithful few. These being unable to contend with the almost universal defection, contented themselves to dwell in obscurity or hiding.

The Roman Church, which, was most certainly of the earth, swallowed up the flood of false teaching that poured out of the devil's mouth.

vs. 17 "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."

God has always preserved to himself a remnant. In the days of Old Testament Israel's worst defection God told Elijah:

"Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." (I Kings 19:18)

That has been the case through all dispensations. It was true during the Thyatira, or Catholic period of church history. The Albigenses, the following of Huss, the Huguenots and others are but a few of the larger groups that bear out this truth, to say nothing of the countless little groups of faithful saints who kept the torch of truth aflame.

Though not visible to the eye of the historians during this period of the dark ages, intellectually, doctrinally and spiritually, yet the true church fed and nourished by God, survived in the hearts of hidden saints.

Then followed the age of awakening, when the Bible was translated into the common vernacular, and the Sardis, or reformation period appeared on the stage of action. This in turn was followed by the Philadelphia, or Restoration period in which the church of the First Century reappeared, speaking where the Bible speaks, and keeping silence where the Bible is silent.

Summary

In this chapter we have presented to us a very rapid survey of the progress of the divine decree "I will put enmity between thee, (the devil) and the woman, but magnified in the enmity between the devil and the church, symbolized as a woman in Revelation.

The design of the vision of the twelfth chapter of Revelation is to carry us forward with the rapidity of bold, symbolic strokes to portray the early and middle stages of this great conflict; until we arrive at the last stage as "uncovered" under the vision of the two wild beasts of Chapter thirteen. For whereas the events of the twelfth chapter are described with extreme brevity, with long periods of time compressed into a few words, in the thirteenth chapter the "uncovering" becomes more detailed and definite.

CHAPTER XIII

THE VISION OF THE TWO BEASTS

Text (13:1-18)

INTRODUCTION

1 and he stood upon the sand of the sea.

And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as though it had been smitten unto death; and his death-stroke was healed: and the whole earth wondered after the beast; 4 and they worshipped the dragon, because he gave his authority unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? and who is able to war with him? 5 and there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and there was given to him