

The Apocalypse

A Series of Special Lectures on the Revelation of Jesus Christ

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Lecture Twenty-Fifth

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET--THE GRAND CLIMACTERIC--"DAYS" INCLUDED--TEXT A SYNOPSIS--VOICES IN HEAVEN--EMOTION OF THE ENTHRONED ELDERS--TEMPLE IN HEAVEN OPENED--ARK APPEARS--NATURE AGITATED--GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD CHANGED--EARTH'S DESTROYERS DESTROYED--THE DEAD JUDGED--THE PROPHETS AND SAINTS REWARDED--ALL CONCERNED IN THESE THINGS.

Rev. 11:15-19 (Revised Text):

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in the heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world is become our Lord's and his Christ's; and he shall reign to the ages of the ages. And the twenty-four elders which sit before God on their thrones, fell down upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give to thee thanks, O Lord God the Almighty, who are and who was ["and are to come" is an addition without adequate authority here], because thou has taken to thee thy great power, and shown Thyself King. The nations indeed were angry, and Thy indignation is come, and the time [or season] of the dead to be judged, and [the time or season] to give the reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great, and to destroy the destroyers of the earth. And there was opened the temple of God in the heaven, and there was seen the ark of his covenant in his temple; and there were [or, ensued] lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and earthquake, and great hail.

We here approach the grand climacteric of this world and of the judgment-work of the Almighty One. The seventh angel, restrained so long from ushering in the final scenes which separate us from the glorious world to come, at length pours out his wondrous blast. It is the Last Trumpet, so often referred to by the sacred writers and by the Savior himself as bringing with it the mightiest scenes and changes in the whole history of earth and time, that here sounds. And if there is anything in all the round of human thought to absorb, fix, and intensify interest and attention, we have it in this subject.

The particular passage we have now to consider is only a synopsis of the matter--a rehearsal in brief of what is subsequently given in detail. It is an important point to remark, that the seventh trumpet does not sound merely for one instant or for one day. In that solemn oath of the cloud-robed Angel, which we were called to consider in chapter 10, and in which it was said that the fulfilling of the mystery of God should be finished at the sounding of the seventh angel, it is distinctly implied that the sounding is continuous and extends through a period of time. It is there said that "in the *days* of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall sound, the mystery of God is [to be] fulfilled." "Days" are included. What measure of "days," or how many of them we are not told; but a period of time is specifically indicated. In the case of the other woe trumpets, there is unmistakable continuity--"five months" the one and evidently no less a time in the other. And the presence of this distinct note of continuity here, taken along with the tremendousness of what turns out under this trumpet, is evidence enough that it is a mistake to confine this last and great woe trumpet to the few summary notations of the text, or to crowd it into an instant of time. From the plainly expressed character of the events, and from the oath of the Angel, we are sufficiently assured that this seventh trumpet embraces everything involved in the completing of the whole mystery of God, up to the termination of all this judgment history. That fulfillment is

certainly not accomplished without the seven vials of wrath, the harvest and vintage of the world, the manifestation of the great white throne, and the establishment of the new heavens and the new earth. In the nature of the case, that fulfillment overspans everything this side of the completed redemption; and yet that fulfillment is most specifically located "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall sound."

There is, therefore, no alternative but to take the text as only synoptical of this trumpet--a sort of summary of its chief contents, the full details of which are subsequently described, and spread over a considerable period; an anticipative *programme*, so to speak, of the main elements and issue of the great drama, given out in advance of the more special narration of circumstantial particulars and related events.¹ In other words, we now have to do with a syllabus of the fulfillment or consummation of the mystery of God--with a prelude sketch of the contents of the Last Trump, in which we may note:

I. THE SYMPTOMS WHICH ATTEND IT.

II. THE ITEMS WHICH IT EMBRACES.

And may He who sent His angel to disclose these wonders open our eyes and hearts by His Holy Spirit, that we may rightly apprehend and ponder the same!

I. The symptoms which attend the sounding of the Last Trump are the most remarkable, the most numerous, and the most intense, both in heaven and on earth, that are anywhere detailed in the Scriptures. There were many mighty wonders attendant upon the deliverance of the chosen people from Egypt and their planting in the promised land. In the air and in the waters, in the trees and in the rocks, in the clouds and in the dust, on animate and inanimate nature there were manifestations that stand out among the greatest marvels of bygone time. At the birth, in the life, and at the death of Christ there was also a great commotion, a stir among the angels, among the stars, among the elements, and among men both living and dead, which make up a history such as had never occurred before. And so when Jerusalem was finally destroyed there were signs, and sounds, and voices, and portents, which have sent their report down through the ages, and which still oppress the breathing of men to hear about. But none of these, nor all of them together, can at all approach the overwhelming intensity of the manifestations which attend the sounding of the Last Trump.

1. *Great voices in heaven utter themselves.* There is not only a stir and great activity excited there, but a great outcry, a giving forth of mighty intimations. Whose voices they are is not here told us; but there is tremendous commotion. Even eternity cannot keep quiet when this crisis comes. The inhabitants of glory have seen too much of earth, its behavior toward God, and God's doings for it not to be excited when the final termination is announced. Their silence breaks, and

1 Bengel takes it as evident "that chapter 12, from its very beginning, refers to the trumpet of the seventh angel; for the voice which was heard immediately under the sound of that trumpet, chap. 11:15, respecting *the kingdom*, is repeated by Epitasis in chap. 12:10, with a remarkable increase of meaning; nor can that by any means be placed before this trumpet." Bengel *in loc.* Even Hengstenberg, who, by his method of interpretation, makes a new beginning altogether with chap. 12, is forced to admit against himself, that "what we now, according to chap. 11:15-18, expect the appearance of the Lord, the final victory of God's kingdom, the resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, the glorification of the Church, all this is represented in verse 19 as having entered, but only by way of gentle indication; for the seer would reserve the more particular delineation of the last things for a later part of the book, and by the enigmatical brevity with which he here treats them, would set expectation on the stretch regarding that more particular delineation in reserve." See his *Com. in loc.* Bengel was unquestionably right when he said that chapters 12-22 are but an *exergasia*, a further explanation or setting forth of the passage now before us.

heaven rings with mighty voices.

What some of these voices are we learn from the succeeding narrative. One is the voice as the voice of many waters, and as a voice of great thunder, as the voice of harpers harping with their harps, and pouring forth a new song in the presence of the throne. Another is the voice of a mighty angel flying in mid-heaven, calling loud enough for every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people to hear. Others are the voices of angels shouting the fall of great Babylon and the fate of them who worship the Beast. Another is a voice crying the blessedness of the dead. Others again are the loud voices calling for the thrusting in of the sickle for the reaping of the harvest of the earth and the gathering of its clusters. Still another is a great voice commanding the pouring out of the bowls of the wrath of God; and another a voice out of the temple, from the throne, crying "It is done," and voices saying "Halleluia," "Amen," "Halleluia;" and still other voices, as it were the voice of a great multitude, and the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying Halleluia, because the Lord God Almighty reigns. And along with these are yet other great voices from the heavenly world, each in its place and all together combining to fill all the realm of God with intensest utterances.

When the Lamb took the book from the hand of the Sitter upon the throne, there was something of a corresponding commotion in the holy universe. It was an act which included and looked to the consummation which the seventh trumpet brings; and all along the track of unfolding judgment we find this same celestial interest and excitement continued, till, at the sounding the last Trump, everything breaks out with cries, shouts, songs, and triumphings.

2. *The twenty-four Elders fall down upon their faces, and worship with sublimest thanks.* When the mighty *Goel* took the book, they also fell down before the Lamb and gave their solemn and adoring vote to his worthiness; but here the prostration is still lowlier. They not only fall into the posture of reverent adoration, but "*upon their faces;*" bury their immortal countenances in the pavement around the throne; by their very emotion hurled from their golden seats, overwhelmed and almost undone. There they expressed their adoring sense of the Savior's worthiness, exulting in the prospect of what was to result; but here they celebrate the whole issue reached, the blessed consummation come, the thing of hope for all these ages now translating into fact; and, crowned princes of heaven and anointed coregents with the great Eternal as they are, they cannot contain themselves. Their glorified limbs sink under the weight of the contemplation; their heads bow down to the place of their feet; their whole being melts into one flux of overwhelming realization of what now is come, and the gush of their adoring soul-dissolving joy breaks like a sea of thankfulness against the throne.

Who these Elders are, I have elsewhere told. They are the representatives of the firstborn of the resurrection. They are the seniors of the celestial congregation of the redeemed. They are the ones accounted worthy to "escape" the sad scenes and tribulations of the judgment-time, taken away and hid in the pavilion of God while the anger of the Almighty sweeps the guilty world, and enthroned in heaven for their valiancy and faithfulness when yet on earth. They are already glorified, but that does not diminish their interest in the ongoing and completion of the same process in the case of others. They have their golden crowns, but that does not withdraw their hearts and sympathies from those still in the graves or from the still remaining fulfillment of all God's word. There is no vanity and selfishness in heaven; no pride of privilege and place; no vaunting of authority. The crowned Elders on their thrones are even more concerned over the conflicts still pending and the victories yet to be achieved than they were in those through which they had won their own crowns. The destroyers of the earth were not yet destroyed. The great

multitude of the dead had not yet been finally judged. The mass of men had not yet been assigned their just deserts. The reward had not yet fully come to the prophets and saints and fearers of God. The divine righteousness and honor had not yet been fully vindicated. The usurpation of Satan had not yet been overthrown. The great redemption had not yet been fully wrought out into ultimate fact. But the trumpet which brings all this was now ringing out its unmistakable notes, and not even these blessed kings could keep their seats or restrain the outpouring of their hearts in grateful, adoring, and exultant thanks.²

3. *And the temple of God in heaven opened.* There is a heavenly temple and worship from which the tabernacle and temple of the Jews was copied. When Jehovah directed the building of them, He said to Moses: "Look that you make them after their pattern, which was shown you in the mount" (Ex. 25:40); and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews calls them ὑποδείγματα, *copies* or likenesses of things in the heavens (9:23). The heavenly and the earthly worship were once in close and manifest union. It was sin that divorced them and separated between man and the divine, excluding him from the sacred communion of Paradise, and all but the consecrated priests from the sanctuary, and all but the high priest from the holy of holies in the Jewish tabernacle and temple, and even him, except once in a year, when alone he might enter it enveloped in clouds of incense.

Sin has obscured and hidden from man the sacred and divine. It has repulsed heaven from his view and fellowship, with only a lingering ray left here and there, and even that so buried away as to be, for the most part, entirely unapproachable. Hence, when Christ paid the ransom-price for human sin and introduced an availing righteousness for the race, then a new dispensation of mercy and grace received its foundation-stone; the veil of the temple was torn and the way into the holiest opened--the divine began to be visible and approachable again. And this opening of the temple in heaven at the last trumpet expresses the same idea. Knowledge and vision of heavenly things, and closer fellowship and intimacy between the worshippers on earth and the worshippers in heaven belong to the great consummation. As the Savior has taught us to pray, then it is to be, "As in heaven so on earth." Oneness is again to be restored between the worship of both worlds. All this is shown in the twenty-first chapter, where the finished mystery is described. Hence, as this trumpet begins to sound, the mists begin to lift from sacred things, the excluding barriers give way, the seclusion yields to human gaze and approach, the veil withdraws, the holy begins to disclose itself again, and the temple of heaven opens.

4. And with that opening of the heavenly temple, *the ark of God's covenant appears.* It is no unholy or profane exposure, but a hallowed symptom, setting forth still further the glory of the occasion. All the compacts of God with His people and all His solemn promises to them are in that ark. All His engagements, whether particular or general, are lodged and treasured there.

2 It is noticeable in this adoring thanksgiving that God is no longer addressed as ὁ ἐρχόμενος, *who is to come*. The common text has this addition, but wholly without authority. All critics agree in rejecting it as an interpolation of some copyist who erroneously supposed that it should come in here the same as in chapter 1:4,8. There He is called ὁ ἐρχόμενος, because not yet manifested as He should be manifested for the great consummation; but here it is already the time of the last trumpet, in which that manifestation is no longer future, but is already come. Hence, He is no longer addressed as the One who is to come, but as already in actual operation and present in that very respect in which He was previously ὁ ἐρχόμενος. So Bengel, who remarks: "Interpreters have long ago seen this." Ansbert says: "They do not here subjoin as they were accustomed, *and who art to come*, they speak of Him as already present." Haymo, who usually treads in the footprints of Ansbert, says: "It must be observed that he does not add, as before, *who art to come*, for they show Him already present in the judgment by which all these things are accomplished, and therefore they by no means speak of Him as yet to come." John Purvey, in his commentary, published with the preface of Luther, says: "He does not add the third clause, which he has usually added, namely, *and who is to come*, for this reason, that the prophet [rather the Elders] then saw God, as it were, already sitting in judgment."--BENDEL, *in loc*.

In that sacred casket they have long been hidden away, as Jeremiah is said to have hidden the Jewish ark when the Chaldeans took Jerusalem (2 Maccabees 2:4-8). But, though buried from view, it is not lost, and its holy contents have all been preserved. Not a promise is obsolete or dead. And now, at the ending of time, that golden box reappears. As the Jews believed the old ark would be brought out again in the day of Israel's blessing, so the ark of God's covenant is now seen in the temple on high. A divine potency goes along with that ark. On earth the waters of Jordan rolled asunder beneath the shadow of it. The walls of Jericho fell down before it. The enemies of God were scattered where it set forward. The many thousands of Israel were in safety and blessedness where it rested. And its appearance here is a token of the recurrence of all these wonders, only on a more complete, grand, and sublime scale. It tells of the speedy fulfillment of all that God has spoken, and the putting into living force of all that He has engaged to do. Whether as respects the seed of Abraham or the Gentiles, friends or enemies, the living or the dead, the Church or the world, blessing or punishment, all that the Almighty has covenanted is now to be fulfilled. And in token of this, the ark--the sign and bearer of His promises--appears. There, could all now see the pledge of God's remembrance of His holy covenant and of His oath which he swore to Abraham, and of all that He has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

5. *And lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and earthquakes, and great hail ensued.* "The days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall sound," are terrible days; days of sore scourgings and afflictions to the wicked dwellers on the earth, and the breaking forth upon them of sorrows which never end. When God revealed Himself on Sinai, He charged the people to beware lest He should break through upon them; and now He is about to break through. The sky flashes with electric fires. Portentous voices ring out in stunning power. The air is filled with thunder. The earth trembles and quakes. The winds rush in noisy fury, and great hailstones fall upon the earth. Jehovah is now risen up from His place to punish the wicked. And as the ark of his covenant is revealed to give joy and hope to the parties of that covenant, lower nature is set in dread commotion to harbingers the bursting forth of His indignation upon his adversaries.

Such, then, are the predicted symptoms which attend the sounding of the Last Trump. Let us now look at--

II. THE ITEMS WHICH IT EMBRACES.

1. The first named is *a radical change in the government of the world.* This is what all the great unidentified voices that first speak on the sounding of the seventh angel utter, as it is the sum of great consummation. The mighty administrators in the upper world exultantly proclaim, "*The kingdom [not kingdoms, as the common reading is, but ἡ βασιλεία abstract--the sovereignty] of the world [ΤΟΥ ΧΟΣΜΟΥ--of the constituted order on the earth] is become our Lord's and his Christ's; and he shall reign to the ages of the ages.*" The tense of the expression is that peculiar to prophetic language, which fixes upon a result yet future, or only beginning to be, as if already accomplished. It is not until the scenes narrated in chapters 20 and 21 are fulfilled that this change of sovereignty is finally completed; but when God announces a thing, and especially when He proclaims Himself in motion to do a thing, it is the same to the heavenly orders as if it were already wrought out. The word of God is truth, and what it says is the same as fact and verity already, although not yet distributed out and located in present time. His word has virtue to make its contents present to those who really know Him. The seventh trumpet brings this change, and on the first tone of it all heaven sees and celebrates the work as already done, and

the kingdom of the world becomes their Lord's and His Christ's.

Not yet has the sovereignty of this world become the Lord's. All earthly governments, principalities, and powers from the beginning until now are uniformly represented in the Scriptures as wild beasts having no lawful owner, and full of destructive savageness and offensive uncleanness. A lion with eagle's wings, a bear crunching bones and flesh, a four-winged and four-headed leopard, a nondescript with many horns, dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly, having great iron teeth to devour and break in pieces--these are the prophetic symbols of the greatest and most lauded of them. Even the premiership of Daniel himself in one of them does not alter its general character.

It is but folly and fanaticism for men to talk of Christian states and governments in this world. Christian and good men may be concerned in their administration, and Christian ideas may sometimes temper their enactments, but earthly states and governments themselves are not Christian, and in the nature of things cannot be. They are all the products of devastated nature's wilds, and full of savage nature's passions and ungodliness. Fix it as we may, such is the result. The best-planned institutions and the wisest laws are ever disappointing their framers. The very law which God Himself promulgated from Sinai's thunder-shaken heights was "weak through the flesh," and did not serve to keep the Jewish commonwealth from like apostasy to that of other nationalities.

To this hour there is nothing so great a desideratum [a considered necessity] among men as good and just government, nor another department in which the native evilness and God-antagonizing passions of men are so potent and defiant. True, the kingdom is by right the Lord's. All authority and power originates with Him and belongs to Him. Government is His own ordinance. But since the apostasy of the race to Satan's standard, usurpation, falsehood, and other powers than the rightful sovereign of men and nations have held and directed the sway in this world. Many revolutions have been wrought, and men have labored and sacrificed, bled and died to achieve them, believing that now they would secure the precious boon for which the race has sighed and cried for ages; but it was only the turning of the sick man on his bed, who keeps his pain however he may change his place.

In our day especially people are looking and laboring for a grand jubilee of nations, shaped to popular rule and compacted by common laws, interests, and creed in which enlightened ideas shall be the king and all the world be one; but the result will be only a more horrible beast than any that preceded it, a leopard with bear's feet and a lion's mouth, full of heads and horns and names of blasphemy; the very embodiment of hell, whose infamies so outrage High Heaven as to bring the great day of God Almighty upon the world. No, no. Your revolutions, reforms, progress of liberal ideas, overturning of old creeds, grand conventionalities in revision of the Decalogue, internationalities for the redemption of the world without Christ, glorious philosophies ruling out a personal God and exalting self and passion in His place, and all your glittering ideals to which to reconstruct society and relocate the highest interests of man (much as they may promise and successfully as they may draw the heart and energy of the world after them) are but the nurslings of Satan's bosom in which this world lies, and the inspirations of his foul breath. Dream, prate, preach and glory as men may, the devil is *de facto* the god and king of this world. His mantle may be often changed and every day may exhibit a new garb, but the presiding genius within is still and always the devil, with all his pride, malice, and despoiling falsities. And so it will go on, "wicked men and seducers waxing worse and worse," till the last trumpet sounds.

But then shall come another order, not developed from below but enforced with sudden and resistless power from above. *How*, we will see when we come to consider the details of the ensuing chapters. Meanwhile, however, the fact itself is sure to the exultant voices in heaven. God is king, and the sovereignty has He given to His Son, Jesus Christ. And having given the world six thousand years in which to choose and settle upon its proper allegiance, and finding after all only a more intense and malignant apostasy, He causes the final trump to sound, breaks in with His Almightyness, and enforces His rightful dominion. A kingdom comes which breaks in pieces and consumes all other kingdoms, and stands forever. Laws are given to be changed no more. And the true Anointed reigns on earth in an empire of sinless, deathless life and peace to the ages of the ages. The government is changed.

2. And closely connected with this change, and one of the things involved in it, is *the destruction of earth's destroyers*. This is announced in the thanksgiving of the Elders. The same word is used to denote Jehovah's act that describes the character of those on whom the action is inflicted. What men and governments in this world sow, that shall they also reap. They that are a curse to the world shall be accursed. The word (δυναστεία) means to spoil, corrupt, ruin, make away with, kill, destroy; and those who act in this line shall be dealt with in the same line. Usurpers, liars, tyrants, persecutors, and murderers, who thus spoil God's world, shall be reacted upon by the violence of their own deeds, overwhelmed, and utterly put out of the way.

Peter gives it as one of the great objects to be achieved by the awful demonstrations of the day of the Lord, that then shall come "the perdition of ungodly men." That day shall find wickedness and confederation in iniquity ripened to the full. The very prince of hell shall then have incorporated himself personally in the government of the world--speaking through its heads, dictating its religion and its laws, controlling its trade, enforcing the worship of himself as God, cutting off the heads of those who dissent, filling the world with the worst of blasphemies, and compelling all that would live to receive the mark of allegiance to him. All existing nations on the prophetic earth shall have organically joined themselves with him as the representative of all authority and power, "and all who dwell upon the earth shall worship him." But when the seventh trumpet sounds, the end of this infamous confederation has come. Then the maddened nations shall suddenly be dashed to atoms, as a vessel of pottery struck with a rod of iron; and their armies slain by the blasts of Jehovah, as the Syrians of old. And the great beast that did rule them, and the deceiver that was with him, shall be cast alive into the lake of fire. Great Babylon shall fall, as a millstone cast into the sea, the dragon shall be seized and shut up in his proper hell, and death and the grave shall be extinguished. All the destroyers of the earth shall be destroyed!

O, glorious riddance of our weary world, when "the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and they who do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire!" (Matt. 13:41,42.) Well may the enthroned Elders fall on their faces and cry their thanks to the Lord Almighty for it.

3. And still another item in the grand schedule of the last trumpet is *the judgment of the dead*. This also is recited in the thanksgiving of the Elders. When men die and their bodies waste in the ground, it is not the end of them. Whatever may be their state meanwhile, they reappear again. John sees them, the small and the great, given up by the sea, death, and Hades, all standing before the great white throne to be judged, everyone of them according to his works. There is to be a resurrection, even of the wicked. They who put an end to their existence on

earth, resolving not to live any more, must still live and take the judgment and sentence of Heaven for all their deeds. Not one of all the race can escape it. And the time of the dead to be judged is "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel."

This side the grave, full justice is never done; and up to the great day, no one receives entirely all his deserts. That is reserved for the period of resurrection. Soul and body, having worked together, shall reap together of what they have sown. Only the resurrection life is full retribution life. Incomplete and unequal are all the administrations here. Many a great criminal dies without having had his guilt so much as known, while perchance innocent ones have had to suffer for his sins. The wicked go unpunished, are even honored in their crimes, and pass away with no experiences to mark how they stand in the estimate of God. Fortunes are made, enjoyed, and respected; their holders are held in favorable esteem to the end of their days, every dime of which is stained with blood, corroded with crime, and marked with fraud, oppression, and soul-damning deeds of injustice. So marked and constant are the inequalities that occur that even the holiest of men have often been tempted to despondency and doubt whether their faith and godliness are not, after all, a mistake.

Nor is there any stay for the good man's confidence or adequate justification of his course but in the fact that the end of the matter is not in this world. Beyond is the theater on which final settlement is to be made, and there is the invincible throne of inexorable justice. There shall all earth's wrongs be righted, all present inequalities adjusted, and the administrations of God forever vindicated. The dead have not gone beyond His reach. The grave does not cover them from His sight nor bar them from His approach and power. Having escaped unpunished from this world, their just portion still awaits them in the next. People may call it fable and dream, and reason it an impossibility, but that will not alter it. And when the seventh angel sounds, there will be exultant thanksgivings in heaven that "the time of the dead to be judged" is come.

4. And with this, yet one other point--*the giving of reward to the prophets, and the saints, and to them who fear God, the small and the great.* Piety and the fear of God are poor recommendations for the favors of this world. Our religion is the religion of the cross, and that cross has to be borne by all who are faithful and true. Nothing can abolish it, nothing can exempt from it. Since the days of Abel, whose confiding devotion and humble obedience to his God cost him his life, there has been no age, no nation, no realm or country on earth where saintship and holiness have not subjected them to losses, trials, and pains. The prophets all were persecuted and injured men, who lived martyr lives if they did not come to martyr deaths. For all these ages, the children of God have been children of affliction and sorrow. Some were tortured; others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonments. Some were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword. Some wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, compelled to hide themselves in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

He who would come after Jesus must deny himself. He who would live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. There is no rest, no recompense, no hope for us here. For if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But no Christian looks for his compensation in this present world. So long as he is in this tabernacle, he groans--being burdened, troubled on every side, distressed, perplexed, always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. And the only thing that reconciles him to such a lot is, that God's servants "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." Glorious promises have come forth, and these the good have embraced and are persuaded of them, and

confess themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth, looking for a better country, believing that God is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him. And the realization of all these fond desires and blessed hopes belong to the time of the seventh angel, when he shall sound.

Piety may not pay as regards this world, but it will pay then. Not even the gift of a cup of water to the thirsty shall then go unrewarded; neither shall a loss, pain, labor of love, pang of hardship, nor tear of sorrow incurred for Jesus or His truth's sake fail of its just recompense. Rewards--rewards for the wronged prophets, for the suffering saints, and for all who fear God, small and great, are in reserve. Jesus has gone to make them ready. In heaven, in the counsel and purpose of God, in His covenant and promise, in His hand, secure from all peradventure, they are stored away. Faith sees them there and waits for them with eager hope. And when the last trumpet sounds, they shall be given. Then shall Paul get his crown of righteousness and all the apostles take their everlasting thrones. Then shall Daniel stand in his lot, and Moses possess the recompense to which he had respect when he chose rather "to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." And everyone that has forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for the sake of God and His Christ shall receive a hundred-fold and shall inherit everlasting life. No wonder, then, that the blessed Elders fall on their faces before God and praise and thank Him with profoundest song when the signal for so glorious a consummation sounds.

Nor is all this without the most intense moment to us. We are all concerned with that last trumpet's sound. Our sublimest eternal interests are wrapped up in what it is to bring. Big is it with the doom and destiny of everyone, and everything that is. Be our place, our state, our occupation what it may, our fate and lot, and every question, every doubt shall then come to final settlement. Near or remote as those scenes may be, we shall all be in them and take from thence the character of our forever. Believe it or not, we every one shall be there; there as victims of the great day of Almighty wrath, as prisoners brought forth for final execution, or as the friends and servants of Jesus, to be confessed, rewarded, and glorified by our blessed Lord.

As we spend these swift-passing days and conduct ourselves in this brief life, [this] will be the character of our experience and portion then. Building on Jesus in humble faith and lowly steadfastness, we are safe and our work is safe. Then may we sing, exult, and give thanks with all the holy ones of heaven as we see the day approaching. Then may we rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is the reward that we shall get. Otherwise there is no dreader sound than that of the Last Trump. And when we think of the millions of dead and living for whom it has no blessing, and of the utter destruction which it shall bring on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel, is there not reason for us all to be moved with fear lest that day should come upon us unawares? It will be too late then to remedy present mistakes, negligence, and omissions. If we are to meet that day with joy and escape the horrors it brings to the unprepared, we must be getting ready now; getting ready by honest repentance of our sins, joining ourselves to Christ and His people, and with all our heart and energy seeking to be in accord with His word and will. Happy are they who, when the Last Trumpet sounds, shall be found in such a case!

*Jesus, do Thou mine eyes unseal,
And let them grow quick to discern whate'er Thou dost reveal.
So shall I be delivered from that woe,
Blindly to stray through hopeless night while all around is day.*