1. Chapter 8 II

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

2 trumpets. The Church, which is often presented under the number seven, is commended to the office of preaching. And here the first trumpet denotes the common destruction of the ungodly in the fire and hail; the second, the expulsion of the devil from the Church for the fiercer burning of the sea of the world; the third, the falling away of heretics from the Church, and their corruption of the streams of Holy Scripture; the fourth, the defection of false brethren in the darkening of the stars; the fifth, the greater hostility of heretics, the precursors of the time of Antichrist; the sixth, the open war of Antichrist and his own against the Church, and the destruction of the same enemy interposed by a recapitulation from the advent of the Lord; the seventh, the day of judgement, in which the Lord is to render to His own their reward, and to examine those who have corrupted the earth.

ANOTHER ANGEL

3 came. He says not, came afterwards; but on announcing that the angels have received trumpets, he returns to explain in what manner they have received them. For although the Church preached before the coming of the Lord, it was not in every place, until it was strengthened by His Spirit.

stood before. He appeared, that is, in the sight of the Church, Himself made the censer from which God received the odour of a sweet savour, and was propitiated towards the world. Another version has, "upon the altar;" because on the altar of the cross, He offered to the Father for us His own golden censer, that is, His own immaculate body, conceived by the Holy Spirit.

incense. He offered incense from the prayers of the saints. For the Church entrusted to Him her prayers, saying, "Let my prayer be directed before Thee, as incense." The same is said both to have taken of the prayers of the saints and to have offered, because the prayers of all can come with a sweet savour to the Father by Him.

1 Super; Bed. with Vulg., ante.
2 Ps. cxl. (cxl. 2. A.V.) 3; Bed., with Vulg., dirigature; A.V., "set forth;" Marg., "directed."
4 Smoke. When Christ the Lord offered Himself a sacrifice of a sweet savour, the compunction of heart in the saints was made acceptable, for this arises from fire within, and like smoke is accustomed to excite tears.

5 Censer. He fitly introduces a censer filled with fire, for "God giveth not the Spirit by measure." And this we know to have been specially fulfilled in respect of the Incarnation of Christ, "for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Earth. So also the Lord in the Gospel says, "I am come to send fire upon the earth."

Earthquake. He shook the earth by the thunder of divine threatening, and the voice of exhortation, and the lightning of miracles, when some persecuted and some followed; when the latter said, "He is a good man," and the former, "Nay, but He deceiveth people."

6 To sound. The Church, inflamed by the sevenfold Spirit, prepared herself to preach with confidence, so as to throw down the glory of the world like the walls of Jericho with heavenly trumpets. For that compassing about for seven days also suggests the whole time of the Church.

THE FIRST ANGEL

7 First. This announcement of the plagues is rightly compared to a trumpet, which is the signal of battle. For he saith, "Lift up thy voice as a trumpet, and declare unto My people their iniquities;" and in another place, "Let there be a trumpet in thy mouth, as an eagle upon the house of the Lord," that is, proclaim with a loud voice that Nebuchadnezzar will come for the destruction of the temple.

Hail. That the punishment of hell is due to works of blood is announced by the voice of the preachers, who say, "they shall pass from snow-water to excessive heat." The spiritual death of the soul may also be understood under the name of blood. Tichonius explains the verse in this way: "There followed the wrath of God upon which the death of many should ensue."

Burnt up. The life of the good is found in doctors and hearers. For, "Blessed," he says, "is he who reads, and he who hears the words of the prophecy." But the third part of the bad has neither of these. For, "the earth, which brings forth fruit in patience, receives blessing from the Lord; but the bad produces thorns and thistles, whose end is for burning." So also the Father, Who is the husbandman, cultivates the fruitful, but cuts down the barren tree, and delivers it as fuel to the fire.

Grass. The grass is all flesh, which is now pampered with the softness of luxury, but which, when the sun of judgement is hot, loses the flower of beauty, and as the Lord says, "To-day is in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven." Tichonius speaks in this way of the third part in this place: "By the third he means intestine foes." But whatever is without the Church is called a third part, and the Church is a third which

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3 St. John iii. 34
4 Col. ii.9.
5 St. Luke xii. 49.
6 St. John vii. 12.
7 Is. lviii. 1.
8 Hos. viii. 1.
10 Heb. vi. 7.
is to fight against a two-fold evil.

THE SECOND ANGEL

8 mountain. As the Christian religion increased, the devil, swollen with pride and burning with the fire of his rage, was cast into the sea of the world, for that the Lord says\textsuperscript{12}, "If ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and cast thyself into the sea, it shall be done." Not that he was not there before, but that when he was cast out from the Church, he began to rage with greater madness against his own, while through the pride of carnal knowledge he wrought in them spiritual death; for , "To be carnally minded is death\textsuperscript{13}." But flesh and blood taught not the Apostles, but the Father who is in heaven\textsuperscript{14}, for they directed the ship of faith in that sea, which yielded itself to be trodden by the feet of the Lord.

9 life. He said, "Which have lives\textsuperscript{15}," to represent the living, as spiritually dead; as the Apostle says of the widow who is living in pleasure, "she is dead, while she liveth."

were destroyed. Another version, by saying, "and they destroyed the third part of the ships," signifies that the third part which was dead killed another third, namely, that which came next to itself, by an injurious tradition, and following of unprofitable doctrine.

THE THIRD ANGEL

10 star. Heretics, who are called by the Apostle Jude\textsuperscript{16}, "stars of seduction," fall from the height of the Church, and by the flame of their own wickedness they endeavour to corrupt the fountains of the divine Scripture, not the sense of which alone, but also the words, they dare to falsify. These are worthy of the name of Wormwood, for a slight admixture of it is wont to make bitter much sweetness.

11 died. For "many," as the Apostle says\textsuperscript{17}, "follow their own luxuries, through whom the way of truth is evil spoken of." By the people of God, however, as Moses teaches\textsuperscript{18}, every kind of water can be drunk.

THE FOURTH ANGEL

12 moon. The glory of the Church, which shines like a star, is often obscured through false brethren, who, either in the prosperity or adversity of the age, cause it to shine less brightly by their defection.

shone not. Another version has this, "And that the third part of the day might appear, and of the night likewise." That is, it was smitten for this end, that the third part of the day and the third of the night might appear either to be Christ's or the devil's. To this end, I say, it was smitten, that is, was given up to its own desires, that as its sins became more abundant and more flagrant, it might in its own time be revealed.

\textsuperscript{12} St. Matt. xxi.21.
\textsuperscript{13} Rom. viii. 6.
\textsuperscript{14} St. Matt. xvi. 17.
\textsuperscript{15} 1 Tim. v. 6.
\textsuperscript{16} Ver. 13; Beda here has "sidera seuctionies," but in his exposition of the Epistle, "sidera errantia," with the Vulgate; the Syriac is rendered "stellae seductrices."
\textsuperscript{17} 2 St. Pet. ii.2; Bed., with Vulg., "luxuries;" A.V. "pernicious ways;" Marg., "or, lascivious ways, as some copies read."
\textsuperscript{18} Exod. xv. 25.
13 eagle. The voice of this eagle daily flies through the mouths of eminent doctors in the Church, when they announce that the cruelty of Antichrist and the day of judgment will come with all the severity to those who are lovers of the earth; while they say, "In the last days perilous times will be at hand, and men will be lovers of themselves;" and below, "men corrupt in mind, reprobate concerning the faith;" and in another place, "Then will the wicked one be revealed, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped;" and again, "The day of the Lord will so come, as a thief in the night; for when they shall say, peace and security, then sudden destruction comes upon them."

three. Not that the trumpets of the angels bring the plagues upon the world, but that each of them in his own time announces such as are coming, or are to come.

2. Chapter 9

THE FIFTH ANGEL

1 star. He declares with what fuel the flame of heretics, of which he had spoken briefly, was kindled. The old enemy forsooth, whom the Lord saw "like lightning fall from heaven," opened the heart of his own by blasphemous doctrine, and taught them to speak impiety against the Most High.

2 smoke. The madness of heresy rages to announce beforehand the great furnace namely, the last persecution; and it labours to obscure not the weak alone, who like the air touch, as it were, the confines of earth and heaven, but the light also of the lofty, though unable to extinguish it. For even the elect, if it be possible, will be led into error.

THE LOCUSTS

3 locusts. As the saints are the body of Christ and members one of another, so also the members of the flesh of the dragon cleave to one another, and are born one from the other, and the smoke of heretical blindness generates the pride of the ungodly, which hurts with its mouth. And although these are shaken by the wind of exaltation, yet they leave not the places of earth, for so also the smoke from which they are produced, though it seek to ascend, always sinks back into itself.

power. Heretics are compared with hostile powers, and appear harmless in their countenance, but keep poison in their hinder parts.

4 grass. He shews that the locusts are men, for they are not sent to the grass, but to men, for we understand locusts simply in this place.

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20 2 Tim. iii. 1
21 2 Thess. ii. 4.
22 1 Thess. v.2.
23 St. Luke x. 18
24 St. Matt. xxiv. 24
seal. They are said to have the seal of God on their foreheads who have it, as they ought to have; and the number of these was reckoned above, as being inviolate and fixed by the angel, who brought from the east the seal of the living God. For here he has been pleased to use the form of speech in which it is said, "No man saith that Jesus is the Lord, but in the Holy Ghost," that is, perfectly and truly.

5 kill. Although heretics are supported by the secular power, and are permitted for a time to assail the good, yet, as the Lord saith, "they are not able to kill the soul." For by the five months he signifies the time of the age, because of the division into five of the sense which we use in this life. But in that another translation has "six months," it agrees with this interpretation, because of the six periods of the age.

scorpion. As the scorpion diffuses poison from its hinder parts, so the ungodliness of the wicked injures from their hinder parts, when by threats or blandishments it causes the temporal things which are behind to be preferred to the eternal good things which are before. In opposition to the parable of the Gospel, the generation of vipers gives this scorpion to its own offspring.

6 death. They would rather that a life of misery should be ended by a speedy death, as the blessed Cyprian complained that it happened under the Decian persecution. "When they wished to die," he says, "it was not permitted them to be slain."

7 horses. That is, they are like the last persecutors. For in the last war which he is to describe under the next angel, he says that horses fight; or simply, as horses are urged to battle, not by any reason of their own, but by the impulse of the rider; so evil teachers, urged by a demoniacal spirit, attack the Church.

crowns. The twenty-four angels, who are the Church, have crowns of gold. But these have crowns like gold, as pretending to false triumphs from an empty victory.

faces. In the human face he represents a pretence of reason; in the hair of women, lax and effeminate manners; in the teeth of lions, which are wont to tear in pieces, and which bring with them a natural stench, ferocity of mind and the infamy of evil doctrine; and in breastplates of iron, hearts which are hardened against the truth. For "these having a form of godliness, but denying its power," "come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves."

9 wings. It is matter for fear rather than exposition, that this army has its powers so greatly increased. First, the smoke ascends, then it produces locusts, which at first are compared to scorpions, and presently afterwards to horses and lions. Their power too would be great enough, even if they did not come armed with breastplates; but now they are said to be winged, and like chariots of war.

tails. As the scorpion goes along softly, but strikes with its tail, so the pernicious craftiness of the wicked seems in appearance gentle and harmless, but in that it secretly destroys as in some hidden manner, it brings with it death.

five months. Again he signifies this life, in which falsehood may avail either to catch the unprofitable, or torment for a time the spiritual.

25 1 Cor. xii. 3.
26 St. Matt. x. 28.
28 Epist. ivi.
29 2 Tim. iii. 5.
30 St. Matt. vii. 15.
king. God, supremely good, in His secret but just counsels, permitted an angel, not unfit for such as these, to have rule over them.

past. Since he had foretold that three woes were to come, he now mentions that one hath already come, in the deceit of heresy, and that two remain, which will happen to the perverse in the time of Antichrist, and at the day of judgement.

THE SIXTH ANGEL

sixth. The sixth angel denotes the preachers of the last conflict, who, as the Gospel forewarns, detect the frauds of Antichrist. For the horns of the golden altar are the Gospels, which rise above the Church.

four. He signifies how much the Church will be persecuted at the end of the world, by the old enemy with his satellites, who from the time of the Lord's Passion is shut up in the hearts of the ungodly, and is restrained by the divine power from injuring it as much as he desires. For the Euphrates, which is a river of Babylon, signifies the power of the kingdom of the world, and the waves of persecutors. This is the great mountain, which he had foretold would be cast in burning fire into the sea.

loosed. In the same manner as prophecy, which points out to us things to come, he himself in spirit sees them come to pass. And he has said four angels, because the persecution will rage in the four parts of the world. For these are they whom he saw above, standing at the four corners of the earth, and restrained from injuring the earth and the sea for the sealing of the servants of God.

prepared. The malignant spirits, who at every moment of the hours and times hunger for the death of man, are then permitted for the trial of the Church to rage more freely, and are to be destroyed in their time? but what, thinkest thou, will they do, when they are lost, who now injure so much while they are bound?

THE HORSEMEN

number. This number designates the crafty duplicity of the perverse army; and this may more easily be perceived in another translation31, which says, "two myriads of myriads." This is the number which the parable32 of the Gospel opposes to the king who has ten thousand, as if the duplicity of the wicked resists the simple faith of Christ, for "thousands of thousands minister unto Him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stand before Him33."

horses. The malignant spirits are involved in the same punishments with those over whose hearts they preside. For we read, that "they who worship the beast are to be tormented with fire and brimstone34," and that "the smoke of their torments goes up for ages of ages." Observe, that in the plague of locusts, he said not that he saw horsemen, but only horses35. " For here the magnitude of the persecutions make manifest the presence of a contrary power. Lastly, here there are heads of lions, but there there is the face of men, and the teeth alone of brutes. For heretics often make a shew of humanity, but the ministers of the last persecution exact by

33 Dan. vii. 10.
34 Ch. xiv. 11.
35 Ver 7.
punishments even that which they recommended by words and signs.

**mouths.** He shews that he said "jacinth" for smoke. These things do not proceed visibly from their mouth; but they are the source of punishment to themselves and their hearers by their injurious preaching. "I will bring fire," he says\(^{36}\), "out of the midst of thee, which is to devour thee."

**tails.** That is, in the their speech and office. For "the prophet that teacheth a lie, he is the tail\(^{37}\)," for he conceals a part which is in a manner hidden and unclean by the volubility of a flattering tongue, saying to the ungodly, "Thou art good\(^{38}\)."

**serpents.** For the false teachers of the old serpent who deceived man, like those who are supported by the protection of princes, hurt more than if they persuaded by words alone. "He sitteth," he says, "lying in wait with the rich\(^{39}\)."

**repented not.** To an ungodly religion they add also an unholy manner of life. After he has described the cruelty of Antichrist, in order to shew his fall, he recapitulates in the usual way the commencement from the birth of Christ, and the glory of the Church.

3. Chapter 10

**THE ANGEL WITH THE LITTLE BOOK**

**1 angel.** The Lord, the angel of the great counsel, comes down from heaven clothed with a cloud of flesh; as also Isaiah says, "Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt\(^{40}\)."

**rainbow.** That is, the promise of propitiation abiding around the good.

**face.** When the face of the Lord becomes bright, that is, when the knowledge of Him is manifested by the glory of the resurrection, His feet which are to preach glad tidings upon the mountains, and proclaim peace, are illumined with the fire of the Holy Spirit and are made firm like a pillar, for "James, Cephas, and John, seemed to be pillars\(^{41}\)," of the Church.

**2 book.** This is the book which was mentioned above, and which was closed by a long-continued covering, and was at last unfastened by the grace of the Lord, that, as the Prophet says, even "the deaf might hear the words of the book\(^{42}\)." And with reason is His face as the sun, because He now carries an open book.

**earth.** The preaching of the Christian faith is extended by land and sea. But, allegorically, the stronger members are placed in the greater dangers, the others in

\(^{36}\) Ezek. xxviii. 18.
\(^{37}\) Isaiah ix. 15.
\(^{38}\) Prov. xxiv. 24.
\(^{39}\) Ps. x. 8. Sept., and Vulg., as Bed.; A.V., with Heb., "in the lurking-places of the villages."
\(^{40}\) Isaiah xix. 1.
\(^{41}\) Gal. ii. 9.
\(^{42}\) Isaiah xxix. 18.
such as are suited to them. For God "does not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able."  

THE SEVEN THUNDERS

3 thunders. When the Lord proclaims mightily, the Church also, filled with sevenfold grace, lifts up her voice to preach. For "the lion shall roar, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who will not prophecy?" seeing that the seven thunders of which he is speaking are the same as the seven trumpets.

4 Seal. Neither do thou exhibit to all indiscriminately the mysteries of the Christian faith, lest they become of low esteem; nor close them to the good, lest they be entirely hidden. And for the same reason he heard at a later time, "Seal not the words of this prophesy." Both these are comprised in a single verse in Daniel, for it is said to him by the angel, "seal the book, and shut up the words even unto the time appointed."

5 hand. The angel swears by Him who liveth for ever, while Christ, Who comes in the Father's Name, confirms the words of His own unchangeable truth, saying, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."

6 created. He who stands on the sea and on the earth, and stretches forth his hand to heaven, swears fitly by the Creator of the heaven, the earth, and the sea. no longer. Assuredly, as the Psalmist says, "The time of the godly will be for ever." But the changeable variety of secular times will cease at the last trumpet, for "the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall arise incorrupt," and "their inheritance shall be for ever."

7 mystery. The mystery of the Gospel which is now preached will then be finished, when "the ungodly shall go into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."  

THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN

8 voice. When the Lord lays open the mysteries of future time, and says, "For the kingdom of heaven is at hand," the Church also is admonished to receive the same book of preaching. But these words may also be suitable to John himself, who is to return to preaching after his banishment.

9 Give. Let him come to the Lord who wishes to receive the sacraments of teaching. Take. That is, place it in thy inward parts, and write it down in the breadth of the heart.

43 1 Cor. x. 13.  
44 Amos iii. 8.  
45 Ch. xxii. 10.  
46 Dan. xii. 4.  
47 St. Matt. xxiv. 35.  
48 Ps. xxxvi. (xxxvii. A.V.) 18.  
49 1 Cor. xv. 52.  
50 Ps. xxxvi. (xxxvii. A.V.) 18.  
51 St. Matt. xxv. 46.  
52 St. Matt. iv. 17.
bitter. When thou hast received it, thou wilt be delighted by the sweetness of the divine oracle; but thou wilt perceive a bitterness on beginning to preach, and to practise what thou hast learned, or, at least, it is to be so understood according to Ezekiel, who, when he said that he had eaten the book, added, "And I went away in bitterness, in the indignation of my spirit."

11 prophesy. He shews what was signified by the book eaten up, and the sweetness mingled with bitterness, namely, that he was to be delivered from banishment, and was to preach the Gospel to the nations, which is sweet indeed through love, but is bitter through the persecutions that are to be endured.

4. Chapter 11

THE MEASURING REED

1 reed. He received the office of writing the Gospel in the reed, which is not useless with a vain lustre, but is like "the rod of equity, the rod of the kingdom of God," for it describes the eternal kingdom of Christ.

Rise. "Rise," he said: not that John was seated, but that the hearts of all are aroused by this word to measure the writings and actions of the Gospel, for then they find what progress they each one make, and how far they agree with the divine rule.

worship. For not all they who are seen therein worship, as he "who shall confess Me." He commands, that is, in what he says, that a part should not be reckoned.

2 without. They who in name alone are united to the Church, and who neither draw near to the altar nor the most holy place, are cast forth by the rule of the Gospel, and are joined to the nations. For "all the glory of her who is the daughter of kings is from within."

tread. Not only are they driven from the Church, but they also fight against the Church itself, with the heathen as their allies, for three years and a-half. It is not that they only trample upon it then in the time of the Antichrist; but that in that time all the body of the wicked, "in whom the ministry of iniquity already works," is joined as it were, to its own head.

THE TWO WITNESSES

3 witnesses. That the cruelty of the bad may not alarm the hearer, he mentions, that the Church also, which of two races is made one, is to become illustrious by the gift of miracles. The Church, too, ever contemplating its head, namely Christ, teaching in the flesh, will prophesy, it is said, for two years and a-half. For the months of three years and a-half, namely, thirty times forty-two, make up two hundred and sixty days. But Daniel writes, that the days of the same period in which the abomination

53 Ezek. iii. 14.
54 Ps. xlv. 7 (xlv. A.V.6).
55 St. Matt. x. 32; St. Luke xii. 8.
57 2 Thess. ii. 7.; Vulg., "mysterium;" Bed., "ministerium."
of desolation is to be set up are one thousand two hundred and ninety-five.

sackcloth. That is, who are made to stand in penance; as the prophet says, "But I clothed myself in sackcloth of hair, while they were vexatious unto me." 59.

4 olive trees. The Church is irradiated by the light of the two Testaments, and ever waits upon the commands of the Lord. So also the prophet Zechariah saw one candlestick with seven branches, and these two olive-trees, that is, testaments, pouring oil into the candlestick. This is the Church with its oil, which never fails, which makes it shine for the light of the world.

5 fire. If any one harms the Church, he is condemned by a retributive sentence of the same harm; and is consumed by fire. For "all they who take the sword shall perish with the sword." And so the Chaldean flame which was prepared for the children of God, slew the ministers of ungodliness themselves. Or: he who is to be changed for the better, is spiritually consumed in a good fire, by the prayers of the mouth of the Church. "Thou wilt heap," he says, "coals of fire upon his head." 62.

6 power. All power in heaven and earth is given to the Church in Christ, for the keys of binding and loosing are committed to it. But spiritually also, the heaven is shut, that it rain no rain, in order that blessing from the Church may not come down upon the barren earth. As the Lord saith of the Father to His vineyard, "I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it." 63.

waters. Not only do they make to cease the waters, but they also render those which had come down useless; and this is, to turn the waters into blood. The sweet savour of Christ, which comes with fragrance from the Church, is "to some a savour of death unto death, to others a savour of life unto life." 64.

7 testimony. He shews clearly, that all these things take place before the last persecution, by saying, "when they shall have finished their testimony;" namely, that which they give, until the revelation of the beast, who is to come forth from the hearts of the ungodly. It is not that they do not then strive boldly to resist the enemy by the same testimony, but that the Church, as is supposed, will then be left destitute of the gift of miracles, while the adversary is resplendent with them in the sight of all through lying wonders. For, as the Lord says, "Want shall go before his face." 65.

kill. He will overcome in those who shall succumb, he will kill in those who, with laudable patience, shall be slain. Or: if he shall overcome and kill spiritually, we may take it of a part of the witnesses, as the Lord says in the Gospel, "They will deliver you up to affliction, and kill you;" which Luke the Evangelist intimates to have been spoken of a part, saying, "Some of you they will kill." 66.

58 Dan. xii. 11.
59 Ps. xxxiv. (xxxv. A.V.) 13; Vulg., Bed., "mihi molesti," "vexatious;" A.V. "sick."
60 Zech. iv. 2,3.
61 St. Matt. xxvi. 52.
62 Prov. xxi. 22.; Rom. xii. 20.
63 Isaiah v. 6.
64 2 Cor. ii. 15.
66 St. Matt. xxiv. 9.
bodies. "If they have persecuted Me," He says, "they will also persecute you." It is no wonder, then, if the city of the ungodly, which feared not to crucify the Lord, has His servants also in derision, even when they are slain. And such things as these ecclesiastical history relates to have often occurred.

Sodom. That is, "silent and dark," having forsooth neither the light of faith, nor the voice of confession. For "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." These regions, for a sign of spiritual punishment, were visibly smitten with these plagues, that is, with devouring fire, and water turned into blood.

see. He said not the peoples and tribes will see, but, many from among the peoples who openly deride the saints, when others believe.

tombs. He has spoken of their wish and their opposition: not that they are able to effect that the Church should not be their memorial; as it is said, "Ye neither enter in, nor suffer others to enter in," seeing that some do enter in, although they oppose. But they will evidently effect, in respect of the bodies of the living and of the slain, that neither are the living suffered to meet together for their memory by the celebration of holy offices, nor the slain to have their names recited for their memory, nor to have their bodies buried for their memory as witnesses of God.

rejoice. As often as the righteous are afflicted, the unrighteous exult and feast, as, "while the ungodly is lifted up, the poor is consumed."

tormented. Because of the plagues with which the human race is vexed, because of their testimony to God, even the very sight of the righteous oppresses the unrighteous; as they themselves say, "He is grievous unto us even to behold."

days. Thus far the angel has spoken of the future, and now he brings in, as accomplished, that which he hears is to come to pass, namely that, after the reign of Antichrist has been destroyed, the saints have risen to glory.

fear. He has spoken of all the living, because even the righteous who shall remain alive will greatly fear at the resurrection of those who sleep.

cloud. This is the same that the Apostle said, "We shall be caught up in the clouds into the air, to meet the Lord."

enemies. Here he has distinguished the unrighteous from those of whom he had said, that they feared in common with them.

THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE

earthquake. When the terror of the judgement comes upon them, all the city of the devil, which is built upon the sand, with all its builders, will fall to the ground. For, both ten and seven are perfect numbers. But if it were not so, the whole would be to

68 St. John xv. 20.
69 Rom.x.10.
70 St. Matt. xxiii. 13.
71 Cf. Ps. lxvii. 4 (lxviii. 3 A.V.).
72 Ps. x. 2.
73 Wisdom ii. 15.
74 1 Thess. iv. 17.
be understood from a part.

affrighted. Who of all men will boast that he has a pure heart, when "the powers of heaven shall be shaken."*

gave glory. They are built upon a rock, who, from their own stability, glorify the Lord when others fall at the earthquake. For "the righteous will rejoice when he seeth the punishment of the wicked." Some understand the two prophets to be Enoch and Elijah, and that they are to preach for three years and a-half, and confirm the hearts of the faithful against the perfidy of Antichrist, which is presently to follow; and that, after their death, his cruelty is to rage for the same period of time, and then, when the conflict is at length renewed by the saints, who in the protection of their hiding-places were supposed to be dead, is to be overcome. And these, because of their fellowship in one body, are said to rise as prophets themselves; and when the persecution is intensified at the sight of those who were already thought to be dead, many of those who were supposed to be worthy of the number seven, or ten, will fall. For Daniel says, "He will confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the half of the week the oblation and sacrifice will cease, and the abomination of desolation shall be in the temple;" and the following, "and when the abomination which makes desolate shall be set up, there will be a thousand two hundred and ninety days," which number is close upon the course of three years and a-half. Finally, Elijah of old destroyed his adversaries by fire, and was hidden for three years and a-half, and withheld the rain; and at length, when the false prophets were put to death, by means of the sacrifice which had been consumed, he turned Israel unto the Lord.

14 second. The second woe does not belong to the recapitulation, but to the battle of the horses, which was stirred up by the trumpet of the sixth angel; for the eagle had foretold three woes, from the voice of the three trumpets which was to come. But he did not utter it then, lest that which belongs to the seventh angel, and the end, should be supposed to follow immediately upon the third.

75 St. Matt. xxiv. 29.
76 Ps. lvii. 11 (lvi. 10 A.V.).
77 Dan. ix. 27.
78 Dan. xii. 11
79 3 Kings (1 A.V.) xvii.1.
80 Ib. xviii. 38, 9.
81 See ch. viii. 13, note 3.
15 **seventh.** The six former trumpets, corresponding with the periods of the present age, announced the various conflicts of the wars of the Church. But the seventh, heralds in the eternal sabbath, and shews alone the victory and the dominion of the true King.

16 **worshipped.** Behold, he says, the third woe will come at the voice of the seventh angel. And when he had sounded, he only spoke of the Church as praising God and giving thanks, from which we understand that the retribution of the faithful will be nothing else than the woe of the evil ones.

17 **who art.** "Thou hast reigned from the age, although the ungodly are rebellious against Thee. But now that Thou art Judge, their fury will be repressed, and will cease." For, "The Lord hath reigned, let the people be angry.""82"

18 **dead.** It agrees with the order, as we read in the Gospel, that first, indeed, all nations83 should be gathered together before the Judge, then that those on the right hand should be disposed in many mansions84 in the Kingdom of the Father, but that the ungodly should be driven out beyond the limits of the kingdom, to be burned in the accursed flames.

**corrupted.** This is the last woe. Therefore, concerning the seven angels sounding with the trumpet, he now recapitulates from the birth of the Lord, as about to say the same things in another manner, and more comprehensively.

19 **The temple of God.** Which was placed aforetime on the earth, had the ark of the covenant, inclosed within the mystical veil. But now, in the Church, which is "the temple of the living God85," whose "conversation is in heaven,"86 the ark of His Incarnation is laid open to the whole world, as the veil of the old temple, and the middle wall of partition, have been rent asunder by the blood of the Lord. For like the heavenly manna in clean gold is the Divinity in a holy body.

**lightnings.** These all are the miracles of the splendour, and preaching, and wars of the Church. He had said also that these things took place in the description of the announcement of the seven angels, from the Advent of the Lord, when He stood upon the altar87, but generally from the beginning to the end. Then he described particularly in what manner they took place, as he also does now, that the temple of God is opened in heaven, and that conflicts follow.

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82 Ps. xcviii. (xcix. A.V.) 1; A.V., "Let the people tremble;" P.-B., "Be the people never so unquiet;" Vulg. and Sept., as Beda.
83 St. Matt. xxv. 32.
84 St. John xiv. 2.
85 1 Tim. iii. 15.
86 Phil. iii. 20.
87 Ch. viii. 3
THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON

1 sign. It is the same sign which now also appears in the Church, that God is born of man.

a woman. The Church is clothed with the light of Christ, and treads upon temporal glory. "Righteousness," he says, "will arise in his days, and abundance of peace, until the moon be taken away, or consumed." That is, the abundance of peace will greatly increase, until it consume all the changeableness of mortality, and then death, the last enemy, will be destroyed. Or: because the same Church has partly the fruition of Christ, the Sun, in heaven, and is partly absent from the Lord, that which he says, "His left hand is under my head, and his right embraceth me," may be understood here.

stars. The Head of the Church is adorned with the number of the Apostles, which is twelve, whether Christ is understood, or whether the first beginning of the Church itself is designated under the name of the head. "Thou hast set," he says, "upon his head a crown of precious stone." The Church, in a spiritual sense, both brings forth those with whom it travails, and ceases not to travail with them when already born. As she herself says, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." So the Lord says in the Gospel, "A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow because her hour is come, but when she hath brought forth a son, she remembers the anguish no more for joy." And He Himself expounded this to His disciples, and added, "And ye now, therefore, have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice."

2 birth. The Church, in a spiritual sense, brings forth those with whom it travails, and ceases not to travail with them when already born. As she herself says, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." That is, the abundance of peace will greatly increase, until it consume all the changeableness of mortality, and then death, the last enemy, will be destroyed. Or: because the same Church has partly the fruition of Christ, the Sun, in heaven, and is partly absent from the Lord, that which he says, "His left hand is under my head, and his right embraceth me," may be understood here.

delivered. So the Lord says in the Gospel, "A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow because her hour is come, but when she hath brought forth a son, she remembers the anguish no more for joy." And He Himself expounded this to His disciples, and added, "And ye now, therefore, have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice."

3 dragon. The devil, blood-stained in his cruelty, is armed against the Church with the power of an earthly king. For in the seven heads he describes all his kings, and in the ten horns every kingdom.

devour. The devil plots against the Church, and strives to extinguish the faith of Christ in the hearts of the faithful, that he may, as it were, kill him who has been taught, and to whom by teaching he has given birth. And a figure of this deceit was shewn in Herod, who, like an intestine foe, pretends that he desires to worship the Lord, in order that he may put Him to death.

5 man child. Although the dragon oppose, the Church ever brings forth Christ. But he spoke of the man child as conqueror of the devil, who had conquered the woman.

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88 Ps. lxxi. (lxxii. A.V.) 7; A.V. Marg., "Heb., till there be no moon;" Vulg., "donec auferatur."
89 1 Cor. xv. 26.
90 Song of Sol. ii. 6, viii. 3.
91 Ps. xx. 4 (xxi. 3 A.V.); Bed., with Sept., Vulg., "of precious stone;" Heb., "pure gold:" Ges. Lex., s.v.; so A.V.
92 Gal. iv. 19.
93 St. John xvi. 21, 22.
For who but the man child, who is "to rule all nations with a rod of iron\(^94\)," rules the good with inflexible justice, breaks in pieces the bad? And this is also promised to the Church, in that it is said above, "I will give Him power over the nations, and He shall rule them with a rod of iron." For the Church, too, daily generates the Church, which rules the world in Christ.

cought up. Therefore ungodliness cannot apprehend Christ, Who is spiritually born in the minds of the hearers, because at the same time He reigns with the Father in heaven, "Who has raised us up also together with Him, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ\(^95\)."

6 wilderness. The Church rejoices in her sojourning in this present wilderness, as living in hope of things eternal. For she has received power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the red dragon, like the Israelitish multitude which was fed with heavenly bread, and overcame the fiery serpents by the sight of the serpent of brass.

place. "Be thou to me," he says, "as God my protector, and as a place of refuge, that I may be safe\(^96\)."

days. In this number of days, which makes three years and a-half, he comprehends all the times of Christianity, because Christ, Whose body the Church is, preached the same length of time in the flesh.

THE WAR IN HEAVEN

7 heaven. The heaven signifies the Church, in which he says that Michael, with his angels, fights against the devil, for that, according to the will of God, he contends for the Church in her sojourning, by praying and ministering help; of whom Daniel\(^97\) also said, that he would come to the aid of the Church in the last and most grievous affliction; from which they suppose that Antichrist is to be slain by him. And they are said to be his angels in the same way that our angels also are. For the Lord says, "Their angels do always behold the face of My Father\(^98\)," the angels, that is, of those whose citizens they are.

fought. The angels of Satan are not those alone who are like him in nature and will, but men who are entangled in their snares are also to be understood.

8 prevailed not. That is, the prevailed not through all time.

found. It was not found, that is, in holy men, who by his expulsion from them, have already become a heaven themselves, and who through faith no more receive him back, who has once been expelled.

earth. The old enemy, who is expelled from the spiritual, is more closely shut up in the earthly. This is to be hurled down from heaven, and sent into the earth. For to him it is said, "Earth shalt thou eat all the days\(^99\);" and in this earth he is bruised by the feet of the saints, as it is written, "Thou shalt tread upon the asp and the

\(^94\) Ps. ii. 9.
\(^95\) Eph. ii.6.
\(^96\) Ps. xxx. 3 (xxxi. 2 A.V.). Vulg. with Bed., "esto mihi in Deum protectorem;" A.V., "Be Thou my strong rock;" Marg., "Heb., to me for a rock of strength."
\(^97\) Dan. xii. 1.
\(^98\) St. Matt. xviii. 10.
\(^99\) Gen. iii. 14.
It is clearly shewn in what heaven these things take place, for we know that in the Church salvation is procured by the victory of Christ, and because of this He says, "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth;" not that power which He Himself always had, but that which He began to have in the Church, as the Head in the members, from the time that He Himself willed.

The angels express joy at the salvation of their brethren, that is, of those who will become citizens, but who now are strangers.

For he suggests, that they both make an ill-use of prosperity, and have not patience in adversity.

With good reason do they despise their lives for Christ's sake, who have overcome so great and adversary by the blood of Christ.

Here, by dwellers in heaven, must be understood both angels and holy men, and it belongs to both to rejoice in the Lord, since both men are joined with angels, and angels minister to man's nature in Christ.

As he has shewn that joy is to be the expectation of the redeemed, so, also, is lamentation of those who perish. And a great woe is impending over those of whom the most wicked enemy has possession in his wrath.

The devil assails the Church with inextricable craft, and the more he is cast down, so much the more does he persecute.

The Church is upheld by the two Testaments, and avoids the envenomed tumult of the world, and seeks in the affection of her mind the solitude of a "meek and quiet spirit," while she thus sings with joy, "Behold I got me away far off in flight, and abode in the wilderness." Nor does it make any difference that there she asks for the wings of a dove, but here receives those of an eagle. For as the Church, "whose youth is renewed as an eagle's," is represented in the former because of the gift of the Holy Spirit, so also is it in the latter, because of the lofty flight and heavenly vision, by which it beholds God with a clean heart.

The whole time of the Church is signified, as being comprised in the number of the days above. For a "time" denotes one year, "times" two, "half a time" six months.

Water signifies the vehemence of persecutors; whence it is said, "Perhaps like water they would have swallowed us up." So, then, the Church is not only raised up by the word of God, but is driven onward by the violence of persecution, and hastens to fly away from the earth.

The holy earth is the flesh of the Lord, which by swallowing up death

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100 Ps. xc. (xc. A.V.) 13.
101 St. Matt. xxviii. 18.
102 1 St. Pet. iii. 4.
103 Ps. liv. 8 (lv. 7 A.V.).
104 Ps. cii. (ciii. A.V.) 5.
105 Ps. cxxiii. (cxxiv. A.V.) 3,4.
which it accepted, and which for a time prevailed against it, has taught us also to swallow up death. The Church may also be understood, by the warnings and prayers of whose mouth the plots of the enemy are avoided.

17 wroth. When he saw that the persecutions could not be continued, because they were averted by the mouth of the holy earth, he prepared himself the more to rest upon the mystery of iniquity, that he might be able to plot continually.

commandments. To keep the commandments of God in the faith of Jesus Christ is to fight with the dragon, and provoke him to battle; and thanks be to God, Who has made the attempts of the cruel dragon of no effect. For, behold, while he endeavoured to annihilate the Lord incarnate, he is defeated by His resurrection. Afterwards, by striving to deprive the Apostles of their boldness in teaching, he was urgent, as it were, to take away from the world the woman, that is, the whole Church. But as he has laboured in vain to effect this, he assails indiscriminately every age of the faithful. And so it is, as follows.

18 sea. That is, the same enemy, when he is to excite plotting and war, stands upon the multitude of the people, "which the wind scattereth away from the face of the earth," and which is wont to accept his devices.

6. Chapter 13

THE FIRST BEAST

1 beast. The beast has different interpretations, according to its place. Here, accordingly, it denotes the body of the devil, which springs from the people of the ungodly; for this is the sea, which above is understood as the abyss. And, therefore, the dragon is said to be king of all that is in the waters, and whose "heads," according to David, "are broken in pieces in the sea." He shews that the seven heads are the same as the ten horns. For he had said, that the dragon bore seven diadems upon ten heads. But now he says that the beast has ten diadems upon ten horns. For seven and ten are the same, as "he will receive sevenfold in this world," when another evangelist has a "hundredfold."

blasphemy. For they call their kings gods, as well those who are dead, and as it were translated to heaven, and among the gods, as those also who have the name of Augustus upon earth, which with them expresses deity. But in another place he says, that the whole beast itself is full of blasphemy.

2 leopard. He is represented as like a leopard, because of the diversity of the nations; a bear, because of his malice and fury; a lion, because of his strength of body and

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106 Ps. i.4.
107 Ch. xi. 7.
108 Ps. lxxiii. (lxxiv. A.V.) 13, 4.
109 St. Luke xviii. 30, where some MSS. have "sevenfold." / "this world," or rather "age," as seculum is elsewhere commonly translated.
110 St. Matt. xix. 29; St. Mark x. 30.
111 Ch. xvii. 3.
pride of tongue. We read in Daniel\textsuperscript{112} of the kingdom of the Chaldæans being compared to a lioness, of the Persians to a bear, of the Macedonians to a leopard.

power. So the Apostle, speaking of the body of the devil, says, "Whose coming is after the working of Satan, in all power, and signs, and prodigies of falsehood, in those who perish\textsuperscript{113}."

3 heads. Antichrist, who pertains to the heads of the earthly kingdom, by imitation of our true Head, dares to exhibit himself as one who has been slain, and has risen again, and who is to be accepted as Christ, Who truly accomplished this. And the falsehood of this pretence is said to have been anticipated in the instance of Simon Magus\textsuperscript{114}.

wondered. He puts the genus for the species, in saying that the beast was worshipped, seeing that earthly men were to worship the counterfeit head itself under the name of the Head, Who was truly slain, and alive.

worshipped. They say that they worship God, Who gave power to Christ.

like. They themselves say, Who is like Christ? Or who can overcome Him?

mouth. "Who is exalted," he says, "above all that is called God\textsuperscript{115}."

blasphemies towards. For he does not blaspheme with open mouth, until three years and a half, but in the mystery of iniquity, which, when a difference is made, and the man of sin is revealed, will be disclosed. And then he will say, "I am Christ;" whereas now it is, "Lo, here is Christ," or, "Lo there." Again, "towards God" signifies "against God."

tabernacle. The wicked one usurps the dignity of the name of God, and he will presume to call the Church also his own.

saints. By the whole, he denotes a part which can be overcome, when in the violence of the time, even the elect, if it be possible, will be shaken; that the Jews may be condemned, who did not believe the truth, but accepted a lie.

dwell. He said "all," but "who dwell on the earth." For, "They who depart from Thee," he says, "shall be written in the earth\textsuperscript{116}."

book. It is just, that they who serve the author of death should not be written in the book of life, and that they who are deluded by the fictitious death of the beast, should be without the fellowship of "the Lamb, Who has taken away the sins of the world\textsuperscript{117}." "Of the Lamb," he says, as in what follows.

beginning. "A lamb," that is, as Peter says, "without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundations of the world, but was manifested in these last times\textsuperscript{118}." Another version has translated it, "the lamb sealed from the beginning of

\textsuperscript{112} Dan. vii. 5, where Chald. has, "a lion;" Sept., Theod., Vulg., as Bed., "a lioness."

\textsuperscript{113} 2 Thess. ii. 9.


\textsuperscript{115} 2 Thess. ii. 4.

\textsuperscript{116} Jer. xvii. 13.

\textsuperscript{117} St. John i. 29; Bed., "has taken away;" Gr., Vulg., as A.V., "taketh away."

\textsuperscript{118} 1 St. Pet. i. 19.
the world." It may also be understood by transposition, that the names of the saints were written from the beginning in the book of life.

9 **have an ear.** As often as the Scripture interposes this saying, it seeks an attentive hearer, because of the obscurity of the subject. For in order that the shortlived kingdom of the devil may not be highly esteemed, he anticipates the thoughts of man by saying, "He that shall lead into captivity will go into captivity"; that is, the devil with the beast who now appears to lead the nations captive in his toils, will himself speedily be in captivity with his own.

10 **sword.** He who now persecutes the Church with carnal or even spiritual death, him the Lord Jesus "will slay with the breath of His mouth, and will destroy with the brightness of His coming."**

**patience.** He had promised that the slayer of men should be killed. But because "no one is crowned but he who has striven lawfully," he says now that there is need of courage, now of a firm breast. After the beast has been described generally, first in hypocrisy, then in the open mouth of blasphemies, he describes it also in the persons of the leaders alone, in like manner in hypocrisy, then as revealed.

**THE SECOND BEAST**

11 **another.** He has called him another, from his office, otherwise he is the same. but that which is here the sea, is, as Daniel testifies, the earth; for as he saw four beasts come up out of the sea, it was said to him, "These four great beasts are four kingdoms, which shall arise out of the earth."

**horns.** He shews the horns of a lamb, that he may secretly introduce the poison of the dragon. For by the false assumption of sanctity, which the Lord truly had in Himself, he pretends that a matchless life and wisdom are his. Of this beast the Lord says, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves."

12 **power.** The wretched disciples follow their master in everything.

**causeth.** He shews the power of seduction, in that he made subject to himself both the body and the soul which dwells in it.

**healed.** That is, who pretended that by rising again he had overcome death. For the Scripture had spoken of him not as "slain," but "as it were slain;" as was said of the Jews, "that they entered not into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled." For the Evangelist did not affirm that the most polluted could have been polluted if they had entered the Praetorium, nor did the Jews who were guilty of so great crimes really fear to be polluted. But he related what they had simulated, as if affirming it.

13 **fire.** He preferred the miracle of fire, as if the greatest, to all others, that, as the Lord Christ had given to His disciples the gift of divers miracles by the Holy Ghost, Who came in fire, so he with deceitful craft might delude his own, as it were, by a

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119 Four cursive MSS. and Andreas, as noticed by Tischendorf, read "sealed," and so Tichonius, as in Mill; between which and the common reading "slain," there is but little difference in writing.

120 2 Thess. ii. 8.

121 2 Tim. ii. 5.


123 St. Matt. vii. 15.

124 St. John xviii. 28.
similar gift.

**14** seduces. "His coming will be," as is said, "after the working of Satan in all power, and signs, and prodigies of falsehood." And there is wont to be a question, whether these are called "signs and prodigies of falsehood," because he is to deceive the senses of men by phantasms, so as to seem to do what he does not; or because these very things, even if they shall be true prodigies, will lead to falsehood those who shall believe, that they could only have been wrought by divine influence, being ignorant of the power of the devil. For it was not by a phantastical, but a true fire and whirlwind that he destroyed so great a household as that of the holy Job, with so great flocks. But whether they are called "prodigies of falsehood" in this way or that, it is in this that the temptation will appear to be greater than all the rest, that when the pious martyr submits his body to torments he too at the same time performs so many miracles before his eyes.

image. That is, that they should be like him, and make an image of him, "as he has the wound from the sword and lives," as another version expresses it. This is that they say so falsely, that they have been dead and have risen again with Antichrist, as to imply that he too makes God a mediator between himself and his own, whereas he has not like our Lord Jesus Christ another one, between whom and himself he may be a mediator.

**15** breath. That is, by making himself an image of the beast, he pretended that he gave the spirit of truth to the very people in whom the falsehood was fulfilled.

**16** mark. The mark is the mystery of iniquity, which is received by those who are hypocrites in practice and profession.

**17** buy. By this mention of buying and selling, he teaches, that as the Church has delivered the Creed for good, to be profitable to our salvation; so they for evil confine themselves within such a definition as this, that there be licence given neither of buying, nor of selling, even as merchants who sail in the same ship, are bound by a uniform signal.

name. That is, who participates in his deceit. For the mark, that is, the note and name of the beast and the number of his name are one. And it is the number of a man, that we may not suppose him, as the opinion of some is, to be either the devil, or a demon, but one from among men, in whom Satan is to dwell bodily. For he is "the man of sin, the son of perdition." And

**18** number. This number among the Greeks, is said to be found in the name of Titan, that is, "a giant," in this manner, - T three hundred, E five, I ten, T three hundred, A one, N fifty. And it is thought that Antichrist will usurp this name, as if he excelled all in power, boasting also that he is the one of whom it was written, "He rejoiced as a giant to run his course. His going forth is from the highest heaven." And

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125 2 Thess. ii. 9.
126 The other version has "as;" Bed., with Gr., Vulg., "which;" and so A.V.
127 2 Thess. ii. 3.
128 Irenæus mentions TEITAN, as the name "most worthy of credit." Bk. v. ch. 30, §3. Oxf. Tr., p. 521.
129 Ps. xviii. 6,7 (xix. 5,6 A.V.)
Primasius\textsuperscript{130} also mentions another name, which contains the same number, - A one, N fifty, T three hundred, E five, M forty, O seventy, \(\sum\) two hundred, which signifies, "contrary to honour." Besides there is the word, - A one, P one hundred, N fifty, O seventy, Y four hundred, M forty, E five, that is, "I deny." By these, both the character of the person and the asperity of the work of Antichrist are indicated\textsuperscript{131}. But how so great a coveter of praise should be willing to be denoted by such a mark, requires a lengthened exposition. Otherwise: who is ignorant, that the number six, in accordance with which the world was created, signifies the perfection of work? And this, whether simple, or multiplied by ten, or a hundred, demonstrates the fruit of the same perfection to be sixty-fold, or a hundred-fold. The weight of gold also which was brought to Solomon\textsuperscript{132} every year was six hundred and sixty-six thousand talents\textsuperscript{133}. The seducer, therefore, will presume to exact for himself the offering which is rightfully due and paid to the true king.

7. Chapter 14

THE LAMB ON MOUNT ZION

1 Lamb. That is, when this Church was toiling under the burden of its conflicts, the Lord Jesus Christ preserved it by the example of His power, and the defence of His protection. For when the body had been shewn which was confounded by the power of the dragon, and marked by his brand, he shews the Church rejoicing in its wonted splendour and numbers, that thou shouldst not be afraid lest the body of the Lamb had succumbed to the fury of the beast. And observe, that the beast stands on the sand of the sea, the Lamb of Mount Zion.

thousand. This finite number ought to be understood as infinite, and, by the signification of the hidden mystery, as suited to the virgin band, which loves God from the whole heart, the whole soul, and the whole mind; and to the body also, which consists of four qualities, and is in its integrity consecrated to Him. For three times three are nine, and four times four sixteen, and sixteen times nine make one hundred and forty-four. So, then, when from among those who are established in the merit of carnal life, and appear on Mount Zion with the Lamb, there is perceived so perfect a multitude, no doubt can exist concerning the other members of the Church.

foreheads. He shews what is the imitation of the mark on the forehead of the body of the beast, while he says that God and Christ were written on the foreheads of the Church.

2 waters. The loud voice of the saints is the great devotion of love, which he states that he heard from heaven, in saying that they who uttered the voice "stood on Mount Zion." For he intended to shew that by Mount Zion he meant no other than the Church, which, in order to overcome the grievances of its afflictions, is exalted by the sublime delight of contemplation, and celebrates at once by praise and by imitation the conflicts of her King. For this is in truth to sing unto the Lamb Who stands.

\textsuperscript{130} For Primasius see above, Ch. IV, note 12.  
\textsuperscript{131} Compare Irenæus, u.s. §4; "But this number of the name he shewed, that we should be on our guard against him when he cometh, as knowing who he is; though of his name he was silent, for it was not worthy to be proclaimed by the Holy Ghost."  
\textsuperscript{132} 3 Kings (1 A.V.) x. 14, 15.  
\textsuperscript{133} Beda inserts "thousands," which is absent from Heb., Sept., Vulg.
harpers. When all the saints are God's harpers, for "by crucifying the flesh\textsuperscript{134} with its vices\textsuperscript{135} and lusts" they praise Him on the psaltery and harp; how much more are they who, by the privilege of evangelical chastity, make themselves altogether a perfect sacrifice to the Lord, and who, in a special manner, "deny themselves\textsuperscript{136}" and "take up their cross," and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth?

\textbf{3 song.} The old song was, "Blessed is He Who hath His dwelling in Zion, and His household in Jerusalem\textsuperscript{137}." But the new song is, "Rejoice thou barren, that barest not\textsuperscript{138}," and again He says, "I will give to my eunuchs in my house, and within my walls, a name better than of sons and daughters\textsuperscript{139}.

able. In a special manner to sing a song unto the Lamb is to rejoice with Him for ever, even above all the faithful, because of the incorruption of the flesh. And yet the rest of the elect are able to hear this song, although they cannot utter it, because, through love, they still rejoice for their exaltation, if they do not rise up to their rewards.

\textbf{4 virgins.} The blessed Augustine has set forth this very beautifully in his exhortation to virgins, saying, "Go on, ye holy youths and maidens of God, ye men and women, celibate and unmarried, go on perseveringly unto the end. Praise the Lord more sweetly, Whom ye think of more frequently. Hope in Him more auspiciously, Whom ye serve more constantly. Love Him more ardently, Whom ye please more attentively. With loins\textsuperscript{140} girded, and lights burning, wait for the Lord, when He comes from the marriage. Ye will bring to the marriage of the Lamb a new song, which ye will sing upon your harps, such an one indeed as no one but ye will be able to utter. For so one saw you in the Apocalypse, who, above all others, was beloved of the Lamb, who was wont to lie upon His breast. He himself saw you, as twelve thousand holy harpers, of undefiled virginity of the body, of inviolate truth in the heart. Ye follow the Lamb, for virginal also is the flesh of the Lamb. Ye follow Him in virginity of heart and flesh, whithersoever He may go. For what is to follow, but to imitate? Because "Christ suffered for us\textsuperscript{141}, leaving you\textsuperscript{142} an example, that ye should follow His steps\textsuperscript{143}."

\textbf{firstfruits.} They are chosen by the Holy Spirit for the merits of their will, as holier and purer victims, from the holy and immaculate flock of the Church. For the Apostle, having no commandment of the Lord concerning them, implores them that they "present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God\textsuperscript{144}.

\textbf{5 guile.} Virgins are not united to the divine company by the merit of chastity alone, if they have not also a life free from all contagion of sin. Tichonius does not interpret this vision of virgins specially, but of the whole Church generally, which the Apostle "betrothes to one husband, to present it a pure virgin to Christ\textsuperscript{145};" and he concludes thus: "He said not, There was no lie in their mouth, but, 'there was not found;' as

\textsuperscript{134} Gal. v. 24
\textsuperscript{135} Origen, cited by Tischendorf, observes, "Where the Latin interpreter hast put \textit{vitia}, in the Greek there is read \textit{passiones}." A.V. has "affections;" Marg., "or, passions."
\textsuperscript{136} St. Matt. xvi. 24.
\textsuperscript{137} Qu. Ps. lxxv. 3 (lxxvi. 2 A.V.)?
\textsuperscript{138} Gal, iv. 27.
\textsuperscript{139} Isa. lvi. 5.
\textsuperscript{140} St. Luke xii. 35.
\textsuperscript{141} 1 st. Pet. ii. 21.
\textsuperscript{142} Gr., ed. Treg., Tisch., "you, you;" Vulg., "us, you;" A.V., "us, us."
\textsuperscript{143} St. Aug., \textit{De Virginitate}, ch. xxvii.
\textsuperscript{144} Rom. xii. 1.
\textsuperscript{145} 2 Cor. xi. 2.
the Apostle says, 'And this indeed ye were, but ye were washed,' and, 'The
iniquity of the unjust will not hurt him, in the day when he shall turn from his
iniquity,' and he can be a virgin, and 'deceit not be found in his mouth.' For by
virgins he means the chaste and modest.'

THE FIRST ANGEL

6 flying. As he had described the doubtful and varied fight of the Church with the
dragon, as she is a sojourner in the age, it remains to assign a due recompence to
both the combatants, and shew what punishments await the bad, or what rewards
the good. So, then, the preacher who runs hither and thither through the midst of
the Church, carries with him the Gospel of eternal kingdom.

preach. It is fitting that they who are lifted up by a heavenly flight, should also,
through preaching, raise up their earthly minds from the seat of their torpidness.

nation. "This Gospel," He says, "shall be preached in all the world, and then shall the
end come."  

7 Fear. Do ye look forward the more to your own salvation, he says, the more speedy
is the retribution which awaits you, which is unchangeable for ever. For ye fear the
Lord, the Maker of the world, and not the momentary tyranny of the beast.

THE SECOND AND THE THIRD ANGEL

8 Babylon. He says that the ruinous city of the devil has already fallen; and this may
be after the manner of Scripture, which is wont to represent as past that which it
knows is inevitably to be fulfilled; or perhaps the proud were cast down by the Lord,
when they were puffed up by the devil, as the Psalmist says, "Thou castedst them
down, while they were lifted up."  

nations. The ungodly city, which is gathered from all nations, itself makes the
nations, that is, its own members, drunk with the wine of error. But the city of the
Lord, which cultivates the vine of Sorek, does not desire to "be drunk with wine,
wherein is excess," lest it be deprived of the promised denarius of life.

9 worship. That is, who shall have worshipped the beast, and the head, which was, as
it were, slain.

mark. By saying, "on his forehead, or on his hand," he shews that the devil marks
some by an unholy profession, but others by practice alone.

10 drink. In that he says, "he also shall drink," he shews that there is another also who
has drunk, so as not to exclude him who, although he is not visibly mingled with the
nations, yet worships the beast under the name of Christ. But they are justly laid low

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146 1 Cor. vi. 11.
147 Ezek. xxxiii. 12.
149 Ps. lxxii. (lxxiii. A.V.) 18; Sept., Vulg. as Bed.; A.V., "Thou castedst them down into
destruction;"Ges. Lex., s.v. See ch. xvi. 10.
150 "The word Sorek in Hebrew signifies a peculiarly choice kind of wine, which is said to
have derived its name from the dusky color of its grapes, that perhaps being the
meaning of the root. It occurs in three passages of Old Testament, Isa. v. 2; Jer. ii. 21;
and with a modification in Gen. xlix. 11." Smith's Bible Dict., s.v.
151 Eph. v. 18.
152 St. Matt. xx. 2.
by the cup of the Lord, who give to drink the cup of the wrath of fornication, not, according to Jeremiah\textsuperscript{153}, that they may vomit forth the malice of a heart which is to be cleansed, but that they may be condemned, and perish by falling asleep in eternal death.

tormented. The saints who reign with the Lord are always able to see the punishment of the wicked, that they may for ever sing the mercies of the Lord, and so render to their deliverer the greater thanks. For the sight of the torments of the wicked does not grieve those who are of the same mind with the just Judge, as neither was the sight of the rest of Lazarus able to cool the rich man who was buried in flames.

\textbf{11 night.} They say that the lion spares a prostrate man. But this beast is fiercer than a lion, and the more he is worshipped, so much the greater punishment does he inflict.

receive. St. Augustine interprets the beast as the ungodly city, and the image of the beast as the likeness of a bird\textsuperscript{154}; of those, that is, who are Christians by a deceitful appearance; and the mark, as the note of guilt, which he says is worshipped, and is subject to him, and in agreement with him.

\textbf{12 patience.} Although the beast has vented his rage, yet the saints are not made sad by the temporal suffering, which is to be rewarded by eternal bliss. For they see, on the other hand, that their persecutors, who for a time act proudly, suffer eternal punishments with the beast.

\textbf{THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN}

\textbf{13 voice.} Beautiful is now the agreement of those who speak. For behold, this one proclaims that the kingdom of the Lord is at hand, that one that the city of the devil is fallen, a third announces the flames of the ungodly, another the rest of the blessed; and he both utters his voice from heaven, and commands it as worthy of eternal memory, to be committed to writing. For "the righteous rejoice because their names are written in heaven\textsuperscript{155}," but the ungodly "are blotted out of the book of the living\textsuperscript{156}."

dead. I thank Thee, O Jesus, Who makest blessed in heaven those who die in Thee on earth, and how much more those who lay down their blissful lives both in and for Thy faith!

labours. As he had said that the ungodly have no rest for ever, so, on the contrary, he shews that the faithful, who are helped by their former works, from henceforth rest, that is, from the time of death. For, "when He has given His beloved sleep\textsuperscript{157}, this is the inheritance of the Lord." But "the sluggard would not plough because of the cold, therefore shall he beg in harvest, and there shall not be given to him\textsuperscript{158}."

\textbf{THE HARVEST AND THE VINTAGE OF THE EARTH}

\textsuperscript{153} Jer. xxv. 27.
\textsuperscript{154} St. Aug. De Civ., I. xx. c. 9. Beda has "avis." But in St. Augustine it is, "eius," 'of him.' In MS., "avis" and "eius" are not very unlike.
\textsuperscript{155} St. Luke x. 20.
\textsuperscript{156} Ch. iii. 5.
\textsuperscript{157} Ps. cxxvi. (cxxvii. A.V.) 2,3. Beda appears alone of the early expositors to connect the second and third verses, as here.
\textsuperscript{158} Prov. xx. 4.
14 cloud. Thus far has the voice of the harlot been promised, and it now remains to exhibit the person of the Judge Himself, Who, when He comes to judgement, overshadows the glory of His divinity by a cloud of flesh, that the ungodly "may see Him Whom they pierced"159."

crown. He has described above160 what this cloud is, in the appearance of the woman, and the crown of twelve stars upon her head. But it may also signify the victory of Him Who reigns.

sickle. This is the judicial sentence of separation, which cannot by any means whatever be avoided. For we are within it, whithersoever we attempt to flee, for whatsoever is enclosed by the sickle falls within it161.

15 angel. The angels, of whom we read in the Gospel162 as "the reapers of the earth," are all "sent forth to minister for those who have the inheritance of salvation163," and they take account of the several merits of the Church, and report them daily to the Lord.

reap. Behold, He says, "Through iniquity abounding, the love of many has waxed cold164," and through the burning heat of evils falling upon it, the harvest of the earth has now almost ceased to be green. So, then, for the elect's sake, the days are shortened, in order that grains already ripe may not fall off. And do thou commit the tares and the chaff to the flames, but the heavenly fruit to the garners of bliss.

17 another. If Christ appeared on the white cloud as the reaper, is the grape-gatherer but the same, finely repeated because of the twofold fruit of the Church? For "He Who sowed seed in His field165" also Himself "planted a vineyard in a fruitful place166." But the planting degenerated, because of the negligence of those who kept it.

18 fire. The office of the angels, as Jerome says167, is twofold. For some assign rewards to the righteous, while others preside over the several torments; as it is said, "Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a burning fire168." The two angels who proclaim that the harvest is dry, and the corn ripe, may be understood to be the prayers of the Church, which, with a great voice, that is, with a great desire, prays daily that the kingdom of the Lord may come, and with these words.

Thrust in. As the harvest, so also the vintage is partly earthly, partly heavenly. But the maturity of both indicates the end of the world.

ripe. That is, her sins are complete. But the perfection of the good may also be called ripeness. For, as the holy Gregory says169, although the end of the world

159 Ch. i. 7.
160 Ch. xii. 1.
161 Compare St. Gregory, Morals on the Book of Job, bk. xxxiii. c. 11: - "And because the power of the heavenly judgement cannot be in any way avoided (for we are in truth within it, wherewith we may endeavour to escape), when the Judge Who is to come is represented, He is rightly said to hold a sickle." Oxf. Tr., vol. iii. p. 576.
162 St. Matt. xiii. 39.
163 Heb. i. 14.
164 St. Matt. xxiv. 12.
167 Comm. in Daniel., ch. vii. v. 10
168 Ps. ciii. (civ. A.V.) 4.
169 St. Greg. Homil. in Evang., bk. ii. hom. xxxv. sec. 2.
depends on its own course, yet by overtaking such as are more perverse, because they are deservedly overwhelmed in its ruin, it becomes known through them.

19 **sickle.** He who has the sickle of the reaper has also that of the grape-gatherer. For the judgement is one, and will take place at on time; but in the harvest and the vintage he shews the beginning and the end of the same affliction.

**winepress.** If this harvest also of the vintage pertain only to the bad, the winepress signifies punishment; but if to the good as well, the treading of the winepress, as the threshing of the floor, crushes what is useless, and proves what is of use. And so the Apostle says that the precious metals are preserved by fire, while the hay and the stubble are consumed, both which are done without the heavenly Jerusalem. But the winepress of wrath is so named in the same form of speech, as it is said, "The Lord delivered him in the evil day."  

20 **blood.** There went forth vengeance, even to the rulers of the people. For in the last contest there went forth vengeance even to the devil and his angels, because of the blood of the saints which was shed; as it is written, "In blood thou hast sinned, and blood pursueth thee." Concerning the horses, it has been spoken above.

hundred. That is, through all the four parts of the world. For quaternity is multiplied by itself, as in the four faces with four sides, and the wheels. Tichonius interprets the reaper and the grape-gatherer of the Church, as it becomes glorious after the flames of persecution, and holds the power of binding and loosing. The angel from the temple, or the altar, proclaims the empire of the blood-red Lord, not with open voice, but by the suggestion of the Holy Spirit, Whose operation is in His body, and shews that it is now the time for the bad to be accursed; and he has power over the fire, namely, that which went forth from the mouth of the witnesses, and devoured their adversaries. Thus far concerning the conflict of the Church, and the perfect end of either contest.

170 1 Cor. iii. 12.  
171 Ps. xl. 2 (xli. 1 A.V.)  
172 Ezek. xxxv. 6; Vulg., "quoniam sanguini tradam te;" A.V., "I will prepare thee unto blood."