

The Synopsis

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1847

1 THE REVELATION

1.1 Chapter 8

Again, divine interest in the saints, brought out into action by the effectual intercession of the great High Priest, brings down judgments on the world. For those under the altar there was no intercession; they were perfected, having been rejected and slain like Christ. There are saints upon the earth who yet need this intercession, so that their cry in their infirmity should be heard and answered. The smoke of the incense came up with the prayers of the saints. The great Mediator took of the fire off the altar, put it into the censer, and cast it on the earth. The intercession turned into judgments in the answer, and the signs of God's power were manifested, and subversion of order on earth followed-voices, thunderings, lightnings (as when the throne was set), and an earthquake.

Then follow specific judgments, on the signal being given from above. They fell on the Roman earth, the third part of the earth (see chap. 12: 4). First, judgment from heaven, hail and fire; and violence or destruction of men; on earth blood: the effect was the destruction of the great ones in the Roman earth, and of all general prosperity. Next, a great power, as the judgment of God, was cast into the mass of peoples-still, I apprehend, in the Roman earth; for destruction of men, and all that belonged to their subsistence and commerce followed in those limits. Next, one that should have been a special source of light and order in government fell from his place, and corrupted the moral sources of popular motives and feelings-what governs and sways the people so as to characterise them. They became bitter, and men died of it. The last of these four plagues falls on the governing powers, and puts them out in their order, as from God: all in the limits of the Roman earth. This closed the general judgments, subverting and producing disaster and confusion in the Roman earth, where the power of evil, as against the saints, was.

Woe (specially on those who had their settled place on earth, in contrast with the heavenly calling, and who were unawakened and unmoved by the judgments on the earth, but clung to it in spite of all as their home), is then announced. Threefold woe! The term "dwellers on," or "inhabiters of," the earth, has not yet been used, save in the promise to Philadelphia, and the claims of the souls under the altar: for both of these were in contrast with such. After all these

dealings of God they are a distinct and manifested class, and spoken of, in what passes on the earth, as such. Against this perversely unbelieving class the earthly judgments of God are now directed: the first, against the Jews; the second, against the inhabitants of the Roman earth; the last, universal.