

who proclaims or presses the kingdom of Christ on the earth. At the fifth seal, a cry arises from the grave itself, that He will come as an avenger. This cry is also answered, and some immediate relief is given to those whose wrongs He is called on to avenge. The sixth seal opens next, and lo, *He Himself is come*. "The great day of His wrath" has actually arrived. In every direction men are hiding themselves from Him. The text of the Apocalypse is fulfilled, "Behold He cometh with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him." At this point, in ch. vi. 16, His face of wrath is visible to the world.

But this is at the opening of the sixth seal. What are we to say of the seventh seal, which follows? The answer to this question was to me one of the greatest knots in the whole Book. I wonder now, that I could have so long failed to see how it is untied. It looks so utterly simple, when it is once done. But let us finish the sixth seal first. It includes the whole of the seventh chapter. Under the sixth seal, then, we see things on earth and things in heaven. On *earth* we see "four angels," holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow," so as to harm anything; more especially that all violence may be restrained, until "the servants of our God have been sealed in their foreheads." These are the twelve tribes of Israel. And that they are sealed *on earth*, is manifest. If not, why should the winds of the earth be held from hurting them? Meantime, besides this company of God's Israel on earth, we see a great company *in heaven*, gathered from "all nations and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues," already past the waves of this troublesome world, and that for ever. Can anything be clearer? The first resurrection of the saints, in its first stage at all events, has already taken place. But the world still remains, and no tribulation is allowed to begin, until the company of God's ancient people has been gathered, and sealed, and established upon earth in the position left vacant for it by the removal of the true Church of Christ from among all nations. This finishes the sixth seal.

We now see the opening of the seventh (ch. viii., 1). And upon this follows "a silence in heaven for the space of half-an-hour." What is the object of this silence? We are not left in doubt. All the "golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints," which we saw in the custody of the four-and-twenty elders, in ch. v., 8, are now produced, and given to one angel together with "much incense,"