

her former persecutions will be repeated. Stealthily and unsuspectedly she is strengthening her forces to further her own ends when the time shall come for her to strike. All that she desires is vantage ground, and this is already being given her. We shall soon see and shall feel what the purpose of the Roman element is. Whoever shall believe and obey the word of God, will thereby incur reproach and persecution.” - The Great Controversy, page 581.

THE FIFTH SEAL

And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, does Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. Revelation 6:9-11.

“When He had opened the fifth seal,” John “saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.” God does not forget those who have suffered for His name, but their names are written in the book of life. The lamb in the tabernacle service was slain on the earth; Christ left the courts of heaven, and the earth became the altar where His blood was shed. The rock-hewn sepulcher became the grave in which His dead body was laid; so the earth has drunk the blood of martyrs, and their bodies lie buried in its bosom.

Representatives of all classes of men, from the lowly tradesman to the men of brilliant intellect, fell before the power of him who sat on the pale horse. Such men as Huss and Jerome, Ridley, Cranmer, and Latimer, suffered for the word of God. But there were others, such as Galileo, who were persecuted because they advocated principles which, when weighed in the balances of him who sat enthroned, were deemed to be dangerous to the government.

The blood of Abel cried unto God, so the earth bears witness before Jehovah of every life which has been taken in His name. This witness is true, one that can never be suborned; and it matters not what may be the verdict of him who holds the balance. God knows, and gives righteous judgment....

When asked why there is such long-suffering on the part of God, John saw the white robes of Christ's righteousness, prepared for every one who has given up life for the sake of the truth. They have been despised, rejected, and killed by men; but on the record books of heaven every sin is covered by the character of their Lord. They were the company who were “destitute, afflicted, tormented: of whom the world was not worthy”; but heaven has a home for them, and in the restoration of all things, they will be given a place near the throne. Their numbers will be increased by those who are called to suffer a similar death in the period of time preceding the Second Coming of Christ.

What was done under cover of darkness in the Middle Ages, will be repeated when the sun is at its zenith. All who are slain for conscience' sake, sleep together in their graves until called forth by the trumpet tones of Him who is the resurrection and the life. Then will white robes be given them, together with palms of victory. Today they are seen clothed in white robes; for the world, forgetting the crimes of which they were basely accused, assigns them a martyr's crown.” - Story of the Seer of Patmos, pages 117-119.

THE SIXTH SEAL

And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood. Revelation 6:12.

This doubtless refers to the great earthquake of November 1, 1755, commonly known as the Lisbon earthquake, the effects of which were felt over an area of 4,000,000 square miles. Lisbon, Portugal, a city containing 150,000 inhabitants, was almost entirely destroyed. The shock of the earthquake, says Mr. Sears, in his Wonders of the World, page 200, “was instantly followed by the fall of every church and convent, almost all the large public buildings, and one fourth of the houses. In about two hours afterward, fires broke out in different quarters, and raged with such violence for the space of nearly three days that the city was completely desolated. The earthquake happened on a holy day, when the churches and convents were full of people, very few of whom escaped. . . .

The terror of the people was beyond description. Nobody wept: it was beyond tears. They ran hither and thither, delirious with horror and astonishment. - Bible Readings for the Home Circle, pages

286, 287.

Dark Day, Fears of judgment Day Awakened. This strange darkness increased until by noon the people had to light candles to eat their dinners by Lights were seen in every window, and out of doors, people carried torches to light their steps. Everything took a different color from what it had by sunlight, and consequently the strange reflections of the torch lights were in keeping with the marvelous and changed appearance of everything.

Hosts of people believed the end of the world had begun to come; men dropped to their knees to pray in the field; many ran to their neighbors to confess wrongs and ask forgiveness. . . .

The darkness somewhat increased all day, and before time of sunset, was so intense that no object whatever could be distinguished. Anxiously and tremblingly, people waited for the full moon to rise at nine o'clock.... But they were disappointed, the darkness being unaffected by the moon. . . . Never dawned a lovelier morning than that 20th of May! Never were hearts more thankful on the earth! Even thoughtless people praised God!

So much were the whole population affected by this event, that, at the succeeding March meeting, the town voted, March 9, 1781, to keep the next 19th of May as a day of fasting and prayer. - W. R. COCHRANE, History of the Town of Antrim, New Hampshire, pages 58, 59.

'Twas on a May day of the far old year
Seventeen hundred eighty, that there fell
Over the bloom and sweet life of the spring,
Over the fresh earth and the heaven of noon,
A horror of great darkness. . . .

Men prayed, women wept; all cars grew sharp
To hear the doom blast of the trumpet shatter
The black sky, that the dreadful face of Christ
Might look from the rent clouds, not as He looked
A loving guest at Bethany, but stern As justice and inexorable Law.
J. G. WHITTIER,

EVENTS FOLLOWING THE SIXTH SEAL

And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casts her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains. And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? Revelation 6:13-17.

This [verses 13,14] was fulfilled in the wonderful meteoric shower of November 13, 1833. Describing the scene in the vicinity of Niagara Falls, one writer 'Says: "No spectacle so terribly grand and sublime was ever before beheld by man as that of the firmament descending in fiery torrents over the dark and roaring cataract." - Bible Readings for the Home Circle, page 287.

The event mentioned in the fourteenth verse is still in the future, and will take place in connection with Christ's Second Coming. We are now standing between the two events, the last of the signs in the heavens, and the parting of the heavens and removal of earthly things out of their places. The great signs here mentioned which mark the approach of Christ's second coming and the dissolution of all earthly things, are all in the past, and the world awaits the sound of the last trump as the closing scene in earth's drama. F. M. W,

Falling Stars, 1833, Seen as Sign of the Second Advent - I witnessed this gorgeous spectacle, and was awestruck. The air seemed filled with bright descending messengers from the sky. It was about daybreak when I saw this sublime scene. It was not without the suggestion at that moment that it might be the harbinger of the coming of the Son of man; and in my state of mind I was prepared to hail Him as my friend and deliverer. I had read that the "stars shall fall from heaven," and they were now falling. I was suffering much in my mind. . . . I was beginning to look away to heaven for the rest denied me on earth. -

FREDERICK A. DOUGLASS, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, page 186.

Falling Stars, 1833, Regarded as Forerunner of the Last Day. - We pronounce the raining fire which we saw on Wednesday morning last an awful type, a sure forerunner, a merciful sign, of that great and dreadful day which the inhabitants of the earth will witness when the sixth seal shall be opened.

That time is just at hand described not only in the New Testament but in the Old; and a more correct picture of a fig tree casting its leaves when blown by a mighty wind, it was not possible to behold.

Many things now occurring upon the earth tend to convince us that we are in the latter days. "This exhibition we deem to be a type of an awful day fast hurrying upon us. This is our sincere opinion; and what we think, we are not ashamed to tell." "The Old Countryman," New York, printed in the New York Star and quoted in the Portland Evening Advertiser, Nov. 26, 1833.

THE SEVENTH SEAL

When He had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. Revelation 8:1.

The sixth seal closes when the one hundred and forty-four thousand have received the seal of God, and are waiting for the appearance of Christ in the clouds of heaven. The opening of the seventh seal is the ushering in of eternity. . . . God's dwelling place is the center of life and the scene of constant activity. Music ever echoes from the vaults of heaven, and choruses composed of ten thousand times ten thousand of angel voices, sing the praises of the Lamb and of Him who sits on the throne.

When the little company on earth are prepared, the scaling angel speeds back to heaven with the message that the work is done. Christ, in the sanctuary above, lays aside His priestly robes, and the Lamb appears as the King of kings. Angel leaders marshal the hosts of heaven. The throne of Omnipotence is moved. God accompanies His Son to earth. Attended by myriads of angels, the Rulers of heaven and earth leave heaven empty, drawn earthward by the faithful ones whose hearts have become the abiding place of His eternal Spirit. The time for the fulfillment of the promise of the Savior has come. He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away." "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." Never before has there been such a scene.

This is the cause of the silence in heaven. Those who have been torn asunder by the ruthless hand of death, meet in the air around their Deliverer. Some had been burned at the stake; others had perished in dungeons; others had been buried in the sea. Happy families, rent asunder by the cruel hand of death, are now united around Christ. Husbands and wives, parted in this life, who slept in Jesus, meet at the voice of Him who died for them.

Oh, what a meeting that will be! Friends will recognize friends. All will unite in thanksgiving and praise to Him who died and rose again, and has now come to give them everlasting rest and peace. The cruel monster death has no power over them. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." This is heavenly reunion.

Together, for seven successive days, they are traveling to their glorious home. They are a company of Sabbath keepers, and the first Sabbath in their redeemed state will be spent on the way to the city of God. This is the company that sing the response given in the twenty-fourth psalm; and it is the same company who they gather about the throne with white robes and palms of victory, join in the chorus which John heard." - *Story of the Seer of Patmos*, pages 142-144.