CHAPTER VIII

1. “And when he opened the seventh seal, there followed a  
silence in heaven of about half an hour.”  
  
LOOKED at from the throne of God, this silence is a pause  
of *action* on the part of the Almighty. Immediately  
upon the former seals, some new voice was heard, and  
some new agent appeared. But, after this, there was  
neither voice nor action.  
 It may be regarded as arising from the inhabitants of  
heaven. It was only “*in heaven*” that the silence  
took place. It was the genuine expression of the feelings of those on high. Expectation held them mute.  
 The Great Multitude and angels pause, therefore,  
with suspended breath, looking eagerly for some new  
result of the seal. Surely the final crash will come!  
For angels are not cognizant fully of the Lord’s purposes, or of men’s movements; as is manifested by  
their inability even to see the sealed book. “Of that  
day and hour knoweth none; no, not *the angels of heaven*.”  
But God is slow to wrath: judgment is His strange  
act. He will not smite with heaviest indignation  
till sin is come to the full. But the last seal showed  
us sin checked and stunned by judgment. Will men  
repent? Time is given, to show what is in men’s  
hearts. But mercy only ripens iniquity.  
 The pause, then, of God’s mercy after the sixth seal  
serves to bring out the nature of men’s fears. As days  
wear on, and the expected crash does not come, they  
recover their courage. Their former dread was but