But the affliction was to assail, not only the president  
but some of the members of the Church. “The devil  
will cast *some of you* into prison.” Here *the angel is  
distinguished from the believers generally*. Here too is  
*special membership*. The Church of Smyrna constituted  
a body, of which those in communion were the special  
members.  
 In this is Jesus *the prophet* of His Church: and His  
far-reaching eye discerns evil to come, not only in its  
human branches and stems, but in its root in the  
heavenly places, among *wicked spirits there*. Eph. vi. 12.  
He points out to us *Satan*, as the *prime agent and mover*  
in the *afflictions of his churches*.  
 God was pleased to give Satan permission, for His  
own glory’s sake, and for the vindication of His saints.  
They were not insincere: and in the fire of persecution  
their steadfastness would prove them genuine gold.  
 The duration of the persecution is defined. The  
Lord on high limits His enemies’ rage, and lets us know  
that the chain is upon the ravening lions and raging  
bears.  
 It was to be “a tribulation of ten days.”  
 How strangely has it been asserted as the rule, that  
in prophecy a day is to be interpreted as signifying a  
year! (1) “For yet *seven days*, and I will cause it to  
rain upon the earth *forty days and forty nights*” (Gen.  
vii. 4). How was this fulfilled? After *seven years* did  
it rain for *forty years?* “And it came to pass after  
*seven days*, that the waters of the flood were upon the  
earth” (10). “And the rain was upon the earth *forty  
days and forty nights*” (12).  
 (2) “The three branches are *three days*. Yet within  
*three days* shall Pharaoh lift up thy head.” How fulfilled?  
“And it came to pass the *third day*, which was  
Pharaoh’s birthday, that he made a feast unto all his  
servants” (Gen. xl. 12, 13, 20).