When earth is all light and joy, stirring and vocal,  
Babylon is to be still by day, and dark by night. At  
night the weddings of the east are celebrated, and the  
shouts of joy from the bridal procession go up. But  
this shall never more be heard in Babylon.  
 The reasons of this sentence of God are next given.  
They are three.  
 The first sounds strangely in the ears of a commercial  
nation like England. The first offence is the immense  
reach and sweep of her luxurious commerce. “Thy  
merchants were the great men of the earth.” So vast  
were the transactions of business, as to enrich with  
princely fortunes those who dwelt in her. “What was  
there,” we are ready to say, “amiss in that?” God  
looks at it not as man does. Earth is under the curse.  
Jesus is calling disciples to be little and lowly. Matt.  
xx. 25-28; xiii. 31, 32. To become great, then, is to  
contravene His precepts. To become great on earth  
discloses secret unbelief of the glories of *heaven*, which  
are set before the Christian’s eyes. It manifests unbelief, too, in the prophetic testimony of God, that all  
greatness on earth is about to be overturned by  
“the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord” (Isa. ii. 10-17).  
 The second charge against Babylon is witchcraft or  
sorcery. With many, all belief in this has died out;  
they ridicule the idea. The intercourse with spirits,  
however, which has become so common, will speedily  
reinstate the belief: and not the belief only, but the  
practice. Babylon will be its great centre. There and  
in Egypt are its traditional poles. Magicians constituted  
an integral part of the State officials there in Daniel’s  
day. Dan. i. 20; ii. 2, 27, etc.; Isa. xlvii. By  
means of these Babylon prevails to become the metropolis of the nations again. Harlotry and false doctrine  
prevail in the first aspect of Babylon: sorcery in the