ZION
THE OVERCOMER
& THE MILLENNIUM
CHARLES H. WELCH

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by

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Dispensational Truth
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The Testimony of the Lord's Prisoner
Parable, Miracle and Sign
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FOREWORD

2 Timothy 2:14-26 has been before us in writing the following somewhat provocative article.

1. Striving, and striving about words to no profit, is forbidden (v. 14,24).
2. The only approval we should seek is that of God (v. 15).
3. To misplace a truth, may eat as a gangrene (v. 17,18).
4. While we have no fears concerning the 'sure foundation', we have a responsibility to 'depart from iniquity' (v. 19).
5. We have no call to attempt to 'purge' other servants of God, but if we would be 'meet for the Master's use' we must 'purge ourselves' from any complicity with known error (v. 21).
6. Such exhortations as 'shun', 'depart', 'flee', 'avoid', cannot be ignored (v. 16,19,22,23). We cannot sit on the fence.
7. All at length leads to 'IF GOD PERADVENTURE'. Here we stop and God alone carries forward (v. 25,26).
8. The dreadful alternative being 2 Timothy 3:7.

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The Millennium

We have doubtless heard of the little old lady who drew such comfort from 'that blessed word MESOPOTAMIA', and have passed it over with an indulgent smile. Yet we all seem to have been bewitched by the word MILLENNIUM, for no such term is found in Scripture. The word has passed beyond the confines of Scriptural exegesis, to the world outside, so that a Member of Parliament may dismiss a suggestion as 'thinking we can bring about the Millennium!'

'All engineering commences on the drawing board'. A moment's reflection will show how sane this observation really is. If only expositors of the Scriptures would get the overall plan of Prophecy before them, and then see how far their theories fit or fail, what a deal of trouble, misunderstanding and false teaching would have been spared. The reader will perceive that this principle is before our mental vision in all the attempts in this analysis to piece the intricate subjects of Prophecy together. For example, we were at first attracted by the teaching known as 'The Pre-Millennial Kingdom' but before committing ourselves we took it to the Drawing Board, in other words, looked at the overall picture of Gentile dominion in Daniel 2. We defy anyone to find a loophole for any such kingdom in verses 44,45, and so, in spite of the claims of friendship and sincere admiration, that pleasant vision had to be set aside. We hope that every one of our readers will do the same with every suggestion made *in this Analysis*, for it is, alas, only too possible that we have a clearer view of the errors of others than of our own.

The Key Passage

It is time we rubbed our eyes, took off the spectacles that prophetic students have supplied, and exercised the *Berean spirit*, which is so highly commended in the Word of God. All that is *positively* stated in the Scriptures on the subject will be found in TEN VERSES of Revelation 20; all other descriptions, promises, characteristics, are introduced into this period by *inference*, rightly or wrongly, but by inference only. Books on the Millennium pay little attention to the actual wording of Revelation 20:1-10, but expatiate and enlarge upon peace and prosperity, with superlatives that find no warrant in the *key passage* of Revelation 20. We have moreover, by continually speaking of 'The Millennial Kingdom', unwittingly limited the Reign of Christ to a thousand years; whereas a true statement would speak of that period as 'the first thousand years of a kingdom, which, commencing with the coming of Christ and the end of Gentile dominion, goes on unbroken (*it shall never be destroyed, and shall never pass away* Dan. 2:44; 7:14,27) until the Son having put all things under His feet (*for He "must reign" until this is accomplished 1 Cor. 15:25,26 which reaches to the Great White Throne judgment and beyond*), delivers up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all'. *This is the reign of Christ*, the Millennial reign being but a portion of it, and possibly a small portion at that. ALL that the Scriptures SAY in Revelation 20, about a Millennium are the words *ta chilia ete* 'the thousand years'.

The Thousand Years

These words are in themselves no more 'blessed' than the word 'Mesopotamia'. They may be a thousand years of misery for all that this term 'Millennium' teaches. Some of us have come to our conclusion as to the character of this Millennial kingdom *only by ignoring* what is actually written in the Apocalypse. The prophetic clock does not automatically stop at the end of the thousand years; what does come to an end is the reign of the OVERCOMERS. 'The King of kings' does not abdicate. The day of the Lord is to be succeeded by the day of God, just as the Davidic kingdom characterised by the presence of the enemy and of war, was succeeded by the Solomonic kingdom of Peace. Is it too much to ask the reader, with these challenging statements before him, to lay aside for the time being at least, whatever he may have held and taught, and approach this important subject afresh? We turn therefore to the key passage:

'And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever' (Rev. 20:1-10).

The Three R's

Three features stand out in this record :

1. The Restraint of Satan.
2. The Reign of the overcomer.
3. The Rebellion at the close.

Here are three R's that are fundamental and ignored at our peril. Satan is only loosed for 'a little season' yet the response to his deception is immediate: 'they went up'. The objection, that this is beyond the Millennium, is invalid. What takes place in 1958 is intimately connected with what was done and thought in 1957. The nations who are thus deceived are differentiated from the people of Israel. The nations are called Gog and Magog, and inhabit the four quarters or corners of the earth, whereas Israel, we must assume, occupy the beloved city and form the camp of the saints (Rev. 20:9). The antichristian character of this rebellion in spite of the intervening thousand years, is indicated by the titles Gog and Magog. The writer of the Apocalypse assumes acquaintance with Ezekiel.

Gog and Magog, Used With Intention

'Son of Man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him' (Ezek. 38:2).

In association with Gog and Magog, are Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer and all his bands, the house of Togarmah of the north quarters and all his bands; and many people with thee (Ezek. 38:5,6). This invasion by these hordes will be met by the Lord Himself.

'I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws' (Ezek. 38:4).

'It shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that My fury shall come up in My face' (Ezek. 38:18).

'Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured ... And I will send a fire on Magog' (Ezek. 39:4-6).

'I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel ... And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them' (Ezek. 39:11,12).

'Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come ... Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes' (Ezek. 39:17,18).

The parallel of this passage with Revelation 19:17-21 is INESCAPABLE. There again we have the call to the fowls to eat the flesh of captains and kings. Here the warring hosts are gathered by the Beast who is cast into the lake of fire.

The 'Millennium' is bounded *on each side* by an invading army, led either by the Beast or deceived by Satan, either gathered against 'Him that sat on the horse' or 'against the beloved city and camp of the saints' and both end in fire, being destroyed as were the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha. If only a handful of rebels were discovered at the close of the thousand years, it would cause us to question the idea of universal peace or righteousness, but this is no 'handful'. The number is said to be 'as the sand of the sea', nothing but the overriding desire to hold to a personal pre-conception could ever lead a child of God to belittle this description.

Sand of the sea - Numberless

From the blessing of Abraham in Genesis 22:17 to Hosea 1:10 this figure is used consistently:

'Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be MEASURED nor NUMBERED' (Hos. 1:10).

This unnumbered host with antichristian intent go 'up on the breadth of the earth' and even though this should be limited to the 'land' of Palestine the implication is obviously the same as in Isaiah 8:8 and Habakkuk 1:8 where the *overwhelming* nature of the invasion is thereby depicted.

No rhapsody, no poetic phrase, no private interpretation, no wishful thinking can alter the fact, that the 'Millennial Reign' ends, as it began with a terrible rebellion. The Millennium is not the FIRST of a new series, but the LAST of an old one, in which man has been tested under different forms of government, and in every case been found wanting. This Millennial kingdom is the LAST OF DELEGATED authority. David may have reigned on earth as vice-regent, the twelve apostles may have sat on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, the overcomers may have reigned as priests of God and of Christ, but all in vain. Christ must put down ALL authority, *whether good or bad*, and reign alone and supreme if ever the goal of the ages is to be reached.

Characteristic Features

We turn our attention for the moment to a series of features that characterise the Millennium, this closing period of man's probation.

1. The restraining of Satan.
2. The restraining of transgression.
3. The sealing up of sin.
4. The rule of a rod of iron.
5. The willing obedience of Israel.
6. The feigned obedience of many of the nations.

The final weeks of the seventy weeks of Daniel 9 immediately precede the thousand year reign, and carry into that period the blessings indicated in verse 24. The first thing that will be accomplished when the Seventy Weeks attain their goal is said to be 'to finish the transgression' (Dan. 9:24). This translation, however, leaves much to be explained. Will transgression be 'finished' in the sense that it is so completely accounted for by Atonement and Forgiveness, that it will never again raise its head? (Heb. *kalah*). Will transgression be 'finished' in the sense of the Hebrew word *shalam*? The answer is no, the Hebrew word being *kala*, which though it resembles the Hebrew *kalah* must not be confounded with it. *Kala* is translated as follows :

Forbid 1, keep 1, keep back 1, refrain 2, retain 1, shut up 4, withhold 2, be stayed 2, be restrained 2, be stayed 1, and finish 1.

This is not *mere opinion*, but evidence and evidence which cannot be neglected or denied without spiritual disaster. Be it noted, that the only reference in the A.V. that contains the translation 'finish' is Daniel 9:24, which the margin corrects by saying 'or restrain'. The word is used of the imprisonment of Zedekiah and of Jeremiah and the noun forms *kele*, and *beth kele* are translated 'prison'. Daniel 9 *does not* teach us that when that prophecy is fulfilled transgression will be 'finished', it will be RESTRAINED or IMPRISONED. This will be also the condition of Satan through the Millennial Kingdom, he will be 'bound' for a thousand years, but he will by no means be 'finished'. In like manner, sins will be SEALED UP, as the margin indicates against the reading 'to make an end of sins'. The Hebrew word *chatham* is translated as follows :

Seal 16, seal up 6, be sealed 2, mark 1, be stopped 1, and the Chaldaic word in Daniel 6:17 seal.

Proof of Feigned Obedience

We gather from the marginal references in the A.V. that some of the nations will yield 'feigned obedience'. Is this translation justified? Let us see. The passages under review are Psalms 18:44; 66:3; and 81:15. The A.V. and the R.V. read 'feigned obedience' in the margin, and the note 'Hebrew *lied*'. Is this marginal interpretation correct? We could refer to such expositors as Perowne, Hengstenberg, Young's Literal translation and Rotherham. Rotherham reads 'Come CRINGING unto me'. Of course this unanimity among scholars *may be* but the blind leading the blind, on the other hand they *may* express the mind of God. There is only one authoritative test. The consistent *usage* of the word and a frank exhibition of its occurrences. The Hebrew word *kachash* occurs twenty-eight times, and *in no other passage* than the three Psalms quoted is it translated 'submit'. The remaining references are translated as follows :

Fail 1, be found liars 1, belie 1, deal falsely 1, deceive 1, deny 5, dissemble 1, fail 2, lie 5, lies 4, lying 1, and leanness 1.

In no passage is it possible to substitute 'obedience' or 'submit' in any one of these twenty-four occurrences. If 'usage' has any weight, then 'feigned obedience' must stand. To *deny* it is to *defy* the testimony of Scripture. Deuteronomy 33:29 which employs the Hebrew *kachash* reads:

'And thine enemies shall be *found liars* unto thee'.

The scholarly Lexicon of Brown, Driver and Briggs gives the meaning of *kachash*:

'Be disappointing, deceive, fail, grown lean',

and in reference to the Psalms in question, their note reads:

'Cringe, come cringing, make a show of obedience'.

The Hebrew *Kachash* is Very Rigid

We cannot sweep aside this unanimous testimony without betraying that ulterior motives are prompting our decision. Further, although the LXX is not infallible, yet surely we must allow Hebrews of that early age to understand their own tongue, *at least as well* as the best of us today. The LXX uses *epseusanto* 'they lied' in Psalm 18:44 and Psalm 81:15 *exactly* as they do in Deuteronomy 33:29. We believe the candid student will be convinced that the Hebrew *kachash* is very rigid in its meaning, and cannot be made to favour a period of universal peace and righteousness. To accept the rendering 'to yield feigned obedience' shatters the unscriptural dream of The Millennium. That thousand year reign is not the perfect kingdom on earth.

Psalm 18:44,45 places in correspondence these features:

'The strangers shall submit themselves (margin, yield feigned obedience) unto me. The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places (and come trembling)'.

Their submission is false.

Psalm 66:3,5-7. The immediate context refers to the exodus from Egypt.

'How terrible art Thou in Thy works!
Through the greatness of Thy power shall thine
enemies submit themselves unto Thee.
(whether willingly or unwillingly is not revealed here)
He is terrible in His doing toward the children of men.
He turned the sea into dry land ...
Let not the rebellious exalt themselves'.

Pharaoh is an example of such forced submission.

We learn from Zechariah 14:16-19 that some of the nations will rebel against the command to go up to Jerusalem to keep the feast of tabernacles, yet at the selfsame time and period Israel will be so soundly converted and blessed, that the sacred words, originally limited to the Mitre of the High Priest, namely 'Holiness unto the Lord', shall be on the bells of the horses and on the very pots in the kitchen of this blessed kingdom of Priests, *yet their holy presence does not prevent disobedience rearing its head among the surrounding nations.*

The Rule of the Rod of Iron

Another revealing feature is the use of the rod of IRON. It is beside the point to dwell on the meaning of the Greek word *rhabdos* or its Hebrew equivalent, the word that clamours for consideration is the word IRON. No tender shepherd uses a rod of IRON for the shepherding of his flock, he uses *that* as a weapon of defence against their enemies, the robber, the lion and the wolf.

Psalm 2:9; Revelation 2:27; 12:5 and 19:15 speak of 'breaking' or 'ruling' with a rod of IRON, and it is this quality of IRON that demands *attention*, and if *ignored* leads to untruth and bondage (2 Tim. 2:25,26). When the prophet would impress us with the terrible nature of the fourth beast of Daniel 7, he speaks of its 'great IRON teeth' (Dan. 7:7). In the same way, when the image that symbolises Gentile dominion is described, it deteriorates from gold to iron, *with this comment*:

> 'Forasmuch as iron *breaketh in pieces* and subdueth all things: and as iron *that breaketh all these*, shall it *break* in pieces and *bruise*' (Dan. 2:40).

That is the inspired comment on iron; 'it breaks in pieces', it bruises, and shall we object to or attempt to correct the language of Holy Writ, without coming under the charge of yielding feigned obedience? Iron is mentioned in the Psalms five times. Apart from Psalm 2 iron is used of *fetters* and likened to *affliction*, and the bars of a prison (Psa. 105:18; 107:10,16; 149:8). Iron is introduced into the Scriptures as one of the attempts of the line of Cain to alleviate the curse that had come on the earth (Gen. 4:22). Egypt is likened to 'an iron furnace' (Deut. 4:20), and no tool made of iron was permitted to fashion the stones used in building an altar (Deut. 27:5), and a heaven above and an earth beneath likened to iron, was a disciplinary judgment (Lev. 26:19; Deut. 28:23). Several times we read of the 'chariots of iron' employed by the Canaanites (Josh. 17:16,18; Judg. 1:19; 4:3,13). The question of Jeremiah 'shall iron break the northern iron and the steel?' (Jer. 15:12) is answered in the Millennium. *The rod of iron will do this.* The devouring great iron teeth of the Beast, the down treading feet of iron and clay of the image will be met and more than met by the rule of the rod of IRON. The Hebrew word *raa* to break, is used in Psalm 2:9; Jeremiah 15:12, and its equivalent Chaldaic word in Daniel 2:40. These are facts which no amount of special pleading can set aside. Again let us note the testimony of Psalm 110:

> 'The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. The LORD shall send the ROD OF THY STRENGTH out of Zion: rule Thou *in the midst* of Thine enemies' (Psa. 110:1,2).

Blessing Radiates from Jerusalem

If the words 'The LORD said unto My Lord' undoubtedly refer to Christ (Matt. 22:44), then the objection that the proximity of 'the Lord' and 'His Anointed' rules out Christ from Psalm 2 is shown to be invalid. Here the Lord is seen ruling not in a world of universal peace, but 'out of Zion' and 'in the midst' of enemies. At the same time, and at the very same period in which many of the nations will yield *feigned obedience*, we read:

> 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power' (Psa. 110:3 A.V.).
>
> 'Thy people offer themselves willingly (margin, are freewill offerings)' (Psa. 110:3 R.V.).

Here we have inspired comparison. The nations yielding feigned obedience; Israel, at last, offering willing obedience. This leads on to another feature associated with the fact namely that the blessing of this Millennial kingdom and afterwards is *first of all* focused in Jerusalem as a radiating centre, and from that centre light and truth will be spread until the knowledge of the Lord fills the earth, as the waters cover the sea.

> 'They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain'

that is the first statement.

'For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea' (Isa. 11:9).

that is the sequel. The answer to the rebellion of the kings of the earth is found in Psalm 2:6,

'Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion'.

Beyond this holy hill the heathen in the uttermost parts are to be disciplined with a rod of iron, and the rebellious kings and judges of the earth are given counsel and warning.

'Lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little' (Psa. 2:12).

This divinely appointed centre is the theme of Isaiah 2.

> 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; *and all nations* shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for *out of Zion* shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem' (Isa. 2:2,3).

First the rod of His strength shall be sent 'out of Zion' where the Lord will rule in the midst of His enemies (Psa. 110:2). He will, as Psalm 2:12 threatened, 'strike through kings in the day of His wrath' (Psa. 110:5). After the Lord returns unto Zion, and Jerusalem becomes 'a city of truth' (Zech. 8:3) 'many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.... In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you' (Zech. 8:22,23). When the glory returns to Jerusalem and the temple is built according to the specifications given in the closing chapters of Ezekiel, then the title of the Lord will be indeed Jehovah Shammah 'The Lord is there' (Ezek. 48:35).

Rebellion at Close of Millennium

The Millennial kingdom ends as we have seen with a rebellious rising of the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, the number of which is so great as to justify the figure 'the number of whom is as the sand of the sea' (Rev. 20:8). Rebellion therefore was incipient during the 1,000 years. No such rebellion will mar the day when 1 Corinthians 15:28 is fulfilled, but that lies beyond the limits of the Millennial kingdom and is not spoken of in the Book of the Revelation. We may discover that much that we have imagined belonged to the Millennium will prove to belong to the period that follows. The day of the Lord is followed by the day of God, the Sabbath, followed by 'the first or eighth day'.

If we keep *strictly to the record* of Revelation 20 we shall see that the so-called Millennial kingdom is the period when the suffering overcomer who has refused to recognise the Beast or his authority, will 'live and reign with Christ, a thousand years', but nothing is said of the bulk of the nation of Israel, except to reveal that there was also on the earth at the same time 'the camp of the saints' and 'the beloved city'. To a large extent this phase of the kingdom is God's answer to *the only pre-millennial kingdom* known in the Apocalypse, namely the Pre-Millennial kingdom of the Beast! When Jerusalem is created a rejoicing and her people a joy, it is *then* that the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock, and (yet, at the selfsame time) dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, saith the Lord (Isa. 65:18,19,25).

The reference to the serpent here suggests that the perfect kingdom has not yet arrived, and in line with this, in the midst of this section which speaks of 'Millennial' blessedness when 'as the days of a tree' shall be the days of His elect (Isa. 65:22), we learn that a 'child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed' (Isa. 65:20). While the age of Methuselah is proverbial, and the age of many of the patriarchs of Genesis chapters 1 to 11 approached to the 1,000-year limit, not one ever reached it. 'The days of a tree' may mean a thousand years, and for any one in that day to die at a hundred years of age would be like a child dying. The fact, however, that it can be contemplated that a 'sinner' should 'die' at a hundred years of age or be 'accursed' (however difficult may be the true exposition of Isaiah 65:20), makes one thing certain, it comes *before* the descent of the New Jerusalem to the earth, for *then* there will be 'no more' sin, death or curse. This together with the reference to the SERPENT in verse 25, makes it evident that during the 'Millennial' kingdom there will be *some* who will be punished

for their sin, even as there will be a *multitude* as numerous as the sand of the sea, that shall be devoured by fire that comes down from God out of heaven at the close (Rev. 20:8,9). Gog and Magog must have been ready; it only took 'a little season' to gather them. We must look to the 'eighth day' beyond the Millennial Sabbath for the perfect kingdom. The subject before us is of sufficient consequence to call for a summing up before examining some most extraordinary items that await us in Revelation 20.

A Summary of Millennial Features

(1) Positive teaching concerning the Millennium is limited to ten verses in Revelation 20. All else is a matter of inference, legitimate possibly, but to be treated with necessary reserve.

(2) The term 'the Millennium' is not a Scriptural title for the period covered by Revelation 20:1-10, for the word is simply Latin for 1,000 years and that is the number of years covered by this prophecy, and expressed six times over, in verses 2,3,4,5,6 and 7. The term however must not be invested with meanings and characteristics that belie or ignore what is written in Revelation 20.

(3) It is correct to speak of this period as a 'kingdom', for the overcomers not only 'live' but 'reign' with Christ a thousand years (Rev. 20:4,6). The Greek word for kingdom is *basileia*, the Greek word for reign is *basileuo*. (See article KINGDOM in *An Alphabetical Analysis*, part 2, p. 227).

(4) Strictly speaking the overcomer (Rev. 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21; 12:11; 15:2 and 21:7) is the thread that links all the prodigious events of this Prophecy together, and unites both passages under Revelation 3:21 thus:

> 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne' (Rev. 3:21).

'And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the BEAST, and over his IMAGE, and over his MARK, and over the NUMBER of his NAME, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God' (Rev. 15:2).

'And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the BEAST, neither his IMAGE, neither had received his MARK upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years' (Rev. 20:4).

The words of Revelation 20:4 'for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God', form a link with the opening statement of Revelation 1:9,10 when John was taken in spirit to the day of the Lord from the isle called Patmos where he shared the tribulation of these overcomers, before their time 'for the word of God, and for the witness of Jesus'.

The Pre-eminent Feature

'The Millennial kingdom' seems to have been used by writers on prophecy as a convenient period in which to place passages that are somewhat difficult to fit into the overall scheme, and this has blunted the edge of the testimony of Revelation 20, which places as *a pre-eminent feature*, the reward for the Overcomer, and hardly refers to any other company, people or calling. Regarding the statement 'This is the first resurrection', it cannot mean the first that ever was, but the former of two. The reference to the beloved city brings with it the numerous passages of Old Testament prophecy which speak in glowing terms of the restoration of Israel and Jerusalem. Isaiah 54:6-17 reveals a city of jewelled splendour, echoing the glories *on earth* of this heavenly Jerusalem itself. Even so, the chapter ends with a reference to those who will gather together against Jerusalem, with the comforting words:

'No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper',

even as we have read in Revelation 20:8,9. If the inhabitants of the land during the Millennium are those of Israel who looked upon the Lord Whom they had pierced and repented, if the nations are those who were 'alive and remained' at the Second Coming, we have no 'problem' about Isaiah 65:18-25, for there we read of the possibility of dying and being accursed, and of the length of life being 'as the days of a tree', which, however extended, cannot be a synonym for life eternal and certainly not of immortality.

The Overcomer

Let us observe how these 'overcomers' of Revelation 20:4 are intertwined with the prophetic revelation of the last days. The rewards held out to the overcomers in the seven churches are :

1. To eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of *the paradise of God* (Rev. 2:7).
2. Not to fear, he shall not be hurt of *the second death* (Rev. 2:10,11).
3. He will eat of the hidden manna, have a white stone and a new name (Rev. 2:17, see Rev. 19:12).
4. He shall rule the nations with *a rod of iron* (Rev. 2:27).
5. He shall be clothed in white, and his name shall not be blotted out of *the book of life* (Rev. 3:5).
6. He will be made a pillar in the temple, and have the name of *the new Jerusalem* written upon him (Rev. 3:12).
7. He will be granted *to sit with Christ on His throne*, even as Christ also overcame, and is set down with His Father in His throne (Rev. 3:21).

All is linked with the book of the Revelation itself, even as we see that in Revelation 20:4, none live and reign except those who were martyred under the Beast of Revelation 13:18.

'The Millennial kingdom' is a very exclusive kingdom. We are not told in so many words that Israel is a restored people, we can only infer that from the reference to the beloved city and the camp of the saints. If Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David, have been raised from the dead at this time, they do not enter into the picture drawn in Revelation 20. They have no place in 'the first resurrection'. The inspired qualification limits this resurrection to martyrs of the last three-and-a-half years of Antichristian Dominion. Two resurrections, and two only are envisaged here and they form a pair :

1. The overcomers, every one a martyr. This is 'the first' resurrection.
2. The rest of the dead. No other resurrection takes place until that of the great white throne at the end of the thousand years. And these two resurrections complement one another and make a pair - 'overcomers' v. 'the rest' not 'saints' v. 'the wicked dead', as is usually taught.

It will be seen we trust, that so far as the record of Revelation 20 is concerned, the Millennial kingdom is pre-eminently the sphere of reward for those who have suffered unto death during the persecution instituted by the Antichristian Beast of the time of the end. We only learn from that passage that there are 'nations' on the earth at the same time, by the reference to the rebellion at the end. We learn at the same time that the beloved city and the camp of the saints have a place there too, but these are not the theme of the Apocalypse.

Only one resurrection is recorded as taking place in this kingdom, and the names of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David are not even mentioned.

We realise that inasmuch as the Millennium is the immediate outcome of the Second Coming of Christ to the earth, all other prophetic features associated with *that phase of the coming* must find a place here. We learn from other passages that *there will be* a resurrection of Israel (Dan. 12:1-3 and Ezek. 37:1-14). These too must find a place. It is possible that some prophetic passages refer to the period that follows the Millennium, when the Heavenly Jerusalem shall descend to the earth and be the glorious administrative centre of the earth for we read that:

> 'The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it ... they which are written in the Lamb's book of life' (Rev. 21:24-27).

The period immediately following the Millennium is marked by five outstanding features :

1. The rise of Gog and Magog like the sand of the sea, and their destruction.
2. The casting of the Devil into the lake of fire.

3. The Great White Throne.
4. The New Heavens and the New Earth.
5. The descent of the New Jerusalem.

The Former of Two

The resurrection of the overcomers, is said to be the 'first'. 'When two ordinal numbers are used in such a connection as this, they are used *relatively* ... hence in English we always say, in such cases, *former* and *latter*' (Dr. E.W. Bullinger). The resurrection of the overcomers is the *former of two*, the resurrection at the Great White Throne being the second or concluding member of the pair. But whoever has heard this Scriptural association even hinted at? We have been too ready to look at the Great White Throne as the judgment of the *wicked dead* or of the *untold millions* who never heard of Christ, and by so doing we have separated what God has joined together. However, merely saying this, proves nothing; 'to the law' and the 'testimony'. Here is the sequel to the statement of Revelation 20:4:

> 'Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection (i.e. the former of two): on such the SECOND DEATH (i.e. connected with the second resurrection of the two) hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years' (Rev. 20:6).

Whoever heard of any one comparing and contrasting the being 'Priests' of God, with the character and fate of those who stand before the Great White Throne? What congruity is there in saying:

> 'Either they will be overcomers, and reigning Priests' or they will be 'the countless millions of wicked dead, multitudes of whom never heard the name of Christ'?

Yet John, writing Revelation 20:6 does not appear to have any qualms. If the Great White Throne judgment deals with the mass of mankind, *what need was there to assure these overcomers* that the second death had no power over them? The second death as generally interpreted can have no power over *any saved sinner*, let alone over an OVERCOMER. What this passage actually does is to put in opposition :

The second death, and reigning with Christ.

The apostle writing to Timothy said :

'It is a faithful saying, for :

A 'If we died with Him, we shall also LIVE with Him.
  B If we suffer, we shall also REIGN with Him.
  B If we deny Him, He also will deny us.
A If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful
  He cannot deny Himself'.

A similar discrimination is found in 1 Corinthians 3:12-15. A believer can 'suffer loss' but he cannot be LOST.

The Seven Churches

Let us turn to the exhortation given to the churches of Revelation 2 and 3. Look at the church of Smyrna. Not one word of rebuke or censure is given, but an exhortation to remain faithful until death with the promise 'I will give thee a crown of life' (Rev. 2:10). And in addition to the overcomer, the Saviour adds:

'He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death' (Rev. 2:11).

Can anyone who holds the generally accepted view of the Great White Throne, explain how it is possible to bring together the assurance of the CROWN of life, and exemption from the SECOND DEATH? They have no common ground. The writer of these lines is a believer in Christ. He is saved and knows it, and even though his Christian life and witness be of the poorest quality, he can say as before the Lord, that *he needs no assurance* that he will not be hurt of the second death. The question does not arise. This being so, we are forced to believe that the second death here has been misunderstood.

The Book of Life

Let us look at the church of Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6). Here there was ground for reproof, their works were not found 'perfect before God'. However, to those who were undefiled, promises were made, and we read:

> 'He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I WILL NOT BLOT OUT HIS NAME out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels' (Rev. 3:5).

Again, if the accepted view of the Great White Throne is true, then this promise is gratuitous, the second death *could never happen any way*, while Romans 8:38,39 remains. However difficult it may be to harmonise with the rest of Scripture one fact emerges from these considerations, namely that the Millennial kingdom and the Great White Throne are *two parts of one whole.* The Book of Life figures in the Revelation five times, thus:

A	3:5.	Promise to the overcomer 'I will not blot his name out of the book of life'.
B	13:8.	These shall worship the beast.
	17:8.	These shall wonder at the beast.
	20:12.	The book of life opened.
	20:15.	Those not in the book of life.
A	22:19.	Threat to take the name out of the book of life.

To this list we might add Revelation 22:18 where the plagues recorded in this book will be added to any who add to the things written, thus rounding off the intimate connection that exists with the earlier and closing sections of this prophecy.

A List of Evils Related to Apostacy

Another challenging passage is Revelation 21:7,8. Over against the overcomer, who is to inherit all things, is placed a list of evils, that at first glance belongs only to the wicked, the ungodly and the unsaved. Yet remembering what we have already seen, and observing *once more* that it is in contrast with the OVERCOMER, not with the average believer, that this list is presented, perhaps the reader will hesitate to pronounce judgment until the Scriptures are permitted to speak for themselves. Here is the list.

> 'The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death' (Rev. 21:8).

Can such a list have any relation with a professed believer? Before this study we might have pronounced an unhesitating 'no' but perhaps we are not quite so sure now. Let us 'search and see'.

'The fearful'.- Greek *deilos*. This word occurs only three times in the New Testament.

> 'Why are ye so fearful, O ye of little faith?' (Matt. 8:26; see also Mark 4:40).

These words are addressed to the DISCIPLES. *Deilia* occurs but once, and it is used by Paul in his letter to Timothy in view of the perilous position Timothy was about to step into:

> 'God hath not given us the spirit of FEAR ... be not ... ashamed' (2 Tim. 1:7,8).

Deiliao occurs but once, namely in John 14:27:

> 'Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid'.

The LXX uses *deilos* of Rehoboam who was young and 'tender hearted' and so understood not 'the children of Belial' (2 Chron. 13:7). In like manner, and connected with the overcoming character, Deuteronomy 20:8 uses *deiliao* for the soldier who is 'fearful and faint-hearted'. Here therefore is proof, that the 'fearful' can and does include many of those who are nevertheless saved, disciples or servants of the Lord.

'The Unbelieving' *apistos*. That it is possible for a believer to have 'an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God', Hebrews 3:12 makes clear, and the context likens this attitude to the character of those who, though redeemed from Egypt, nevertheless 'fell in the wilderness' (Heb. 3:17) and in contrast with the two 'overcomers' Caleb and Joshua (Heb. 3:16). 2 Timothy 2:13 has already been quoted as showing that though the words 'if we believe not' can alas apply at times to those who nevertheless 'shall live', they cannot be said of those who both 'live and reign'.

'The Abominable', *bdelussomai*. This word is used with reference to 'the Abomination of Desolation' spoken of by Daniel the prophet (Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14; Rev. 17:4,5; 21:27). The fearful, the unbelieving, the abominable, are all related to the state of mind that the terrible persecution of the Beast at the time of the end will induce.

'The Murderer', *phoneus*. The reader may with some reluctance have followed so far, but at the word 'murder' will probably draw back. Yet Peter did not feel it necessary to explain and excuse the introduction of so dreadful a term, when he wrote:

> 'Let none of you suffer as a *murderer*, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian ...' (1 Pet. 4:15,16).

To us, it seems odd to link 'murder' with 'being a busybody' or of using such an exhortation to 'Christians', but Peter did not feel that way evidently. Paul likewise, when writing to the Galatians puts together 'emulations, envyings, drunkenness and revellings' with 'murder' (Gal. 5:19-21), and adds to all such, not to murder only, 'such ... shall not inherit the kingdom of God'. That self-righteous Pharisee, who became the beloved apostle of the Gentiles, could say of his early life 'touching the righteousness which is in the law' that he was 'BLAMELESS' yet he had set out on a mission breathing out threatenings and MURDER (*phonos*) against the disciples of the Lord (Acts 9:1).

When the Man of Sin is in the ascendant, when no one will be permitted to either buy or sell that has not the mark of the Beast, then many shall 'betray one another' and deliver up the true believer to be 'killed' (Matt. 24:9,10). To those thus betrayed will come the promise:

> 'Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer ... be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life ... He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death' (Rev. 2:10,11).

'The Whoremongers' *pornos*. This word and its variants refer to any allegiance, in the day of the Lord, to that evil system associated with 'The mother of Harlots' (Rev. 17:1).

'The Sorcerers', *pharmakeus*. These sorcerers are mentioned in Revelation 9:21 and 18:23 and reveal the Satanic powers that will be at work in the day of the Lord. In the list already quoted from Galatians 5, Paul includes 'witchcraft' (*pharmakia*). These awful powers are seen at work in Revelation 16:13,14:

> 'And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty'.

'Idolaters and all liars' conclude this dreadful list. The apostle did not hesitate to say when writing to the church at Corinth 'If any man that is called a BROTHER be ... an idolater' (1 Cor. 5:11), neither did he feel it unnecessary to say 'neither be ye idolaters as were some of them' (who did not overcome like Caleb and Joshua) (1 Cor. 10:7). See 1 Corinthians 9:24 where this passage is introduced, not with salvation, but with prize and crown, and with the possibility of being a 'castaway' or 'disapproved'.

The worship of the image of the Beast (Rev. 13:15) when resisted led to the martyrdom and the crown of those who reign during the thousand years (Rev. 20:4). Finally 'all liars' is extended in Revelation 21:27 as 'whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie' and in Revelation 22:15 is further expanded to 'whosoever loveth and maketh a lie'. 'The lie' is of the Devil, it is 'his own' (John 8:44). 'The lie' is associated with the Man of Sin and the working of Satan, together with those who received not the love of the TRUTH and have pleasure in unrighteousness (2 Thess. 2:9-12). In the church, those who posed as apostles were found 'liars' (Rev. 2:2), and the liar is definitely associated with Antichristian denial (1 John 2:22). This list of dreadful sins is all related *to the time of stress which*

comes upon the world under the domination of the Beast and the False Prophet. To lean towards that blasphemous teaching, to submit rather than suffer, becomes an act of treachery on a field of battle, and the treatment of all such offenders must be drastic in the extreme.

There remains to be considered one more feature, and one that may cause considerable feeling; that is the bringing into the realm of the church (Rev. 2:3) the possibility of ending up in the Lake of Fire. Traditional theology in the past has entertained few qualms as it contemplated the countless millions of unevangelized heathen being consigned to that dreadful place, but it may be the nearer approach will stimulate a keener interest. The Lake of Fire is implicit in the two references to the churches, the second death, and the Book of Life already considered (Rev. 2:11; 3:5). In the first place, this dreadful doom was not prepared for the sons of men, it was 'prepared for the Devil and his angels' (Matt. 25:41) and in the Revelation, the first to enter are The Beast, the False Prophet, and the Devil (Rev. 19:20; 20:10).

In times of peace, the punishment for some act directed against a Government might be several years' imprisonment, but the selfsame act in time of war might be punishable by death. Into the churches of Revelation 2 and 3 we can perceive the infiltration of the fifth columnists, false apostles, liars, Nicolaitanes, the blasphemy of those pretending to be Jews, but who are of the synagogue of Satan; Satan's throne, the doctrine of Balaam, the woman Jezebel, the threat to 'kill her children with death', the depths of Satan, a name to live yet dead. These constitute the associations of some of those who, having sold themselves to Satan, received the mark of the Beast, and so will be counted worthy of suffering the same fate as that infernal trinity, the Beast, the False Prophet, and the Devil. The Psalms, many of which are prophetic, are full of complaints and prayers concerning the enemy, the deceitful man, the persecutor, the betrayer.

Where Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, the believing remnant of Israel, and of 'all Israel' that will ultimately be saved come in this period and sphere, must be gathered from other Scriptures. Abraham, we know from Hebrews 11, will find his place in the heavenly Jerusalem but this does not descend to the earth until the thousand years are finished. The one positive teaching of Revelation 20:1-6 is that the martyrs of the final three and a half years of Gentile dominion, shall 'reign' and be 'priests' of God and of Christ.

Three Days

Before we consider the teaching of Revelation 20, concerning the Great White Throne, let us gather what we may from the testimony of 2 Peter chapter 3. He speaks of:

1. The day of the Lord (2 Pet. 3:10).
2. The day of God (2 Pet. 3:12).
3. The new heavens and earth (2 Pet. 3:13).
4. The day of the age (lit.) (2 Pet. 3:18).

The wording of the A.V. obscures the relation of the day of the Lord with the day of God, the R.V. is nearer to the original.

> 'But *the day of the Lord* will come as a thief; IN THE WHICH the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up'.
>
> 'Looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of *the day of God* BY REASON OF WHICH the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?' (2 Pet. 3:10-12 R.V.).

'In the which', 'by reason of which' clearly distinguishes the one from the other. The day of God succeeds the day of the Lord and is beyond the dissolution of heaven and earth. For that day, said Peter, we look, and that day of God is explained further to be :

1. The new heavens and new earth.
2. The Day (pre-eminently) of the age *hemera aionos* (2 Pet. 3:18). The Millennium is not the goal, the goal is the Day of the Age, the Day of God, symbolised in the typical Scriptures as 'the eighth day' the first day of a new week.

When we consider the opening of the seals, we find that the sixth seal (Rev. 6:12-17) takes us to the frontier of the Millennium. The sun becomes black, the moon like blood, the heavens depart as a scroll, the day of His wrath is come. There can be no more than one occasion when the heavens depart as a scroll.

Psalm 2 speaks of the gathering of the kings and rulers of the earth and is quoted in Acts 4:26,27 of Christ. The kindling of the wrath of the Son is parallel with the passage quoted from Revelation 6.

The Great White Throne

Let us now turn our attention to the Great White Throne. We observe that this judgment is twofold. First there is a judgment of works, and this is followed by the judgment that issues in life or the second death. The judgment that will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha can scarcely be made to fit in here, neither can the judgment of the unevangelized Gentile world be easily aligned here as it is described in Romans 2:6-16. The latter at least is a judgment according to 'deeds' (Rom. 2:6), and of course may be all one and the same as this judgment of Revelation 20, but for the moment the decision is not vital to our quest. The Gospel preacher often refers to the Great White Throne in language that exceeds anything written in Revelation 20. Instead of this chapter telling us that 'whoever stands before the Great White Throne is necessarily damned', the reverse is the truth. John ceases to speak of multitudes, he descends to the singular *kai ei tis ... eblethe* 'If ANYONE ... He was cast'.

The Great White Throne resurrection and judgment is the complement of the Overcomer's resurrection and judgment and being so, may have no reference to the millions of unevangelized dead.

Here for the moment we stay. Much re-adjustment will be necessary and this requires time, care and prayerful study. We believe sufficient has been brought forward in this analysis to justify a re-examination of many existing theories, and if it only calls a halt, and sends us all back to the neglected yet central portion of Scripture in this connection, namely Revelation 20:1-10, enough will have been achieved to justify publication. By speaking of the 'Millennial' kingdom we have blinded our eyes. We ought to speak of the first thousand years of a kingdom that shall have no end until the Son of God delivers up a perfected kingdom to God the Father, that God may be all in all.

Delegated Authority

The 'Millennium' is the last of the rule of God upon earth that employs DELEGATED authority. David in resurrection, will be the Saviour's Viceroy. The twelve apostles will sit upon the twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, the martyrs of the Antichristian persecutions will reign with Christ, and even then, the 1,000 years ends in rebellion. The reign that follows is the age of the Son of Man alone, and this ushers in the day of glory. We are conscious that much that we have written in this article is rather disconcerting, but we ask only one thing of our readers. Have we built squarely upon the revealed Word of God? Have we introduced any private interpretations of our own? We earnestly desire to be corrected if we have unconsciously done the latter, but we make no apology for any of our teaching that is in harmony with the Scriptures.

The interested reader will find in *The Berean Expositor*, Vol. 6, page 66, that what we have here expanded was there foreshadowed, but the claims of the Dispensation of the Mystery made demands that put the question of the Millennium on the shelf. Recent suggestions have prompted us to the present analysis.

Two challenging items must conclude this survey.

Whose Works Will be Judged?

(1) At the Great White Throne there will be a judgment of WORKS. If those judged are the wicked dead, why differentiate between sins and works? Commentators seem to be unanimous that this judgment refers to the teeming millions of unevangelized heathen. But, seeing that Revelation 2:11 and 3:5 and 20:6 tie the whole of the Apocalypse together and must not exclude 20:12-15, and seeing that 'works' are definitely a subject of 'judgment' in Revelation 2:2,5,9,13,19,26; 3:1,2,8,15 and *the rewards* of these same chapters all point forward to the same closing scenes of the Apocalypse, does it not cry out for recognition that 'the works' of Revelation 20:12,13 are NOT the works of the unevangelized millions but of those who could not be included in the FORMER resurrection of the overcomers, both characters being found in the seven churches?

(2) Again, the Book of Life is defined in Revelation 21:27 as 'The *Lamb's* book of life', even as it is in Revelation 13:8 in direct reference to the worship of the Beast. Hebrews 12:23 will help us here. Hebrews 12:5-7 deals with sons, the theme of Hebrews 12:18-29 is the especial blessing of the 'firstborn' in connection with 'Mount Sion ... the heavenly Jerusalem'. The names of those firstborn are 'WRITTEN IN HEAVEN' and the threat or the exemption concerning the 'blotting out of the name from the book of life' has reference to those who during the three years and a half of the great tribulation, become *either* 'overcomers' or wait for the resurrection at the Great White Throne.

We particularly ask every reader - Do you, or will you START all your investigations of this great subject of prophecy with the key passage - Revelation 20:1-10? Dr. Bullinger used to say 'Some use the Scriptures as a BUTTRESS, to support their convictions. Others go to the Scriptures as a BUCKET let down into the well of truth, and come up full of the water of life'. Which kind are you?

We had thought to head this article 'Beyond the Millennial Reign' but we have done little else than clear away some of the accumulated rubbish that has prevented genuine building (Neh. 3:1-32; 4:10). We doubt not but that we shall have to build not only with trowel, but as Nehemiah did with a sword near at hand (Neh. 4:18) but it will be a well worth fight (2 Tim. 4:7). The ages that follow the thousand years must be the theme of future studies.

The following study may help us to recognise the place that the overcomer plays in prophecy.

Readers overseas may be pardoned for thinking of London as one great city, but in reality there are two Londons. The one a square mile, with place names still indicating the gates of the city, such as Bishop's Gate, Aldgate, Cripplegate, etc. and odd remnants of the old city wall. This is 'The city of London' with its ancient history, its city police, its city giants, and its valued citizenship. Greater London is governed by the London County Council and differs in many essential respects from the city.

So, it is easy for the reader to think of Jerusalem as of one undivided city, but closer examination of the Scriptures will lead to a discrimination between the city Jerusalem and the stronghold of Zion. As certain aspects of truth are especially related to Zion, this distinction must be kept in mind. The first reference to Jerusalem, is in Joshua 10:1 where we find it ruled by the Amorite king Adoni-zedek 'the Lord of righteousness', Satan's substitute for Melchizedek 'King of Righteousness' (Gen. 14:18). Although Jerusalem was taken by Joshua we read:

> 'As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day' (Josh. 15:63).

Zion and the Overcomer

Coming to the days of David we find the first reference to Zion. David reigned first over Judah in Hebron, and then over all Israel in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:5), but we learn that there was a 'stronghold' held by the Jebusites that defied him. So confident were they in the impregnability of Zion that they manned the walls with the halt and the blind in derision. A secret entrance called 'the gutter' became known to David, and he announced that whoever could get up this gutter and capture the stronghold of Zion should be made Chief Captain. This Joab accomplished, climbing up a shaft that connected what is now called 'the Virgin's Fount' with the interior of Zion (2 Sam. 5:6-9). In 1 Chronicles 11:4-6 this exploit is recorded, and there we have not only the added note 'So Joab the son of Zeruiah went first up, and was chief' but the remainder of the chapter is significantly devoted to enumerating the names and the exploits of 'the first three', 'the thirty' and a list of 'valiant men' all marked out for conspicuous bravery. The first reference to Zion, links it with the 'overcomer'.

Sion is Equivalent to the Heavenly Jerusalem

When we turn to the New Testament we find this association preserved. 'Ye are come to Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem ... the church of the firstborn which are written in heaven' (Heb. 12:22,23). Sion is mentioned also in the book of the Revelation where we see the 144,000 overcomers stand on Mount Sion with the Lamb (Rev. 14:1,4). Hebrews 12 and Galatians 4 place Mount Sinai in contrast with Mount Sion, and in Galatians 4 the apostle speaks of 'Jerusalem which is above' (Gal. 4:25,26). Paul would be familiar with the fact noted by Josephus that Sion was referred to as 'The upper city' using the same word *ano* as is found in

Galatians 4; *he ano agora, he ano Ierousalem.* Putting these references together, we perceive that Sion differs from Jerusalem in that it is associated with overcoming, it is the Upper City, it is the alternative title to the heavenly Jerusalem. In the Old Testament this heavenly city is unrevealed, and Zion refers there to the centre of the Lord's administration not in days of perfect peace, but in the midst of enemies:

> 'The LORD shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion: rule Thou IN THE MIDST OF THINE ENEMIES'.
>
> 'The Lord at Thy right hand shall STRIKE THROUGH KINGS in the day of His WRATH' (Psa. 110:2,5).

This passage is comparable with Psalm 2. There we have the kings of the earth setting themselves against the Lord, and against His anointed, but He that sitteth in the heavens shall have them in derision, and when He speaks to them, it is in His WRATH, saying:

> 'Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion'.

This King whose dominion includes 'the uttermost parts of the earth' shall 'break them with a rod of iron' and these kings are enjoined to 'Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, When His WRATH is kindled but a little' (Psa. 2:6,8,9,12).

The Millennium follows *immediately* upon the Coming of Christ (Rev. 19:21; 20:1,2). There is no interval for a Pre-Millennial kingdom in the records of the Apocalypse *except* it be the kingdom of the Beast. When Christ comes, He comes to *Zion*:

> 'The Redeemer shall come to Zion ... Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee' (Isa. 59:20 to 60:1).

At the selfsame time, namely at the coming of the Lord to Zion 'darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people ... and Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising ... the nation and the kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish, yea those nations shall be utterly wasted' (Isa. 59:20; 60:1,2,3,12). Again we read in the prophecy of Joel:

> 'Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand ... The LORD also shall roar out of Zion ... and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel ... for the LORD dwelleth in Zion' (Joel 2:1; 3:16,21).

The Millennium opens (1) with the Lord reigning in Zion, or (2) it does not. *If it does*, then the Millennium cannot be a kingdom of universal peace, to say so denies the testimony of Scripture. When the Lord reigns in Zion it is in the midst of enemies. Wrath is to be feared. Rule will be severe - a rod of IRON. Nations are in danger of perishing and so are kings, and the nation and the kingdom that refuse to serve Israel shall perish 'Yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted' (Isa. 60:12). This will be the day when Israel shall be named 'The Priests of the Lord' and 'Ministers of our God', the day when those that mourn 'in Zion' shall have beauty for ashes (Isa. 61:3,6).

So we could continue. We must either believe that when the Lord reigns in Zion, it will be on an earth where enemies still exist, or we can believe one or other of the theories with which the Millennial kingdom has been invested, but it is impossible to believe both.

The Last Test

The Millennium is man's last opportunity and test. Here, when sin is restrained and the Devil bound, man still proves utterly unable to stand, and the Millennium is the last of a series that commenced with Eden, and which continued under patriarchal rule, the dominion of law, and the reign of David, even to the advent of the Son of Man in His humiliation on earth.

Right Division Obtains Here

We have evidently placed in the Millennium prophecies that belong to a succeeding age, and not to the reign of the overcomer. A day follows the Millennium when the heavenly Jerusalem descends to the earth, to be the jewelled centre of a new earth, and Peter tells us that the day of God follows the day of the Lord. The new heavens and the

new earth to which Peter directed his readers (2 Pet. 3:13) where, he said, ‘dwelleth righteousness’ is an aspect of truth to which we turn our attention in subsequent articles.

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